

**THEORY OF LIVED EXPERIENCE:
THE IDEA OF HISTORICITY AND SOCIAL IN
WILHELM DILTHEY AND ALFRED SCHUTZ**

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

BANSIDHAR DEEP



**CENTRE FOR PHILOSOPHY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067
INDIA
2017**

DECLARATION

I, Bansidhar Deep, declare that the dissertation entitled "Theory of Lived Experience: The Idea of Historicity and Social in Wilhelm Dilthey and Alfred Schutz" submitted by me for the award of the degree of the Master of Philosophy is my own original work. The dissertation has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree in this or any other university.



Bansidhar Deep 25.7.2017

Centre for Philosophy
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067



जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
दर्शनशास्त्र केंद्र CENTRE FOR PHILOSOPHY
सामाजिक विज्ञान संस्थान SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
नई दिल्ली-110067, NEW DELHI -110067


Date: 25/7/2017

CERTIFICATE


This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "Theory of Lived Experience: The Idea of Historicity and Social in Wilhelm Dilthey and Alfred Schutz" submitted by Bansidhar Deep in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award for the degree of Master of Philosophy from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, is a bonafide record of research work carried out by him under my/our supervision. The contents of this dissertation, in full or in parts, have not been submitted to any other institution or university for the award of any degree or diploma.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Prof. Bhagat Oinam
(Supervisor)

 **BHAGAT OINAM**
Professor
Centre for Philosophy
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067, India

Prof. Bindu Puri
(Chairperson)

 **Chairperson**
Centre for Philosophy
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067, INDIA

Dedicated to My Parents

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to give a comprehensive understanding of the concept “lived experience” in the philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey and Alfred Schutz. This work is an attempt to explore the idea of “historicity” and “social” in Dilthey and Schutz to articulate the idea of “lived experience”. This work will also give an idea on the theorization of lived experience. The debate of experience in the history of Modern Western philosophy is well known in the academic world and is considered very scientific in nature. But there are debates and philosophical discourses upon lived experience which are not so-called scientific but closely related to human sciences/social world. Lived experience is a human experience which can be seen in the social science discourses. On lived experience many scholars and philosophers have been engaged within the social science discourses such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, existentialism, feminism and recent discourses on race, caste, disabilities and so on. Lived experience as a philosophical concept has been debated in philosophy in different fields such as epistemology, ontology, ethics, metaphysics, politics, religion, history and personal narratives. Therefore, it is very significant to study lived experience in order to understand the human sciences/social world in philosophy. For example, for the first time Dilthey used/introduced the concept of *Erlebnis* (lived experience) in the context of human studies or human sciences or cultural sciences. For him lived experience is grounded in human sciences as without it the human sciences cannot be understood which we call social sciences. Following Dilthey this concept became a central category for most of the philosophical traditions including hermeneutics, feminism, phenomenology, literature, pragmatism and so on.

Schutz has done extensive work on lived experience. He is one of the phenomenologists who developed a new dimension to understand lived experience. This dimension is “social” or “collective”. Schutz’s philosophy starts with a critique of Husserl and Max Weber, and then he goes ahead to understand the nature of social world. His book

was aptly titled *The Phenomenology of Social World*. In this book he has discussed about the nature of lived experience and the constitution of lived experience in society. In his phenomenological and sociological discourse, “social” has become the central focus. To understand anything related to human world or social sciences one has to locate it in a society. Thus lived experience exists in the society not merely as an individual experience but also in the form of a collective experience. Therefore, we cannot understand it without the analysis of social or collective. Hence this study will attempt to analyze as to how lived experience is a collective or social experience.

Some philosophers have discussed about the constitution of lived experience in society. Among them Heidegger, Beauvoir, and Schutz are some of the prominent ones. As far as the constitution of lived experience is concerned there are two types of arguments which could be found in the social sciences discourses. First, some philosophers argue that it is a constructed phenomenon in the society. Second, others argue that it is given and not a constructed phenomenon. Therefore, there are two contrary narrations to understand the constitution of lived-experience. This I will discuss in the second chapter.

Generally, philosophers understand lived experience as our immediate, pre-reflective consciousness of life. But according to Dilthey (1985) “a lived experience does not confront me as something perceived or represented; it is not given to me, but the reality of lived experience is there-for-me because I have a reflective awareness of it, because I possess it immediately as belonging to me some sense. Only in thought does it become objective”.¹ According to *Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy* the term lived experience was termed by Dilthey for what is immediately given to individual consciousness regarding one’s own thought and feeling. It can also be used for the experience which orients a person’s self-conception and around which the individual life organizes itself. Through lived experience the particular life history unfolds, we can understand society as our world on the basis of our lived experience of the forces that

¹ Dilthey, W. *Poetry and Experience*, P. 223.

move society.² Though the concept of lived experience has been defined but it can be contested.

However, both the philosophers—Dilthey and Schutz in their philosophy have used many concepts which are very important. These concepts are “history”, “historicity”, “historical consciousness”, “poetry”, “experience”, “inter-subjectivity”, “understanding”, “interpretation”, “expression”, “intentionality”, “consciousness”, “social sciences” or “human sciences”, “social”, “social realities”, “collective”, “life world”, “everyday experience” and so on. Other than Dilthey and Schutz, there are philosophers who have used many concepts which help us to understand the theory of lived experience, for example “body”, “gender”, “women”, “race”, “caste”, “un-touchability”, “touchability” and “embodiment”. These concepts can help us to understand lived experience and the historicity on the one hand, and lived experience and the idea of social or collective on the other. In order to understand about these two dimensions of theory of lived experience I will confine myself to Wilhelm Dilthey and Alfred Schutz. In different disciplines, writers and thinkers have studied/worked/written on lived experience but here this study will mostly focus on philosophy in general and phenomenology/hermeneutics in particular within the social science discourses.

Various questions concerning lived experience in philosophy and social sciences can be raised. But in this philosophical work, three broad questions have been raised in order to understand some problems in philosophy and social sciences. Firstly, how lived experience has to be understood in the context of “historicity”. In other words, how lived experience is unique to human which cannot be understood without the engagement with “past”, “present” and “future”. To understand this problem I will be discussing Dilthey’s philosophy and his works. But other than Dilthey there are other philosophers who have worked on historicity and lived experience such as Heidegger, Gadamer and so on. Wilhelm Dilthey was a German historian, psychologist, sociologist, and hermeneutics philosopher. He was concerned with the basic problems of methodology in the social

² Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu, *Black Well Dictionary for Western Philosophy*, p. 351.

sciences and philosophy, such as how social sciences or human sciences are different in nature from natural sciences.

Various thinkers have noted that lived experience first of all has a “temporal structure”; it can never be grasped in its immediate manifestation but only “reflectively” as “past” in the “present”. Therefore, the question which arises here is how lived experience is connected to historicity along with immediate experience of a subject? This question was dealt with by Heidegger and Dilthey. This is the reason Heidegger gives importance to the historicity which he writes as “historicality” of understanding as one’s “background” or “situated-ness” in the world.³ In other words, to understand anything about the present experience which one is experiencing presently one has to know the background or history. This work proposes to understand the lived experience of present, for example experience of women or gender discrimination or racial discrimination and caste discrimination one has to study or know the historicity of those experiences. As far as this study is concerned, I will confine myself mostly to Dilthey’s philosophy to analyze how lived experience is historical and its continuity in present.

Since the first chapter will be focusing upon historicity and lived experience one has to know the genealogy of lived experience which helps us to understand the mentioned problem better. Dilthey begins and introduces the concept and its significance to understand social science or human science within the hermeneutics and historical approach and later on within the hermeneutics discourse Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Collingwood, Jurgen Habermas and others have also used this concept in their writings. In phenomenology and existentialism discourse Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, Alfred Schutz have analyzed the concept of lived experience. And we also see in Dewey, Pierce, William James and other pragmatists who are so much concerned about the concept of lived experience. The genealogy of lived experience cannot be limited to any particular school but this concept has been the concern for the whole social sciences disciplines including history, sociology, literature, psychology, women

³ Laverty, Susann M. “Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology: A Comparison of Historical and Methodological Considerations”, P. 8.

studies or feminism, political science and philosophy. We can also see the link of genealogy of lived experience in the contemporary writings globally particularly in the field of race, gender, feminism, caste, disabilities and so on.

The link between historicity and lived experience can be understood in different ways or point of views in Dilthey. To comprehend this concept he tries to understand the “historical consciousness”, “reflective capacity” in human, and “memory”. His hermeneutics approach is also an attempt to understand the link between historicity and lived experience which he took from Schleiermacher. To understand this he also sees how human life itself is to be understood as historical and social as well. Therefore he focuses the intrinsic relationship between philosophy of life and philosophy of history. Further to understand this problem he brings the literary importance particularly poetries where he tries to show that how lived experience is historical. All these contributions make Dilthey significant to understand various methodological, epistemological and ontological issues in social sciences.

Secondly, the questions related to how lived experience is the social or collective⁴ experience rather than merely an individual or scientific experience. To deal with this problem I will be focusing on the works and philosophy of Alfred Schutz. Alfred Schutz was an Australian philosopher and social phenomenologist whose work bridged sociological and phenomenological traditions. Schutz was being gradually recognized as a leading twentieth century social sciences philosopher. But most of the time he was in America. He related Edmund Husserl’s work to the social sciences, and was influenced by Max Weber’s legacy on philosophical foundations for sociology. Schutz has worked closely between philosophy and sociology to understand some relevant questions regarding social sciences. He brings philosophy in sociology to understand social reality. Schutz tries to understand the concept of “social” in terms of social reality which comprises of “social action”, “behavior”, “motive”, “intersubjectivity”, “lived experience”, “intention” and so

⁴ Here in this work I have used social and collective interchangeably particularly in second chapter.

on. Schutz is a significant philosopher and sociologist who have written about lived experience.

Lived experience defines the “social ontology”, which proposes that the social world is different from natural world in nature and quality. Therefore social world has different concepts and theories which define what the social world is. The theory of social ontology is one of the examples which defines that social is different from natural world. Schutz has analyzed the concept of social. He sees social realities existing in different levels. These are social reality in terms of present experience by a subject, experience of contemporaries by another subject, experience of predecessor by past subject. In other words, these social realities can be articulated in terms of past, present and future. However, according to Schutz, if we see lived experience as social experience we have to discuss the theory of “intersubjectivity”. There is a notion that one does not understand the lived experience of “other”. Therefore lived experience has to be understood in first person point of view. It is also considered that in phenomenological study, lived experience is grasped through first person point of view. In other words, the phenomenological epistemology is about first person point of view about the world. This theory is relevant and epistemologically valid but since lived experience is not about the subject matter of an individual and it is a collective so it is social and has to be understood in the context of intersubjectivity. Despite extensive study on this area within the phenomenological tradition, still certain questions remain unanswered. Whether the lived experience is well articulated or known by third person point of view or only is it well articulated or known by the person who has lived it (first person)? Therefore, this question requires a philosophical investigation of “other”. This question will be dealt when I will be discussing on how lived experience is social in the chapter two.

One cannot understand the experience of gender with the absence of males. Or the question of “black” becomes irrelevant if there is no “white” world and in India the question of caste discrimination becomes meaningless if we don’t understand it in comparison to upper castes. And of course the lived experience is a social experience or social reality has to be understood in the context of everyday experience which we see in

the case of racial discrimination, gender discrimination and caste discrimination. Hence, in second chapter, to understand how lived experience is social I will discuss in details about the social ontology in the context of lived experience, then intersubjectivity and lived experience as everyday experience.

When we talk about lived experience we see many things related to it. One of the issues is—whether it is an experience of an individual person or is it a collective or social experience. Ultimately lived experience seems to be collective, for example, the experience of race in U.S.A and caste in India. The Negroes as a community or collective faces racial discrimination. Dalits are discriminated not because of their personal fault but because they belong to a particular community or identity or caste. These are not an individual experience but collective. This question has not been discussed in the philosophy. Although, there are debates which can be found in phenomenological tradition implicitly but still it has not been given enough attention. This social dimension of lived experience is focused by Schutz throughout his works. Thus Schutz's phenomenology cannot be constructed as methodological individualism but always as a collective.

Then on Chapter Third, I will raise the question of theorization of lived experience. As far as the theorization of lived experience is concerned very few research has been done in philosophy. Therefore this work is also an attempt to bring to the attention the theorization of lived experience. To comprehend this issue I would show as to how theorizing experience of race, gender and caste are very much closer to theorizing lived experience. To put it differently, this work focuses on the issues of gender, race and caste as illustrations to understand the lived experience or the theorization of lived experience. There are many instances which can be cited to understand lived experience such as disabilities, LGBTQ and others but here I will mostly focus on race, gender and caste.

There are two ways through which one can understand theorizing lived experience. Firstly, theorizing lived experience is a vast area which touches upon different dimensions of lived experience. In other words, theorizing lived experience means understanding all

its dimensions and implications through the engagement with concepts in an interdisciplinary manner. These dimensions/concepts are “historicity”, “political”, “social”, “personal”, “epistemic”, “ethical” and “ontological”. Second is to locate theorizing lived experience in the context of theorizing race, gender and caste. In other words, theorizing lived experience by analyzing the experience of racial discrimination, gender discrimination and caste discrimination. However, phenomenologists have given enough attention to articulate the different dimensions of lived experience as a part of theorization of lived experience. The theorization of lived experience can be seen in the philosophy, particularly in the school of phenomenology. Many phenomenologists have written and theorized about lived experience. This discussion/theorization is not primarily on lived experience but we can find indirect approach to it. For example, in Husserl in the form of “life world” and “transcendental reduction”, in Heidegger in terms of engagement with the “*Dasein*”, in Sartre in terms of engaging with “black experience”, writing literature, biography, art, theaters, in Simone de Beauvoir in terms of the experience of women/gender and in Merleau-Ponty in terms “lived body”, “embodiment”, “perception” and so on. Thus the phenomenologists have theorized in different levels, some have focused on ethical dimensions, some on epistemological dimension, some of them on ontology, some of them on political dimension and so on. In the writings of phenomenologists we see that lived experience is human experience which connotes different ontology and epistemology. To articulate this issue all phenomenologists have explored the various dimensions of lived experience which I will be discussing in third chapter.

Theorization of race/racial discrimination is a larger area which has to be considered as part of theorizing lived experience. This can be seen in the writings of Fanon, Sartre, black feminists and many others writers. Within the context of race, gender and caste, body becomes a point of analysis, which I think is a part of theorizing lived experience, because racial discrimination takes place due to some different “look”, “quality” and “features”. Blacks are treated differently by whites. Since the “body” of African American people is black or their skin is black, they are treated differently and discriminated. On the other hand it is not about just black and white but there are bodies

which are not black in look but because of their body having some different features and look they are treated differently. In the feminist discourse also the body of women has been debated extensively in comparison to male's body. Even in the context of caste and untouchability we can see lower caste or untouchable's body are not touched by touchable or the upper castes in India. Therefore in the context of race, gender and caste body has to be critically analyzed as part of theorizing lived experience. We see caste discrimination for lower caste in India is a lived experience and this has been discussed by scholars in contemporary social sciences discourse. For example, Gopal Guru, Sundar Sarukkai, Raghuramraju and many other feminist writers have written about the experience of women in general and lower caste women in particular.

When we bring the debate of "body" we see there can be seen the debate of metaphysics and ethics in the discourse of lived experience. Overall these issues bring to the attention of the scholars that this concept is highly relevant philosophically and significant in understanding social realities and human world. All these can be looked into in order to understand the theory of "social ontology". Thus this concept has to be studied in an interdisciplinary manner and this work will give some glance to it. This concept has been of great concern in sociology, political science, psychology, history, feminism and philosophy. This project discusses some core debates in philosophy in the context of lived experience. How social sciences are different from natural sciences? What is the nature of lived experience? Is lived experience inclusive one which recognizes everybody as ontologically equal?

In short, this work comprises three chapters. The first chapter is titled "the lived experience and historicity in Wilhelm Dilthey" where I have discussed about the historicity of lived experience and its continuity in the present experience. So there is a both "synchronic" and "diachronic" analysis of lived experience. In order to articulate this problem I have also discussed the "time" (past, present and future) and how there is a correlation in them. One cannot understand a phenomenon without focusing on this correlation particularly when one is trying to understand the social phenomenon. The second chapter is titled "lived experience and the idea of social in Alfred Schutz". I have

brought the attention on how lived experience is a social and collective experience rather than merely an individual. In third chapter is titled “theorizing lived experience”. Here I have tried to articulate some of the issues related to theorization of lived experience, in the context of phenomenology, feminism, gender, race and caste.

In this study I will be using some of the original writings by Dilthey and Schutz and other philosophers who have worked on lived experiences. But I will also be using many secondary works on the concept of lived experience directly and indirectly. The method I will use in developing the arguments on the questions and problems related to lived experience are phenomenology and hermeneutics on the one hand and critical and analytical on the other. In phenomenology, the concept of “lived experience” possesses special philosophical and methodological significance. Therefore, the concept itself is used as a methodological tool to study social or human sciences in philosophy. In phenomenology and hermeneutics, philosophers have used lived experience widely and therefore it is necessary to understand it from the lens of both phenomenology and hermeneutics. This work is a completely theoretical one.

CHAPTER ONE

Historicity and Lived Experience in Wilhelm Dilthey

I. Genealogy of the Lived Experience

The question of lived experience in social sciences discourse was initiated by the Wilhelm Dilthey exclusively. The term lived experience was used for the first time by Dilthey in the mid of the 19th century. He is one of the prominent philosophers who have discussed lived experience thoroughly in the history of philosophy. But later on many of the philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, political theorists, literary theorists and historians have engaged with this concept and were influenced by his ideas. If we see the genealogy of the lived experience it can be related to the early romantic literary movement in Germany and other places, Dilthey's writings, and then the whole phenomenological, existential and hermeneutics traditions in philosophy. Dilthey was so much concerned about the concept of lived experience in his hermeneutics approach and later on within the hermeneutics discourse Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Collingwood, Jurgen Habermas and others have also used this concept in their writings. Robin Gerge Collingwood took from Dilthey's theory of *verstehen* (understanding) and has interpreted history and culture in his way. Contemporary philosophers such as Gadamer and Habermas have worked on Dilthey's thought. Gadamer's hermeneutics, however, is decidedly past oriented, stressing on the power of the past and the value of tradition. Habermas is future oriented; stressing on the power of man and capacity to overcome tradition—man's socio-historical self—by creating new responses to life. There are many number of followers and fellow workers of

Dilthey such as Simmel, Troeltsch, Max Weber, Scheler, Gundolf, Francisco Romero, Ortega y Gasset, E. Cassirer, Meinecke, Wach, and Dvorak.⁵

In phenomenology and existentialism discourse Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, Alfred Schutz have analyzed the concept lived experience. And we also see in Dewey, Pierce, William James and others the pragmatists who are so much concerned about the concept of lived experience. John Dewey has written about the structure and nature of lived experience throughout his writings.⁶ Foucault can also be included in the tradition of engaging with the concept of lived experience. He has tried to philosophize the experience of so called mentally disordered (madness) people therefore experience or lived experience has played a very significant role in his philosophy.

Dilthey was influenced by German enlightenment movements from Kant, Hegel and whole literary movement/writings. He was influenced by the historical school particularly in German and European scholarship in general. That is why in his writings referring the poetic philosophers and historical philosophers. Among them are Goethe, Novalis, Schiller, Holderlin, Lessing, Ranke, Droysen, Shakespeare, Rousseau, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, and Henry Bergson. Dilthey was also influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche indirectly. That is why some of the scholars have compared Nietzsche and Dilthey particularly on the conception of “time”.⁷

The genealogy of lived experience cannot be limited to any particular school but this concept has been the concern for the whole social sciences disciplines includes history, sociology, literature, psychology, women studies or feminism, political science and philosophy. Various philosophers and thinkers have interpreted and analyzed this context in their own way and in the relevance of their disciplines. Therefore lived experience has

⁵ Masur, Gerhard. “Wilhelm Dilthey and the History of ideas”, p. 107.

⁶ See for details to understand lived experience in Dewey in the edited volumes by John J McDermott *the Philosophy of John Dewey: Volume I (the Structure of Lived Experience) and Volume II (The Lived Experience)*. One can also see about lived experience in Dewey’s Writings directly for example his book *Art as Experience* where he has written about lived experience.

⁷ Bulhof, Ilse N. has compared Dilthey and Nietzsche in his work *Wilhelm Dilthey: A Hermeneutic Approach to the Study of History and Culture*, p. 6.

different typologies or dimensions that have been engaged by the philosophers and scholars. The different dimensions are historical, political, social, economic, psychological, personal, epistemic, ethical, metaphysical, and ontological. But the recent scholarships in social sciences or social scientists and scholars have not given enough attention on this. Otherwise the direction of social sciences could have been something else. It can give a broader perspective to make social sciences inclusive and egalitarian. The feminists have given some attention of lived experience to critique the existing epistemology, among them Judith Butler, Simone de Beauvoir, Martha Nussbaum, Luce Irigaray and others being some of them. In the writings of feminism and gender rights movement one finds that they used this category as an epistemic and political tool in social sciences. This can be seen in the writings of Sartre, Beauvoir, Foucault and many others. We see in the phenomenology tradition where phenomenologists have interpreted this concept in the context of epistemology, ontology and ethics. In India the political theorists and scholars have initiated discussion on this concept, such as Gopal Guru, Sundar Sarukkai and Raghuramaraju among others in contemporary social science discourse.

Hence, in the contemporary social science writings we see writings about lived experience. This writings can be seen in articulating race, the writings about the issues of women or gender and in the writings related to caste in India. In other words, the genealogy of lived experience must link/incorporate the writings which are on race, gender, caste, disabilities and so on. On the issues of race plenty of literatures have been developed in the contemporary scholarship which is nothing but articulating lived experience. Frantz Fanon, Sartre, Patricia Collin Hill, Toni Morrison, W. E. B Bois, Aime Cesaire and others are few among other. There are also writings on women experience which have been written globally by feminist scholars can be related in the tradition of genealogy of lived experience. On caste discrimination, oppression, humiliation and exploitation as lived experience many autobiographies have been written which can be incorporated in the genealogy of lived experience. However, the historicity of caste is a long history from Pre-Buddhist period up to today. Nicholas Dirks talks about the historicity of caste in his book *Castes of Mind* but he has failed to articulate the historicity

of caste. According to him, caste is a modern phenomenon or colonial product.⁸ The historicity of caste does not confine to understanding how caste has come into being and locating its ontology in colonial epistemology.⁹ But the historicity of caste has to be located and understood in the context of lived experience of caste as historicity which is nothing but exploitation, discrimination, humiliation and oppression for oppressed communities for centuries in India. Nicholas's conception of caste as social reality might be one of the narrations of history of caste. But the historicity of caste has been elaborated and investigated by anti-caste thinkers and philosophers such as Buddha, Savitribai Phule, Jotirao Phule, Ambedkar, Periyar, Ayothee Dash, Kabir, Ravidas and many others which has to be included in the genealogy of caste. This argument can be found in the writings of Ambedkar and other anti-caste thinkers.

II. Lived Experience and Historicity

The lived experience is a philosophical concept which does not make full sense only in the present. But always lived experience looks back to the “past”, which is “history”. Therefore “historicity” becomes central theme to understand lived experience. In order to understand this philosophical problem one has to define what lived experience is? What is the nature of lived experience? The lived experience of different kinds can be seen such as the experience of caste discrimination in India, the experience of racial discrimination in United State of America, South Africa and the experience gender based discrimination in general. In this particular chapter the real question is—would it be possible to understand lived experience without linking with one's past or history? Or what is the historicity of lived experience? Generally, philosophers understand lived experience as the immediate, pre-reflective consciousness of life. According to *Blackwell Dictionary of Western*

⁸ Dirks, Nicholas. *Castes of Mind*, p. 5.

⁹ Ibid, p. 8.

Philosophy the term lived experience was termed by Dilthey for what is immediately given to individual consciousness regarding one's own thought and feeling. It can also be used for the experience which orients a person's self-conception and around which can individual life organizes itself. Though lived experience the particular life history unfolds, we can understand society as our world on the basis of our lived experience of the forces that move society.¹⁰ But is it merely the immediate experience which has nothing to do with the past? This question seems to have been answered by Dilthey. According to Dilthey (1985):

“Lived experience is variously characterized way in which reality is present to me. For a lived experience does not confront me as something perceived or something represented; it is not given to me. On the contrary, the reality which is present to me by the fact that I am inwardly aware of it, that I immediately possess it as something belonging to me in some sense Only in thought does it become an objective”.¹¹

There is a retrospective character of lived experience. One has to reflect your past to understand your “life”, “situation” and “condition”. And this is what Dilthey says that “the meaning of life, man's life is discovered in the history”.¹² The main point here is that I cannot feel the lived experience merely by perceiving things; rather it has to be presented in me and I am aware of it. This is only possible when I have my history or past experience with me. Otherwise it would not be presented to me and be aware of my history.

In fact, Dilthey was deeply concerned with this concept throughout his writings. He is concerned because the significance of this concept in social sciences/human sciences is tremendous. According to him, without this (engagement with the concept of lived experience) one cannot make sense of social sciences/human sciences. The question of lived experience and how it is linked with past have been investigated by various philosophers—such as Martin Heidegger, Simone De Beauvoir, Hans-Georg Gadamer,

¹⁰ Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu, *Black Well Dictionary for Western Philosophy*, p. 351.

¹¹ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Poetry and Experience*, p. 223.

¹² Bonno, Tapper. “Dilthey's Methodology of the Geisteswissenschaften”, p. 333.

Frantz Fanon, John Dewey and others. All these philosophers have recognized this reality and they have acknowledged in their writings, as we find it in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, Beauvoir's *Second Sex* and so on.

Lived experience is “not given to me” like a representation which is an index to some other reality beyond it. Instead, a lived experience is directly there-for-me as its own reality. In its most basic modes, a lived experience involves a reflective or self-given awareness which is an immediate, pre-reflective consciousness where there is not yet the distinction between act and content, subject and object that characterizes representational consciousness. The reflective awareness inherent in lived experience is thus not to be confused with reflection.¹³ To understand the past as reality connected with your lived experience one has to explain the concept “reflective awareness”. In fact, Dilthey emphasizes a very synonymous category of reflective awareness that is “memory”. He says—as history is memory and as a category of meaning belongs to memory this is the most distinctive category of historical thought.¹⁴ According to Dilthey, “*innwerden*” (Makkreel translates as reflexive consciousness” is the foundation for describing or understanding the life. However, for Dilthey, most of the knowledge of soul/self/human world arises via memory. It is through memory that the lived experience are brought to givenness. Thus, there is a close relation between historicity and lived experience. And memory is one of the categories which help us to understand this reality. To make sense clearly about this argument let us see what Dilthey has to say:

A lived experience is a passage in time in which every state is in flux before it can become a distinct object. Indeed, because the subsequent moment always builds on the previous one, each become something past before it can be grasped. It then appears as memory...every moment of life that is observed no matter how much the flow is concentrated on, is a remembered moment.¹⁵

¹³ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Poetry and Experience*, p. 16.

¹⁴ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 10.

¹⁵ Theodore R. Schatzki. “Living Out of the Past: Dilthey and Heidegger on Life and History”, p. 306.

Other than this category (memory or reflective consciousness) there are many concepts which Dilthey derives from Goethe and his contemporaries; for example, *Lebenserfahrung* (life-experience), *lebensbeziehung* (life-relation), *lebensgefühl* (feeling of life) and so forth.¹⁶

Lived experience is distinguished from *Erfahrung* (German, scientific experience), the data of experiment and measurement, which can be gathered indirectly.¹⁷ According to Dilthey social sciences and natural sciences are two different domains. Social sciences are grounded in human experiences for instance lived experience, whereas natural sciences are scientific experiences based on sense data or sense perception. The task of human sciences are to analyze the cognitive, evaluative, and purposive attitudes operating in the reflection on the historical world without losing their sight of their original togetherness in the concrete concerns of ordinary life. That is the reason lived experience plays very important role to understand social sciences.¹⁸ According to him, human beings are historical and social being. Therefore, the concept of life only can be understood through the analysis of socio-historical connection. For him to understand the life is to understand the essence of philosophy and world. This approach was taken by Dilthey from Schleiermacher's dialectics where it has been shown that how this two dimensions are linked. Dilthey says that life and history are closely related and in order to understand lived experience, both life and history have to be investigated. To put it differently, Dilthey adopted the Friedrich Schleiermacher's hermeneutics and developed it into a typology of life. Dilthey has argued that the individual lived experience is necessarily tied to its socio-historical contexts, and the meaning emerges from the nexus of relationships.¹⁹

¹⁶ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Poetry and Experience*, p. 20.

¹⁷ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Introduction to Human Sciences*, p. 13.

¹⁸ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 2.

¹⁹ "Wilhelm Dilthey." *New World Encyclopedia*. 18 Aug 2013, 20:52 UTC. 8 Jun 2017, 05:43 <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/p/index.php?title=Wilhelm_Dilthey&oldid=972782>.

According to Dilthey, man²⁰/human beings is to be found and understood not in the abstract philosophical definition but in a historical-cultural process that continuously defines him and partially undefine him. He was very much concerned about “philosophy of life” and “philosophy of history”. Therefore, the dominant impulse in his philosophical thought is the desire to understand life in its own terms²¹. That means men/human beings are to be understood by the analysis of his living condition, context, history, culture and so on. Here, the main question arises—can we understand a person/community without talking about his/her history/historicity? Another thing is can we directly know to our history without reflecting upon our life and its condition/situation where we have been living around? To understand the link between lived experience and history one has to explore these two aspects of Dilthey’s philosophy which he is concerned seriously.

To comprehend the life one has to reflect or look back the previous life/past/history and which are done in both autobiography and biography.²² In autobiography one has to look back about himself/herself to articulate his/her experience and in biography one has to interpret the life experience of person who is “other” and not himself/herself. In both case someone has to look back the historicity. In this way history helps people to understand life. There is a close relation between history and life. Dilthey writes in his *Formation of Historical in the Human Sciences* that without human beings no history will be made.²³ Therefore, human beings create the history, without them no history will exist. Because they are thinking being. They think over their experience, actions, and thoughts. Dilthey says human beings re-experience, revitalize²⁴ their experience through, art, poetry, autobiography and biography. According to Dilthey, lived experience, understanding,

²⁰ Dilthey uses the term man in general to understand human sciences, so here one should be aware that he uses this term for human beings.

²¹ As quoted in the introduction by Roman J. Betanzos in Dilthey’s *Introduction to Human Sciences*, p. 12.

²² See for details *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 266, where it has explained that how history and autobiography/biography are closed on the one hand and both autobiography and biography are helpful to make sense of lived experience and life on the other.

²³ Dilthey, *Selected Works, the Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, Vol. III, pp. 218-223.

²⁴ Owensby, Jacob. “Dilthey and the Historicity of Poetic Experience”, p. 505.

autobiography and biography are historical categories.²⁵ These need to be understood historically.

In the context of lived experience, the historicity is significant because it talks about a specific history. The history as a narrative can be multiple narrations on one historical fact but here it is very important to talk about historicity because it is self-constitutive. For Dilthey, historicity identifies human beings as unique and historical beings.²⁶ For Heidegger, historicity can be understood in two ways. First, *Dasein* must be understood as contextualized by the stream of concrete events of the world history. The second and more fundamental sense is based on Heidegger's claim that *Dasein* is not an object, but a "life history", a "happening", an unfolding between birth and death and a flowing outward into the future and backward into the past. According to Heidegger, the historicity can be defined and understood in terms of "temporalization" or the "structure of temporality". It denotes *Dasein*'s way of taking up the possibilities of the past by projecting itself onto its own most possibility of being as a whole. The human past is constitutive of the self and its future possibility.²⁷

Dilthey criticizes Immanuel Kant, because he only emphasizes on appearance/phenomenal. If that is the case then the life will become merely phenomenal. And we will be blind in terms of "past" and "future". Kant lacks a sense of history, and for Dilthey that meant he lacked a basic sense of man/human beings, because history contains the fullness of what man has done and been and therefore of what he is now. So for Dilthey "past" has to be related with the life and present experience. In other words, historical understanding of experience is required to understand man which Kant lacks. According to Dilthey, lived experience is structural nexus which preserve the past as presence in the present. Although lived experience is a "structural whole", it is not "static". Its unity is

²⁵ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 272.

²⁶ Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu, *Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy*, p. 308.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 308.

“diachronic” as well as “synchronic”.²⁸ Lived experience already contains in itself, the past and future within its consciousness of the present. The past and the future reside in the present as representations of reality. But, these representations are not merely passive contents of lived experience. The past is experienced as a force reaching into the present. It is drawn or incorporated into the present as an effective “presence”²⁹. Those past lived experiences which are structurally related to the present experience are drawn into the present, thus creating a temporal whole. In this way, the concept of lived experience or “*Erlebnis*” is closed to the concept of “time”. This problem has been explored by Heidegger and Ricoeur. Ricoeur has explained it in terms the connection between time and narration whereas the Heidegger’s position is more complex because the “*Erlebnis*” of time interferes with the “*Erlebnis*” of history giving rise to the existential concept of historicity.³⁰ This can also be understood in the philosophy of Foucault and Nietzsche in terms their methodological engagement with the concepts of “genealogy” and “archaeology”. Both have given some attention on the relation between the concept of life and time. This philosophical analysis gives some insights which are historical and theoretical raised some fundamental problems of man in which the double directions of history and of contemporaneity meet and join together.³¹ Since all these discussions are taking place in the context of *Erlebnis* and here we are concerned about the relation between lived experience (*Erlebnis*) and historicity.

Thus, every lived experience becomes part of a system of contextually related experiences (presently which one is experiencing) explicated from it through a process of reflection on its meaning. Implicit in the structural analysis of lived experience is the part-

²⁸Diachronic analysis of experience is to understand the experience over time and the synchronic analysis of experience is to understand the experience at a particular time. In the context of lived experience we can see when we try to understand lived experience in relation to historicity we can see diachronic analysis of lived experience and when we try to understand the living experience as lived experience we see the synchronic analysis of lived experience. See for details “Diachronic and Synchronic Unity” by Oliver Rashbrook.

²⁹ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Selected Works*, Vol. V, pp. 225-227.

³⁰Rizzacasa, Aurelio. “On a Phenomenological Analysis of the *Erlebnis* of Time” in *Life: the Outburst of Life in the Human Sphere Scientific Philosophy/ Phenomenology of Life and the Sciences of Life*, p. 409.

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 416.

whole³² relation that is central to the Dilthey's hermeneutic approach.³³ The life is the foundation of human beings that rational speculative and metaphysical theories have failed to explain the meaning of human life in the world. That is the reason for Dilthey to see lived experience/human experience as everyday life experience is to be understood through art, literature, history and so on. And it becomes an alternative framework for human studies/human sciences.

Lived experience is the fundamental or primordial experience, a reality of consciousness that is ultimate and prior to reflection, behind which one cannot go.³⁴

As mentioned above the lived experience is the fundamental experience of human sciences. They reflect on their history because they access the reality of consciousness. Now in order to understand lived experience, the philosophy of life is the core in Dilthey's philosophy on the one hand and the "historicity of life" on the other. Here it is clear from the above discussion that both life and history are like of a two sides of one coin. Without human beings history would not have existed and without history human beings would have become "mechanical".

Man is a "historical being"; that "Man knows himself only in history, never through introspection", that only history tells a man what he is; that the totality of human nature only exists in history.³⁵

In this sense, man is not a nature; man is history. Therefore, Dilthey's philosophy of life necessarily has to be the history of life. There is a connection between life, history and philosophy in Dilthey's philosophy. In other words, both history of life and philosophy of life are each other supplementary to understand whole human world.

³² See for details in the second chapter where I have explained why part and whole relations are important in Dilthey's hermeneutics and in the context of lived experience and history.

³³ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Poetry and Experience*, p. 16.

³⁴ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, Translated by Ramon J Betanzos, p. 13.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 15. Men know themselves because they know their history. Therefore, in this context just introspection does not help men to understand themselves.

Therefore, both philosophy of life and history of life are necessary condition to make sense human world.

Philosophy is all about our life and our living in the world. Therefore, to understand the world and reality one must start from the life and its experience, the reversal cannot be done because we know things through our experience. Human beings as thinking being interprets the world, therefore without human beings the world is meaningless. Dilthey says life is given to us directly to each of us, as our own life and that is only starting from our own life that we understand life around us, the other forms of human and animal life. Starting here means, starting from lived experience.³⁶

Here the main concern is lived experience and its connection with the history. Lived experience is an experience which is there in the society where people/individual/groups/communities lived a kind of experience which is a distinct kind of life experience. In other words, in a society everybody might live a different kind of life style in terms their “location”, “identity”, “class”, “caste”, “food”, “weather” and “climate”, “gender” and so on. But all these have a historical connection, which is by they are distinct and without which one cannot make sense of his/her life. Dilthey is a philosopher who has discussed the philosophical aspect of lived experience in relation to history and life. He was influenced of Hegel and other German historical philosophers. But his conception of history is quite different. For example, his historical understanding is not like Hegel’s teleological and absolute conception of history. For him, history does not mean “end” or “telos”. It is an ongoing process. Later on Dilthey was influenced by Husserl too to an extent. Therefore, one sees how psychology, phenomenology and hermeneutics are three important flow of thinking, there in his thought. Psychology is very important because it is much closed to human mind. At the same time phenomenological thought focuses on both experience and consciousness in human beings and their relation to objects in the world on the one hand and history helps to narrate the total life through interpretation to understand life is called hermeneutics on the other. This is why literary

³⁶Danani, Carla. “Life, Experience and Understanding in Dilthey’s Thought”, in Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. *Life: Scientific Philosophy, Phenomenology of Life and the Sciences of Life: Ontopoiesis of Life and the Human Creative Condition*, p. 454.

history plays very important role in Dilthey's philosophy. When he tries to define lived experience and how does one come to know about his/her life:

How does one come to know these experiences and "bring them to consciousness"? How does one think about them? The crucial process by which this happens is one in which life expresses itself in certain ways, and the expressions of life or "objectifications of life" are known through an inner process of "*verstehen*" or "understanding" through which life comes to know itself.³⁷

Then the understanding develops in the subject through interpretation and representation. In this way "expression", "representation", "interpretation" and "understanding" becomes importance in his philosophy of lived experience. Without expression, interpretation one will not be able to understand lived experience.

Now when we interpret or express one's life experience, it seems we are expressing our present life experience or lived experience in the present. However, it is not possible to comprehend the "life experience" by just expressing your present experience, because when you express anybody's or your own experience history has to be explored. In other words to understand the life experience one has to understand the whole life. The moment you interpret the experience of present, you are interpreting about the history of life. Thus we interpret the past experience. But of course we can say that we have some experience which we are experiencing in present. Lived experience is not just one kind of experience in your present life but the totality³⁸ of your experience in your life. Dilthey calls it physical and psychological unity or psychic unity. That is the reason history is connected with lived experience. Here I have tried to show that how it is necessary to understand the link between lived experience and historicity.

³⁷Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, Translated by Ramon J Betanzos, p. 23.

³⁸To understand life is to understand the life in totality, that is why Dilthey says it in different language the psychic nexus and this psychic nexus is possible through physico-psychological nexus or socio-historical unity.

It is also very essential to discuss Dilthey's view on literatures to understand lived experience and its relation to past. What makes him to focus more and more time in the history of literature in the world, particularly German literatures? Is that to understand the link between lived experience and history or to understand human sciences as different from natural sciences? If that is the case, it may have to say that he has explored it to see the link between past/history and the lived experience. Dilthey has used the literature and poetry as a tool to make sense of this reality. Therefore, there is a need to discuss it. Life is historical which has been accepted by both Dilthey and Heidegger. That is the reason Dilthey was understood life in terms of "time", "movement", "wholeness", a "stream", and a "ceaseless flow" whereas Heidegger understood life in terms of "temporality", "movement" and "wholeness".³⁹ Now all these categories are the subject matter of history. According to Dilthey, "lived experience" is the unit to understand life. Later on Heidegger extended the debate and said in different language "actions" are the unit to comprehend life. However, both these categories lived experience and action has temporality, but to understand the life we have to understand the whole lived experiences in the life. That is the reason historicity plays significant role to understand life through lived experiences. In this context Dilthey elucidates how the internal structure of lived experience in present one has to understand earlier or possible experiences:

...the connection of what is remembered with what is present, the continued existence of the qualitatively determine reality, the continued effectivity of the past as the force in the present communicates a particular character of presence to what is remembered. And the presence is the becoming incorporated of what is past in to lived experience.⁴⁰

So there is a close relation between life and history. Life is the core subject matter in social sciences. All the fundamental questions related to epistemology, ontology, ethics and metaphysics lies in life. Now the human life cannot be understood in isolation of society but one has to understand in totality or wholeness.

³⁹ Theodore R. Schatzki. "Living Out of the Past: Dilthey and Heidegger on Life and History", p. 302.

⁴⁰ As quoted in Ibid, p. 303.

III. Life, Poetry and History

Dilthey has discussed literature exclusively in his philosophy. Throughout his writings he refers the poetic philosophers and historical philosophers as well. For example, among them are Goethe, Novalis, Schiller, Holderlin, Lessing, Shakespeare, Rousseau, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer. For Dilthey, the experience of poet is the lived experience. This can be seen in his *Poetry and Experience* (Volume V of his *Selected Works* and other writings). He mentions about “literature”, “poetry”, “novel”, “music”, “drama”, “aesthetics”, and “visual arts” and so on.

To understand better about link between lived experience and history in poetry and literature/art, there is a need to make a point on the relation of poetry and lived experience. Poetry helps to make sense of this problem. In fact, Dilthey’s students wrote a volume on literary essays titled as *Poetry and Lived Experience*⁴¹ by collecting Dilthey’s works on literatures. And Dilthey himself wrote many papers related to aesthetics and poetry such as “On Power of Imagination and Madness” (1886), “Building Stones for An Aesthetics” (1887) and other. Poetry is the representation and expression of life. It expresses lived experience. Therefore it would be a difficult task to understand history and lived experience without poetic analysis.⁴² In the history of literature one finds that all the poetries are the expression of life experience of the person, community which they have lived in them. In other words, in the language of Dilthey theory of experience lies in the experience of the poets.⁴³ Now the question arises that—why it can only be expressed in poetry and not through other means?

⁴¹ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Poetry and Experience*, p. 19.

⁴² Ibid, p. 237.

⁴³ See Dilthey’s *Poetry and Experience*, Vol. V, p. 4.

Here one can presume that the lived experience is not expressed in the mainstream writings and horizon. As a result it is expressed by the subjected person or community (the person or community who have lived the experience) in other way around through oral history, fiction and other means. For example in India the reality of lower castes or in the language of Ambedkar, the matters of untouchable castes do not express in the main stream writings. That is why the lower caste people express it through poetry and “oral history”. That is the reason political theorist Gopal Guru poses some prominent questions to the Indian social sciences. He talks of theoretical Brahmins and empirical *Sudra*.⁴⁴

Even this question was raised to Dilthey, because in the writings of Dilthey very less representation of lower class and peasant culture were discussed. According to Jacques Kornborg, what Dilthey offers us is indeed a history of the higher reaches of culture, a study of ideas and values as they are held by cultural elites—philosophers, poets, and religious figures. His depictions in the writings are about intellectual elites and upper class. What Dilthey meant by the world view of an age did not include attitudes to life in the great oral tradition of European peasant culture.⁴⁵ So for Kornborg, Dilthey has also failed to represent the lower class in his literary theory and analysis. Here one thing can be said that even though the literary history belongs to lower class and lower caste life experience but these days even the upper class/upper caste/elites also writing fiction, art, novel and so on.

Poetry is undoubtedly a successful tool to express human experience; because the poet him/she express his/her lived experience. That is why according to Dilthey, the lived experience cannot be expressed through formal categories such as identity, equality and difference but it is only can be expressed through real category that is “living” itself. Therefore, “life” is a real category which cannot be expressed by formal categories. According to Dilthey, the meaning of existence also is understood through poetic

⁴⁴ Guru, Gopal and Sarukkai, Sundar. *Cracked Mirror*, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Jacques Kornberg, “Wilhelm Dilthey on the Self and History”, pp. 295-296. To understand the argument on politics of writings, Kornberg quotes Gerorge Mosse, who has said that the intellectual history has become the history of intellectuals. That means peasants and oral traditions are excluded but only aristocrats and upper class.

expression.⁴⁶ Further he says that the whole configuration of the historical human world can be comprehended first and foremost through poetry rather than through science.⁴⁷

The philosophical conception of history develops from literary history. Perhaps poetic will have a similar significance for the systematic study of historical expression of life.⁴⁸ There is a notion that poetry only expresses the experiences, so this is not “theoretical”. But poetry possesses metaphorical knowledge and broader imagination which is theoretical and philosophical as well, which also can be seen in the writings of poetic philosophers including philosopher Dilthey. Most of the philosophers have written a lot about literature, art and poetry such as Heidegger, Sartre, Aristotle and other. Heidegger writes in his book *Poetry, Language and Thought*—“Thinker as Poet”, because what a thinker does and what a poet does is not different but similar exercise. He also emphasizes that the function of poetry as the founding of “truth”—“bestowing”, “grounding” and “beginning”.⁴⁹

Another important point related to poetry is that it does not capture the reality but “speculation” and “imagination”, which nothing to do with objective reality. Now in this context Dilthey has articulated that this was the problem with the old imaginative art and therefore he demands for the “objectification”⁵⁰ of psychic images which is not speculation and imagination but actually represents the realities of everyday life. To understand this argument one can see some of the examples from India. Savi Savarkar is one of the artists, whose art represents the lived experience of untouchability in India. He makes his art where pictures/images about the lived experience is shown as a social practice (in

⁴⁶ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Poetry and Experience*, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Danani, Carla. “Life, Experience and Understanding in Dilthey’s Thought” in Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. *Life: Scientific Philosophy, Phenomenology of Life and the Sciences of Life: Ontopoiesis of Life and the Human Creative Condition*, p. 465.

⁴⁸ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Poetry and Experience*, p. 5

⁴⁹ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language and Thought*, pp. xi-xii.

⁵⁰ The word objectification was used by Dilthey in the context of art and how does it relate with the empirical reality. Therefore, for him the imagination of art also can be objectified or can be manifested as objective reality.

Dilthey's language we can say the objectification) by using his imagination. Therefore, it is not merely in the imaginative world but also in concrete/actual world.

There a debate has emerged and it is known to the public discourse that the experiences of discrimination, humiliation, exploitation are expressed through autobiography. All these experiences are considered as lived experiences. And that is the reason Dilthey is also concerned about autobiography and biography which he mentions in his writings, for example when he wrote Schleiermacher's biography. Dilthey's hermeneutics is very much closed to autobiography, biography and lived experience. According to him, he is attracted to autobiography and biography as a form of history is that these are the highest and most instructive form of the understanding of life.⁵¹ In other words, we can say that there is a close relation between lived experience and hermeneutics, because lived experience can be make sense through interpretation, expression and understanding.

Dilthey took art and literatures as to understand human sciences and life in particular; because art helps to apprehend the life. And art helps human to distinguish him from the sciences which is mechanical in nature. However, if we study Dilthey approach to study poetry it is very clear that he is not just concerned about the link between poetry and experience but also how lived experience is linked with history/past which can be understood through poetry/literatures/art. This is very visible in the writings of Dilthey.

That is obvious that we are experiencing things in our everyday life including our lived experience. But this experience is not necessarily constant. Dilthey claims that many of our apparently natural or immediate responses of feelings are, in fact, historically conditioned and thus not necessarily constant.⁵² But of course there are experiences which are constant. For example, when someone is going through some experience right now in present; say feeling of eating something right now or feeling of pain in my body. Poetry is all about the experiences which are narrated by the poet. To understand the link between

⁵¹ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Selected Works, Vol. III*, p. 11 and p. 221.

⁵² Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Poetry and Experience*, p. 13

poetry and lived experience, or poetry and history Dilthey quotes Kames's Elements of Criticism:

In ideal presence a mere representation of something past transformed into a complete image where there is no past as distinct from the present. It is this capacity of art to preserve the past in the present that allows us to respond emotionally to what rushes by in real life. As Kames says, "our emotions are never coinstantaneous".⁵³

This theory of past in the present is something need to be understood clearly about the lived experience and past. David Pendery has discussed this particular issue in his article—"Lived experience, Historical consciousness and narrative: A Combinatory Aesthetics Ethic". According to him, this problem has been dealt in the writings of John Dewey, Jurgen Habermas, Erving Goffman, Edmund Husserl, William Styron, McPherson, Hayden White, Frank Ankersmit, Daniel Wickberg, Lessing Doris and many other historical writings which helps one to understand lived experience and history. And here narration plays a very significant role. He gave the example of both non fictional and fictional historiography. Take for example:

In terms of historical fiction, William Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner* is instructive. Styron's work is not only a brilliant reconstruction of historical reality in early nineteenth century slaveholding Virginia and the bloody slave rebellion led by Nat Turner, but also a sustained attack on the institution of slavery and the barbaric treatment and inhuman devaluation of black people in the United States. I think that the book's moral and ethical themes can be interpreted not only as windows onto the past, but also as decidedly hortatory, in terms of their applicability to the present and future.⁵⁴

This above mentioned point shows that how historical fiction helps to reconstruct the historical reality. As we know that the lived experience of racial discrimination in

⁵³ As quoted in Ibid, p. 13

⁵⁴ Pendery, David. "Lived Experience, Historical Consciousness and Narrative: A Combinatory Aesthetics" Ethic, p. 52.

United States of America also has to be understood through the historical consciousness. To understand this Pendery has given many exemplars writings such as Doris Lessing's *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (1988), Cronon William's "A Place for Stories: Nature, history and narrative" (2001), Douglass Frederick's *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1987) and Ball Charles's *Slavery in the United States: a narrative of the life and adventures of Charles Ball, a black man*. Throughout his article he has tried to show that how these writings are the example to understand lived experience through narrative and historical consciousness.

In order to make sense of lived experience from historical point of view Dilthey gives the example of various literary figures/ philosophers. He extensively writes on Goethe, Shakespeare, Rousseau, Holderlin, Schiller and others. All these poetic philosophers express their life experiences as their lived experience and give meaning to it. When a poet expresses his/her lived experience he/she does not just express as it is but by using the power of "imagination" look this world differently. And because of this imagination poet looks the reality philosophically rather than merely as factual. The main point here is also that the poet expresses his/her life as a totality—"lived experience designates a part of the course of life in its total reality—a concrete part which from a teleological point of view possesses a unity in itself. Because the concept of the present does not ascribe any dimensions to it, the concrete consciousness of the present must include the past and the future. Therefore, the lived experience is not merely something present, but already contains past and future within its consciousness of the present".⁵⁵ In this above argument given by Dilthey shows that there is co-relation between time (past, present and future). But mostly in the context of lived experience, past and present are very much important to understand.

There was a world of enlightenment, where domination of abstract thought was prevalent. But the historical mission of Goethe introduced a new era of poetry. And this era brings a methodological changes in social sciences be it religion, art, literature, history, sociology, psychology, economics, philosophy and so on. In fact, the whole romantics'

⁵⁵ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Poetry and Experience*, p. 225.

movement in German's intellectual literature history and their engagement with the history/past is enormous to understand the world and ongoing debates. One can also see the hermeneutics as a methodology of interpretation in philosophy or in the language of Dilthey human studies always has to give more importance to the past. That is the reason he uses the term expression, lived experience, understanding and so on. The concept expression needs to be elaborated. He used those as a methodological tool in hermeneutics. As I have mentioned above that to understand anything you need to express it. And the concept expression and lived experience are very close to hermeneutics⁵⁶ and Dilthey's framework for social sciences. Dilthey simultaneously understood life from two perspectives such as outsider perspective and insider perspective. The outsider perspective has been the dominant perspective on history in enlightenment movement. He located the familiar outsider perspective of reflective thought, which looks back on history or anticipates its future course, establishing its past structure and meaning and protecting plans for the future. The insider perspective is that of lived experience. Approach from this perspective, history appears as synchronic structure of which the living person represents the center. This perspective is the foundation for Dilthey to understand human sciences, which articulate the lived experience of a subject who finds himself in the midst of life and history and who is unable to emancipate himself from the historical conditions in order to direct sovereignly the course of history.⁵⁷

Since Dilthey's approach is philosophy of life, he is very much concerned about the everyday experience rather than abstract speculations. This may be the reason he is concerned about the human experiences in the real world. The human experiences are very unique experiences because those experiences are sometime "intentional"⁵⁸ and "purposive". Their uniqueness is they can reflect and understand their experiences by

⁵⁶ See for details what is hermeneutics in Dilthey's *Poetry and Experience*, p. 16, in brief he says hermeneutics is the study of human experience and objectifications to determine the meanings embodied in them.

⁵⁷ Bulhof, Ilse N. *Wilhelm Dilthey: A Hermeneutic Approach to the Study of History and Culture*, p.4.

⁵⁸ When Dilthey explains human experiences are unique experiences; because they themselves can rethink over their experience and do things intentionally. In this way, they are reflective being, thinking being, social and historical beings. Here Dilthey was bit of influenced by Husserl who was the contemporary of him.

themselves. Lived experience as a unique experience in the human world is bound to be looked back and understand what is it and how does it help to understand the world in everyday life.

As we all know that human beings are finite being they always learn, unlearn and relearn in the world. Lived experience is itself past and history that is why “lived” experience and not “live” or “living” experience. Lived means already have gone through. Although Dilthey some synonymous terms such life experience, living experience, everyday experience and so on. Why was he interested in both historical schools and literary intellectual movements in German particularly and general in the world? Why he was so concerned about lived experience? The only answer would be that in order to understand the human world you must understand lived experience and history. According to him, history is the source of knowledge, without it we cannot understand the present reality and problems. In this context, the argument given by Gopal Guru’s is invalid which proposes to understand Dalit experience one need not go to past because according to him, “For Dalit History Is Not Past but Present”.⁵⁹ Throughout his writings the way Dilthey was engaged with the concept of lived experience, is philosophically loaded and inevitable to discuss if we are concerned about social world/human world. That is why the concept has a significant role to play in the Dilthey’s philosophy of social sciences, philosophy of history and philosophy of life.

IV. Significance of Lived Experience in Dilthey

Dilthey’s philosophy cannot be understood without bringing his debates of lived experience in human studies/social sciences. The significance of this concept in his

⁵⁹Guru, Gopal. “For Dalit History Is Not Past but Present” in *Words Matter: Writings against Silence* (edited and introduced by K. Satchidanandan), pp. 140-151.

philosophy is that—it is a unique experience of human beings. If we understand the human world differently and which is, we have to recognize that what is something would be projected or put forward which will prove that uniqueness. Lived experience as a human experience in everyday life can be an example to understand it. He differentiated that it is the experience which does not merely subjective one but also it has some objective reality; because it has linked with your history. So it has both internal and external aspects.⁶⁰ That is why he also maintains the balance between “empiricism” and “rationalism” as Kant did that. But they differ in their approach and understanding. And one of the examples is that Dilthey wrote the *Critique of Historical Reason* as a critique of the epistemological position of Kant’s the *Critique of Pure Reason*.⁶¹ Dilthey criticizes Kant because his project of epistemology and scientific knowledge based on reason which is “a priori” and “universal” but “ahistorical”. For Dilthey no “reason” is universal but “relative” or it is conditioned in a socio-political-historic contexts. Here the significance of Dilthey in philosophy is equally considerable as Descartes and Kant in philosophy, because he gives an alternative epistemology for human sciences or social sciences. Descartes tries to make philosophy a body of knowledge by adopting geometry as the model of knowledge. Kant also explicates the nature, conditions and the limits of human knowledge through his *Critique of Pure Reason*. However Dilthey also equally attempted to establish a philosophical perspective within which we can find the nature, conditions and justification of human knowledge particularly in the human sciences.⁶²

The concept “experience” has been discussed and analyzed in the history of philosophy. This concept is understood in the context of epistemology, ethics and ontology (it has been discussed in second and third chapter). In modern philosophy it was considered that experience means sense experience of the human subject. But if we see in the larger conception of experience as lived experience in philosophy, which includes whole social sciences or human sciences. In other words, bringing lived experience in the

⁶⁰ Rizzacasa, Aurelio. “On a Phenomenological Analysis of the Erlebnis of Time” in *Life: the Outburst of Life in the Human Sphere Scientific Philosophy/ Phenomenology of Life and the Sciences of Life*, p. 410.

⁶¹ See for details Wilhelm Dilthey’s *Selected Writings* edited by H P Rickman, pp. 17-23

⁶² "Wilhelm Dilthey." *New World Encyclopedia*. 18 Aug 2013, 20:52 UTC. 8 Jun 2017, 05:43 <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/p/index.php?title=Wilhelm_Dilthey&oldid=972782>.

discourse broaden the debates of experience from merely scientific perspective to the world of philosophy. Thus this concept is so significant in philosophy to understand the human world. For example John Dewey's naturalist approach and his naturalistic metaphysics of experience present the notion of lived-experience as the main subject of philosophy.⁶³ Dilthey also says the main concern of human sciences is much closed to the debates of lived experience. Same thing we can see in the philosophy of Schutz, Heidegger, Simone de Beauvoir and many others.

It is clear that lived experience as a philosophical concept has been discussed and analyzed by most of the prominent philosophers in the West as it is mentioned above. The significance of lived experience is so important that after Dilthey all the phenomenologists from Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl to Maurice Merleau-Ponty discussed it in their philosophy. Heidegger acknowledges the work of Dilthey throughout his work particularly in his main philosophical work *Being and Time*. It has extensively worked by Merleau-Ponty in his book *Phenomenology of Perception*. His work has also been acknowledged by all the hermeneutics from Gadamer to Paul Ricoeur. Gadamer in his book *Truth and Method* has discussed Dilthey's work in the writings. And the significance of his work is not only merely to study philosophy, or history but almost in every social sciences disciplines, including sociology, religion, theology, art, political sciences, sciences, psychology, poetry and literatures and so on.

Hence, Dilthey has to be studied in across the disciplines in social sciences because his academic contributions are there. He tries to develop a common framework and methodology for human sciences or social sciences. The framework that how human studies are unique which is why different from natural sciences such as physics, chemistry and so on. To understand this he develops an approach called "hermeneutics". To develop this he investigated history, religion, art, literatures, poetry, psychology and whole contemporary debates including the German enlightenment movement from Kant to Neo

⁶³ Aysun, Ayd N, "Lived Experience: Dewey's Naturalistic Conception: a philosophical research on the notion of experience", Lambert academic publication, 2015.

Kantian and idealism of Hegel to neo Hegelians, phenomenology to modern existentialism and the romantic intellectual history of literature.

Today the academics particularly humanities and social sciences are so interdisciplinary where it is very difficult to understand any social reality without focusing upon different point of views. These days' poetry and literary movement within social sciences are also so prevalent. But Dilthey has not been discussed enough in the academia. He is also very significant to study to understand the contemporary problems of social sciences. In fact he is very helpful to understand social sciences, methodology and so on.

He is very significance within philosophy particularly to understand— philosophy of social sciences, philosophy of history, philosophy of life and philosophy of literatures and so on. In order to understand the larger debate of history and epistemology be it Hegel, Kant or both empiricists and rationalist debates one has to read Dilthey.

CHAPTER TWO

Lived Experience and the Idea of Social in Alfred Schutz

I. The Significance of Social in Schutz's Phenomenology

After discussing Dilthey, it is clear that lived experience is a human experience rooted in everyday life and also connected with the past/history. In Dilthey's writings we can also see implicitly that lived experience is not merely an experience of an "individual" but "social". Thus he not only stresses but affirms that men are historical and social beings rooted in the collective identities of their time and place.⁶⁴ As Dilthey stresses that human world is different from natural world and cannot be understood from the framework of "cause" and "effect" rather it can be understood in terms of interpretation and understanding, which he derives from Schleiermacher, Max Weber, Goethe and others. This method is called "*Hermeneutics*". In this context, H L Van Breda writes:

In German academic circles this was the period of methodological controversy concerning the *Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften*⁶⁵. Dilthey, whose influence on German philosophy and sociology was profound, had shown that the knowledge of the human world and of historical cultures presupposes an understanding of certain significations immanent in life and that

⁶⁴Jacques, Konberg. "Wilhelm Dilthey on the Self and History: Some Theoretical Roots of Geistesgeschichte", p. 315.

⁶⁵*Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften* are used in German by Dilthey in the context of natural sciences and human sciences or social sciences respectively.

the apprehensions of such significations differs radically from the causal explanations practiced in the physical sciences.⁶⁶

Further Dilthey says—“I in the Thou⁶⁷” can be related to “social” and “collective” or how this concept is not merely having personal connotation but social or collective. When Dilthey uses the category “part” and “whole” he understood lived experience as collective or social. In other words, an individual as a part connected with the whole and the whole is nothing but collective and the “structure”.⁶⁸ Dilthey’s philosophy of life emphasizes that our self-understanding is always more than “personal”, because most of what we express and use the communal signs of the language. We grow up with and more generally all the discursive practices of objective spirit.⁶⁹ Therefore, the society where we live which has some norms, values, practices, beliefs, rules and so on. These norms are collective/social but it manifests in the individual behaviors and actions.

Now the question of how this lived experience is a social or collective experience, and not merely an individual experience need to be investigated in this chapter. Although this question was discussed in Dilthey he did not discuss it extensively or exclusively. This question can be understood and explored in Alfred Schutz; because he has discussed both the concept of “lived experience” and “social” in his philosophical project. Taking some clue from Dilthey let us discuss this problem and the significance of it in Schutz.

The social world is the world of human beings. It is the world of “mind” or “consciousness” which is rooted in “understanding”. It is also the world of “human experience”. And this has been accepted by various philosophers, sociologists, political theorists, psychologists, and historians. That is why lived experience can be said as social experience. Schutz has theorized the concept of social in his book *Phenomenology of Social World* and throughout his other writings. Why did he give importance to the concept

⁶⁶ Schutz, Alfred. *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*, edited and introduced by Maurice Natanson, p. xxvii.

⁶⁷ Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 191.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 51.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 13.

of social reality and what makes him study the idea of social reality could be a problem which further requires an enquiry.

That was the time (when Schutz was developing his thought) when social world was understood very differently in the methodological level. To understand social world one has to look at what is the nature of social world and how is it different from natural world. That was the context these questions were responded by social philosophers like Max Weber, Durkheim and Comte etc. Within those crucial times Schutz is one of the philosophers who studied social world very seriously. In order to make sense of social world he has discussed the theory and concepts given by Husserl, Weber and his other contemporaries.

Husserl has discussed the concept of “life world”, “consciousness”, “experience”, “inter-subjectivity”, “lived experience” and so on. Weber has contributed the concepts such as—“Social Action”, “Understanding”, “Subjective Meaning”, “Interpretation”, “Motive”, “Behavior” and “Rationality”. These entire concepts have philosophically played a significant role to understand the social reality. That is the reason Schutz studied both Edmund Husserl and Max Weber very critically because these are the philosophers who have analyzed social world very closely and methodologically.

Now the debate of “social” and “natural” world is an ongoing debate across all disciplines particularly in social sciences and its methodology. To make better the human world first one has to understand human world or social world better. And only then it will be better understood when we study lived experience as human experience, and “social ontology” in a rigorous manner in social sciences. Thus many philosophers have made efforts to make sense of the social world. The more you will understand the social world the more you will make it constructive.

The basic questions that can be raised in the context of social sciences and its methodologies are as follow. What is social? How is it different form nature? What is the dynamics and uniqueness of social world? Through which framework or methodology we will understand this world better? All these questions have been responded and

philosophized by Alfred Schutz and of course many of his contemporaries including Max Weber, Wilhelm Dilthey and Husserl. He has developed a different framework where he brings the philosophical debates of consciousness, experience, intentionality, action, behavior, inter-subjectivity, understanding, life world through phenomenology to sociology. That is the reason it is quite difficult to understand him without discussing or making sense of Husserl and Weber. This is what his great contribution in the social sciences, philosophy and sociology has been.

The significance and the contributions of Schutz in social sciences cannot be avoided both in terms of methodology and epistemology. Thus he has contributed a lot about the ontology of social. In order to understand lived experience as social or collective experience let us discuss about the ontology of social.

II. Ontology of the Social as Lived Experience

Before going to discuss how lived experience is social or collective, it is very important to discuss the ontology of social. What is social? What is the uniqueness of social? What is the ontology of lived experience? According to sociologist Durkheim, the concept of “social” can be understood in terms of his analysis of “social fact”. For him social fact is a collective practice and which is external to any given individual. Here one can say lived experience is also a social fact which lies in collective or social.⁷⁰ Therefore, the relationship between different human beings or individual becomes central analysis when we try to understand the concept of “social”. In a society more than one people live and they have a complex relationship among themselves in terms of religion, practices, marriage, politics, culture, economics and so on. That is why, society has to be understood in terms of collective rather than individual. But at the same time we cannot say that there

⁷⁰ Durkheim, Emile. *The Rules of Sociological Method*, p. 4.

is no individuality or the role of individual in society. Therefore many sociologists say that the society is structured by individuals where more than one individual come together and structure the social relationship. This can be seen in Weber's analysis of social action which takes place when more than one person interact and act intentionally. This can also be seen in Durkheim's sociology. Schutz tries to understand social realities by analyzing the social phenomenon which is found in the human behavior and everyday life, as he tries to understand social realities in the context of common sense or common behavioral life of human beings in the society where individuals act, behave and live. The individuals, who live in the society, act, behave and give meaning to those actions and behaviors which are in phenomenological language actions are intentional and so actions are directed towards other human beings or fellow being or object in the world. The social world is constituted by a multiplicity of actors, each of whom defines that world is related but in individuated ways. Understanding the world means understanding the way in which it defines their situations. Here lived experience defines human situations and that situation only can be understood when one understands its historicity. In other words, my situation is historical, it is the sedimentation of all my experiences and is brought to bear at every moment of my life⁷¹ because which helps us to understand one's situation and lived experience. In this context let us see what Maurice says:

The primary grounding of our being in the world is in subjectivity space and time. Once again, as with the biographical situation and at the stock of knowledge at hand, the definition of individual's world arises out of his uniquely sediment and structured subjectivity. But, as Dr. Schutz would say, this is only half of the story. Although the individual defines his world from his own perspective, he is nevertheless a social being, rooted in an intersubjective reality. The world of daily life into which we are born is from the outset an intersubjective world. The philosophical problem of intersubjectivity is the clue to social reality.⁷²

⁷¹ Richard, M. Zaner. "Theory of Intersubjectivity: Alfred Schutz", p. 74.

⁷² Schutz, *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*, edited and introduced by Maurice Natanson, p. xxx.

Lived experience is there in the society and it can be found in a community or in an individual who belongs to a particular community/caste/class/gender, rather than a person completely isolated from community or society. For example, the lived experience of caste and untouchability is a collective experience. In other words, the experience of caste discrimination/humiliation is not merely individual but collective. That is why the ontology of lived experience lies in the collective or collective memory. But is it a collective, which represents society as a whole? Definitely it is not. It is a collective which represents a particular community in a society.

When we talk about lived experience we see many things related to it. One of the philosophical problems in social sciences is—whether it is an experience of an individual person or is it a collective or social experience? Ultimately, lived experience seems to be collective, for example the experience of “*Race*” in United States of America and “*Caste*” in India. The “*Negros*” as a community or collective faces racial discrimination. Dalits are discriminated not because of their personal fault but because they belong to a particular community or identity or caste. These are not an individual experience but collective. And this question has not been discussed in the philosophy adequately. Although, there are debates which can be found in phenomenological tradition implicitly but still it has not been given that much attention. This social dimension of lived experience somehow has been focused by Schutz throughout his works directly and indirectly. Thus Schutz’s phenomenology cannot be constructed as methodological individualism but always as a collective. This problem requires a further research. Now let us discuss what is social? This social can be understood in terms of Weber’s definitions as:

a social relationship as the conduct of several persons who, according to a given context of meaning, direct themselves towards and orient themselves upon each other; it exists completely and exclusively in the chance that social action takes place in a predictable meaningful fashion.⁷³

Here the concept of social is something not only about the individual but it’s also about the relation of an individual with different individuals. As Schutz, Weber and all

⁷³ Schutz, *On Phenomenology and Social Relations*, p. 9.

phenomenologists would say, actions are “intentional”. This intended action or conduct becomes social if it is directed towards the conducts of others. Since social world is not like natural world, which is given to us, sometimes the social realities are constructed. Lived experience as a social phenomenon or reality must have been constructed. In human world the humans are divided on the basis of their identity, and community. For the benefit and personal interest some community develops some norms and practices which excludes and discriminates other community. Further that exclusion and discrimination become lived for certain community because they have been facing those historically. As far as the constitution of lived experience is concerned there are two types of arguments which could be found in philosophy. First, some philosophers argue that it is a constructed phenomenon in the society. Second, others argue that it is given and not a constructed phenomenon. Thus, there are two contrary narrations to understand the constitution of lived-experience. Schutz, Beauvoir, and Dilthey would say lived experience is a constructed reality whereas the phenomenologists such as Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre would say it is given to us because it’s already there in the society. Therefore the debate of social ontology becomes very important to understand lived experience. The lived experience of caste, race, and gender⁷⁴ are constructed realities. That is why Schutz sees Weber’s theory of action as a bridge which would allow him to pass from the realm of phenomenology to that of sociology.⁷⁵

Now it is very difficult to analyze Schutz’s arguments of lived experience in the context of social ontology. If we see the analysis given by Schutz it does not adequately provide an understanding of how lived experience is social explicitly, although he has defined how social realities can be understood but we can see the implicit explanation over this subject matter indirectly. For example he has talked about inter-subjectivity, social action, behavior and how social reality is constructed. There we can see the ontological argument of lived experience. But he has understood it in terms of the constitution of lived experience. In other words, how lived experience constitutes in the society? There are two

⁷⁴ We can see in Simone De Beauvoir’s *Second Sex* where she has showed that how gender is not a natural but social. And this is the case with in the context of race and caste.

⁷⁵ Schutz, *On Phenomenology and Social Relations*, p. 8.

aspects of constitution of lived experience. Firstly, the constitution of lived experience, in the “pure duration” and secondly the being of the constituted objectification of the “spatio-temporal” world.⁷⁶ The former shows that there is a lived experience which changes over the period of time and has some connection with previous lived experience too. In this way there are lived experiences which we are experienced in different time and those experiences may not be same at all the time as “a priori reality” but it brings some modification as time changes. Take for instances, the experience of caste in India. The overall experience and discrimination of caste is there in the society. But if we analyze it analytically we see the nature and operation of caste has been changing. Therefore the nature of social is which is dynamic and complex. Thus it can be seen as “unique” because it may not be the case with natural world. This has been discussed by Schutz by putting forward the arguments of Husserl and Weber on this matter in the context of intentionality. Let see how lived experience is something intentional:

First of all, every action is a spontaneous activity oriented towards the future. This orientation toward the future is by no means peculiar to behavior. It is, on the contrary, a property of all primary constituting processes, whether these arise from spontaneous activity or not. Each such process contains within itself intentionalities of lived experience that are directed toward the future. It is to Husserl that we owe the clarification of this point.⁷⁷

That is why it is not only confined to the present experience but it is also connected with future and past. The whole analysis of Weber and Husserl followed by Schutz are based on this. The social aspect of lived experience can be seen in Schutz from different angles. He analyses Weber’s theory of social action and behavior, in his project which is one of the angles where he sees social. And if you go to the deeper/subtle levels of lived experience I think we can see there is a social connotation to it. However, the lived experience as a social ontology has the potential to define social sciences as unique and distinguishes from the natural sciences and we can even see some relation between them.

⁷⁶ Schutz, *the Phenomenology of Social World*, p. 86.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 57.

When the debates of lived experience started in social sciences we see how the philosophers, sociologists, political theorists and psychologist and historians looked at the social world differently. These are Schutz, Dilthey, Weber, Marx, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Simone-de Beauvoir, Frantz fanon, Gramsci, Ambedkar, John Dewey and many others. Before them we do not see this kind of explanation, interpretation or discourse in social sciences. Prior to these philosophers, the discourse was confined within the debates of natural sciences. Hence, the philosophers could not see social sciences independently.

Failure to distinguish the social from the physical and biological universes, has led to a spurious reductionism of the nineteenth century physical and biological determinism. Distinction is, of course, not to be construed as separation. While the physical and the biological are involved in the social, the social involves something more than merely physical and biological factors; i.e., an ethos consisting of shared values, ends, and feelings.⁷⁸

The social sciences were reduced to natural sciences which were epistemologically and ontologically incorrect. According to Schutz, the concept “social” is something which has to be related to three basic components. These are past (history), present (contemporaries) and future (successor). Therefore, according to Schutz, the social realities are to be understood at different levels. However, the domain of “direct experience” or the realm of direct experience is only one among many social realms. Since human being is a finite being who might not be able to know the whole world which he/she has not experienced yet. So it is just one fragment of the social realities. Here human beings try to understand the social realities by direct experience which we are experiencing in the everyday life. There is a social reality which is not known to his/her directly through experience but this is known to his/her contemporaries. That is why this realm of social is called as the social world of “contemporaries”. Here the contemporaries are the “other” fellow human beings. Now there is an apprehension that if we are living around our fellow beings, we can directly experience them including their subjective experience but that is

⁷⁸ Gittler, Joseph, B. “Social Ontology and the Criteria for Definition in Sociology”, p. 361.

not the case we can know the subjective meaning of our fellow being rather only we can know it by “inference”.⁷⁹

In addition to above mentioned two social realities, we can also be cognizant of a social world which is connected with our past or history. This world can be said as the social world of “predecessor”. In this world one can only be an observer and not an actor. And there is yet another social world that is the social world of “successor” or future, this world which one can only vaguely grasp but never directly experience.⁸⁰ This multiple dimensions of social only can be grasped by the concept “social ontology”. When we say about the ontology of “social” we have to say that there is a world which is unique and dynamic having some basic characteristics or attributes which may not be understood by the categories of natural sciences. Social ontology cannot be understood if we see social world as the part of natural. But it is only understood when we look at social world and realities independently. In this context let us discuss what Joseph B. Gittler has to light upon:

If man as a social being involves the symbolic, the teleological, the covert, the motivational, and the affective, and if sociological concepts refer to social human being, it would follow that these concepts need to be defined in terms of the teleological, the covert, and the affective. Setting up definitions in terms of the nature of the social is what we mean by social ontology.⁸¹

Now we see here that social ontology is the theory which defines the nature of social reality. In the above mentioned argument given by Gittler; social realities have separate concepts and theories which can define social realities. In this context, we can also see that lived experience as a social reality and concept can help us to define social reality. In other words, it can help us in understanding the nature of social world and also the nature of social sciences.

⁷⁹ Schutz, *the Phenomenology of Social World*, p. 142.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 143.

⁸¹Gittler, Joseph, B. “Social Ontology and the Criteria for Definition in Sociology”, p. 358.

We have seen that the social realities in different levels. Lived experience also has different components which defines the nature of social sciences. It is connected with the past or history, present and we can easily connect with our future. It can be drawn from the above discussion that social is a concept that is not confined merely to present but it encompasses your predecessor, successor, contemporaries and your present life as well. Thus, we can also say that the concept of lived experience also can be understood in the broader context; that must have connection with the contemporaries, predecessor, successor and present life. In this sense there is a synonym between ontology of social and ontology of lived experience. Because in both context we can understand the nature of social reality and can define social sciences. However, to understand lived experience as social in Schutz let us now discuss inter-subjectivity which he has discussed throughout his writings.

III. Social and Inter-subjectivity

The problem of inter-subjectivity is discussed in the various philosophical schools such as philosophy of mind, philosophy of language and phenomenology. In phenomenology Husserl is the philosopher who talks about inter-subjectivity. For him the problem of inter-subjectivity is a transcendental one. He states it is a “transcendental inter-subjectivity”. In this context he tries to understand the relation between subject of experience and object of experience. This problem of inter-subjectivity and Husserl’s discussion on this may be analyzed into two connected problems: (1) how can we know that others exist? (2) How can we know about others? In terms of transcendental phenomenology this problem can be stated as follow:

- (1) How is it that the transcendental ego can constitute other (independent, “external”)?

- (2) How can this constitution be done “correctly” by the transcendental ego, which is necessarily locked into itself?⁸²

This question arises because Husserl thought that the transcendental ego constitutes one reality in itself. Therefore one may not be able to reach to other ego but be locked in his/her ego. Husserl would also say that others are not actually in me but consciously can be intended in me. However, Husserl offers two fairly separate but related answers to these two questions:

One answer is that the world as I experience it, my own world, contains undeniable (i.e., inherent, essential) evidence of your existence. Whatever in the world I experience, I experience (implicitly) as having two aspects, that which is mine alone (my “primordial ownness” in Husserl's terminology), and that which is not properly mine alone but as it refers to others—that which “transcendental constitution gives me as other”.⁸³

Now Schutz disagreed with Husserl's answer. And for him this is not a transcendental problem, but intersubjectivity must be dealt with as a problem of “life world” of the natural attitude.⁸⁴ That is why the analysis of “life world” is something very much close to Schutz's phenomenology of social world. That is the reason Schutz engaged with Husserl's phenomenology and tried to understand many sociological human realities including “action”, “intention”, “inter-subjectivity”, “consciousness”, “experience”, “lived experience”, “behavior”, and “interaction”. Schutz took very seriously about the problem of intersubjectivity because the social world is the world which constituted by interlocking activities of actors multiplicity of individuals living and acting within it. In fact, we are all actors on the social world, practically engage in a variety of intersubjective relations. For Schutz the problem of intersubjectivity lies at the root of all the social sciences and at the

⁸² Carrington, Peter J. “Schutz on Transcendental Intersubjectivity in Husserl”, p. 96. One can also see the work of Schutz which were edited and introduced by Maurice titled collected papers I: the problem of social reality. Here Schutz has discussed about the problem of intersubjectivity, which lies in the typifications of common sense world rather in the formal or transcendental ego world.

⁸³ Husserl, 1973, Para. 44, p. 93, as quoted in Ibid, p.96.

⁸⁴ Schutz, 1966a, p. 82. As quoted in Ibid, p.95.

heart of human existence. That is the reason the existence of other is taken for granted by Schutz.⁸⁵

The social world has different components such as linguistic forms and cultural orientations. Thus, intersubjectivity is possible through “communication”. It may be in terms of spoken word, expressive gesture, or non-cognitive communicative scheme such as music. It is known that in a society many different communities and people live. Schutz discussed about the relation between communities and persons. It is a social reality that there is relation between one individual with another, and one community with another community. That is why it is very difficult to understand society “homogeneously” and there is a context to talk about this (relation between individuals and communities) in intersubjectivity. In order to understand this social reality Schutz makes a point on how behavior, action, interaction, culture are to be understood very seriously. This is where we can make sense of inter-subjectivity. For example, Schutz would say that the social interaction involves the social action of at least more than two people who orient themselves upon each other. Living in the world of everyday life in general means living in an interactional involvement with many persons, being entangled in complex networks of social relationships.

The basic argument in the context of inter-subjectivity and lived experience is—you cannot know the “other” lived experiences as you can know your lived experience.⁸⁶ The human beings can always understand the social realities by/from his/her lived experience point of view. That is the reason human beings have to bring up his/her some “subjectivity” in understanding the social world and so human world. Human beings are “finite” beings who can understand the world from the experience and reasoning. Alfred Schutz has given equal importance to these two aspects in his philosophy. Therefore, according to him, the meaningful lived experience possible only in the constitutor’s own stream of consciousness. He has also explored both the subjective and objective

⁸⁵ Richard, M. Zaner. “Theory of Intersubjectivity: Alfred Schutz”, pp. 71-72.

⁸⁶ Schutz, *the Phenomenology of Social World*, pp. 101-105. Here Schutz tries to analyze the lived experience in the context of inter-subjectivity. In other words, how we will come to know about the lived experience of other.

dimensions of lived experience. This we can see when Schutz analyses about intersubjectivity in his book *Phenomenology of Social World* to understand the theory of lived experience as social reality. He/she cannot think of anything clearly without having some experience. When we debate about the lived experience in other; we assume that sometimes it might not be possible to comprehend/explicate other's lived experiences, by those who do not have that experience. In other words, we cannot explicate other's lived experience as one can do in the case of his/her. This debate is relevant only when we consider lived experience as social and collective experience.

It is also very important when we think that lived experience is not a natural or scientific experience based on sense data or sense perception which is naturally given to us but it is socially constructed as social realities. When we accept that it is socially constructed, then it becomes important for us to understand it in the context of social or collective context rather than in a very narrow individual, parochial sense. Thus we see in sociology, philosophy and political theory, various debates or arguments related to how caste, race and gender are social and collective concern. For example, the debates of intended meaning in subjectivity, the debates of subjectivity and objectivity in social sciences, how gender is social category⁸⁷ and so on.

It can also be said that lived experience is based on consciousness or intentional.⁸⁸ Then only we can comprehend it in the context of social world. When we see lived experience and consciousness are closely related, then, question arises, this consciousness is individual consciousness or this is a consciousness related with my society. When we say phenomenologically that human beings are intentional beings then do we think only about I or we or us and not at all about other, (they, you)? In short, can human mind be possible without the other?

⁸⁷ See for details in *Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir, where she has discussed how gender/women are a social constructed category.

⁸⁸ See Ambedkar's *Annihilation of Caste* where he has made a point that caste is not a "physical" but it's a "notion of mind". When you say caste is a notion of mind it's directly related to your mind, consciousness and intentionality. That is why, when we talk about caste is mind, and consciousness we also have to see all these attributes of caste in the context of society rather just merely in the context of individual.

The lived experience of women based on gender distinction or discrimination is possible because there is the other which is men. The lived experience of the untouchability (based on caste discrimination) exists because there is the world called “touchable”. The lived experience of “black” based on race exists because there is the world called “white”. All these are socially constructed and not natural. In order to make sense of this problem let us see what Fanon has said:

The white civilization and European culture have imposed an existential deviation on the black man. We shall demonstrate furthermore that what is called the black soul is a construction by white folk.⁸⁹

In the very introduction of his book, Fanon has raised this point that how “black” is a constructed social reality. One can argue that the whole book articulates this question. This has also been mentioned by Kwame Anthony Appiah in his foreword for the book that “in this book *Black Skin, White Masks*, published in 1952, Fanon has asserted that what is called the black soul is a construction by white folk”.⁹⁰ Since we say that it is socially constructed, it is a social reality. It is socially constructed, so we do not see it in some of the society or country as inherently possessed. That is why, there could be imagined about a society or nation where neither racial discrimination nor caste discrimination will exist inherently and exclusively. But we see it as a social reality in some limited countries/societies where caste exists inherently in India, Race exists inherently in U.S.A and in other Europeans countries. In order to understand lived experience as social let us discuss inter-subjectivity.

The inter-subjectivity of lived experience is very difficult to talk about. That is why we can see in Schutz’s analysis that it is very difficult to know the other’s lived experience unlike the way we know ours. But still we have to understand other’s lived experience by the help of our lived experience. It is possible to talk about the inter-subjectivity of lived experience. It is possible when different subjects having similar lived experience; where they can guess it, they can feel it, and they can study each other as a shared consciousness

⁸⁹ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. XVIII in introduction.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. VIII, in Foreword by Kwame Anthony Appiah for the book.

or experience. This happens also through various signs and symbols.⁹¹ When we talk of inter-subjectivity of lived experience in the context of different subjects having different lived experiences; we have to see those differently because they might have different connotations and meanings. That is why; Fanon talks about two dimensions of black man which are as follows:

One with his fellow blacks: the other with the whites. A black man behaves differently with a white man than he does with another black man.⁹²

Let me discuss certain realities to comprehend the above mentioned problem. In India, thousands of castes are there in existence. Among those castes have some inter-subjectivity but in “negative sense” and which is “inhuman”. The inter-subjectivity of lived experience can be seen in positive sense within the particular caste group not among different caste groups. Caste is based on “cynicism” or cynical beliefs (beliefs that people are generally selfish and dishonest). It always looks for itself and own benefits.

However, there is a larger chance to understand each other’s lived experience and also they can communicate easily within the caste. That is the reason we can talk inter-subjectivity in two levels: (1) “negative social” and (2) “positive social”. In Indian context, Dr. Ambedkar has said that caste is “anti-social”, because it creates hindrances for inter-subjectivity. In other words, it divides people and communities.⁹³ Here according to Dr. Ambedkar, caste does not have inter-subjectivity in terms of social intercourse. For example, among different castes don’t have inter-caste marriage; inter dining, interactions of different kinds in every day experience/life. Since caste and untouchability do not have inter-subjectivity he says—caste is “anti-social”. Let me pose some questions to understand Ambedkar’s argument better. Does caste have inter-subjectivity? Or does race have inter-subjectivity? Does gender have inter-subjectivity? If yes, then what kind of inter-subjectivity is that? There are two possibilities to understand it. One possible interpretation is that caste lacks inter subjectivity because it denies interaction, inter

⁹¹ See for details in Schutz *Phenomenology of Social World*, in the chapter of inter-subjectivity.

⁹² Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 1.

⁹³ Dr. Ambedkar. *Annihilation of Caste, Critical Quest, New Delhi, pp. 19-20.*

communication and social inter-course among different castes. That is why it is anti-social. Another possible interpretation is that caste is a “social fact”, which has some kind of relations between different castes. But this relation is not necessarily very “positive” (egalitarian or emancipatory or inclusive or democratic one); it can be “oppressive”, “exploitative”, “discriminatory” and so on. Therefore we can describe it as “negative social”. The relationship between Dalit and upper-castes, blacks and whites and men and women is like the relationship between the slave and master. In this context, Irigaray says:

....he fails to leave her a subjective life, and to be on occasion her place and her thing in an intersubjective dynamic, man remains within a master-slave dialectic.⁹⁴

Hence I would say caste is a social reality or social fact but it's a negative social reality which denies inter-subjectivity of “human-kind” and allows the inter-subjectivity of “different-kind”. And this can be understood in the context of race and gender too. The white world always denies the inter-subjectivity between black and white but there are contexts where some kind of inter-subjectivity to take place. In the context of gender also female and males have inter-subjectivity but some are negative social inter-subjectivity and some are positive social inter-subjectivity. Schutz raises an interesting question that, is there a “common world” for both me and other where we relationship⁹⁵ is possible. Schutz says it as “interlocking perspective” or “reciprocity perspective” in the context of lived experience.⁹⁶ As we saw that there is an opposite world exists in terms of females and males, blacks and whites, and lower castes and upper-castes. They have different kinds of relations which cannot be understood in terms of we/us relationships. That is why it is very difficult to understand within the intersubjectivity of one kind because there are different kinds of relationships which exist.

The lived experiences are collective concerns. It may be the lived experience of racial discrimination based on race, the lived experience of caste discrimination in terms of

⁹⁴ Luce Irigaray, *Ethics of Sexual Differences*, p. 10.

⁹⁵ Richard, M. Zaner. “Theory of Intersubjectivity: Alfred Schutz”, p. 72.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 88.

untouchability, the lived experience of women or gender and so on. These lived experiences are having some collective consciousness and historicity which is why one has to look at these as collective and social experience. But that does not mean there is not an individual role. It is there but in a marginal sense. For example, the experience which someone is going through, it may be the experience of untouchability, humiliation, or the experience of gender discrimination or the experience of racial discrimination which ultimately—she/he is going through. Nicholas Dirks in his book *Castes of Mind* has argued about the dichotomy between individual and social reality in the context of West and India. He gives the example of Nehru's conception about the individual and community.⁹⁷ In fact, India is group dominating society where individual rights and freedom is never recognized. This group dominating is there because of caste system which is not for community feeling in its normative sense or in universal sense but it is a parochial and self-confined group and community where feeling of hatred, anger, abhorrence and abomination are inherently existed.

In this context lived experience can be seen as social experience. Ambedkar raised a very interesting point or argument in his seminal book *Annihilation of Caste*. The argument is—in a caste based society the assertion of individual and the interest of an individual, the freedom of an individual, and the rights of an individual is never heard. So group standards, group interests, and group authority would be dominating over individual. Thus, in this kind of a society, if an individual tries to violate/break the rules of the group (that is caste or it could be race or gender), then the individual has to face oppression, exploitation, discrimination, humiliation and punishment. Why in a caste ridden society like India, the individual does not have much freedom? It is because caste is a group dominating practice, where less freedom of mobility or movement is found for individual. It is fixed and final and offers very little possibility to overcome from the group domination.⁹⁸ That is why according to Ambedkar, caste is not a “division of labor” but “division of laborers” where there is no place for merit or worth but it is decided from your

⁹⁷ Dirks, Nicholas. *Castes of Mind*, pp. 3-4.

⁹⁸ Dr. Ambedkar. *Annihilation of Caste, Critical Quest, New Delhi*, pp. 23-24.

birth in the community.⁹⁹ On the other hand, if we see in other contexts like class we see that there is a possibility of mobility. Even if one compares it with race where there is only the conflict between black and white. But in the caste context, it is so complex because there are thousands of castes in existence and based on the principle of “graded inequality” rather than simple one.¹⁰⁰ Following all these premises, one can draw the conclusion that caste or gender or race and other lived experiences are group dominating which is why it can be understood in a larger societal and collective context.

The collective aspect of lived experience is clearly visible in the writing of Frantz Fanon, Dilthey, Schutz and others. The psychologist like Freud would focus on individual account of lived experience but philosopher like Fanon says that it is a collective/social phenomenon. That is why he replaced the “*phylogenetic*” theory by an “*ontogenetic*” approach we shall see that the alienation of black man is not an individual question but because of the collective and social. This is what the social ontology in the context of lived experience is in Fanon. Fanon says that society unlike “*bio-chemicals*” processes does not escape human influence. The man is what brings society in to being.¹⁰¹ If there would have not been human beings we might have not been discussing social as independent world and which would be regulated by the human rules, principles, values, practices, institutions and so on. Therefore, human sciences are dynamics which is an ever changing world.¹⁰²

Thus in the writings of Fanon the lived experience has been explained in terms of social and collective. This social and collective can be understood in terms of inter-subjectivity of race as well. He analyzes the lived experience from the point of view of inter-subjectivity. For instance, in *Black Skin White Masks*, we find many of the experiences of black man in relation to white. These are lived experiences. The lived experience may be in terms of what experience a black woman had when she married or

⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 14-15.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 41.

¹⁰¹ Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. xv, in introduction of the book. Fanon uses the terms “phylogenetic” and “ontogenetic” to understand how the alienation of the black man is not an individual question. The term phylogenetic was used in the context of individual and the term ontogenetic for collective and social context.

¹⁰² Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 6.

loved a white man. Or it may be a *Malatto* woman lived experience while she married or loved a white man. This is also a case when a black man falls in love with a white woman. Here it is not just about the male and female relationship in the context of love, relationship, marriage but this carry very complex form. It is complex form in the sense it is not just about love, relationship and marriage but it works in the larger political, social and economic life of blacks and whites. Therefore, the lived experience of a person in a community has to be understood in the larger context. By larger context here I mean the relationship between black and white, male and female, so-called lower castes and upper castes in Indian context and so on. Let us see one of the expressed experiences of a black man to understand the intersubjectivity in race:

furious at this humiliating ostracism, the common mulatto and black man have only one thought on their mind as soon as they set foot in Europe: to gratify their appetite for white women. Most of them, including those of lighter skin who often go so far as denying both their country and their mother, marry less for love than the satisfaction of dominating a European woman, spiced with a certain taste for arrogant revenge. And so I wonder whether I'm any different from the rest and if I marry you, a European woman, I wonder whether I won't look as though I'm stating that not only do I despise women of my own race, but drawn by desire for white flesh that has been off limits to us blacks since the white rules the world, I am unconsciously endeavoring to take my revenge on the European female for everything her ancestors have inflicted on my people throughout the centuries.¹⁰³

That is the reason lived experience make sense in the context of inter-subjectivity and social. In order to understand how lived experience is social let us give a familiar example. In the context of both racial and casteist society we see sometimes “social ostracism” or “social boycott”. This social boycott occurs both in the context of individual and groups or communities. In India, the Dalits have to confront with this tragic social ostracism where the Dalit as community is boycotted by the caste Hindus or so-called upper castes. This social ostracism can be seen in everyday life, where the upper caste have

¹⁰³ As quoted in *Ibid*, p. 5, from R. Maran, Op. cit., p. 185

been committing atrocities over Dalits, they are burning the houses of Dalit, they are not allowing them in the public places, and so on. Interestingly in India women are also not allowed in certain public places like temple.¹⁰⁴ This can also be seen in the United States of America where black as a community has to face social boycott. This social boycott does not allow Dalits to enter in to their own land, the public places like temples, fetching water from the public tube well, ponds and so on. Therefore, if the experience of caste is lived experience, especially the experience of lower castes then one has to look at lived experience as social experience in terms of inter-subjectivity.

But some lived experience, which completely have to be understood by lived communities and persons, for example the experience of discrimination, oppression, humiliation, poverty and exploitation which only the “oppressed” can explicate/articulate/express adequately. This might not be possible for “oppressors” to understand. If at all it is possible only in “probable” sense and not in “actual”.

As we debated how consciousness is also determined by our social realities this takes us to think it beyond the individual. To understand this, let us give the example of language. According to Wittgenstein, language is a social/public/common phenomenon. Therefore, private language does not exist;¹⁰⁵ hence, the mind, which might be determined by certain social realities. I cannot think beyond my experience in society. That is why if we think that lived experience is intentional, which we see in the analysis of Weber, Husserl, Dilthey and Schutz then we have to understand it in the context of inter-subjectivity or beyond individual and in the realm of social or collective. This can be understood in the following ways: one thing is clear that the world where we live is given to us. When one says the world which is given to us, means when we are born in the world where we see certain norms, values, practices, institutions that are already there for us or given to us. But sometimes over the period of time some of us can reject it or accept it or

¹⁰⁴ See for details <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Women-are-not-allowed-in-these-places-of-worship-too/articleshow/53871816.cms> and (<http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/women-polluting-religious-spaces-how-the-idea-came-about/>), accessed on 25/06/2017.

¹⁰⁵ See for details in Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigation*, p. 137. In this book he argues for common/public language.

deprived of as well. There is always a possibility to negate the existing norms, values and practices. Some rights and practices which are given to certain section of people but they are deprived of those by some other section of people. For example, there are laws and legality which allows Dalits, women to access some public property like temple but they are not.

But there is a world already given to us. Our mind nurtures according to the environment where we live in. And that determines our thinking, psychology, practices and so on. For instance, if you are an Indian by birth and have been living here, your world view might get constructed differently than other, because your thinking has developed in a particular society. You might believe a particular god, goddesses, religion which are prevalent in that particular society. In that sense there is nothing called individual something independent from your society rather it is collective or social at least in the context of lived experience of race, gender and caste. However, lived experience is rooted in everyday life and in order to understand the social or social reality one has to look at it in the everyday context. Schutz's philosophy of lived experience cannot be understood if one is not locating in the context of everyday reality or experience.

IV. Everyday Life and Lived Experience

The lived experience is an everyday reality it is embedded in the everyday life. This has been discussed by Alfred Schutz in a different language. For example, he has discussed it in terms of Husserl's life world. Husserl talks about the natural attitude which means the object of experiences which is there in the world and which is given to us. In other words, the things we see in the everyday life around us as facts, the things we see in everyday life which we accept as it is without being critical about those things or event. Thus we are so accustomed to them in doing things and thinking about those mechanically without questionings. The natural attitude involved in the world is about beings, things and human.

This natural attitude falls around us that make our daily lives. In phenomenology, the term natural attitude has been termed by Husserl. In fact, the framework of phenomenology to sociology or sociology to phenomenology is to understand everyday reality in society. In other words, Schutz was a sociologist who was very much concerned about philosophy within the discourse of phenomenology to understand the social reality. Therefore Schutz's philosophical problem lies in the daily life. To understand the reality of "common sense life" is the basis to understand the work of Alfred Schutz.¹⁰⁶

Lived experience is everyday reality which we find in the everyday experience in the individuals and communities. For example, in India lived experience of humiliation in terms of caste is an everyday reality. Women also have to confront the discrimination and humiliation in the everyday life from the male hegemonic structure. Similar thing we can be said racial discrimination of African Americans in United States of America and in many African countries.

Therefore, the starting point of social science is to be found in ordinary social life where our fellow men/women are not only objects of experiences in everyday life but are also subjects of thought¹⁰⁷. The analysis of lived experience in social science is to articulate social sciences and understand it better. Therefore, we cannot exclude the debates of lived experience in the context of everyday life in the social sciences discourse.

The lived experience in everyday life can be seen in the articulation of Beauvoir. She has explained in *Second Sex* that how the so-called woman has to confront the lived experience as everyday reality in everyday life. This lived experience of women in the society is clearly visible in everyday life. For instance, Captain Recharad Carnac Temple has explained in his article the "Everyday life of the women as lived experience in India". And it prevails in the common sense of the masses in India. According to him, the lived experience in terms of customs, rituals and other practices are imposed upon women. That is how it is there in society. Due to this imposition, those practices become lived for some

¹⁰⁶ See for details in Schutz, Alfred. *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*, edited and introduces by Maurice Natanson, p. xxvii.

¹⁰⁷ Schutz, *the Phenomenology of Social World*, p. 141.

groups, communities, individuals, and so on. In this sense lived experience is not eternally given to us but is constructed, reconstructed in society. In other words, it is always being produced by the social and “political agencies” in society. For example, the lived experience of women and lower caste in India is a very complex one, where victimhood overlaps because of lived experience which they are going through. As a result, there is an intersection between them. In this context of everyday experience of women Captain Recharad Carnac Temple says:

It is evident, however, that the main cause of the evils that Captain Temple has pointed out, is the system of caste; and so long as this system prevails, there can be no satisfactory improvement in the life of Indian women.¹⁰⁸

Gopal Guru has also argued that due to the “segregation” and “exclusion” the so-called upper castes produce and reproduce an everyday experience of “humiliation” and “social death”.¹⁰⁹ This segregation is not only for lower castes but also those women who have to face. This is produced and reproduced in the everyday basis in society to maintain the hegemony of certain section. Any sort of lived experience in society, which is there, has reproduction capacity. This possibility of reproduction forces pushed us to look at the lived experience in everyday context. Judith Butler argues against the argument proposed that gender is merely constructed category. According to her, it has to be understood beyond the category of construction and reconstruction but there are regulatory or performatory forces which are responsible for the materialization of sex/female body/gender. However, humiliation and other forms of oppressions are also perpetuated because of these regulatory and performatory forces in society. These forces are active in the everyday experience. The category of sex from the start, normative, it is what Foucault has called a “regulatory ideal”.¹¹⁰ Thus the category of sex and gender has to understand in every day context. For example Butler says:

¹⁰⁸ Captain, Temple. “Everyday life of the women as lived experience in India”, p. 65.

¹⁰⁹ Guru, Gopal. *Words Matter: Writing Against Silence*, p. 143.

¹¹⁰ Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter*, p. 1.

Construction is neither a subject nor its act, but a process of reiteration by which both subject and acts come to appear at all.¹¹¹

Hence the lived experience of racial discrimination, gender discrimination and caste discrimination are lived for the lower castes or *Sudra* and *Ati-sudra* in India, the women and gender minorities and the blacks in the world. These communities are facing atrocities, violence, discrimination, humiliation, exploitation and oppression on a daily basis. That is why it has become lived in their everyday life. In fact, these days ethnic groups or Tribals are also facing oppression and exploitation by the other sections of the society and this exploitation, oppression have become lived in their everyday life. Since they bear this oppression of lived experience they know better than those who have not lived of these oppressions. These oppressions are socially produced so these are social realities rather than individual's concern. Therefore the epistemic characteristic of lived experience is that it makes us reflective and active about society.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 9.

CHAPTER THREE

Theorizing Lived Experience

I. Lived Experience in Phenomenology

Theorization of lived experience can be understood in two ways. First way is to engage with the concept of “lived experience” and also some related concepts like “embodiment”, “historicity”, “social” etc. The second way is to engage with the experiential dimension of one’s own existence in the world. In other words, through engagement with concepts and ideas one can understand the theorization of lived experience. When we engage with the experience in terms of racial discrimination, gender discrimination, caste discrimination and discrimination based on ethnicity, more complex issues arise that require serious engagement.

Theorizing lived experience in terms of engaging at the level of concepts and experience, has been explored by Wilhelm Dilthey and Alfred Schutz. In order to understand the theorization of lived experience Dilthey has engaged with the concept of “historicity” which I have discussed in the first chapter. To understand lived experience he also engaged with many other categories such as “life”, “human sciences” and “poetry”. He engaged with the experiential dimension engaging with poetry, autobiography and biography. Alfred Schutz also engaged with the concepts of “intersubjectivity”, “social ontology”, “action” and “life world”. He was also engaged with the experiential dimension when he talked about the intersubjectivity and how to make sense of other’s experience. Thus both Dilthey and Schutz’s engagement are not separable but distinguishable. As far as their ideas of lived experience are concerned they are very close to one another.

In phenomenology, one finds several discussions and theorization on lived experience. These discussions /theorizations are not directly on lived experience but we can find indirectly about it. For example, one finds it in the idea of “life world” and “transcendental reduction” in Husserl, and in the engagement with the “*Dasein*” in Heidegger. Sartre engages with the concepts of “body” and “black experience”, Simone de Beauvoir with the experience of women/gender, and Merleau-Ponty in terms of “lived body”, “embodiment”, and “perception”. Lived experience as a philosophical concept has been the issue of concern in the history of philosophy. Lived experience has been theorized by various philosophers including John Dewey, Gadamer and others who do not necessarily belong to phenomenological tradition.

As we see lived experience as a philosophical concept, it can be seen from different points of views. In other words, it has many dimensions, meaning and connotation within social sciences discourses. For example, within the phenomenological tradition different philosophers have looked at and theorized it from different angles. Some of them have looked at it in terms of “ethics”, some of them in terms of “ontology”, some of them in terms of “epistemology”; some of them have located it in the context of discrimination, exploitation, humiliation, oppression (politics) and so on. We can see that it has many dimensions that includes social, collective, historical, political, personal and others. Therefore, there are two ways where one can understand theorizing lived experience. Firstly, theorizing lived experience is a vast area that touches upon all these (above mentioned) dimensions. In other words, theorizing lived experience means to understand all its dimensions and implications in an interdisciplinary way. This way of theorizing lived experience is nothing but theorizing lived experience with the analysis of concepts. Second, to locate theorization of lived experience in the context of theorizing race, gender and caste which is nothing but theorization of lived experience in experiential level. This section shall focus on the former whereas the latter section will be dealt with in the second section.

Over-all, in phenomenology, lived human experience plays a very important role to understand philosophy of social sciences. They have discussed the very significant

problem which is posed in the social sciences, knowledge and particularly the role of lived experience to understand it. The basic problems phenomenologists dealt with as an exercise of theorizing lived experience are how lived experience is not merely present experience but it has to be understood differently. Kant, Hegel and others have used the term experience generally, but not in the way it is understood by the phenomenologists. To explicate that lived experience is not an experience in general (used traditionally in social sciences and philosophy); phenomenologists investigate different dimensions and characteristics of lived experience linking it with “temporality”, “historicity”, “embodiment” etc.

Lived experience is not an experience which was used in the philosophy of Kant and Hegel, or in empiricism. But lived experience as a distinct “category” has to be recognized and located in social sciences and philosophy. And this has been done from hermeneutic tradition to mostly by the phenomenologists. Lived experience is related with the everyday usages and where one can experience oneself. That is why it is “lived”. Earlier the concept “experience”, i.e., *Erfahrung* was applied to understand the reality about the human and natural world. But later on the philosophers coined the concept called “*Erlebnis*” which has been translated in English as “lived experience” which is about the basic ontological meaning of human world or social world¹¹²This articulation can be seen in the writings of hermeneutics and phenomenological philosophers. I have mentioned above that to explicate and articulate the lived experience, and how it is unique and different from experience in general, the phenomenologist and hermeneutics philosophers have discussed the various dimensions of lived experience.

Now let us discuss how phenomenologists have theorized it. Some phenomenologists have observed the tension between past and present. And lived experience is a concept which helps us to deal with this problem and understand the social world and the human. Heidegger analyzes lived experience in the context of ontology and

¹¹² Burch, Robert. “Phenomenology, Lived Experience: Taking a Measure of the Topic1”, p. 132.

epistemology. He would see that lived experience being an existential reality for the human, has to be related with his/her past/history.

Heidegger's description of the way in which human existence finds itself in a world of existential involvement and takes up its historical situation can be applied.¹¹³

That is why Heidegger takes history as an epistemic tool which helps us to know certain things in the present. As he clarifies that “*Dasein*” has the ability to “retain” and “await”. Thus we can make sense of “present” better and also think about our “future”. That is why he gives the philosophical interpretation of lived experience and how it can be related with our existential reality as well as with our past. In this context, he gives an interesting example—I recognize a certain utensil to be pen because of my past “use” of pens. Here one should note that it is not that there is a “past” which is there and that directly helps me to know a certain thing. But that past as an event or thing or fact which is in my memory and which I had used as an involvement with the world. That is why the simple existence of our past does not help our epistemic exercise in the world but we must would have been involved and used to with our past.

However, for Heidegger, *Dasein* is the “Being” which is unique and has the capacity to involve with the world. Human being involves with the world/things, therefore he distinguishes between “readiness-to hand” and “present at-hand”. The involvement of *Dasein* with the utensils or objects in the world as an activity is called readiness-to hand. And not involving with objects in the world but which is present to us is called present-at-hand. That is the reason human beings cannot be reduced to the world of object but human world is the world of “consciousness” with historicity. Another interesting example given by Heidegger is hammer:

¹¹³ Cooper, Ron L. “Heidegger and Whitehead on Lived-Time and Causality”, p. 300.

My original understanding of a hammer occurs in my activity of hammering, in a kind of un-self-conscious engulfment in a world that presupposes nails and boards and houses. If I alter my perspective to consider the hammer as simply an isolated object of a certain shape, size, and weight occurring in a particular coordinate of space/time, an individual substance displaying certain properties, the hammer is seen as present at-hand. Heidegger claims that it is the unfortunate habit of philosophers to speak of things as if they were simply masses of physical properties while neglecting the worldly matrix that is disclosed in our ready-to-hand involvements with those things. We are primarily involved in the world and only secondarily detached observers of the world.¹¹⁴

Here, the only concern is since Heidegger talks about the history as “lived time” and which is connected with our existential reality of present there is a context here to talk about lived experience indirectly. Lived experience is mostly about one’s own experience which is lived in the past. But one still might be experiencing that experience, so there is a link between past and present in terms of experience, and also we can say that there is a link between “lived experience” and “living experience”. Schutz would say it in a different caricature lived experience within the “flow of duration” and “reflection on experience” which is lived through.¹¹⁵ The way Heidegger dealt with the problem, Schutz also seems to be dealing with the problem in the same way.

Meaning does not lie in the experience. Rather, those experiences are meaningful which are grasped reflectively.... It is, then, incorrect to say that my lived experiences are meaningful merely in virtue of their being experienced or lived through.... The reflective glance singles out an elapsed lived experience and constitutes it as meaningful.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p. 300.

¹¹⁵ Burch, Robert. “Phenomenology, Lived Experience: Taking a Measure of the Topic1”, p. 134.

¹¹⁶ Schutz: 1967: (pp. 69-71), as quoted in Burch, Robert. “Phenomenology, Lived Experience: Taking a Measure of the Topic1”, p. 134.

Within the phenomenological tradition Sartre, one of the prominent philosophers has theorized the lived experience from a different point of view. There are two different ways to understand theorization of lived experience in Sartre's philosophical project. First, the analysis of black's experience is nothing but theorization of lived experience by Sartre.¹¹⁷ In other words, through the analysis of the philosophy of "négritude" and "black" as a lived experience and secondly, through the engagement of literature, poetry, arts, theatre Sartre has theorized and articulated the lived experience.¹¹⁸ Sartre has written about both black and the proletariats and also about their commonalities. He theorizes the racial oppression in depth. He said that there are two levels of oppression in the context of the black: one is "subjective oppression" (understood through poetry, arts and psychoanalysis) and second is "objective oppression" (in the level of economic and political).¹¹⁹ He criticizes the left or Marxism because Marxism somehow fails to analyze the subjective oppression and lastly they reduced everything into the realm of economic and political. That is the reason he says race overshadows class¹²⁰ and in the context of India, Ambedkar would say caste overshadows class or "a caste is an enclosed class"¹²¹. Sartre's analysis of subjective oppression of anti-racism is the expression which is coming in to articulation from the lived experience. That is why in this context of subjective oppression/expression can be said to be very close to lived experience.¹²² Sartre has discussed body very philosophically. For him to unite one's consciousness the body of an "other" is necessary. Body is not just about you, it has many dimensions such as body for itself, body for other and body in itself. Same way in the context of lived experience one has to talk about lived experience in the world.¹²³

¹¹⁷Jules-Rosette, Bennetta. "Jean-Paul Sartre and the philosophy of négritude: Race, self, and society", pp. 271-272. Also one can see the preface of *Wretched of the earth* which has written by Sartre. In this preface one can see Sartre has theorized the experience of blacks as lived experience of oppression and exploitation.

¹¹⁸ Lacapra, Dominick. "Sartre and the Question of Biography", p. 22.

¹¹⁹ Jules-Rosette, "Jean-Paul Sartre and the philosophy of négritude: Race, self, and society", p. 268.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 268.

¹²¹ Dr. Ambedkar, *Caste in India*, p.19.

¹²² Jules-Rosette, "Jean-Paul Sartre and the philosophy of négritude: Race, self, and society", p. 268.

¹²³ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 303.

Now, however, in the context of Merleau-Ponty one can see very different kind of engagement on theorization of lived experience. In his work *Phenomenology of Perception* one can see the theorization of lived experience in terms of his analysis of “lived body”, “embodiment”, and “perception”. For him body is the site which is the basis for everything. According to Merleau-Ponty, body is both “being-in-itself” and “being-for-itself”. Therefore, the body and the world are inseparable.¹²⁴ In other words, body has both physical and psychological dimensions. He raises certain basic questions—what is a human body? Is human body an object? Or is human body a subject? He says—it is neither completely subject nor object. It is both subject and object. The human body is a lived body. It is mine. Since the body is primarily my body, it is personal, subjective, objective, and inhabited by an intentionality which enables it to express meaning.¹²⁵ Here the point is body as a site which cannot be reduced to any one aspect of the reality but body as a site which is foundation for all realities. This may be the reality about the relation between body and world or in the context of knowledge, metaphysics, ontology, and ethics and so on. Further he says—“to have a body means, that one is involved in a definite environment, because our body is our vehicle for being in the world, although, the body is to be distinguished from the world. It is our medium for having a world, this implies that being a body involves being in the world, a primordial form of existence which is pre-objective”.¹²⁶

The theory of body presupposes a theory of perception. Human perception of the world and its objects is contingent upon the lived body. Thus perception is embodied in the body.¹²⁷ To substantiate this (how one’s body is connected with the world) he gives an interesting example. This example follows—if one loses an arm or a leg, not only is one’s world altered but one’s perception of the world is changed. Here what is this lived body? Is this the body applicable in the context of everybody or this body embodied in a particular

¹²⁴ Olson, Carl. “The human body as the boundary: a comparison of Merleau-ponty and Dogen”, pp. 108-109.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 108.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p. 108.

¹²⁷ Ibid, p. 111.

person/community? This question is a basic question to understand lived experience in the context of Merleau-Ponty. Here it can be articulated that the lived body is the body which is not general but very specific and unique. May be the body of a black person is not lived for the white person. And the body of an “untouchable” is not lived for a “touchable” in India. Since a black person has lived body which is black, he/she must have the perception of different kind. That is why one can say in Merleau-Ponty’s language that your lived body determines your perception about the world. This is the reason Merleau-Ponty understands it (lived body) as embodiment. This can be seen in the writings of Frantz Fanon where the perception towards the world is determined by the lived body which is embodied. Same is the case in the context of India, where the perception of untouchable towards the world is determined by one’s embodiment. For example, the body of “untouchable” is considered as the filthy, dirty etc.

II. Locating Theorization of Lived Experience in Race, Gender and Caste

In academics everybody is aware about theorizing race, theorizing gender, and theorizing caste. These analysis are commonly seen in the social science discourses. But still all these categories have not been theorized enough to understand lived experience. And social science studies in India have not given sufficient attention to this. That is why Indian social science is yet to be developed. What is it all about theorizing lived experience? Or how do we make sense of it in race, gender and caste? This is an epistemic exercise in the social sciences. Theorizing lived experience pushed us to look at every aspects/dimensions of lived experience. Now what are these dimensions? These are social, individual, subjective, objective, historical, moral, epistemological, and ontological. It is an ontological concern because it is special to the human world/social world.

Let's discuss theorizing lived experience in race. Michel Banton in his book *Racial Theories* has discussed race as status, race as class, race as designation, race as social construction, race as sub-species, race as linear, and race as type (*Racial Theories* by Banton). Further research has not been done on race as lived experience except some by Fanon.¹²⁸ If we see the theories on race in this particular book we see race is a constructed phenomenon and over the period of time different meanings were attributed to it by social scientists, biologists, historians and philosophers. Fanon also theorized race and argued that race is a process, race is a form of alienation and race is a social relation. In this way for Fanon race/white supremacy is not an individual but social process.¹²⁹ When we say race is a social process or social relation Fanon argues against the theory of liberalism.

However, according to David Macey, Fanon's focus on experience (the black experience) was a result of his engagement with the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir where the category of experience does not refer to typical everyday existence but has a particular philosophical meaning.¹³⁰ Therefore the theorization of lived experience looks for various forms and dimensions of race. Some of the scholars have pointed out many aspects of race but there are some aspects which are yet to be addressed. For example, we see that race is a constructed social category and we can also see it as an institution or a norm which is being practiced in the society. And this practice, for the white, is "good" and "moral" because it protects their interests. On the other hand, for the Negroes it is oppression, suffering, inhuman, discrimination, humiliation, exploitation and so on. We can see the same thing in the context of lower castes in India, women and LGBTQ (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer) and so on. In the context of lower caste people, caste is an oppressive, discriminatory, exploitative institution and phenomenon. Discrimination based on gender is also means exploitation,

¹²⁸ Michel Banton in his book *Racial Theories* has argued about what is race and what is the nature of race. In this book we can see how race is attributed to different social realities such as race is class, race is status, race is designation and so on.

¹²⁹ Unity and struggle: Fanon and the theory of race, (<http://unityandstruggle.org/2015/04/13/fanon-and-the-theory-of-race>)

¹³⁰ Unity and struggle: Fanon and the theory of race, (<http://unityandstruggle.org/2015/04/13/fanon-and-the-theory-of-race/>)

discrimination, oppression and humiliation for LGBTQ. Therefore, the Negroes want abolition of race. The whole expression of pain, oppression, discrimination over blacks due to race by the forces (includes the imperial and White forces) is nothing but lived experience. Here, the basic question is what is the lived for the blacks? The simple answer is they have lived a life of oppression, discrimination, exploitation and humiliation.

One of the basic characteristics of lived experience is that it always looks forward, and has potentiality to change the social structure/system. One looks forward for an alternative system and it can be seen in the writings of Sartre, Fanon and others. Lived experience is always in search for an alternative. Having lived experience means to look forward or thinking about change and transformation. In other words, having a lived experience means having different perspectives in mind towards things and the world. Therefore it is not only about the nature of a society but also how a society should be. This argument can be seen in the context of caste in India. Ambedkar says that caste is enclosed class. It never allows for universal. Caste creates endogamy, where there is less possibility of universal.¹³¹ The idea of universals provide to justice, liberty, equality, dignity, self-respect, and humanity.

Theorizing lived experience of race as oppression, discrimination, exploitation, and humiliation is worth investigating. The question is not merely about the black and white aspects of race. Racial discrimination takes place not only because one is “Black” but even without being Black one can be discriminated on the basis of race. In India, North East Indian people face racial discrimination not because they have black skin but because of their “look”. Thus we see various forms of racial discrimination in the world. In this context, “body” plays a very important role in understanding race. Sometimes the color “Black” is also very much related with the body. To understand the subtle meaning of race implication one can see certain concepts into examination, such as “body”, “appearance”, “gaze”, “look”, “feature”, “skin”, “ugly”, “beauty”, etc. and how through the same one is “stigmatized” in the society. This has been explained by Goffman by giving the references of “blind”, “deaf”, “Negro”, “cripple”, “prostitutes”, “homosexual” and so on. The

¹³¹ Ambedkar, *Caste in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development*, p.18.

stigmatization takes place in the context of individual and social group level (Goffman says—“category”). Because of the stigmatization certain section of the people are reduced to mere thing/object.¹³² This is the reason phenomenology becomes very relevant to understand race or theorization of race. From Heidegger to Merleau-Ponty, have given enough attention on the body. Merleau-Ponty articulates the idea of “embodiment” because humans are embodied, we have a body. Without understanding the body we would not be making sense of the social world, because this is the basis of all formulations. The debate on body is very significant to understand the nature of race, caste and gender as lived reality. This has been in the discourse in the social sciences since Dilthey and others came into the scene.

Fanon says that the experience of a black man is reduced to his body, specifically to the skin, when viewed by white racists. Fanon mentioned how whites look towards the black and perceive the black body schema and call it as “dirty nigger”, “Negro”¹³³ and so on. Further these attitudes became a burden for the blacks as Fanon articulates:

An unfamiliar weight burdened me. The real world challenged claims. In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negative activity. My body was given back to me sprawled, distorted, recolored, clad in mourning in that white winter day.¹³⁴

The experience of blacks is reduced to his/her body. And further the body of a black is reduced to a thing. But philosophers have defined body as a distinct category and entity which cannot be reduced to a mere thing or object. For example Merleau-Ponty would say human body is not a body which does not live or merely physical one but it's a

¹³² Goffman, Erving, *Stigma*, pp.11-55. See for the details about the stigma in the society, at the level of individual, group and community.

¹³³ Jalalzai, Zubeda. “Race and the Puritan Body Politics”, p. 259

¹³⁴ As quoted in *Ibid*, p. 259.

body which has the “psychological” dimension.¹³⁵ In the context of race, the blacks are considered as less than human being. For example, Fanon writes:

On that day, completely dislocated, unable to be broad with other, the white man, who unmercifully imprisoned me, I took myself far from my own presence, far needed, and made myself an object. What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood? But I did want this revision, this thematization. All I wanted was to be a man among other men.¹³⁶

As we have seen the theorizing on lived experience in race, the same we can also see in gender. There are various aspects in feminism, and it has many perspectives to understand the politics, and political economy, but in the context of lived experience what one can stress on is the experience of women as the tool for their (black community both men and women) politics, analysis of gender, race and so on. That is why the standpoint perspective can be widely applicable to understand theorization of lived experience. This can be seen in the writings of Patricia Hill Collins, who focuses on the intersection of gender, race and poverty/class and standpoint theory/perspective. Hill Collins argues that the black women’s standpoint is unique to the black community (particularly black women collective), having emerged from the lived experiences within the intersecting oppressions of race, class and gender. The problems of racism, poverty, sexual discrimination are all linked together and must be addressed by the black community.¹³⁷

The standpoint theory/perspective can be understood in different levels. For example, when feminism emerged for the first time they put forward the framework of standpoint theory (women perspective in general) and criticized the male dominating perspective (men’s perspective) and dominant epistemologies because male historically have been biased about talking of women’s realities. Therefore the standpoint of women became the central discussion in the feminist discourse. In the feminist analysis experience

¹³⁵ Merleau-ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 103-112.

¹³⁶ Jalalzai, Zubeda. “Race and the Puritan Body Politics”, p. 259

¹³⁷ Hornois, Catherine E. Race. “Gender and Black Women Standpoint”, p. 74.

plays a significant role to understand the reality about the world. Experience became the “epistemic tool” for women to understand the world and the reality about the gender. This experience of women is ontological because it exists only in the female body. This experience is not simply a scientific experience but the experience of the “lived” as Collins emphasizes throughout her writings. Women are facing gender discrimination, progression, exploitation, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuses and so on. And this experience is ontologically applied to all women in general, upper class, upper caste, lower class, lower caste, black women, and White women and so on.

Within the experience of women in general the lived experience further defines the different ontology in the black women and lower caste women in India. That is why black women standpoint theory and Dalit women standpoint theory¹³⁸ arise because the black and Dalit women face triple discrimination than the white women. In this context, Combahee River Collective's “Black Feminist Statement” describes:

The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives.¹³⁹

This statement shows how black women are facing more oppression than white women. White women face sexual exploitation from the male and also they might be the victim of economic deprivation, but they are not the victim of racial discrimination. Therefore in this context the black woman's lived experiences are double layered. Firstly, they are women, so they are exploited by the males across board. In terms of sexual discrimination they face from the black men too. Secondly, they face the racial

¹³⁸ See for details about Dalit Women Standpoint Position in Sharmila Rege's “Dalit Women Talk Differently- A Critique of Difference and Towards a Dalit Feminist Standpoint Position” and her other writings. To understand comprehensively about Dalit women standpoint theory one can also see in the writings of Smita Patil, Gopal Guru, V Geetha and Susie Tharu.

¹³⁹The Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement”, p. 271.

discrimination as every black face. Here, let us see how male and female are defined in a Black Nationalist pamphlet:

We understand that it is and has been traditional that the man is the head of the house. He is the leader of the house/nation because his knowledge of the world is broader, his information is wise... After all, it is only reasonable that the man be the head of the house because he is able to defend and protect the development of his home... women cannot do the same things as men—they are made by nature to function differently. Equality of men and women is something that cannot happen even in the abstract world. Men are not equal to other men, i.e., ability, experience or even understanding. The value of men and women can be seen as in the value of gold and silver—they are not equal but both have great value. We must realize that men and women are a complement to each other because there is no house/family without a man and his wife. Both are essential to the development of any life.¹⁴⁰

However, black women are also exploited economically, so they are discriminated on the basis of class. Overall, here also one can see the standpoint perspective is applicable because black women have been facing the racial discrimination as lived experience which is not the experience for the white women. Thus the black women's standpoint theory is significant on the point of view of lived experience. Same thing is applied in the context of India, where the lower caste women face triple level of discriminations on the basis of sex/gender, caste and class. This ontological difference is manifested because they have a different lived experience. For example, the lower caste women face caste discrimination whereas the upper caste women do not face it so they do not have the experience of caste discrimination. Thus this standpoint perspective of women has become the central point of analysis to understand the theorization of lived experience.

The black women's experience of race, sexuality and class are shared experiences, which is not the experience of an individual but of black women as a collective. In this context Collins would say that the common and shared experience of Black women—all

¹⁴⁰ As quoted in *Ibid*, pp. 276-277.

African-American women shared the common experience of being Black women in a society that denigrates women of African descent. Collins also argues that the collectivity of African-American women as group has degree of performance over time such that group reality transcends individual experiences.¹⁴¹ Here the standpoint theory not only articulates the intersection of gender, race, caste or class but also articulates how lived experience as a collective experience.

A further debate that the body of a woman is different than that of the man can be taken up now. The “body” of a woman is ontologically different. Whether it is ontologically different or not is a subject matter of debate in philosophy. This point is discussed by Luce Irigaray throughout her writings. Irigaray talks about this in *Ethics of Sexual difference*. For her the subject has become split off from the embodied and social subject. She says—if women are cut off from their own becoming, then they are buried alive in our culture. Because of the split, women, as the body, represent sexuality which is the cut off from the ideal or the spiritual and becomes a lower function, that which is to be transcended in the pursuit of the good.¹⁴² So here the issue of body and the sexuality is central to ethics not in the limited sense of a set of taboos and prohibitions but in the sense that the symbolic division of labor prevents women from becoming themselves.¹⁴³

In phenomenology, body has been analyzed phenomenologically from different angles in philosophy. Irigaray brings this discussion into forth and says that the phenomenological account of the lived body, and the lived world needs to be complemented by the awareness that there is an interaction between the lived experience, the imaginary, and the discursive and social construction of both. She appreciates the phenomenologists Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Leibniz, because they have stressed on language, body, and ethics. She points out that in each case; their philosophy reduces in one form or another to the morphology or imperatives of the male body.¹⁴⁴ Thus the male

¹⁴¹ Hornois, Catherine E. Race. “Gender and Black Women Standpoint”, p. 71.

¹⁴² Margarates, Milkwhit. *Philosophy of Feminine*, p, 149.

¹⁴³ Ibid, p.150.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, pp.151-152.

body was considered as transcendental which is the highest topology. And it can be seen throughout the writings of philosophers, such as the topography of the male body/subject is conceptualized in terms of reflection in Hegel and Lacan, space and time in Kant, dwelling in Heidegger and Leibniz, *differance* and aspacement in Derrida.¹⁴⁵ In each case the maternal body is being used as building material. This exploitation prevents women's accession to subjectivity unless women have a topology too. That is why ethics of sexual difference and women's subjectivity and autonomy. Luce Irigaray sees the otherness of sex (women/feminine) in the writings of the philosophers Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Descartes, Merleau-Ponty and others. She sees it in terms of assimilation of the subjectivity of the women into the male body. In other words, the subjectivity of the women is merged into the male body. That is why the abstraction and language that have been constructed by the philosophers are gender biased. According to Luce Irigaray, Merleau-Ponty's conception of visible, invisible, touch or touched/touching or being touched are nothing but the segregation or the ignoring/invisibilizing of the female body/subject. Thus everything is reduced to male body.

Here there can be two alternative interpretations of the ontology of sexual differences. Firstly, the general conception and conviction which believes that women are never considered as independent subject but are always understood in relation to men and merging into the male subject in all sense.¹⁴⁶ And they are reduced to the things or object. In this context, Merleau-Ponty's conception of human subject which is physico-psychological¹⁴⁷ fails because they (women) are only reduced to physics, and their psychology is denied. Secondly, they are regarded as the different ontology which falls into the category of nature, un-thought, irrational, object, unthinkable, sexuality, castration and death and so forth.¹⁴⁸ As far as the second point is concerned Simone de Beauvoir has

¹⁴⁵ The concepts of *differance* and aspacement have been used for Derrida in Margaret's book on Luce Irigaray because according to Luce Irigaray, these are the concepts which define male subjectivity and ignore the female subjectivity.

¹⁴⁶ See for details *Ethics of Sexual Differences* by Luce Irigaray, pp.5-19.

¹⁴⁷ Merleau-ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp.103-112.

¹⁴⁸ Luce Irigaray, *Ethics of Sexual Differences*, p.157.

proved through her writings that nothing called women as separate category ontologically exists, but it is constructed reality.

We see that there is interconnection between race, gender and caste. Caste and gender are closely related and same is the case between race and gender. But of course they have differentiation. Let us discuss how theorization of caste can be a part of theorizing lived experience.

Many of the thinkers who have written and theorized about caste also experienced caste discrimination in their everyday life. For example, Ambedkar uses caste as an important category in his writings which he had lived throughout his life. So caste discrimination is lived experiences for the lower castes people in India particularly the untouchables. Lived experience helps us to define and redefine the social world better. This can also be seen in the writings and teachings of all anti-caste thinkers/philosophers including Jotiba Phule, Sabitribai Phule, Ravidas, Tukaram, Chokhamela, Periyar, Kabir, Ayothee Thass, and others. They all had lived the experience of caste humiliation, discrimination, exploitation and oppression. Because of their lived experience, they all found Indian society as discriminatory, in-egalitarian, patriarchal and casteist and further imagined for an alternative society which would be based on liberty, equality and fraternity and justice. Ambedkar's idea of "ideal society" can serve as a case in point.¹⁴⁹ In the similar way, one of the revolutionaries of *bhakti* movement Sant Ravidas's imagination or utopia for an ideal society is called *Begumpura*. In this context of Ravidas and his imagination of utopia Gail Omvedt writes:

In fact, the first formulation of an Indian version of utopia comes not from elite literature, but from one of the anti-caste intellectuals with a mass following. The bhakti radical, Sant Ravidas (c.1450-1520), was the first to formulate an Indian version of utopia in his song "Begumpura". Begumpura the city without sorrow is a casteless, classless society; a modern society, one without a mention

¹⁴⁹ Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, p.25

of temples; an urban society as contrasted with Gandhi's village utopia of Rama Rajya.¹⁵⁰

In the West, Sartre imagined about an ideal society which would be non-racial and class-less society. It is considered that the lived experience can be well articulated through poetry, autobiographical, and biographical writings. This can be seen particularly in Kabir and Ravidas they have explain the reality about the society through poetry.

Moreover, theorizing lived experience of caste can be explained as theorizing lived experience. It can be done in various levels. When Gopal Guru theorizes "humiliation", it is nothing but theorizing lived experience. One thing is clear that theorizing lived experience means looking at the various possible meanings of caste, the associated concepts and theories. However, merely looking at one aspect of the reality would not be helpful to understand the ontology of caste. Rather one has to focus on caste as broader analytical category which has to be examined in various levels. For example if we look at the contemporary scholarship, we see mostly the focus is given to one or two category and that too to some sub-category of caste such as "untouchability". But theorizing lived experience of caste investigates all the sub-category within the broader category of caste. These are "untouchability", "unapproachability", "un-crossability", "un-seeability", and "un-communicability".¹⁵¹ Gopal Guru theorizes humiliation and investigates the various contexts through which the caste oppressions operate. In the book *Humiliation*, many scholars have explored the very similar concepts to understand humiliation. Some scholars have tried to understand it by analyzing exploitation, some by discrimination, and some by prejudice and so on.¹⁵²

The lived experience is not affirmative or positive experience but negative or anti-social and inhuman one, which does not give space for self-respect, dignity and so on. That is why, recognizing lived experience makes you go beyond it and appeal for annihilation of

¹⁵⁰ Omvedt, Gail. *Seeking Begumpura*, p.7.

¹⁵¹ Guru and Sarukkai, *Cracked Mirror*, p. 84.

¹⁵² See for details Gopal Guru's book *Humiliation* where various scholars have discussed the very synonymous concepts to understand the concept of humiliation.

injustices—race, gender and caste discrimination. This is the reason Guru too discusses that humiliation is unjust, indignity, and so the Western scholars have theorized and philosophized the experience of humiliation and favored for self-respect, recognition and dignity¹⁵³. For example, Habermas argues that human beings always try to overcome from the tradition which he calls as man's socio-historical self and then look for an alternative. In this context, lived experience as tradition has to be critiqued because it perpetuates discrimination, inequality, indignities and injustices. That is why many scholars and philosophers argue for modernity or modern values—dignity, self-respect, liberty, equality, justice and so on. This is clearly visible in the writings and philosophy of Habermas.¹⁵⁴ Therefore theorizing lived experience goes beyond just “inwardness” but it also “look forward” and appeal for equal space for everyone. In this context one can argue against the Guru's argument that poetry does not have capacity to do theory, because theory is universal and poetry is particular. But this is highly problematic. Guru, I think, makes a mistake. When someone expresses his/her life experience through poetry it is not just that he/she thinks or expresses it as it is, but he/she thinks about the universal values such as liberty, equality, fraternity, dignity, self-respect and justice. So, poetry, unlike what Guru sees, can strive for the universal.

In the context of caste as lived experience Guru and Sarukkai have posed some basic questions. But here I will not deal with all the questions which they have raised but some of them. In their discussion one can see theorizing lived experience in different levels; those are—ontology, ethics, epistemology and metaphysics. As we see in the *Cracked Mirror*, Guru argues on lived experience and ethics. According to him, the upper caste people do not have the experience of caste oppression, discrimination, exploitation and humiliation. And since they have no idea about it in experience, they should not theorize or talk about Dalit experience. He argues it is ethically wrong because that would lead to “inauthenticity” and bias. However, Sarukkai rejects this argument and states:

¹⁵³ Guru, Gopal. *Humiliation*, p. 02.

¹⁵⁴ Bulhof, Ilse N. *Wilhelm Dilthey: A Hermeneutic Approach to the Study of History and Culture*, p. 6.

After all theory is about rational inquiry, which is done for the sake of knowledge and undemanding. How can such an act be judged to be good or bad? Social theory is about describing, explaining and ordering social structures and social experiences and one believes that there is really nothing ethical or unethical in this process per se.¹⁵⁵

Here I agree with Guru's argument that one can debate ethics in lived experience, because don't we think that the lived experience of caste oppression, humiliation, exploitation, discrimination is "bad", which perpetuates inequality, hierarchy, injustices in the world? Dalit looks forward for emancipation from those lived oppressions and this looking forward by Dalit is nothing but the search for "good". In this way it can be debated in the context of morality. Perpetuating caste means perpetuating injustices and inequality in society. That is why it is immoral and unethical to do this. So the upper castes in India are unethical and immoral if they are perpetuating caste and not being cooperative with the lower caste or Dalit for annihilation of caste. Here one can bring Ambedkar's point that caste does not have morality or ethics, even if it has, it is the "caste morality".¹⁵⁶ Caste does not have morality in the sense of striving for humanity. To comprehend this argument Sarukkai's definition of lived experience can be appropriate here:

Lived experience is...not about what there is but is about what there is not.
Lived experience is not about freedom but about lack of freedom in an experience.¹⁵⁷

However by taking some clues from Sarukkai's above mentioned argument one can argue in the context of morality that upper caste does not have lived experience of oppression and humiliation but at the same time they do not have morality of universality/humanism but caste morality. Hence caste is always self-centric and cynical in nature.

¹⁵⁵ Guru and Sarukkai, *Cracked Mirror*, p. 128.

¹⁵⁶ In *Annihilation of Caste*, p. 24, Ambedkar has defined about caste morality. He says—"the virtue has become caste-ridden and the morality has become caste bound".

¹⁵⁷ Sarukkai, Sundar. "Dalit Experience and Theory", p. 4045, 2007.

Now there is an obvious relationship between theory and experience or lived experience. Without having experience one might not be able to do theory in a systematic manner. Even if one does it will be vague and unsystematic. Experience is the basis for doing theory which can be seen in the writings of philosophers like Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Bacon, Kant, Dewey and others. Guru also points out the basis of experience in theory:

A theoretician can proceed with doing theory but need to be aided by the empirical evidence of the experience of an individual or a social group. Such reflective realization becomes a possibility primarily in the context of experience that provides necessary background condition for doing theory. These conditions can be twofold: objective (material) and subjective (conceptual or epistemological).¹⁵⁸

However, in the context of lived experience, one can argue that it has two properties emotion/embodied experience and reflective capacity or reason/rationality. The subject of lived experience has emotion because lived experience as a collective oppression and humiliation is bound to produce a feeling of emotion for their community. And it also has reflective capacity because it looks back in the past and some time in future for the betterment of themselves and their community. For example, Ambedkar could produce some theory about caste, democracy, polity, economy and society not merely because he had experience of caste discrimination as lived experience but also because of some rationality/reasons which he might have got from Buddhism, the anti-caste thinkers and from the Western modernity. Therefore theorizing lived experience of caste gives you an alternative epistemology which comes from both Dalit experience and rationality.

The ontology and metaphysics of caste can be discussed from different angles such as the metaphysics of body (the body of Dalit, women and black), or we can say the lived body. To have an experience, we need a body. We are not purely conscious in the world. We have five sensory organs through which we experience and the body as

¹⁵⁸ Guru and Sarukkai, *Cracked Mirror*, p.72.

complex, which consists of not only physical organs but also consciousness.¹⁵⁹ But if we see certain experience such as lived experience it is embodied within particular body, or community or person. Body plays an important role in understanding and theorizing lived experience in the context of caste. Why an upper caste does not touch the body of lower caste (Dalit)? The reason it is believed that touching the body of so-called lower caste pollutes the body of the upper-caste.¹⁶⁰ How and why upper-caste becomes polluted has no scientific basis. If the body of both upper caste and lower caste are ontologically same then what makes the upper caste not touch the lower caste? Or what makes the lower caste body stigmatize? True that untouchable or the lower caste people in India mostly do manual jobs. It is not that they don't want to do mental or skilled works but they are historically not given opportunity to do so. They are deprived of doing skilled jobs and forced to do manual jobs like construction, manual scavenging, sanitation, head loading and so on. These manual jobs are related to one's body, and these jobs are stigmatized to the Dalits.¹⁶¹ Dalits doing manual jobs may be one of the reasons why upper caste does not touch them. Wherever a Dalit body goes, it becomes untouchable for others (so-called upper caste). According to Ambedkar, Manu defines it very differently which makes unique the practicing of untouchability in Hindu society.

For the purposes of purification Manu treats the subject of defilement from three aspects: (1) physical defilement, (2) notional and psychological defilement and (3) ethical defilement.¹⁶²

So the body of lower caste (Dalit) is an "ontological danger" for upper caste. Thus there is fear from both sides. The lower caste people "fear" upper caste because if they by chance come into the contact or touch the upper caste they have to confront atrocity, violence and different forms of punishments. On the other hand the upper castes also have

¹⁵⁹ Guru and Sarukkai, *Cracked Mirror*, p. 49.

¹⁶⁰ See for details Ambedkar's *Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 7. Here Ambedkar has discussed about the ontology of untouchability, in terms of origin of untouchability, and the unique characteristics and features of untouchability in Hindu society.

¹⁶¹ Guru and Sarukkai, *Cracked Mirror*, p. 95.

¹⁶² See for details Ambedkar's *Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 7, pp. 257-58.

some kind of fear of the lower castes because if they by chance touch them they will become polluted and impure. In other words, their (lower caste) contact or touch might not make them (upper caste) “horizontal” in their relation to lower caste and there is possibility of losing their “superior” identity and privileges. In this context, Guru gives an example of slums in Malabar Hill in Mumbai:

In this area highly elite people live mostly they are upper castes in India who did not distinguish untouchables from physical dirt. But in their perception, untouchables were mobile dirt and dirt was mobile untouchability. This sense of repulsion is so deep in elite/upper caste perception that it denies any legitimate advantage of odour to a scented body from the slum. Thus the continuous production and reproduction of mobile dirt suggests a special dimension of ontology. Thus the untouchables image as walking dirt was chained to his or her physical association and the experience of being a walking dirt which of course was given to his or her, was sustained through the static nature of the space.¹⁶³

Whether the dirt is ontologically given to Dalit body or it is imposed one is a subject of debate. Ambedkar says that it is an imposed one. This is imposed in the sense that they are forced to do certain kind of dirty profession or jobs such as manual scavenging. Otherwise if we analyze the human body and the way human body is attached with certain “filthy” things which are ontologically equally can be found in everybody. Guru gives the example of “organic bodies which contain negative properties, such as sweat, excreta, urine, mucus, and gases. In the metaphysical level, the organic body as the source of impurities suggests a kind of ontological equality—that every “body” is dirty both in moral sense and material sense”.¹⁶⁴ But for so-called upper-castes, Dalits are considered as impure and pollute. They think that wherever Dalits go, they take dirt.

¹⁶³ Guru and Sarukkai, *Cracked Mirror*, p. 90.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 204.

Overall the purpose of discussing all these are to understand the theorization of lived experience. Theorization of lived experience is rooted in analyzing certain categories such as body, race, caste, and gender, both in the conceptual and experiential level.

Conclusion

In this work I have tried to address some of the basic questions on lived experience which are so relevant in social sciences and philosophy. I have investigated how lived experience and historicity is linked, how lived experience is social/collective rather than merely personal etc. To articulate these two problems, I have referred to the works of Dilthey and Schutz. Both the philosophers have tried to understand lived experience in the context of social sciences as according to them this concept is unique in social world. Mostly in academic circles, when lived experience is analyzed only present experience is studied (i.e., experience at the present moment), but this study found out that in order to understand lived experience in a better manner, we have to go beyond the present experience and understand it historically. In other words, to understand what lived experience means, it is not enough to analyze the present given experience but whatever we have already “lived” or have gone through as well as what experience we are having at the present moment.

Dilthey has focused on philosophy of life, philosophy of history and philosophy of literature to articulate the link between lived experience and historicity. Here I found out that historicity is extremely important to understand lived experience. For example, on the issue of race or caste there can be multiple historical narrations. But lived experience has its own historicity which cannot be forgotten by bringing different interpretations. Lived experience articulates this distinction between historicity and history. Nicholas Dirks is of the view that caste is a colonial product which he claimed as historicity of caste. I would say that it is not the historicity of caste rather it is a history of caste, and that too one of the narrations among many.

Through various point of views, Dilthey proposed that the lived experience is historical and it cannot be understood by merely analyzing the present experience. To

understand all these realities he also focused on the method of hermeneutics which he thinks is essential to understand lived experience and historicity. Because when you try to understand the “life” you try to look back and forth and of course your present life which can be seen in autobiography and biography. Or to understand the human life history contains the fullness of what man has done and what he has been and therefore what he is now. That is why Dilthey talks of structural nexus and time. He has said man is a historical and social being.

On the other side, lived experience is considered as subjective which can only be understood by first person point of view, and the “other” as third person doesn’t understand the first person’s lived experience. It is also considered that lived experience has not a larger universal understanding in the context of societal level but merely at the level of individual and subjective. However, this study found out that lived experience has a larger significance in the context of social sciences and human world. That is why Dilthey says that lived experience is grounded in human sciences and therefore it is the base for social sciences. The larger context of lived experience can be understood in terms of intersubjectivity, social ontology, consciousness, emancipation, various forms of oppression and discriminations in the world. According to Schutz, lived experience is not only limited to the present experience but it is also connected with the past as well as future. It is connected with the past in the sense that in order to understand the theory of lived experience we have to understand the background or the historicity of lived experience. It is connected with the future in the sense that lived experience always helps us to look forward for an alternative future. Lived experience makes human conscious about what this world is and what it should be. In other words, it helps us to understand the nature of a society or human world and thereby it helps us to choose an alternative world which I have discussed in detail in the third chapter.

The social aspects of lived experience can be seen in Schutz from different angles. He analyzes Weber’s theory of social action and behavior in his project which is one of the angles through which he sees lived experience as social. He took Husserl theory of life-world to understand the social reality. The lived experience as a social ontology has the

potential to define social sciences as unique and distinguish it from the natural sciences. Social ontology defines social realities differently. This has been discussed by Alfred Schutz in his writings although he does not use this concept directly. Lived experience as human experience helps us to understand the nature of social world and social ontology. Alfred Schutz has discussed intersubjectivity to understand the social reality and lived experience. In other words, in order to understand the social significance of lived experience, epistemic and ontology of lived experience, Alfred Schutz was rigorously concerned about intersubjectivity. To understand the intersubjectivity in lived experience, I have illustrated race, gender and caste in this work, where I found it is necessary to discuss intersubjectivity if we are to understand the lived experience as social experience rather than a mere individual experience. For instance we cannot understand lived experience of 'blacks' in the absence of 'white' world. In the context of the lived experience of women, if the men's world did not exist then the debate of lived experience would have become meaningless. Similarly in the context of caste the lived experience of caste discrimination, oppression and humiliation would be meaningless if there was no upper caste world. Hence this work found that to understand the subtle meanings of lived experience, we have to understand it in the context of intersubjectivity and in a larger context. Alfred Schutz focuses on the everyday contexts to understand social realities which I have discussed in the second chapter. According to him, lived experience is ingrained in everyday life. Lived experience can be seen in the everyday life as a social reality in terms of racial discrimination, gender discrimination and caste discrimination which is another way of justifying lived experience as social.

In the second chapter I have also discussed how lived experience is constructed in society. Lived experience cannot be understood in isolation of society because as a social reality it was constructed by society rather than by an individual. Therefore we can draw the example of human mind. Can we think independently without being influenced by each other or by society? I have found in this work that the mind of human being is influenced by society and its structure. Human mind is not possible without the other in the normative sense. The social aspects of lived experience in terms of intersubjectivity can be found in the writings of Fanon too which I have discussed in this work.

In this work, I have also tried to show what can be the theorization of lived experience. The theorization of lived experience has not been done sufficiently in academic world, particularly in philosophy. So I have tried to show what can be considered as theorization of lived experience. This has been done in chapter three. Theorization of lived experience means scrutinizing the different dimensions of lived experience through engagement with the concepts by various philosophers including Dilthey and Schutz. Theorizing lived experience also means nothing but theorizing race, gender and caste through the engagement with “experience”. If one is theorizing about race, experience of racial discrimination, gender based discrimination on women and other minority gender, caste and the experience of caste discrimination, he/she is doing nothing but theorizing lived experience. This work has attempted to show it. The different dimensions of lived experience can be studied in epistemology, ethics, ontology, metaphysics, historicity, psychology etc. All these dimensions have been studied by philosophers in phenomenological tradition. For example, Heidegger has focused on ontology and historicity in terms of engagement with the “*Dasein*”. In Husserl it is understood in the form of “life world” and “transcendental reduction”, in Sartre in terms of engaging with the concept of “body”, “black experience”, literature, biography, art, theaters, in Simone de Beauvoir in terms of the experience of women/gender, and in Merleau-Ponty in terms of “lived body”, “embodiment”, and “perception” and so on. Thus the phenomenologists have theorized lived experience at different levels, some have focused on ethical dimensions, some on epistemological dimensions, some of them on ontology, while others have focused on political dimension and so on. In the writings of the phenomenologists, we see that lived experience is not a scientific experience but human experience which denotes different ontology and epistemology. That is the reason that both in the writings of Dilthey and Schutz, I found they were making the distinction between social world and natural world ontologically. To articulate this issue, all phenomenologists have explored the many dimensions of lived experience which I have discussed in the third chapter.

I have also argued that theorization of lived experience in the context of race, gender and caste, the “body” becomes a central analysis to understand theorization of lived experience. There are debates and arguments given by various scholars that body is one of

the most important elements through which people which people are treated differently. For example, within the feminist discourse, the body of a woman becomes a point of debate as to whether it is different from the body of a man. Same is the case with race, because the blacks look different from white in terms of their body outlook, so they are treated differently. In India the body of an untouchable is considered filthy, foul, dirty and so on. In this way body has to be debated in the context of theorizing lived experience and this work has attempted to make few steps forward.

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