

Appearance and Existence

by Ven. Ninoslav Nāṇamoli

For a *puthujjana* the world exists. He can perceive things in that world, see them appear and disappear, he can see them changing. A *puthujjana* can also affect his surroundings and modify things according to own preferences, pursue the desirable experiences and avoid the undesirable ones – the *puthujjana* is *involved*. This 'involvement' with things represents the very core of the *puthujjana's* 'experience as a whole'. Most people spend the majority of their lives obliviously absorbed in it, taking the course of 'involvement' for granted.¹

It needs to be understood that these 'objects', which the *puthujjana* is fundamentally involved with, are *things* which his experience is inseparable from, for the simple virtue of being *his experience of those things*. For this reason we have to broaden the meaning of the term 'things', from usually denominating 'objects' in one's surroundings, to include *any* experience whatsoever that arises and can be discerned internally or externally (whether it is 'objects', 'tools', emotions' or 'thoughts'). In that way the term 'things' would correspond to what is meant by Pāli term '*dhamma*'. Thus, the experience of the *puthujjana's* everyday world, his possessions, his desires and fears, anxieties and happiness are all *things* or *phenomena*. All these phenomena are completely *unknown* in their *nature*. This is why it is crucial for a *puthujjana* to recognize that a nature of a thing *exists*. This existence is not 'in' the world of the objects that are ready-to-hand, not 'in' his mind, not even between the two – but, a thing exists as an *experience*. Strictly speaking that's all that can be truthfully said, without resorting to presupposed theories, inductive observations and explanations of the experience – the only thing that a *puthujjana* can know for certain is that 'there is an experience'. In this way it can be seen that a thing *is*, its 'being' appears and things such as pleasure, pain, emotional states, ideas, abstractions etc. that people have in their everyday lives, are in this way all *real*, they all come to exist as something that is there, that has *appeared*. No matter how ordinary or extraordinary one's experience is or might be, whether it is common or unusual, that experience exists *as such*. Even if one is going through the most obscure, ambiguous states of one's mind, those very states are valid in their nature (as obscure, as ambiguous); whether they are intimate and subjective or the most impersonal objective facts – they are all *phenomena*, they constitute the experience as a whole (which is also a *phenomenon*).

“We do not *know* what 'Being' means. But even if we ask, 'What is “Being”?', we keep within an understanding of the 'is', though we are unable to fix conceptually what that 'is' signifies. We do not even know the horizon in terms of which that meaning is to be grasped and fixed. *But this vague average understanding of Being is still a Fact.*”

However much this understanding of Being (an understanding which is already

¹ “Husserl attempts to make the natural attitude descriptively evident by pointing out that our everyday way of going about our business – dealing with things of all sorts, other people, engaged in scientific activities, recreation, and so on – involves various modalities of “belief.” I simply take for granted that what I am dealing with exists and is, more or less, as it presents itself as being. Furthermore, “other actual objects are there for me as determinate, as more or less well known, without being themselves perceived or, indeed, present in any other mode of intuition” (Husserl 1982: 51) – that is, they belong within a co-intended horizon of “indeterminate actuality” (Husserl 1982:52).” – ‘The Blackwell Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism’, *Husserlian Phenomenology* (by Simon Crowell), p. 19.

available to us) may fluctuate and grow dim, and border on mere acquaintance with a word, its very indefiniteness is itself a positive phenomenon which needs to be clarified.²

The same is to be said for the even more complex categories of the *puthujjana*'s world, such as 'actions', 'choices', notions of 'good' and 'bad' and similar. They are not exempt from the phenomenological nature of things. Good or bad, skilful or not, these things *manifest* in one's experience, and as such: they are real.

A very common passage from the Suttas which describes that which is known as the 'mundane' Right View:

Atthi dinnaṃ, atthi yiṭṭhaṃ, atthi hutam, atthi sukata dukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko, atthi ayaṃ loko, atthi paro loko, atthi mātā, atthi pitā, atthi sattā opapātikā, atthi loke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpaṭiṭṭhā ye imaṅca lokam paraṅca lokam sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedentī'ti

“There is what is given and what is offered and what is sacrificed; there is fruit and result of good and bad actions; there is this world and the other world; there is mother and father; there are spontaneously reborn beings; there are in the world good and virtuous recluses and brahmins who have realised for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.” (MN 117/iii,72)

This easily overlooked passage offers a very acute description of an *authentic* attitude of a *puthujjana*—the attitude of recognition and acknowledgment of the existence of things *as* phenomena (“*there is...*”). Someone might argue that one does not necessarily see the spontaneously reborn beings for example, but the point is that one should recognize the mere fact that there *could be* spontaneously reborn beings—the *possibility* of spontaneously reborn beings *exists* as such. And if one recognizes the validity of the appearance and existence of that possibility, an *expectation of the concrete proof* that can be obtained only through *senses* (i.e. one needs to *see* those beings) ceases to be relevant, in the same way that a view that a thing exists only if it can be experienced through the senses ceases. This attitude thus discloses the *priority* of the *phenomenal nature of things* (of one's experience), over any other view which does not assert that priority. And it is because of this very lack of the correct priority that these kinds of views are *wrong views* (as far as freedom from suffering is concerned). Thus, whatever one's experience is, whichever shape it might take—big or small, important or not, clear or ambiguous—that experience is *there* in its own phenomenological form. This by no means implies that such experience is necessarily understood, it simply means that it is recognized for what it is, even if that is as “something-which-is-not-understood”. This kind of 'acknowledgement' is the authenticity that we also find the existential philosophers often referring to. Together with authenticity, there comes the sense of the *fundamental responsibility* for one's own existence³

² Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by J. Macquarrie and E.S. Robinson. London: SCM Press, 1962, p. 25.

³ A rather inspired observation of Walter Kaufmann, a distinguished Nietzsche scholar and translator, in his book *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, p. 46: “...perhaps the most compassionate and venerable of all mortals, the Buddha. . . [had said that] all man's alibis are unacceptable: no gods are responsible for his condition; no original sin; no heredity and no environment; no race, no caste, no father, and no mother; no wrong-headed education, no governness, no teacher; not even an impulse or a disposition, a complex or a childhood trauma. Man is free; but his freedom does not look like the glorious liberty of the Enlightenment; it is no longer the gift of God. Once again, man stands alone in the universe, responsible for his condition, likely to remain in a lowly state, but free to reach above the stars.”

which is a necessary prerequisite for a *puthujjana*'s 'mundane' Right View⁴ (which can then lead further onwards toward the 'supramundane' Right View—the view of the Path). The reason why this attitude is a necessary prerequisite is because only with this attitude will a *puthujjana* be able to *understand* that he *does not understand*, and by doing so enable himself for understanding.”⁵ The problem is, however, that if a common man denies that which is right in front of him in his day-to-day living, he denies the basic principles of his own experience. In other words he is denying the most immediate *appearance* of things. This results in phenomena not being seen at all. As long as this attitude persists that man is going to be deprived of the possibility of understanding the nature of the experience and consequently the nature of his own suffering. That man is *inauthentic*.⁶ As the experience shows us this is all too easily done. All that is required is to simply never question the face value of one's views of the world and the experience and to never look further from one's immediate absorption in things.

For inauthentic man, when he does think about the nature of his experience and the world around him, his views would generally pertain to a common notion of a *hidden reality* behind the everyday world (either material or mental, depending on the direction his mind takes). What is meant by this is that he simply *assumes* that there is something *more* real or fundamental in relation to what he is or can experience. Simply put, if he was to assume a 'mental' type of reality, as something which underlies the present experience, he would fall into (one of the forms of) *idealism*; alternatively, if the reality was to have a more 'material' basis, he would fall into some form of *materialism* (or *realism*).⁷ Either way, the *puthujjana* oscillates

⁴ “There is fruit and result of good and bad action...”, i.e.: “I am responsible for what I do”. Similarly, “there are... recluses and brahmins who have realised for themselves the direct knowledge...” means “Freedom from suffering is possible, and if I don't pursue it, I, myself, am responsible for that. By not pursuing it I am responsible for remaining there where suffering can arise—I am responsible for *my suffering*.”

⁵ “It is far better for a man to understand that he does *not* understand the Dhamma, than it is for him to believe falsely that he does understand it. The former attitude may encourage progress, the latter can only obstruct it.” — *CtP*, pp. 57-58.

⁶ For more on the everyday phenomenon of 'inauthenticity' see Hedigger, *Being and Time*, and J-P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, particularly the chapter on 'Bad Faith'. See also the following lines from Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (p. 311): “Science organizes the moments of subjectivity within a knowledge of them, and this knowledge is assumed to be the highest stage, and all knowledge is an abstraction which annuls existence, a taking of the objects of knowledge out of existence. In existence, however, such a principle does not hold. If thought speaks deprecatingly of the imagination, imagination in its turn speaks deprecatingly of thought; and likewise with the feeling. The task is not to exalt the one at the expense of the other, but to give them an equal status, to unify them in simultaneity; the medium in which they are unified is *existence*.”

⁷ Ven. Nāṇavīra observes: “There is, however, another point: an *oriented world* (which is the meaning of *loka* in the Suttas) is the correlative of a point of view (there is a SN Sutta that specifically identifies the world with the eye, ear, nose, and so on), and consequently to deny self is to deny the world, and to assert self is to assert the world (*so loko so attā*). Thus we have the following scheme:

<i>Sassatavāda</i>	<i>Ucchedavāda</i>
Assert a point of view;	Denies a point of view;
Asserts self — <i>atthi attāti</i> ;	Denies self — <i>natthi attāti</i> ;
Assert the world;	Denies the world;
Denies the objective existence	Asserts the objective existence
of things — <i>sabbam natthīti</i>	of things — <i>sabbam atthīti</i>
Is an Idealist (Bradley, Berkeley)	Is a Realist (Stebbing, Russell)

If this analysis is correct it would explain why a scientist, though apparently asserting the permanence of the Universe, is, in fact, an *ucchedavādin* — the Universe he asserts is without a point of view, and is the negation of the world (= *loka*).” — *StP*, p. 186.

Also, cf. DN 2, in particular the Ajita Kesakambalin's response.

between the two.⁸

For example, in present times, a spiritual/mystical view of the hidden 'Reality' (one's 'true Self', or 'universal consciousness') would be a form of idealism, while the very common and prevalent scientific objectification of the experience would most certainly come under materialism. These two can serve as the two prominent poles of the Wrong View spectrum.⁹ These views differ from the Right View because as they are focused on developing and providing *explanations* of the nature of one's experience, while failing to see that fundamentally they are *derived from it*. No matter how plausible and accurate a theory or an explanation of the origins and nature of the experience is, the fact is that experience, as a phenomenon, will always *have to come first*. This means that the explanation cannot be applied *retrospectively* to describe its own origin which is *simultaneously present*. Nevertheless, by maintaining this contradiction (which is an *assumption*) the actual *structural order* of the experience is assumed *different*. And since that's all a *puthujjana* has in front of him, that *assumed nature* of the experience *exists as such*. Because of this, the nature of a wrong view is to provide a man with reasons and causes, which achieves nothing except concealing and contradicting the notion of the immediate appearance of things and one's own existential responsibility. When Reality is hidden behind the appearances, which are then no more than 'illusory', whatever a *puthujjana* does and whatever he feels ceases to be *relevant*, even if it's the most immediate and personal suffering. If it isn't irrelevant just yet, a person with this kind of view will certainly strive in order to make it so by blending it into the all-embracing view that the world is nothing more than illusion, and as such whatever comes to be experienced in that world is disregarded because it doesn't belong to Reality. Consequently, by not pertaining to Reality, the things in one's environment can be ignored, and one will feel justified in doing so. Thus, for a *puthujjana* of this kind, things encountered in everyday life don't fit into his *view of reality*—they are dismissed, they are *not understood*.¹⁰ In the view of scientific objectification on the other hand, the *puthujjana's* actions

⁸ Cf. *StP*, p. 323.

⁹ Obviously things can be a bit more complex than this, inasmuch as these opposite views have a lot in common as Merleau-Ponty observes:

"We pass from absolute objectivity to absolute subjectivity, but this second idea is not better than the first and is upheld only against it, which means by it. The affinity between intellectualism and empiricism is thus much less obvious and much more deeply rooted than is commonly thought. It arises not only from the anthropological definition of sensation used equally by both, but from the fact that both persist in the natural or dogmatic attitude, and the survival of sensation in intellectualism is merely a sign of this dogmatism. Intellectualism accepts as completely valid the idea of truth and the idea of being in which the formative work of consciousness culminates and is embodied, and its alleged reflection consists in positing as powers of the subject all that is required to arrive at these ideas. The natural attitude, by throwing me into the world of things, gives me the assurance of apprehending a 'real' beyond appearance, the 'true' beyond illusion." — Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 45.

¹⁰ "To *have faith* in the Reality of the 'external world', whether rightly or wrongly; to "*prove*" this Reality for it, whether adequately or inadequately; to *presuppose* it, whether explicitly or not—attempts such as these which have not mastered their own basis with full transparency, presuppose a subject which is proximally *worldless* or unsure of its world, and which must, at bottom, first assure itself of a world. Thus, from the very beginning, Being-in-a-world is disposed to "take things" in some way [Auffassen], to suppose, to be certain, to have faith—a way of behaving which itself is always a founded mode of Being-in-the-world. The 'problem of Reality' in the sense of the question whether an external world is present-at-hand and whether such world can be proved, turns out to be an impossible one, not because its consequences lead to inextricable impasses, but because the very entity which serves as its theme, is one which, as it were, repudiates any such formulation of the question. Our task is not to prove that an 'external world' is present-at-hand or to show how it is present-at-hand, but to point out why Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, has the tendency to bury the 'external world' in nullity 'epistemologically' before going on to prove it. The reason for this lies in Dasein's falling and in the way in which the primary understanding of Being has been diverted to Being as presence-at-hand—a diversion which is motivated by that falling itself." — Heidegger, *op. cit.* p. 250.

are neatly explained in terms of various collections of nerve impulses, reflexes, genes, sensations and so on. In this case the significance of one's actions cannot extend beyond the threshold of the molecular compounds of one's body, which then serves as the *reason* (or *excuse*) for the *puthujjana's* desires, emotions, concerns etc.¹¹ In both types of views the responsibility for the immediate intentions and decisions is abolished, by way of being included in the mystical or molecular forms (for example "God's Will" or genetic "predispositions")—which serve to explain one's world. In either case that responsibility is not *felt*, its *nature* is *disowned*. (Might this perhaps be the *real purpose* of these views?) Thus, the inauthenticity remains for as long as there is a view which places itself *over* the existence as such, as something which is more primordial in itself: the Reality *behind* or *beneath* the appearance, the molecular structure of the world, again—*beneath* the things in the way we encounter them in the world. Consequently, things like 'good' or 'bad', 'results' (of one's actions), 'being reborn', 'sacrifice', 'other world' and so on¹² have no place in one's experience.¹³ As such, they become very ambiguous categories of one's life, which an individual can choose to accept and believe in, or perhaps reject according to his personal choice. (The overall decline of morality in the world indicates which kind of choice prevails.) In this way these things are pushed in the domain of religion and ethics and regarded as 'convictions' and 'observances' that one can follow if one pleases.

Thus, whenever the priority of existence is not recognized, the *nature* of things is obscured. Clearly the practice of Dhamma is then out of the question. Nevertheless, for a *puthujjana* the possibility of seeing the structural priority of existence as a whole over the particular instances his Self derives from it, still remains, and only when he admits this, the real work can begin.

The Appearance in Its Priority

So, with the mystical view on one end, and the objective, scientific one on the other, the recognition of one's personal existence cannot arise. Because of these inauthentic attitudes, which are nevertheless *normal* attitudes of the *puthujjana's* everyday life, it would be correct to say that for him things don't even *exist*, in a correct sense of that word. Only with the development of the rudimentary notions of authenticity, through the practice of mindfulness and restraint and reflection, can a *puthujjana* begin to notice, little by little, the nature of his experience as a whole—*phenomena* can start to *appear*. It is only in this way that one can understand what is meant by the 'being' of things, which is nothing fundamentally different

¹¹ "Behaviour is thus hidden by the reflex, the elaboration and patterning of stimuli, by a longitudinal theory of nervous functioning, which establishes a theoretical correspondence between each element of the situation and an element of the reaction..."

"The traditional notion of sensation was not a concept born of reflection, but a late product of thought directed towards objects, the last element in the representation of the world, the furthest removed from its original source, and therefore the most unclear. Inevitably science, in its general effort towards objectification, evolved a picture of the human organism as a physical system undergoing stimuli which were themselves identified by their physico-chemical properties, and tried to reconstitute actual perception on this basis, and to close the circle of scientific knowledge by discovering the laws governing the production of knowledge itself, by establishing an objective science of subjectivity..." — Merleau-Ponty, *op. cit.* pp. 8, & 12.

¹² Things that are not explainable through the observational methods of inductive sciences.

¹³ "The theory of sensation, which builds up all knowledge out of determinate qualities, offers us objects purged of all ambiguity, pure and absolute, the ideal rather than the real themes of knowledge." — Merleau-Ponty, *op. cit.* p. 13.

than the 'being' of myself.¹⁴ Through the establishing of authenticity a *puthujjana* can observe that things around him, and his experience as a whole, appear and disappear. In the beginning it seems like this is happening while his *sense of the experience as a whole* stays *unchanged*. This 'unchangedness' holds priority over the *puthujjana's* experience, and that's because in its nature it presents itself as something which is remaining the *same* or *independent* (i.e. unchanging) throughout the appearance of things which comes and goes. It looks as if things that appear are 'included' within that general non-changing sense of the experience. The appearance of things –or, simply, things *belong* to it. Although there is no concealed 'Being' behind that which appears since the basic authenticity has been established, this nevertheless results in the notion that fundamentally things *are*, and *that is why* they appear. Thus, 'Being' is assumed to be an ontological phenomenon that manifests itself *through* the 'appearance'. One might not be able to find it apart from appearance, but nevertheless, a *puthujjana* thinks—"things exist, that's why they can appear". In this way one assumes the ontological priority of existence over the appearance. Thus, a *puthujjana* places 'being' as that which is *first*. This type of priority of 'being', is the necessary basis for the *puthujjana's* sense of 'Self'. The notion of constancy, the unchanging nature of the experience as a whole, the independence, is the "extra-temporal changeless 'self'"¹⁵ of the *puthujjana*. '(The being of) Self' is then the reason for things to appear ,they are appearing for it.¹⁶ This arrangement, this *particular [dis]order* of things is also called: *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*.

If, presumably, a *puthujjana* wants to abandon this view, which is the root of all suffering, the authentic pursuit must continue. What he has to see is that this notion of 'Self', despite its independent character, also *appears*. No matter how elusive or ambiguous it might be—it has to be seen as such: as an elusive thing. Only after this is it is possible for a *puthujjana* to see that the order of things imposed by the presence of an assumed 'extra-temporal' phenomena in his experience is the *wrong order*. Based on things' appearance, and based on the sense of the experience as a whole, there is no justifiable reason for him to assume any primacy of the sense of unchangeability any longer. *There is* 'the sense of unchangeability' and that too *appears*. Thus, the unchanging '(sense of) being' was, in a wholly gratuitous manner, given priority over the appearance of things by being assumed as something which does not appear. The reason for this was simply because this notion of priority was never *noticed*.¹⁷ If a *puthujjana*

¹⁴ A reader might notice here the discrepancy between what I've just said and the views one can find in Heidegger's or Sartre's works. These philosophers maintain the notion (in different degrees) of *the separation* between *my* being, i. e. the 'I', and being of *things*, the objects of the experience which 'I' encounters. For example Sartre developed a fundamental division of being-in-itself and being-for-itself, which he then tried, and consequently failed, to reconcile in *Being and Nothingness*. In-itself is not more real than for-itself, (i. e. 'me' or '[my] consciousness'), and the reverse is also true; in order for it to exist it requires for-itself, as much as for-itself requires the in-itself. And it is not possible, in good faith, to think of or regard the in-itself *independently* of consciousness, nor consciousness independently of the in-itself, not even in one's imagination. 'Matter', *rūpa*, needs consciousness in order to find its footing in appearance, without it, it is *inconceivable*. (Cf. the mutually dependent relationship between *nāmarūpa* and *viññāṇa*.) In brief: whenever there are things, there is me; whenever there is me, there are things. (Hence one has to understand *sabbe dhamma anatta*—all things are not-self.) Whether it is 'being' of things that we are looking at, or my 'being', the point is that there is 'being'—*bhava* is there. This is also why, the reader will notice I use 'existence' and 'being' interchangeably. Whether it is 'mine', or not, whether it is personal or impersonal, large or small, visible or invisible, far or near, any 'being' whatsoever means that *bhava* is *there*; it is, it exists. As long as that is the case, 'I' (or at least some degree of the conceit 'I am') will be present.

¹⁵ *NoD*, ATTĀ.

¹⁶ "...the phenomenon remains, for "to appear" supposes in essence somebody to whom to appear." —J.—P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, translated by Hazel E. Barnes. London: Methuen, 1957, 1969; New York: Philosophical Library, 1957, p. 2.

¹⁷ Hence the nature of it also appearing was obscured.

sees this *existing* notion that *appears*, (which is *that*, which is his 'Self'), a sight of inseparability between 'existence' and 'appearance' will emerge. If a thing exists, that is because it appears; if it appears, that is it exists. Neither the appearance nor existence can be discerned or conceived without each other, and that is what is meant by "to be is to be perceived" – *esse est percipi*. At this phase, the assumption of a hidden reality *behind* the appearance is almost inconceivable. The *puthujjana* understands that if anything is to exist, it *has to appear*.¹⁸

Thus, one's authenticity grows. The attitude has undergone a considerable change, from a *puthujjana* not even being aware of his own existence, over the notion that things appear *because* they exist, up to now, where 'to appear' and 'to exist' means just the same. Although this is certainly far better than anything before, nevertheless this attitude doesn't quite yet free the *puthujjana* from suffering. He has to continue, but this is as far as he can go on his own. No matter how hard he tries to understand the existence, any attempt to do so will throw him onto the appearance, and *vice versa* – whenever he looks at the appearance all he is going to see is the existence. In one way or another, the *puthujjana* will not be able to prevent himself from falling into a view that 'appearance' and 'existence' are the *same*,¹⁹ or – since the difference is perceived between them – he might think that they are *different*.²⁰ But then the 'sameness' is still there, so perhaps they are *both-the-same-and-different*. Consequently, he can negate the whole thing and think that they are *neither-the-same-nor-different*. In either case, he remains *ignorant* in regard to the two; he remains a *puthujjana*. If he is to change this, he needs help from the *outside*; it has to come to him *externally*. The *puthujjana* is not able (i.e. it is structurally impossible) to "step out" of his experience, and see his situation of 'being-a-*puthujjana*' as a whole. No matter how far he steps back, he carries his ignorance with him. Only coming across the Buddha's Teaching can offer him an *outside perspective* of himself, which if cultivated can 'turn him' into a non-*puthujjana*.²¹

The Teaching tells him that 'existence' cannot be conceived anywhere *apart from* 'appearance', but also that it is *not* 'appearance' as such; furthermore, and even more importantly, it also tells him that 'existence' does not depend on 'appearance' directly, it

¹⁸ Sartre (*op. cit.*, p. 6) seems to have become aware of this, but then chose to disagree:

"What determines the being of the appearance is the fact that it appears. And since we have restricted reality to the phenomenon, we can say of the phenomenon that it is as it *appears*. Why not push the idea to its limit and say that the being of the appearance is its appearing? This is simply a way of choosing new words to clothe the old "*Esse est percipi*" of Berkeley..."

It seems that the famous formula of Berkeley cannot satisfy us – for two essential reasons, one concerning the nature of *percipi*, the other that of the *percipere*."

Sartre then goes on to construe consciousness into a form of an 'empty' absolute which is "pure 'appearance' in the sense that it exists only to the degree to which appears." (*op. cit.*, p. 12). There is no question of things existing to the degree they appear, however there is no such thing as 'pure appearance' in the sense of appearance independent of that which has appeared, since every appearance *has to be* appearance of *something*. Even if someone says: "Pure appearance" – that designation of that "pure appearance" is that which *stands for* that which is "pure appearance", thus that "pure appearance" is not pure – Sartre's "empty absolute" is thus *contradictio in terminis*.

¹⁹ "The first being which we meet in our ontological inquiry is the being of the appearance. Is it itself an appearance?... In other words, is the being which discloses itself to me, which appears to me, of the same nature as the being of existents which appear to me?" – Sartre, *op. cit.* p. 4.

²⁰ "...the being of the phenomenon can not be reduced to the phenomenon of being." – Sartre, *op. cit.* p. 6.

²¹ "The *puthujjana*'s experience is (*sañ khāra*-)*dukkha* from top to bottom, and the consequence is that he has no way of knowing *dukkha* for himself; for however much he 'steps back' from himself in a reflexive effort he still takes *dukkha* with him..." – CtP, p. 482; and on the p. 38 of the same work: "The Dhamma gives the *puthujjana* the *outside* view of *avijjā*, which is inherently unobtainable for him by unaided reflexion (in the *ariyasāvaka* this view has, as it were, 'taken' like a graft, and is perpetually available."

depends on the 'assumption' (*upādāna*)²² in regard to that which appears,²³ and this means nothing else than that the appearance, for its appearing, *does not require* existence at all—it is actually better *without it*.²⁴

Na kho, āvuso visākha, taññeva upādānaṃ te pañcupādānakkhandhā, nāpi aññātra pañcahupādānakkhandhehi upādānaṃ. Yo kho, āvuso visākha, pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu chandarāgo taṃ tattha upādānaṃ”ti

“The five assumed aggregates, friend Visākha, are not just assuming; but neither is there assumption apart from the five assumed aggregates. That, friend Visākha, in the five assumed aggregates which is desire-&-lust, that assumption is therein.” (MN 44/i,299-300)

Thus this inquiry has passed ‘through’ the *puthujjana's* 'being', which must not be either denied (dismissed) or justified (explained), but established as a *phenomenon*. It was seen that this phenomenon, far from being a reason because of which things appear, actually depends on the *puthujjana's* assumption in regard to *that which appears*. In the beginning, the *puthujjana's* existence was a mere fact, of which he was barely aware and this fact represented his thoroughly inauthentic Self. However, now his existence has not only ‘appeared’ for him, it was seen that 'existence' cannot even be conceived *without* that which appears. In this way the roles were slowly reversed and the priority of existence over the appearance of things has faded. Now, with the Buddha's aid, a *puthujjana* can further see that actually the existence is not that which appears—it never was. It is the appearance that *exists*, by him *assuming* it (or by being *ignorant* in regard to it.) The existence, in order to be, requires *maintaining* (hence *upādānapaccāya bhavo*). In this way a new perspective has emerged on the relationship between existence and appearance, which reveals that, initially, the *puthujjana* had the whole picture upside-down. The further pursuit of this principle would simply carry further right through the center of *puthujjana's* being (who at that point would cease to be a *puthujjana*) and complete the ‘reversal’ of this inverted experience of his, in the same manner as one would turn a sleeve inside-out. At

²² *Upādāna* is defined by the PTS Pali-English Dictionary as follows: 1) lit. substratum by means of which an active process is kept alive or going; fuel, supply, provision... 2) 'drawing upon', grasping, taking up...; *Assumption, assuming* according to Chambers Concise Dictionary means: to adopt, to take in, to take upon oneself, to take for granted; [Latin term is *assūmere, assumptum: (ad) to (sūmere) take*].

The nature of the assumption in general, can be described as follows: the assumption takes its object *for granted*, and it does so without having a knowledge of whether that thing which is being 'taken up' *actually* is in the way that it is taken up. As a matter of fact, not having a knowledge of this is the fundamental prerequisite for the assumption to manifest, because if the object is known for what it is, there wouldn't be a need to *assume* it for what it is. Knowledge and assumption (*vijjā* and *upādāna*) are mutually exclusive. However, *upādāna* is there (as *pañc'upādānakkhandā*) which means that the assumption of what the five aggregates are, *preceeds* that which five aggregates are. In this way the beginningless *avijjā* puts the assumption *first*, as something “in front”, something more fundamental, that the five aggregates which are taken up. This is done in direct violation of the fact that *upādāna* cannot be anywhere apart from the five aggregates, that it actually requires *them* for its existence. Thus, assumption assumes *priority* over that which is *already* there. That ‘assumed assumption’ (or taking for granted that which is taken for granted) becomes the *puthujjana's* ‘norm’ of things’ existence, it ‘measures’ them according to what it thinks they are, not for what they are. The extent of the assumption determines *the extent of this measure (i. e. the existence)*—*upādānapaccāya bhavo*. (Cf. Sartre, *op. cit.*, p. 2: “...then the appearance becomes full positivity; its essence is an ‘appearing’ which is no longer opposed to being but on the contrary is the measure of it.”)

²³ He assumes: “It is the same; it is different; it is both-the-same-and-different; it is neither-the-same-nor-different.”

²⁴ “Craving, however, is a gratuitous (though beginningless) parasite on the intentional structure described here, and its necessity is not to be deduced from the necessity of intention in all experience. Intention does not imply craving—a hard thing to understand!” — *NoD, CETANĀ*.

that point that *individual's* Being would cease without remainder.