Martin Buber’s philosophical anthropology is founded upon the dialogical or I-Thou relationship between humans, individual human selves and other humans, nature and even the objects of knowledge, if the objects are of special nature like art objects. It thus straightway opposes the I-It approach, which places the others including the other human beings at a lower logical level. With a focus on ‘dialogicality’ as the essence of human nature Martin Buber developed a dialogical philosophical anthropology. In the domain of phenomenology its explication of human knowledge in an alternative mode on the basis of the relational space between the knowing subject and the knowable takes the shape of phenomenology of dialogue. This is further extendable towards the ethical consciousness and its formation on the same foundation.

Dialogical philosophical anthropology is a counter-thesis of individualistic philosophical anthropology that isolates human subjectivity as hierarchically and ontologically different from other objects, humans and other entities including nature. Buber criticizes the individualistic anthropology and points out that man cannot isolate himself from objects, nature and other human beings. Individualistic anthropology arises out of dissolution of everything other than the individual subject himself and thus renders human existence meaningless. So, Buber holds that man must be essentially dialogic. The human subject enters into a relation with the whole being of the other in real dialogue. For Buber true self-knowledge is possible through disclosure of
Having oneself cannot lead to self-knowledge; in other words, self-knowledge, for Buber, does not consist in self-enclosure, but in disclosure of the self. It must not be disintegrated from the knowledge of one’s own being that is in the wholeness of one’s being. Buber says, “So long as you have yourself, have yourself as an object, your experience of man is only as of a thing among things, the wholeness which is to be grasped is not yet ‘there’. Only when you are, and nothing else but that, is the wholeness there, and able to be grasped.”

Anthropology is thus dialogic to Buber. According to Buber, there must be distinction between self-possession and self-knowledge. Only dialogically self-knowledge can be obtained. In this regard also, we can quote these lines from Buber: “The ‘I’ emerges as a single element out of the primal experiences, out of the vital primal words I-affecting-Thou and Thou-affecting-I, only after they have been split asunder and the principle has been given eminence as an object.” It is not that I-It relation does not produce any knowledge. But that knowledge is only of a utilitarian kind or utility-centered keeping the knowable object at a lower logical and epistemic level. This is usually the nature of empirical and fact-based knowledge and cannot explain the knowledge in a horizontal perspective where there is no such epistemic and logical violence, for example, knowledge of art objects, the moral other, nature in a deeper contemplation as being for human selves, or religious awareness of God as Eternal Thou.

Now, so far we are discussing about the wholeness of man, we have to know the whole man, and there lies the main point of philosophical anthropology to Buber. To find the answer to the Philosophical anthropological question ‘what is man?’ Buber rejects three types of anthropology, viz., individualistic
anthropology, collectivistic anthropology and scientistic anthropology. Individualistic anthropology cannot reduce man to an object for its own emphasis on subjectivity. But due to its inner contradiction and violence over the wholeness of human's being it ultimately makes man a thing among things. But “Martin Buber’s ‘I-Thou’ bifurcation is a personal way of referring to the subject and object constitution of a person.” He rejects collectivistic anthropology on the ground that here the anthropologist studies himself only as a part of a whole whose center is outside himself. And he rejects scientistic anthropology because the centrality of man’s being in its completeness is not taken into account here.

Buber places man in a dichotomous purview of subject-object nexus to reveal the inadequacy of this approach as a methodological one for philosophical anthropology and its incompleteness so far as human ontology is concerned. Though the dichotomy is an undeniable fact of human existence and without I-It form of relation one cannot explain human existence in terms of knowledge of a specific nature, this dichotomous way of viewing human existence, for its very nature, cannot take cognizance of the holistic view of it. On the other hand, the holistic view, because of its very nature, is not oblivious of the dichotomous way. Richard L. Lanigan looks at this aspect of dichotomy more as an appearance but not as a real component of human existence. He says “... a person can perceive himself as a self or appearing subject in contradiction to himself as an object or material appearance ... The man perceives the other in himself and this perception constitutes the dimension of thought in the lived person. That is, perception as thought is the horizontal process by which the person monitors his subjectivity as a modality of his body and the objectivity of his body as a modality of his subjectivity.
Thus, there is not subject and object proper, only the person as appearing subjectivity and objectivity in appearance.”\textsuperscript{4} However, to minimize the importance of this dichotomy was not the purpose of Buber. On the contrary, for him, it is a real category developed out of a disconnection of man’s being as \textit{Thou} from his empirical existence. While the disconnection can be viewed as necessary to explain one particular type of human knowledge and operation of intentionality of consciousness in a particular mode, this disconnection itself cannot be explicated meaningfully without reference to the original \textit{I-Thou} form of existence.

Now, the very understanding of the problem of knowing the whole man becomes inevitable to Buber. He contends that there is a requirement of dialogic interaction on the part of the anthropologist. Buber says about the anthropologists, “In the moment of life he has nothing else in his mind but just to live what is to be lived, he is there with the whole being, undivided, and for that very reason, there grows in this thought and recollection the knowledge of human wholeness.”\textsuperscript{5}

According to Buber, the proper mode of man’s being can be understood only through a dialogue in which exists an awareness of the relationality of the mutual reflectibility of each consciousness in the other, which is dynamic, infinite and therefore living.

Thus the dialogical approaches for the study of man becomes necessary with discovery of the dialogical nature of man. Dialogue becomes both an ontological category of humans and also a method for anthropological knowledge i.e. knowledge of the other human being. In this second case, of course, a reflection on the very nature of dialogue is necessary because any
method is self-conscious. But how can dialogue, which is basically opposed to any kind of abstraction and reification, be itself made an object of any self-conscious programme? The problem may be solved by understanding dialogue itself as potential for being self-reflective without losing its existential character. When dialogue becomes self-reflective, we can conceptualize it as meta-dialogue.

Now, we can measure the solution of Buber’s philosophical anthropological problem. Meta-dialogical description of the dialogic nature of man could solve this. But our question still remains, ‘what is the whole man?’ This is the most fundamental question of philosophical anthropology. If we consider ‘whatness’ of what man is then it is the fundamental question so far as we have discussed. The wholeness of man’s being cannot be approached from the perspective of subject-object bifurcation, because on such bifurcation one can only address the other human as such only as an object and thereby can point to the whatness of man’s being in terms of his achievements, positions, psychological traits, class, caste, possessions etc. that we could not distinguish between subject and object. But the competence of humans to be in both types of relational framework, viz. I-Thou and I-It is thereby overlooked. The whole man can only be addressed as Thou, and the dialogue as a method is adopted therein. Thus it is better to shift from ‘what’ to ‘who’ in the most fundamental question of philosophical anthropology.

The problem of philosophical anthropology cannot be dealt with in a naturalistic fashion. Friedman writes, “... it was upon this natural basis that all the other sciences of man anthropology, sociology, political science and finally the new Freudian science psycho-analysis --- asked their question, ‘what is man?’ What is the natural man, what is the primitive man, as opposed
to the man created by socio-political, cultural, and economic forces? What is man in his natural inheritance, in his pre-history as the human animal a primate or primitive? Thus none of the sciences were asking the whole question, what is man? Nor were they asking the unique question, who am I, in my uniquely human essence? The fundamental question should then better formulated as ‘who is man’?

By discussing the above factor, we can say that man is essentially a fellow human being --- a Thou; only as Thou his whole being can be addressed. As a Thou he exhibits the surplus in him. From this standpoint philosophical anthropology is a praxis unfolding the surplus in man in terms of his projects for being more than what he is in a certain point of time in-and-through dialogic involution. Only by realizing the fellowship in such involution we can claim to know man.

Besides this self-conscious mode of dialogicality philosophical anthropology of Buber explicates the conception of primitive man standing in an existential relation to the world. World as thou, in its personified form unfolds itself before the primitive knower. So, here knowledge becomes relational. Buber describes this as a relation. He says, “Creatures live and move over against us but cannot come to us, and when we address them as Thou our words cling to the threshold of speech.” This conception of primitive man speaks of the existential ontological basis of man’s possibility of becoming dialogical in a self-conscious manner.

As we have discussed earlier, Buber’s philosophy of dialogue views the relation of human existence fundamentally in two different kinds – I-It and I-Thou relations and we cannot envisage any concept of Being beyond this
relational sphere. Entering into relation means entering into an *I-Thou* relation. When man fails to enter then relation, the distance thickens. This failure corresponds to *I-It*. Entering into relation is an act of the whole being and here we find part of the answer of the question ‘What is the whole man?’ or ‘who is man?’ *I-It* relation changes the whole situation of the other being, making it one’s object. Observing the object, we make it part of an objective world with which we do not enter into relationship. So the *I-It* or subject-object relationship is not the primary one but is an elaboration of the given. But *I-Thou* relationship is not like that. *I-Thou* form of relation remains as a means of re-entering into relations. The *I-It* or subject-object relationship is not the primary one because in it man does not enter into the relation or a real dialogue that consists in mutuality and immediacy. This relation is normal everybody relation of a human being towards the things surrounding him. Buber mingles the fundamental ontology with human ontology. The fundamental ontology for Buber is the ontology of the relation; in his words, it is the ‘relation’s own being’. It is the ontology that holds between *I* and *Thou*, being and being.

The world consists of both *I-It* and *I-Thou* relations. But in Buber’s anthropology, the fundamental fact of human existence is man with man. It automatically becomes *Thou* because man may come to the knowledge of external reality as *it* only at a later state of his rearing up by the family and group when he is enabled to differentiate between *thou* and *it*. But his longing for a *Thou remains* forever. In the history of human society a process of disenchantment goes on in the context of which man learns the distinction between the world of utility and the world of relations, joy, creation etc where relation with an other, - the other which is not the self – becomes prominent.
This is applicable to individual human being as well. Buber writes, “The development of the soul in the child is inextricably bound up with that of the longing for the Thou, with the satisfaction a disappointment of the longing, within the game of his experiments and the tragic seriousness of his perplexity.”

A person responds to a Thou, not an It. The It is known through the given language structure consisting of common usage. The world of ‘It’ does not have any vital force. A self builds up a wholesome personality by filling up the distance between the other and the himself through the cultivation of relation. The I-It relation takes place in the ‘subjective’ and in the ‘objective’ but the I-Thou relation takes place in the ‘between’ – the reciprocal relationship of whole and active beings. Though I-Thou is the word of relation and togetherness, each of the members of the relation really remains himself/herself, and that mans really different from the other. In this case ‘relation’s own being’ constitutes the being of each member as different but with a thou-orientation. Though the Thou is not an It, it is also not ‘another I’. The relation becomes an I-It type when a person treats himself as ‘another I’. I-Thou relationship with the world and other humans is lost when there is a shift to I-It or subject-object relation, but the thou-orientation is elemental in human experience according to Buber and it is possible to experience the other face of the world and other humans only because of this elemental experience. So, ‘I-It has a projected meaning received from ‘I-Thou’. Hence, Buber writes, “… again and again that which has the status of object must blaze up into present ness and enter the elemental state from which it came, to be looked on and lived in the present by men.” or else aesthetic, ethical and religious experience would have been an impossibility.
Buber's I-Thou philosophy implies a different view of our knowledge of ourselves, other selves, and the external world than the view of them based on subject-object bifurcation. From Buber's basic premise, 'As I becomes I, I say Thou', it follows that our belief in the reality of the external world comes from our relation to other selves. According to Buber, I-Thou and I-It alternate with each other in human experience. The discourse that consists of constant comparison between objective realities is often a purely technical one and hence itself belongs to the world of I-It, but the compelling conviction of reality, which it produces, is entirely dependent upon the prior reality of the meeting with the Thou. Subject-object or I-It, knowledge is ultimately nothing other than the socially objectivized and elaborated product of the real meeting which takes place between man and his Thou in the realms of nature, social relations, art and religiousity. When I-It blocks the return of I-Thou, it poses as reality itself, it asserts that reality is ultimately of the nature of abstract reason or objective category and that it can be understood as something external, clearly defined, and entirely 'objective'. Reality, from this angle, is bereft any immediacy and presentness. It becomes a 'spoken fact' and therefore a past losing all dynamic exchange with the self in quest.

The contrast between the presentness of I-Thou and the pastness of I-It provides us with a key to the most misunderstood and most often criticized part of the Buber's I-Thou philosophy --- his assertion of the reality of the I-Thou relation with nature. It is the presentness of the I-Thou relation which shows most clearly the logical impossibility of criticizing I-Thou form of knowing on the basis of any
system of \textit{I-It}. Buber’s critique on the point is that the reason for objects being \textit{It} to us and not \textit{Thou} is that they have already been registered in the subject-object world of the past. We think that we know the ‘real’ objects although we usually we know them only indirectly and conceptually through the categories of \textit{I-It}. It is only the knowing of the \textit{I-Thou} relation, which makes possible the conception of wholeness of man and reality. A holistic study of nature and reality, besides man himself, is possible from the standpoint of \textit{I-Thou}, in terms of the addressivity of anything existent.

Now the essential problematic of the sphere of the \textit{between} is the duality of being and summing. The \textit{I-Thou} and the \textit{I-It} relations are generally mixed with one another since no man lives from pure essence and none from pure appearance. The ontological leap from both the self-enclosed self and the thing-hood of the thing to an in-between sphere of ‘I-Thou’ is an index of a serious and significant change in the methodological enquiries of philosophical anthropology. It is a cosmic dialogue between these two worlds of \textit{I-Thou} and \textit{I-It}. Meta-dialogue is a method in philosophical anthropology. It is a cosmic dialogue between these two worlds of I and Thou where there is intervention of \textit{It} on the one hand and freedom from the \textit{It} on the other in terms of the prevalence of Thou-orientation alone. Meta-dialogue as a method in philosophical anthropology consists in the act of initiating oneself into the human reality. Buber says that ‘the relations’ may be interpreted as the ontology of the space between I and Thou. Intentional acts follow from within this dialogical space and not particularly from the subject (I) or the object (other).
The phenomenology of dialogue which is the central concern of this work is also concerned with the question whether it is possible to conceive of intentional acts as originating from a dialogical space which prioritizes neither ‘I’ as knower or the ‘other’ as the known. Intentionality thesis is fated to include a tension between an agent-oriented and the other-oriented reflection upon intentional acts; here the concept of intentionality of consciousness develops an ingredient of what is called the space between the subjects or simply the space between. The epistemological bifurcation of subject and object, which remained rather inescapable in the entire intentionality thesis, is being changed or better to say, modified in terms of an explication of the concept of dialogue here.

This concept of Intentionality as from within the dialogical space of the between alters our idea of inter-subjective communication and language too. Though we make theories with the help of language only, its identity as a social institution alone does not suffice from this point of view. Its genesis is essentially dialogical and other-centric that undergoes a process of objectification into a social institution. Thus, like the alternation of humans’ epistemological space between I-Thou and I-It there is also alternation between language in its instrumental and institutional form and language that transcends its instrumental and institutional character. Pointing to the genesis of language, Buber said, “the word that is spoken is uttered here and heard there, but its spoken ness has its place in ‘the between’. Before the consciousness of Thou, was their language? Martin Buber again said, “Language never existed before address; it could become monologue only after dialogue broke off or broke down, the early speaker was not surrounded by objects on which he imposed names, nor did adventures befall him which
he caught with names: the world and destiny became language for him only in partnership. Even when in solitude beyond the range of call the hearer less word pressed on his throat, the word was connected with the primal possibility, that is being heard.\textsuperscript{13}

The ‘Thou’ first comes to us in search of ‘I’. Then it becomes so inter-related with the ‘I’ that it enters into ‘I’ surrounding the existence of ‘I’. Buber said, “The development of the soul in the child is inextricably bound up with that of the longing for the Thou, with the satisfaction and the disappointment of the longing, with the game of his experiments and tragic seriousness of his perplexity.”\textsuperscript{14} This interaction of ‘Thou’ with ‘I’ gives a starting-point to the dialogue. To describe man’s existence as a dialogic is the understanding of the Thou. The emergence of the study called ‘dialogism’ owes largely to Buber and the theory of Intentionality latent in his philosophy. From dialogue we move towards meta-dialogue and then dialogism as a discipline.

According to Buber, dialogue means responsibility, and responsibility means response to the actual lived world, the addressivity of the situation and the moral agent and not a universal moral law in Kantian sense. Dialogical ethics being based upon response to the immediacy of the moral situation and the ‘moral equal’ in its Gandhian sense is not something arbitrary for Buber. On the contrary it demands a listening and responding. It is the demand for being really present – present as a whole person who makes real decision from the depth of the presence and dialogicality. In fact the concept of dialogical mode of Intentionality speaks of a unique type of conscious disposition of human
Thou that is again and again awakened in the realms morality, social living, religiosity and art experience.

Buber also has a category of the “essential we” formed out of ‘Thou-orientation’. It is not derived from the abstract collectivity at the cost of dialogicality, but based upon a conscious nurturing of Thou in one’s being. It does not mean that at every moment you relate to everyone. In The Knowledge of Man, Buber repeatedly asserts that confirmation takes place in the relation of one person to another. Buber believes that there is a personal direction to which we are called; our response to this call is concrete, unique and creative. He says that he finds this direction time and again by concretion – in his relation to what meets him in the world. His direction is dialogical in the full sense of the term. He can find it only if he comes up again and again, as far as he can and with his whole being, to this meeting with the world. This meeting is not founded upon sheer of acceptance of the world/nature/God/Other person; it consists in attendance and a conversion of the self or object into a Thou. The dialogical Intentionality thereby gathers two phases, viz. the phase of decision to respond in this special mode with recognition of the other’s presence, and the later phase when there is a concretization of the dialogical situation with this kind of conversion.

The same intentional act is clearly manifest in the realm of art experience. An aesthetic creation is a mode of being for man, the being of which is a quasi-subject, and through this mode man's being enters into a relation with the being of this quasi-subject. From the standpoint of phenomenology of dialogue this mode of presence can be considered as being intentionality manifested in art, which Goutam Biswas conceptualizes as 'dialogic mode of Intentionality'. The relationship between aesthetic object and man as its
beholder and creator is the aesthetic space. This is an exegesis of the aesthetic experiences of man following Buber's concept of dialogue. According to Buber "Art" is one of the form of I-thou relationship and therefore, 'a dialogic discourse on art is possible.' Two things are important here: 'dialogue' as the mode of communication taking place between art and man, and nature of this communication. Buber's I-thou relationship integrates the two into one experiential whole. In the first place, the 'dialogue' brings man close to art; it is a ushering that constitutes his subjectivity afresh. This subjective understanding about art is not possible unless there is a pre-existing relation between man and art, which is man's relation with the world entering into a particular transfiguration of the world in an art object. The very act of transfiguration is a particular way of creating the world and its appreciation is a mode of re-entering into a relationship with the world. Transfiguration brings out an expression of man's being in his subjectivity, while setting it in another mode of relationship with the world. This entire phenomenon gets a two-fold relationship woven into one experiential whole, in which an act of creation is subjective as the first fold, while its appreciation, interpretation and understanding is nothing but a 'dialogue', which is the second-fold. These two get merged together and emerge as a new relationship-the I-thou relationship. Listening to a piece of music, reading a poem, etc. are man's act to get at the 'in-itself' of an aesthetic object, but man gets at it by experiencing it in its own mode of existence, which is a "for-itself". It is self-illuminating and therefore, it is no longer an It, but something more than It, a quasi-consciousness. Man's experience of this state comes through his intimate nearness to it, man goes near it through 'dialogue'. Finally when he gets it in his subjectivity, man's ego is not getting it, but a transformed subject gets it; the agency of the art experience shifts to the subject of the in-itself of the aesthetic object in
question i.e. the *quasi-for-itself of the art object*. This transformation of man's ego into the subject of what art-object 'in-itself' consists is it's becoming 'thou'. This becoming is the essence of man's communication with the art-object. It is a transformation of not only the *I-It* into *I-thou*, but a mutual affection of *I* and *thou* both. The becoming of an art-object into 'thou' is the final act of becoming the whole in experience. Both human subject and art object become subjects here in this meeting and this is how the "realm of the between" is created in the domain of art.

Art is concretization of a dialogic relationship with the world, - the relationship that exists even prior to art creation or art activity but is renewed in a conscious human programme of re-creating the world in living it in a dialogical way and transforming the self into a *thou* and the world too into a *thou*. The Intentionality of consciousness is revisited here in both the dimensions of dialogical experience of humans. The whole being of man includes both these dimensions of consciousness and man's consciousness becomes aware of these two dimensions.

Explication of Martin Buber’s phenomenology of dialogue projects the primacy of relationship in a horizontal sense between man and man, man and nature, and man and the *Eternal Thou* i.e. God. Intentionality of consciousness flows here from within the realm of relation or from the point of dissolution of the subject-object bifurcation i.e. *I-It relationship*. Through the method of dialogue and our meta-dialogical reflections on dialogue we are enlightened about the efficacy of dialogical method in revealing both *I-Thou* and *I-It* dimensions constituting the human competence for encountering the world. Knowable object here is replaced with a moral equal who is supposed to have the equal competence to enter into *I-Thou* and *I-It* relation with the
world and other human beings, nature and God. For this replacement a Thou-orientation becomes an imperative for the self who also in the process of this replacement undergoes a transformation and becomes a *Thou*. When the dialogical space is created, intentionality does not any more originate from the self for the constitution of an object; it is the intentionality of a dialogic consciousness, which is *in between* two *Thous*. Further contemplations and reflections on the nature of dialogue by thinkers other than Buber brought about and opened newer dimensions and nuances of the concept of phenomenology of dialogue and dialogical intentionality. In the following two chapters we will be engaged in it from the standpoints of Mikhail Bakhtin and Emmanuel Levinas.
Notes and References


2. Ibid. p-21-22.


4. Ibid., p-93

5. Martin Buber, *BMM* pp-126


12. Ibid. p-115-116