

ROUTLEDGE RESEARCH IN PHENOMENOLOGY

# Philosophy of Mind and Phenomenology

Conceptual and Empirical Approaches

Edited by  
Daniel O. Dahlstrom, Andreas  
Elpidorou, and Walter Hopp



# Philosophy of Mind and Phenomenology

This is a volume that assembles a group of internationally leading scholars to pursue the intersections between the traditions of phenomenology and philosophy of mind; these intersections, although they have largely been passed over so far, appear to be crucial to the continued development of both traditions in their inquiries into the mind and its structure in the twenty-first century.

—*Paul Livingston, University of New Mexico, USA*

This volume identifies and develops how philosophy of mind and phenomenology interact in both conceptual and empirically informed ways. The objective is to demonstrate that phenomenology, as the first-personal study of the contents and structures of our mentality, can provide us with insights into the understanding of the mind and can complement strictly analytical or empirically informed approaches to the study of the mind. Insofar as phenomenology, as the study or science of phenomena, allows the mind to appear, this collection shows how the mind can *reappear* through a constructive dialogue between different ways—phenomenological, analytical, and empirical—of understanding mentality.

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Conceptual and Empirical Approaches

*Edited by Daniel O. Dahlstrom, Andreas Elpidorou, and Walter Hopp*

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# Introduction

Any study of the human mind must come to grips with how things appear to us. Studies (philosophical, scientific, or otherwise) of the mind are, indeed, heavily invested in careful examination of how our surroundings, others, things within our surroundings, mental episodes themselves, and countless other things make themselves present to us, affording themselves in experiences that we undergo, singly and collectively, and that we frequently ascribe to ourselves in the first person. Far from dispensing with experiences understood in this way, the study of the human mind is crucially dependent upon meticulous descriptions of those experiences as they are experienced, from that first-person perspective. To take this step for granted is to egregiously neglect phenomena that are essential to the life of the mind, and to presume to forgo consideration of them is debilitating for the study of the mind. The fact that such phenomena have proved remarkably recalcitrant to reductionist approaches is hardly surprising, since neurological and behavioral investigations that purport to explain away such phenomena must rely upon some first-personal account of them.

The present volume is guided by the foregoing considerations. Its focus on understanding experiences as they are experienced in first-personal terms signals neither a fall back to a Cartesian paradigm of the mind nor the espousal of an antiscientific attitude. First-personal judgments about appearances are taken to be neither infallible nor incorrigible; they are not given unwarranted priority over scientific findings. To insist on the need to examine experiences in light of their first-personal character is simply to acknowledge the ineliminable role that this character plays in the understanding and study of the human condition. Nothing more. Nothing less.

In contemporary usage, ‘phenomenology’ sometimes denotes the specific movement in the history of philosophy initiated by Edmund Husserl in the early twentieth century. Other times it designates whatever first-personally appears to someone, as in the remarks ‘we need to pay attention to the phenomenology of the experience’ or ‘that claim is supported by the phenomenology.’ In this volume we use ‘phenomenology’ in a third (albeit related) sense to designate the sort of examination of human existence that takes the first-personal character of experience to be fundamental to that

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examination. Put simply, phenomenology is for us the study of experiences, including their contents and structures, as they are experienced in the first person. Though the first-personal character of an experience may be implicit or pre-reflective, it is explicit where the subject of experience is able to attribute the contents or structures of the experience to herself by invoking the grammar of the first person, e.g., ‘that’s how I experienced it’ or ‘such was the content of my experience.’ The relevant contents and structures, so experienced, can be considered both immanently and transcendently. Insofar as phenomenology focuses on the immanent character of the contents of experience, it considers mental phenomena with the aim of clarifying their make-up precisely as mental states and experiences. By focusing on the transcendent character of experiences, phenomenology examines mental phenomena insofar as they are world-disclosing or world-constituting. Phenomenology, as we understand it, is thus not restricted to an analysis of phenomena immanent to consciousness. To the contrary, how things appear to us is part of phenomenology’s very subject matter and, hence, such themes as objectivity, world, and intersubjectivity lie within its scope.

The hypothesis or contention that phenomenology plays an indispensable role in our attempt to understand the mind is not taken as an article of faith. The aim of the volume is to make a case for the value, relevance, and, indeed, the indispensability of phenomenology for the study of the mind by bringing to the fore and articulating a multitude of ways in which phenomenology matters and contributes to our understanding of mentality. We do not regard the pursuit of this aim as a substitute for the astute conceptual analysis practiced in contemporary philosophy of mind or for the arduous research that is the staple of progress in neuroscience and cognitive science. At the same time, conceptual analysis and scientific methods, arguably by their very nature, run the risk of failing to do justice to the full character of experience, especially first-personal aspects of it. In putting together this volume, our objective has been to demonstrate that phenomenology yields crucial insights for understanding the mind that complement more strictly analytical and empirically informed approaches to the study of the mind.

The volume consists of a collection of 15 essays. The volume’s topics and the issues treated in its essays have been selected with the aim of addressing (i) traditional and persisting problems in philosophy, (ii) issues that are both timely and the subject of current philosophical debates, (iii) issues largely neglected by phenomenological research, (iv) issues prevalent in philosophy of mind that may benefit from phenomenological analyses, and (v) issues concerning the compatibility of phenomenological analyses of the mind with analyses based upon cognitive and neurological sciences. By bringing together phenomenology, analytic philosophy of mind, and recent empirical findings, the collection is uniquely designed to address important and pressing questions in the philosophy of mind in a systematic and comprehensive manner. In our view, phenomenology, when done well, allows the mind to appear in all its embodied, embedded, and worldly dimensions. With this view of the

prospects of phenomenology in sight, our hope is that the present collection may allow the mind to emerge (in some contexts perhaps to re-emerge) through constructive dialogue among different ways—phenomenological, analytical, and empirical—of understanding the mind.

In the volume's opening essay "Cognitive Phenomenology," **David Woodruff Smith** addresses a central question for this discipline, namely, "What exactly is the subjective or phenomenal character of experience and to what extent are our conscious mental activities invested with such a character?" Smith reviews different theories of *what it is like* to have the experience of being conscious, from conservative theories that limit phenomenality to sensory impressions to liberal theories that extend the phenomenal field across the entire field of consciousness (including consciousness not only of objects and states of affairs, but also of the experiences themselves). Among these liberal theories is classical phenomenology, which enjoys the advantage of incorporating the first-person perspective into its content and methodology. Against the backdrop of this distinctiveness of phenomenology, Smith analyzes the complex structure of what it is like to be conscious, contending that the phenomenal character of experience is only a part of what it is like to have an experience, integrated as it is in a complex structure of intentional and motor content, within a horizon of peripheral meanings and expectations. Smith concludes with a sketch of a modal model of consciousness that differentiates the mode of presentation (the objectual content) from the modality of presentation (modal features characterizing the act of consciousness, as parts of the structure of typical everyday experiences). According to this model, phenomenality, defined as what appears in consciousness, is one such feature, yet it infuses all other such features, including subjectivity, inner awareness, act type, location, object-directedness, and—not least—embodiment.

Among the features that, on Smith's account, characterize the modality of presentation is subjectivity, i.e., what it is like *for me* as the subject living through the experience. The experiential notion of for-me-ness is the centerpiece of "For-me-ness: What It Is and What It Is Not," the contribution by **Dan Zahavi and Uriah Kriegel** to the present volume. Like Smith, they understand this notion as a matter, not of what is experienced, but of how it is experienced, though they also regard it as a constitutive, pre-reflective aspect of the phenomenal character of conscious experiences. Zahavi and Kriegel develop their position and clarify the nature and commitments of the notion of for-me-ness by defending it from a number of pressing objections. First, they counter introspective (Humean) objections to the notion of for-me-ness—ones that maintain that introspection fails to reveal a trace of such notion—by stressing that for-me-ness neither occurs on its own, as some sort of detachable or isolable quale, nor entails a reflective capacity to recognize one's identity as the subject of various experiences. Second, they argue that for-me-ness is compatible with the transparency of experience, so long as it is understood that for-me-ness presents itself pre-reflectively to



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someone, i.e., a particular *me*. Third, they argue that psychopathological cases (specifically, cases of thought-insertion and cases that exemplify a dissociation between introspective access and felt ownership) fail to demonstrate that for-me-ness is an inessential feature of experience. That is because, in both cases, experience still retains its for-me-ness. Finally, Zahavi and Kriegl respond to views according to which for-me-ness is either explanatorily vacuous or dispensable by arguing, *inter alia*, that no adequate description of phenomenal consciousness can dispense with for-me-ness.

Nor can any adequate account of consciousness, phenomenal or otherwise, afford to ignore its embodiment. As **Dermot Moran** demonstrates in his essay “Lived Body, Intercorporeality, Intersubjectivity: The Body as a Phenomenological Theme,” phenomenology has a long and proven track record of recognizing and effectively explicating the pivotal role played by the body in the constitution of every sort of consciousness. Moran shows how phenomenologists, both classical and contemporary, have found the resources to explain not only the body’s own conscious self-constitution, with its inherent incompleteness (thanks to being both *in* the world and *for* the world), but also the embodied character of perceptual consciousness, of empathetic, intersubjective consciousness, and of the conscious habits and practices that make up the cultural world generally.

In her contribution, “The Body and Its Image in the Clinical Encounter,” **Dorothee Legrand** focuses on the encounter between the clinician and the patient as a form of ethical practice at the juncture of jointly irreducible experiences of the body. Paradigmatic in this connection is the clinician’s increasing reliance on visual imagery and its impact on the patient’s experience. Among the benefits of the reliance on medical imagery is that it confirms objectively the patient’s reported illness and often relieves the patient of any felt responsibility for his or her condition. The reliance on medical imagery also carries risks, however. The patient may assume a passive role vis-à-vis his or her illness. The patient may also rely less on his or her own experience in assessing his or her condition, thereby creating a rift between the lived body and the objective body as revealed in imagery. Drawing on Husserl’s analysis of image-consciousness, Legrand highlights the clinical implications of attending to the difference between the body-image and the body, both lived and living (“not dead yet”) (93). While failing to attend to this difference can lead to distressing experiences, maintaining the gap “between the body seen scientifically and the body felt subjectively” opens “a space for the cooperation between the clinician’s expertise and the patient’s experience,” where full priority is accorded “neither to the clinician’s expertise nor to the patient’s experience” (90). Crucial to this process is the notion of an open image, where the body appears not in but through the image precisely as what constitutively dissembles it. Accordingly, Legrand maintains that the clinician would be able to read the medical image of the body only by prioritizing the living and lived body—that is, the body that suffers, and that can be cured or taken care of. Ultimately, Legrand holds that medical

images can be redeeming insofar as they force us to come to grips with the multiple dimensions of our experience of ourselves—our lived body and our living body, our life and our death—that cannot be integrated with one another.

In several contributions to the present volume, Merleau-Ponty's account of embodied perception and habituation plays an important role, at times central (e.g., Smith), other times complementary (e.g., Freeman). This importance reflects his broad influence on the treatment of issues at the intersection of philosophy of mind and phenomenology. In "Merleau-Ponty: Actions, Habits, and Skilled Expertise," **Komarine Romdenh-Romluc** turns our attention to the promise of his treatment of agency. Through differentiation of the concepts of skill and habit, Romdenh-Romluc demonstrates the resources in Merleau-Ponty's account of agency for avoiding both empiricist and intellectualist shortcomings in contemporary accounts of action. Merleau-Ponty succeeds, she contends, in giving an analysis of agency that reduces it neither to a subpersonal account of the mechanisms underlying it nor to a brute bodily movement guided by thought. A central implication of her revised version of Merleau-Ponty's account is the insufficiency of standard distinctions between actions and happenings or between personal level analysis and subpersonal level analysis to capture the nuances of human agency.

**Shaun Gallagher** begins his entry, "The Minds of Others," by recounting the embodied character of at least some aspects of mental life and the difference between the access we have to our own minds and bodies and the access we have to those of others. He argues that, in contrast to much contemporary thinking about intersubjectivity, phenomenology has the distinctive capacity to hold these two basic insights "in a positive and productive tension" (117). At odds with the prevailing view that our only access to other minds is a matter of inference or simulation, phenomenologists have traditionally contended that we have direct perceptual access to the other's intentions and emotions, thanks to our largely embodied and situated interactions. This general debate is played out, Gallagher shows, in theoretical approaches to empathy, as he examines approaches based upon simulation theory before turning to those based upon phenomenology. While there are several variations in each sort of approach, he identifies certain questionable suppositions of a prominent variation of the simulation approach (e.g., the supposition that empathizer and the target of the empathy are alike in an affective state and the supposition of an isomorphism between these affective states). He also notes the lack of uniformity in the characterization of empathy, some simulation theorists regarding it as a low-level (basic) phenomenon, others as a high-level phenomenon. By contrast, phenomenological approaches to empathy commonly take it as a low-level phenomenon, a direct, albeit incomplete, experience of others (i.e., an experience of them in all their transcendence), not involving any sort of simulation (though they also disagree among themselves, as Gallagher points out, about how primary a form of

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intersubjectivity empathy is). The concentration on low-level empathy raises the question of how high-level, more complex forms might arise. Gallagher ends his essay by demonstrating the prospects that narrative practices hold for developing the sort of non-theoretical understanding of others that lends itself to more sophisticated forms of empathy.

In his “Interoception and Self-awareness: An Exploration in Interoceptive Phenomenology,” **Daniel O. Dahlstrom** makes a case for construing interoception (experiences that emerge in concert with internal states of the body) as a rudimentary form of self-awareness. After introducing the phenomenological distinctiveness of interoception in the context of neuroscientific findings and conjectures, he contrasts it with certain reflexive experiences and reviews some of Husserl’s salient treatments of interoceptive phenomena. Conceiving his paper as an exploration of the very idea of interoceptive phenomenology (its prospects and challenges), Dahlstrom also entertains potential objections to the project.

**Walter Hopp**’s essay “Phenomenal Conservatism and the Principle of All Principles” compares and contrasts Husserl’s Principle of All Principles and Michael Huemer’s Principle of Phenomenal Conservatism. The former grounds all justified belief in the experience of *fulfillment*, in which an object is given or intuited as it is meant. The latter grounds all justified belief in *seemings*, which are distinguished by their forcefulness or assertiveness. Hopp argues that, despite some notable similarities, the two principles differ in their content, their implications, and in the theories of intentionality and justification underlying them. Hopp discusses cases in which the two theories give different verdicts regarding the justification of a subject’s beliefs and argues that, in each case, Husserl’s theory is correct. He also argues that the phenomenal conservative has no account of why a given content would or would not be accompanied by a seeming. Husserl’s account, by contrast, treats seemings as rationally appropriate responses to the consciousness of evidence, thereby securing an intelligible connection between contents and seemings. Finally, Hopp argues that Husserl’s view does not constitute a restricted version of phenomenal conservatism, since acts of fulfillment are not a species of seemings, and, even if they were, the features in virtue of which they justify beliefs are not the features in virtue of which they are seemings (a related point is made by both Audi 2013 and Conee 2013).

It is well known that Heidegger, in a stridently anti-Cartesian spirit, eschews any talk of consciousness in favor of being-in-the-world. For this reason, among others, scholars have generally taken a dim view of the prospects of developing along Heideggerian lines a robust and rigorous account of phenomena traditionally associated with emotional life. In “Defending a Heideggerian Account of Mood,” **Lauren Freeman** adopts a contrarian posture toward this widespread view. After glossing Heidegger’s general account of moods, Freeman outlines four problems besetting it (its inconsistencies, its failure to attend to underlying neurological structures, its limitedness and questionable claims for the priority of certain moods, and its neglect of the

body) and articulates ways in which Heidegger's account would need to be modified in order to address these problems. Without gainsaying the persistence and importance of certain shortcomings in Heidegger's account, Freeman offers contemporary readers reasons for holding onto a Heideggerian concept of mood as a fundamentally disclosive and existential attunement to the world. Ultimately, Freeman advances a Heideggerian account of our emotional life that is both congenial to a number of Heidegger's insights concerning the manner in which we find ourselves in the world and amenable to a dialogue with the empirical sciences.

In his highly influential *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* (1719), Jean Baptiste Du Bos argues that these arts are founded on an innate need to escape ennui. He taps successfully into the conventional wisdom, then as now, that boredom is a highly pejorative phenomenon. In his "The Significance of Boredom: A Sartrean Reading," **Andreas Elpidorou** challenges this conventional wisdom by arguing that boredom is not a problem but a solution. Taking his cues from a close reading of Sartre's phenomenological theory of emotions and complementary empirical research, Elpidorou demonstrates the theory's potential for capturing the character and positive significance of boredom. Just as emotions, according to Sartre, are ways of apprehending difficulties presented by one's situation and offering transformative, unreflected solutions to those difficulties, so boredom is a response to a perceived mismatch between our desires and what a situation affords. Elpidorou accordingly argues that boredom, far from being a passive and inconsequential or trivial state, is a regulatory state that has the double function of informing us of the presence of an unsatisfactory situation and of motivating us to escape it. In sum, on Elpidorou's account, boredom matters, and it matters because it keeps us in touch with our projects.

The recent resurgence of interest in Sartre's work and especially in its connections to debates within contemporary analytic philosophy is witnessed not only in the contribution by Elpidorou but in two more essays in the volume. In "Knowing One's Own Desires," **Jonathan Webber** engages in an intricate dialogue with Richard Moran's theory of self-knowledge and Sartre's account of phenomenological reflection and motivation. Webber notes that works on self-knowledge in the Anglophone tradition have tended to focus on how one knows one's beliefs or intentions and have thereby neglected issues concerning knowledge of one's own desires. In an attempt to rectify this omission, Webber clarifies Moran's account of first-personal authority over beliefs as consisting in the deliberative authority to form one's own beliefs and examines whether such an account can be applied to the case of desires. Webber's analysis shows that, even if Moran's account can be extended to the case of desires, it requires that we already have epistemic access to our own desires. But how do desires feature in experience in a way that allows us to have access to them? Webber finds an answer to this question in the work of Sartre. According to Sartre, we do not generally experience our desires as inner forces. Rather, our desires

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feature in experience insofar as they affect the manner in which the world appears to us. Consequently, to become aware of our desires, we must shift our attention from the world itself to our experience of the world. It is precisely such a shift of attention that grounds direct epistemic access to our desires. Webber concludes that epistemic authority over desires is essential to rational agency, since in order to shape one's desires rationally, one needs to be aware of one's other desires.

The distinction between conscious and unconscious experiences suggests a natural limit to the scope of phenomenological analyses. Phenomenology can study and analyze only that which first-personally appears to the subject. This intuitive understanding of the scope and limits of phenomenological analyses suggests that dreaming experiences are experiences that are indeed amenable to phenomenological analyses. Just like many of our waking experiences, dreaming experiences are conscious and phenomenally so: there is something that it is like to have a dream, in the same or similar way that there is something that it is like to drink coffee or to lift a heavy suitcase. Yet, dreaming experiences pose difficulties to the phenomenologist—difficulties that are inherent to the nature of dreams. Unlike most of our waking experiences, dreaming experiences do not admit of the same kind of inspection and scrutiny that perceptual or imaginative experiences permit. For one, we are not free to stop and marvel at our dreaming experiences. In turn, dreaming experiences tend to be non-linear and fail to meet many of our everyday expectations. While dreaming, we often find ourselves in one place, but only a second later and without reason, we are transported elsewhere. Or consider a typical example of a nightmare. Nightmares tend to be terrifying partly because the objects of our nightmares do not behave in a predictable or expected manner; stones are transformed into animals and persons turn into monsters, suddenly and unexpectedly. Finally, dreaming experiences tend to be elusive. Not only are we often unaware that we are dreaming, but also our capacity to recollect what occurred in our dreams is rather limited. Despite the inherent difficulties that dreaming experiences pose to the phenomenologist, dreaming experiences is a topic replete with phenomenological insights and one that gives rise to challenging and pressing questions. For example, what is the nature of dreaming experiences? Is it perceptual, imaginary, or something else entirely? What is the relationship between the person who is dreaming and the audience (and often protagonist) of the dream? What kind of belief characterizes the dream? Finally, does the dream entail a temporary loss of the world? In "Eyes Wide Shut: Sartre's Phenomenology of Dreaming," **Nicolas de Warren** offers an original and provocative reading of Sartre's *The Imaginary* with the aim of answering the aforementioned questions. By analyzing both the character of dreaming experiences and the differences between dreaming and other types of experiences (e.g., perceptual experiences and wakeful imagining), de Warren's essay makes a valuable contribution to the literature on dreams—one which we hope to be of interest

both to readers already invested in the phenomenological tradition and to those approaching the nature of dreams from a more analytic perspective.

Dreaming experiences are not the only type of experience that has remained in the margins of phenomenological analyses. Auditory perception has also been largely neglected. Often, the neglect of auditory perception is the product of the underlying assumption that the results that one can draw from the examination of visual experiences are ones that extend and are applicable to other modalities. Such an assumption, however, cannot be supported either by the methods or by the results of phenomenology. Indeed, in “Hearing, Seeing, and Music in the Middle,” **Dan Lloyd** makes that contention evident. Lloyd shows clearly that phenomenology, as a call to the things themselves, does not restrict things to visible things. Through a detailed phenomenological analysis, he explicates the ways in which the “world” of vision differs from that of hearing. The former affords a world of objects, whereas the latter affords one of events. Lloyd articulates the differences in these two types of “worlds” by engaging in what he calls “ecological phenomenology”—a type of phenomenology that is inspired by the seminal work of J.J. Gibson (208). But Lloyd does not stop there. He supplements his ecological phenomenology with “transducer phenomenology,” that is, an investigation into the nature of properties of our sensory systems and the ways in which such properties can give rise to salient phenomenological differences (212). The complementary work of ecology and transducer phenomenology leads Lloyd to optimism regarding the prospects of neurophenomenology and a potential solution to the “hard” problem of consciousness. That is because Lloyd’s analysis shows that a number of important phenomenological distinctions emerge as either ecological or neural differences. Lloyd’s essay concludes with an insightful examination into the nature and significance of music. Building on the contrastive “worlds” of seeing and hearing, Lloyd argues that music falls somewhere between seeing and hearing. Music, in its repetitions and variations, mimics the patterns of exploration of the visual world; it creates sound objects that, unlike naturally occurring sounds, extend and persist in time.

In “Prospects for a Naturalized Phenomenology,” **Jeffrey Yoshimi** takes up an issue that is of crucial importance to understanding both the nature of phenomenology as a philosophical endeavor and its potential connections to the empirical sciences of the mind. In his contribution, Yoshimi both examines and assesses the different ways in which phenomenology can be reconciled with the methods and naturalistic assumptions of the empirical sciences of the mind. Yoshimi starts by providing a helpful synopsis of Husserl’s attitude towards psychology and shows that Husserlian transcendental phenomenology is incompatible with the project of naturalizing the mind. Yoshimi then moves away from Husserl’s conception of phenomenology and its relationship to psychology and considers two different attitudes regarding the relationship between phenomenology and the empirical study of the mind. The first assigns to phenomenology methodological priority

over science; the second, a more recent attitude, views phenomenology and science as “equal partners” in an interdisciplinary attempt to understand mentality and human nature (300). Yoshimi evaluates the prospects of both of these attitudes and concludes that phenomenology, as a historical movement, has not yielded any novel or unprecedented methodological insights. Still, Yoshimi does find value in the practice of phenomenology. Phenomenology is replete with detailed descriptions regarding the nature of human experiences and, as such, it can supplement in important ways scientific attempts to explain and understand the mind. The descriptions of phenomenology, Yoshimi concludes, can be employed and used in developing a promising form of naturalized phenomenology.

Yoshimi’s deflationary reading of phenomenology’s contributions to the empirical sciences is resisted by **Mark Rowlands’s** essay. In “Bringing Philosophy Back: 4e Cognition and the Argument from Phenomenology,” Rowlands argues in support of vehicle externalism by using phenomenological resources. Vehicle externalism is a thesis regarding the constitution and location of mental processes. It holds that the *vehicles* of some mental states and processes—i.e., the physical machinery that enables a subject to possess mental states and run mental processes—can be located (at least, partly) outside the subject’s central nervous system. Vehicle externalism, in other words, maintains that the structures in virtue of which mental states and processes occur can (and, in fact, often do) involve bodily and worldly elements as their mereological constituents.

It is common to defend vehicle externalism on the basis of a liberal form of functionalism. If mental states or processes are individuated with respect to the role that they play within the mental and behavioral economy of a subject, then the location of the vehicles of such states and processes is rendered (at least in theory) irrelevant. The acceptance of functionalism, it seems, is only a short stop away from vehicle externalism. However, the use of functionalism, in attempts to establish vehicle externalism, has been met with great resistance. Most influentially, Rupert (2004, 2009) has argued that functionalist proponents of vehicle externalism are faced with a choice: they can individuate mental states or processes in terms of fine-grained or coarse-grained functional profiles (cf. Adams and Aizawa 2008, Sprevak 2009). Yet neither type of individuation speaks in support of vehicle externalism. Although there are many attempts to save vehicle externalism from Rupert’s critique (see, e.g., Clark 2008 and Wheeler 2010), Rowlands is mindful of both the controversy and the limitations that surround a functionalist defense of vehicle externalism. He offers a novel argument in support of vehicle externalism by drawing on the work of both Frege and Husserl. Rowlands distinguishes between two ways of thinking about our intentional states. Intentional states can be thought of as the objects of our awareness, but they can also be thought of as the items in virtue of which we are aware of worldly objects and mental episodes. For Rowlands, this latter understanding of the nature of intentional states is crucial. First, it



brings to the fore the fundamental and essential character of intentionality. Intentionality, according to Rowlands, is a revealing or disclosing activity. Second, understanding intentionality as a type of revealing or disclosing activity shows, Rowlands argues, that the various versions of extended, embodied, and enactive approaches to the mind are straightforward and even obvious consequences of this view of intentionality. If successful, Rowland's essay demonstrates the value of phenomenology and its consequences for the empirical study of the mind. It provides the necessary theoretical support for extended, embodied, and enactive approaches to mentality.

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Section I

# Introspection and Phenomenal Consciousness



# 1 Cognitive Phenomenology

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## 1. THE PROBLEM OF COGNITIVE PHENOMENOLOGY

An intriguing controversy has developed in philosophy of mind, a controversy that helps to bring out crucial phenomenological features in perception, thought, and action, and thereby helps to define the discipline of phenomenology itself.

At issue is the *phenomenal character* of various types of experience. Some theorists maintain that only purely sensory experiences have a “phenomenology,” i.e., a phenomenal character of *what it is like* to experience that mental state. Other theorists hold that purely cognitive experiences of thinking also have a distinctive phenomenal character, albeit non-sensory. And some theorists assume that every conscious experience has a bona fide phenomenal character, distinctive of that type of experience. Even conscious volitional bodily actions, it is held, have a character of what it is like to do such-and-such. . . . In recent philosophy of mind, the notion of “what it is like” to have a given type of experience has focused discussion on phenomenological aspects of consciousness, as opposed to metaphysical aspects of the relation of mind to brain. The “what it is like” idiom took firm root in Thomas Nagel’s “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?” (Nagel 1974). Nagel used the idiom, aptly and precisely, to bring out “the subjective character of experience.” What exactly is that character and how far does it extend in our experience?

The controversy over “cognitive phenomenology” concerns the question of how phenomenal character distributes over a variety of conscious mental activities. The debate over these phenomena helps us to see what is the role of phenomenology itself in the philosophy or theory of mind. And the aim of the present essay is inter alia to delimit the discipline of phenomenology and its role in our emerging theory of consciousness. Indeed, as cognitive neuroscience grows in increasingly interesting ways, the “hard problem” in the science of consciousness looms evermore: how a given type of *neural* process yields a given type of *subjective* experience, or how conscious *experience* is grounded in the *neural correlate* of consciousness.

Indeed, the hard problem calls for a sharp account of the very discipline of phenomenology.

Phenomenology was launched by Edmund Husserl in his *Logical Investigations* (1900–01), ramified with a “transcendental” twist in his *Ideas I* (1913), and amplified further as in his last writings in the *Crisis* (1935–38). Maurice Merleau-Ponty opened his *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) with this query: “What is phenomenology? It may seem strange that we must continue to ask this question half a century after Husserl’s first works. Nonetheless, it is far from being resolved” (1945/2012, 7). Indeed! The core conception of phenomenology, for both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, may be glossed as follows: Phenomenology is the study of consciousness—the many varieties of conscious experience—as experienced from the first-person perspective. Husserl focused on “pure” consciousness, bracketing the surrounding world, especially the natural world as “mathematized” in physics. Merleau-Ponty brought into phenomenology issues of physiology, considering how conscious experience in perception and action are related to the body, including how the body is experienced in perception. Today the neural correlate or substrate of consciousness is explored by tracking information-processing signals across different parts of the brain, featuring the thalamus and cortex in interaction. Still, conscious experience, or what analysis tells us about consciousness itself, is what a theory of neural correlates is to explain. So we return to phenomenology proper for that analysis. (Compare Evan Thompson (2015) on phenomenological perspectives from ancient Buddhism through twentieth-century phenomenology and into contemporary neuroscience in the work of Francisco Varela’s conception of “neurophenomenology.”)

We note at the outset two uses of the term “phenomenology.” In the classical use following Husserl (and Brentano), *phenomenology* is the study of consciousness as experienced from the first-person perspective. In a recent usage (as above), the “phenomenology” of a conscious mental state or activity is the phenomenal character of what it is like to experience that activity. I shall use the term here in the traditional way to refer to the discipline as just defined. Occasionally, I shall use the term in scare quotes to refer to the phenomenal character of an experience. To link the two uses, we may note a similar dual use: physics is the discipline that studies, for example, the gravitational force that governs the motion of the moon around the earth, and we may accordingly speak of the “physics” of the earth’s pull on the moon, meaning the physical force of gravitation at work.

(The controversy over cognitive phenomenology is well mapped in Bayne and Montague 2011, *Cognitive Phenomenology*. Here I shall draw out key issues formulated there, and I shall draw upon key results in Husserlian phenomenology, the better to address the controversy. However, I’ll try to lay out the relevant issues in their own right, without assuming the reader’s familiarity with details in either Husserl’s phenomenology or the recent discussions of cognitive phenomenology.)

## 2. PHENOMENAL CHARACTER: FROM CONSCIOUSLY SENSING TO CONSCIOUSLY THINKING

Consider a visual experience of seeing purple, just purple, in a phenomenal field filled with purple (nothing more), a *Ganzfeld* of purple haze if you will. We all know roughly what that type of experience is like. Well, it's like looking upward into the blue sky on a clear day, seeing nothing but the expanse of pure blue: that is, as an Impressionist painter may look at this pure blue—as opposed to, say, looking into the clear blue sky and seeing a pelican diving out of the blue toward the ocean. In such an idealized color-experience, the phenomenal character of the visual experience is that of simply seeing purple, or simply seeing blue.

The most conservative theory of phenomenal character holds that sensations—visual sensations, auditory sensations, pain sensations, etc.—have a phenomenal character, but no other types of mental phenomena have a bona fide phenomenality. Emotions might join the list, with a “felt” character; perhaps, as William James considered, emotion is a sensory experience where, say, anxiety or anger or joy is felt as a bodily sensation. But let us stay here with the five sensory modalities, including visual color sensation. As this theory is worked out, an experience with cognitive, specifically, conceptual content is analyzed as a complex experience in which only a sensory component has a bona fide phenomenal character. In this theory we might hear a Humean model of the mind: there are sensory impressions (say, a visual impression of purple), there are ideas associated with sensory impressions (say, the idea of a purple automobile), and there are further ideas logically inferred from those more basic mental contents (say, the idea of an automobile's engine). On this neo-Humean model, then, phenomenal character distributes over the sensory impressions, but the other mental contents are at work in the mind without benefit of “what it is like” to have and to “feel” those further contents coursing through your mind. (A well-defined theory along these lines is expounded in Prinz 2011, in Bayne and Montague 2011.)

A variant of this broadly empiricist theory of the mind makes room for cognitive states of thinking. Consider my thinking that VW buses were popular with hippies: specifically, I think that purple VW buses were popular in the Haight-Ashbury district in the summer of 1967. On the extended empiricist model, this experience may include a sensory image of purple that crosses my mind in so thinking, but my experience of so thinking does not itself carry any phenomenal character—just note the content of the proposition I am thinking. Ah, but now add a further twist to the content of my thinking. In the course of my so thinking, I experience a sensory image of the sentence “Purple VW buses were popular in the Haight-Ashbury district in the summer of 1967.” A further extension of the conservative model holds that, as the linguistic image of that sentence courses through my mind, my hearing the sentence—an auditory image in my mind's ear, as it were—is

a sensory component of my thinking. That sensory component, says the extended theory, has a properly phenomenal character. Further, says this theory, the whole act of thinking includes a processing of the proposition expressible by the imaged sentence, but that semantic processing has no phenomenal character. On this view, within my experience of so thinking, only my auditory image of the sentence has a character of what-it-is-like, but that image is itself a part of the act of thinking, the richer conceptual part being beyond the range of anything sensory and so lacking in phenomenal character. So goes an extended conservative theory of the contents of thinking, conservative about the range of phenomenality. This theory has some plausibility with regard to thinking in words. (An articulate theory along these lines is presented in Tye and Wright 2011, in Bayne and Montague 2011. Tye's so-called representationalist view of perception perhaps underlies this model, but here I'd simply like to abstract a neo-conservative theory of phenomenal character along the lines sketched, without commitment to some type of "representation" implemented in a causal flow of information.)

Consider next the case of hearing speech. I hear someone say, "VW buses were popular in the Sixties." I hear not just the sound pattern. I hear, immediately, what is said: I hear the meaning or content of the sentence. Indeed, the content is so apparent that I may not really notice the exact words spoken, or the speaker's mellowing accent. So, the more liberal theory holds, this experience, hearing the spoken utterance, has a properly phenomenal character, which is that of my hearing what is said. That is, I hear the meaning, not only the phonemes (which do not grab my attention at all), and that is what it is like to experience speech in my familiar language. (See Strawson 2011 and Siewert 2011, in Bayne and Montague 2011.)

But then, the liberal theory continues, when I myself think, in words, "VW buses were popular in the Sixties," well, my cognitive experience in so thinking has its own phenomenal character. There is more than the pure auditory image of the words coursing through my consciousness, carrying a bona fide phenomenal character. For, so goes the expansive line, I consciously think *that VW buses were popular in the Sixties*, and this act of thinking has its own distinctive character of what it is like to consciously think just that thought. For that thought itself—not a sensory image of the words, but the very thought or proposition itself—is coursing through my consciousness with a distinctive phenomenal character of what it is like to think just that thought. Even assuming that I think the thought "in" my variant of the English language, it is the thought itself that is coursing through my consciousness: garbed in language and carrying its semantic import. (This view is sharply developed in Pitt 2004 and furthered in Pitt 2011, in Bayne and Montague 2011.)

Even an experience of action has its proper phenomenal character, some hold. Consider what it is like for a baseball pitcher to throw a sinking curve ball. There is the kinesthetic feel as he grips the ball in a certain way, and

the feel as he winds up and delivers the pitch, but there is also his conscious volition to wend the ball into the inside corner of the batter's strike zone. A specific version of all this is wholly present in the consciousness of the pitcher as he executes his favored pitch in a World Series game. On the expansive theory of consciousness, the pitcher's conscious volitional bodily action has a phenomenal character of what it is like to throw this pitch. (On conative or agentive character, see Horgan 2011, in Bayne and Montague 2011.)

Finally, we note the most expansive theory of phenomenal character. Every conscious experience, on this view, has its own distinctive phenomenal character: that is just part of what it is for a mental activity to be *conscious*. I take it that this view was the basic assumption in the writings of Franz Brentano, William James, Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Aron Gurwitsch, et al., and perhaps their predecessors from Descartes onward. In this classical view, we may say that the *phenomenal field* just is the field of consciousness, the field of consciously experienced "phenomena," of what appears in consciousness: the field of trees and people and events and states-of-affairs *as presented phenomenally* in conscious experiences of seeing or thinking or acting. On this classical view, I take it, each particular experience has its own character of what it is like for the subject to enact or live through that experience, enjoying phenomenal appearances of that of which the subject is conscious in the given type of experience.

Those classical writers did not feature the more recent idiom "what it is like" (canonized in Nagel 1974), but the shoe fits. Following Husserl et al.: What it is like to have a particular experience is just the way consciousness appears *in that experience*, that is, paradigmatically, the way *consciousness of such-and-such* appears. Thus, what it is like to experience consciousness of a certain object features the way that object is "given" in consciousness, the way it is *presented phenomenally* in the relevant experience. That is, whether the object of consciousness is a purple VW bus presented through a visual percept, or a state of affairs presented through a propositional content such as the thought that VW buses were popular in the Sixties, or one's action presented through one's conscious intention in driving the VW bus—that is, whatever type of object, state of affairs, or action is phenomenally "given" in consciousness through a relevant content. To mark out the array of things presented in one's consciousness in a given experience, perhaps over a certain stretch of time, Husserl spoke of the "horizon" of meaning presenting the subject's "surrounding world" as experienced (*das Umwelt*). Similarly, Merleau-Ponty spoke of the subject's "phenomenal field" (*le champ phénoménal*) centered on the subject's operant body. And in the same vein Gurwitsch spoke of the "field of consciousness," looking to Gestalt psychology joined with Husserlian phenomenology. Here I cast a wide net to capture the broad notion of a *field* of things *phenomenally presented* in conscious experience. (See: Husserl 1913, *Ideas I*, and Husserl 1952, *Ideas II* (first draft: 1912); Merleau-Ponty 1945,



*Phenomenology of Perception*; Gurwitsch 1964, *The Field of Consciousness*, and Gurwitsch 1985, *Marginal Consciousness*.)

I would note further that, on the classical model, consciousness of this-or-that characteristically includes a form of *self-consciousness*, i.e., an “inner” consciousness of the subject’s “outwardly” directed consciousness of a given tree or person or state of affairs or what have you. Arguably, I note, *phenomenality* then embraces both outward awareness and inner awareness. Accordingly, the *object* of consciousness is phenomenally given, part of the phenomenal field, given in perception or thought or action; but, furthermore, the *experience itself* is phenomenally given, albeit in a different way, in inner awareness. Both forms of awareness make their appearance, I hold, in the *phenomenal character* of the experience: in what-it-is-like to have that experience. That is, on what I’m glossing as the classical model. We return to this issue below.

In reviewing these theories of phenomenal character, we contrast the more restrictive or conservative views with the more expansive or liberal views. These contrasting views of phenomenal character carry more or less explicit theories about the mind. But how, from the first-person phenomenological perspective, do we analyze the experiential character of our own consciousness? The controversy over cognitive phenomenology throws a spotlight on the ways our *theories* of consciousness inflect our phenomenological analysis of consciousness *as lived*. Are the opposing views of phenomenal character, then, hopelessly *theory-laden*, whereas pure phenomenology was designed to bracket empirical theories about experience?

It might be argued that the conservative restriction of phenomenality to pure sensation is driven by a broadly Humean, empiricist theory of mind aided and abetted by a twentieth-century fixation on sense data. And it might be argued that the liberal extension of phenomenality to purely cognitive acts of thinking is driven by a broadly Cartesian, rationalist theory of mind transformed by a twentieth-century fixation on linguistic propositional content. Indeed, while I am sympathetic to the expansive classical view of phenomenal character, I wonder about the background motivations and genealogy of the opposing poles in the debate over cognitive phenomenology. Still, I think a deeper level of motivation concerns the very nature of phenomenology itself. At stake is the relation between first- and third-person perspectives on consciousness per se.

### 3. COMPETING THEORIES OF PHENOMENALITY

It is quite regular in philosophy to talk of competing *theories* about the mind. But *phenomenal character* is supposed to be something we directly experience: *what it is like* to experience a given type of conscious experience. From the first-person perspective, phenomenal character is a matter of what *appears* in my experience as I consciously see or think or intentionally-do

such-and-such. At stake are the “phenomena” of consciousness itself, the way consciousness appears in and to itself. Our theory of phenomenal character would seem to be a third-person account of the first-person character of conscious experience. What then shall we make of the relation between our *theory* of consciousness and the *phenomenal* character we are theorizing about? The discipline of phenomenology finds, correctly I believe, that we do indeed experience phenomenality in the first-person structure of consciousness; if so, there arises the question posed of how to capture first-personal structure in what may seem to be a third-personal form of theorizing.

Husserl’s conception of phenomenology developed as a science of lived consciousness informed by theoretical analysis of the structure and intentional content or meaning (*Sinn*) of lived experience itself. An evolution in the very idea of phenomenology can be traced in the historical development of Husserl’s philosophical system: from (i) the *Logical Investigations*, where logical semantic theory leads into intentionality theory; into (ii) *Ideas I*, where a “transcendental” theme inaugurates the method of epoché or bracketing; and onward through (iii) the posthumous *Crisis*, where genetic or historical aspects of ideal meanings are emphasized. In any case, our task here is not the interpretation of Husserl’s system, but the interpretation of crucial features of consciousness itself. How does the phenomenological structure we *experience* in our own consciousness—from phenomenality to intentionality—relate to our phenomenological *theory* about consciousness? (Compare J.N. Mohanty’s magisterial two-volume study of Husserl’s development, in Mohanty 2008 and 2011; Smith 2013b on the evolution of Husserl’s philosophy, including the structure of noematic content; and Smith 2014 on aspects of phenomenological methodology in the philosophy of mind.)

John Searle likes to say that appearance and reality coincide in the case of consciousness. In his own words: “. . . consciousness consists in the appearances themselves. *Where appearance is concerned we cannot make the appearance-reality distinction because the appearance is the reality*” (Searle 1992, 122, Searle’s italics). Again, “The ‘illusion’ of consciousness is identical with consciousness” (Searle 1998, 56). Well said! The way my experience *appears* to me just is the way my experience *is*. That is the point of the science of “phenomena” (= appearances), as Husserl conceived the theoretical discipline of phenomenology. Indeed, as Descartes foresaw, to perform the act of thinking (= consciously seeing, imagining, cogitating, wishing, etc.) is *eo ipso* to experience the essence of thinking (= consciousness). “I think [consciously], therefore I am [subject of that conscious thinking].” Descartes’ *cogito* is thus the opening salvo of phenomenology per se. And, basically, that is the point of bracketing for Husserl: to bring to the fore the lived character of consciousness regardless of the actuality of what our experience presents or “intends.” The “phenomena” of experience are before us, ready for our developing theory of consciousness. . . . And yet

today we know that, as neurophenomenology recognizes, our lived conscious experience is grounded or dependent on the complex neural interactions in our brains as information flows back and forth among thalamus and cortex and beyond. (On consciousness and its appearance, compare Searle 2004, 93–11; Smith 2004a; Husserl 1913, *Ideas* I, §§ 27–34. On the conception of neurophenomenology, see Petitot et al. 1999. For an overview of current cognitive neuroscience, making room for consciousness per se, see Baars and Gage 2013. And compare Thompson 2015.)

Gradually, along these lines in our theory of mind, the *first-person* perspective has come more clearly into view. As philosophy of mind unfolded within the tradition of analytic philosophy, in the wake of Gilbert Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* (1949) and more recently the functionalist paradigm, philosophical theories of mind have approached the nature of mind from a third-person perspective, just as physics and the natural sciences approach natural phenomena from a neutral third-person perspective. This perspective goes without saying in physics, since anyone is supposed to be able to reproduce the observations and theoretical analyses of the phenomena under investigation. Yet, as we turn to the phenomena of consciousness, the first-person perspective comes to the fore. Indeed, part of the very essence of a conscious experience is the way the subject of consciousness, the "I" or first-person subject, experiences that phenomenon: this aspect of experience is, as phenomenologists have held, constitutive of consciousness itself. And, accordingly, the role of phenomenal character has gradually come to the fore in philosophy of mind: approaching mind initially from a third-personal perspective as in cognitive science. (A historical perspective on the relation between phenomenology and analytic philosophy of mind is the Introduction to Smith and Thomasson 2005. The increasingly salient roles of phenomenal character in recent theory of mind are charted by David Chalmers in Chalmers 2010.)

The aim in philosophy of mind is to produce a theory that accounts for various features of mental activity. In the age of physics and now of neuroscience, a guiding motif—indeed, ever since Descartes' *cogito*—has been the enigma of how mental activity is related to brain activity. Only gradually, however, have problems of *consciousness* per se emerged as centers of philosophical analysis. And only recently, and fitfully, has the first-person perspective come into the game in philosophy of mind in the tradition of analytic philosophy.

By contrast, as in the work of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, et al., phenomenologists have consistently and persistently worked from the first-person perspective (often explicitly by name). Both the content and the methodology of phenomenology involve the first-person perspective. Accordingly, where phenomenology develops a *theory* about various aspects of consciousness, the first-person perspective is built into the theory itself. On the one hand, the *methodology* of phenomenology proceeds from the first-person perspective. On the other hand, the structure of consciousness itself—the *object*

*of study* in phenomenology—embodies a first-person perspective. Thus, an act of consciousness has the first-person structure < *I* see/think/do . . . >. And in phenomenological reflection, I turn my attention from the things-of-which-I-am-conscious to the experienced fact that I am conscious of those things. Husserl’s method of bracketing is, most simply, the practice of stepping back from the existing surrounding world and into the position of the subject of consciousness, wherein “*I*” consciously see or think or do such-and-such. (On first-person methodology, compare Lynne Rudder Baker 2014 and Smith 2013b.)

It may be charged that phenomenology should not be called *theory* at all. For a scientific theory looks at its phenomena from an external perspective, whereas phenomenology looks at its phenomena from an internal perspective—literally “phenomena” or what appears in consciousness. Nonetheless, Husserl explicitly began his conception of phenomenology with an account of the “theory of theories” in the *Logical Investigations*, where the Prolegomena set the scene for his development of the phenomenological *theory* of intentionality. Phenomenology is unique among the sciences, in that the subject matter of phenomenology—consciousness itself—is by definition a first-personal structure. So phenomenology is a form of theory but, uniquely, a theory of lived “phenomena.” (The role of theory per se in Husserl’s development of phenomenology is spelled out in Smith 2013b.)

Now, among the several theories of phenomenal character noted above, each has its own theoretical commitments. The claim about where phenomenal character is properly distributed, according to a given theory, is evidently theory-driven—driven by specific assumptions in the relevant *theory* of phenomenal character. Indeed, that is why I have characterized the several views of phenomenality as “theories.”

But *of course* the philosophy of consciousness is infused with interpretive theory about the structure of consciousness. The problem, manifest in the problematic of cognitive phenomenology, is how the *lived* experience of consciousness and the *theory* of consciousness are joined in the practice of phenomenology. Indeed, I think phenomenal character—the lived character of experience—can be put in a wider theoretical context, so let us turn now in that direction.

#### 4. WHAT IT IS LIKE TO SEE: PHENOMENALITY, SUBJECTIVITY, AND INNER AWARENESS

*What it is like* to have a certain type of experience is not a simple feature of the experience.

We may begin to spell out the complexity of this feature by elaborating the idiom. In phenomenological reflection we characterize a visual experience by analyzing: (i) what it is *like* (ii) *for me* (iii) to *see* (iv) *such-and-such* (v) *consciously*, i.e., with *awareness*. What appears in my field of

consciousness, then, is a *structured* “appearance” or (better) “appearing.” There is a qualitative phenomenal character of what it is *like*. Further, there is an egocentric or subjective character of being what it is like *for me*, the subject or “I” who lives through or enacts the experience. Further, there is an act character of being what it is like for me to *see* (as opposed to hear, or imagine, or think about, etc.). Further, there is an intentional character of being what it is like for me to see *such-and-such* (the object presented *as* such-and-such). Moreover, there is the “awareness” character of being what it is like for me to see such-and-such *consciously*, that is, with *awareness*, with an immediate *inner awareness* of what it is like for me to see such-and-such. Without that awareness my experience is not even conscious. The case of blindsight brings out the role of awareness in conscious vision, for without awareness the subject does not see anything at all, that is, consciously.

As we distinguish these constituent features within the character of “what it is like,” we find that we—the royal we—have indulged in a major oversimplification. When we ask what it is like to be a bat (à la Nagel 1974), we ask what it is like to experience bat-like echolocation, as opposed to human-like vision. We are not blind as a bat; we are echo-blind, incapable of sensing exactly where a mosquito is by hearing the echo of our own vocal squeak. So we wonder what it “feels” like to perceive a nearby object in bat-like echo-contact rather than human-like visual-contact. The “likeness” we are interested in is primarily the *sensuous* character of echo-audition, beyond which, as scientists, we may marvel at its efficacy regarding mosquitoes. But there is much more to the *phenomenological structure* of an experience, the structure that defines what that experience is like *overall*. On closer analysis, the phenomenal character of an experience, as I’ll try to explicate, is only one part of the full structure of “what it is like” to have a given experience.

Let us approach the complex structure of what consciousness is like by way of some familiar forms of our experience, starting from sensuous experience. If we consider a simple experience of seeing purple, seeing a *Ganzfeld* of purple haze, then we focus on the phenomenal character of a visual experience with limited intentional content, with sensory content but arguably no intentional content (what is the *object* presented?). If we consider an experience of thinking that 37 is a prime number, or an experience of thinking that Kant endorsed transcendental idealism, then we focus on the ostensible phenomenal character of an experience defined largely by its propositional content, arguably with no sensory content. These cases represent two stripes in the spectrum of conscious experience. But if we consider more quotidian experiences, paradigmatic experiences in everyday life, then we find phenomenal character integrated in a rich structure of complex sensory and intentional and even motor content—where phenomenal intentional content is girded by a horizon of peripheral meaning, expectation, and potential bodily action.

Consider, for example, the complexity of my consciousness as I quickly turn my head to see a flash of purple as a VW bus speeds down my street.

Sensory qualia in seeing purple and meaningful content in seeing the VW bus are fully integrated in this brief span of my stream of consciousness. And they are further blended with my kinesthetic-proprioceptive awareness in turning bodily toward the noise and movement in the street. It was this sort of conscious experience that drew the attention of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. And the structure of such experience complicates the story of cognitive “phenomenology.”

Thus, Husserl held that sensory content and intentional content are normally interdependent (Husserl 1913, *Ideas I*, §85). On Husserl’s analysis, a visual experience is a fusion of sensory and intentional elements. These elements Husserl called sensory *hyle* and intentional *morphe*, the “matter” and “form” of the experience. These elements Husserl held are mutually dependent parts (“moments”) of the experience; each can occur only together with the other, within the whole act of perceptual consciousness. Merleau-Ponty followed suit with rich amplification (Merleau-Ponty 1945). On Merleau-Ponty’s account, *what I see* is not only (say) that purple vehicle, but that vehicle in relation to me, to my body, indeed, a vehicle I could be driving were I at the wheel. I experience my body, Husserl held, as a “lived body” (*Leib*), not as a mere “physical body” (*Körper*), but as the *origin* of my intentionality in both vision and action. (See Husserl 1952, *Ideas II*, §§ 36–41, on the lived body as “organ of will” and as “center of orientation.”) Accordingly Merleau-Ponty defined my *phenomenal field* as centered on my body. What I see, in the case at hand, is thus presented not only as a purple VW bus (note the sensory and intentional elements), but also as an object in relation to my body, to myself as lived body, the “I” that can freely drive the VW bus. On such an analysis, the phenomenological structure of my visual experience has a phenomenal character that embraces my awareness of something purple, of something I take for a VW bus, of something spatially or spatiotemporally before me, of something I can drive, etc. In Merleau-Pontian terms, the phenomenological structure of my visual experience is that of a sensorimotor intentional consciousness, and all the content just noted “appears” in my phenomenal field: in my visual consciousness of “that purple VW bus before me,” i.e., “in relation to my kinesthetically felt body . . .” All this is part of what it is like for me to see the speeding vehicle; all this falls within the scope of the phenomenal character of my experience. We’ll return to the sense of embodiment below, noting for the moment its addition to the character of what it is like to see something before me.

In light of such reflections, the most revealing approach to the theory of *phenomenal character* follows the trail of phenomenality through the complexities of everyday experience. Only in our familiar forms of everyday experience do we appreciate the *scope* of phenomenal character, where phenomenality imbues or infuses sensory content, intentional content, kinesthetic content, “self” content, and more. I should like to place this range of content within a more detailed theory of phenomenological structure: a

theory of the structure of “self-consciousness,” consciousness’ consciousness of “itself,” and eo ipso of “myself”—the structure within which things can “appear” in consciousness.

Drawing on the *modal model of (self-) consciousness* (as I’ve called it, as noted below), we can articulate the complex structure of what-consciousness-is-like. In particular, we mark out key distinctions (not generally observed) among *phenomenality*, *subjectivity*, and *inner awareness*, in addition to *object-directedness*. Phenomenality, I want to argue, is normally *fused* with subjectivity and inner awareness in the phenomenological structure of an experience. And this fusion of “modal” characters (as I call them) typically informs *what it is like* to have that experience.

For the record, I am not saying all of these features—phenomenality, subjectivity, and inner awareness—are necessarily present in every conscious experience. Rather, I am saying that these features are part of the structure of consciousness in a wide range of typical or “normal” everyday experiences. The sense of self may be absent in certain forms of meditation. The element of inner awareness of experience may be absent when one is focused intently on doing something, or alternatively when driving absent-mindedly along a deserted highway. Even the element of object-directedness may be absent, say, in feeling dizzy (a pure sensation not “of” any object), or in seeing just purple (in a *Ganzfeld* featuring no appearing objects). Observing such variations in the structure of consciousness allows us to distinguish phenomenality per se from these further forms or aspects of awareness. In the more familiar range of experiences, however, phenomenality is fused with subjectivity (“*phenomenally* . . . I see or think . . .”), with inner awareness (“*phenomenally in this very experience* I see . . .”), and with object-directedness (“*phenomenally* . . . I see *that purple VW bus*”). Phenomenality illumines these further elements of consciousness, in virtue of which the full experience “appears” in consciousness with its own character of what-it-is-like. That is, given the modal model of consciousness.

(The modal model is elaborated in Smith 1986, 1989, 2004a, 2005. Here I want to draw out implications for the role of phenomenality in conscious experience. The present account will serve to amplify my approach to cognitive phenomenology in Smith 2011, in Bayne and Montague 2011. Relevant alternative models of consciousness, subjective character, and phenomenal character are explored in Kriegel and Williford 2006, and in Kriegel 2009.)

## 5. PHENOMENALITY IN THE MODALITY OF (SELF-) CONSCIOUSNESS

Let us consider two types of experience that lie in the spectrum running from pure sensation to pure thought. First, suppose that, hearing the rumbling roar of an old engine, I turn to look out my window and I see a purple VW bus racing down the street. Second, suppose that I pause and think that



VW buses (like the one I just saw speeding past) were popular in the Sixties. With the modal model, we may factor out several aspects of the structure of consciousness in these two experiences.

The structure of each experience we may articulate in a phenomenological description as follows:

- Case 1:  
Phenomenally in this very experience I now here see that speeding purple VW bus.
- Case 2:  
Phenomenally in this very experience I now here think that VW buses were popular in the Sixties.

These forms of description are framed so as to articulate specific *forms of content* in the overall *structure* of each of the experiences so described. Graphically, the underlinings indicate the different formal “slots” in the complex structure of each experience (not the structure of the indented sentence, but the structure of the experience itself). We may remain quite neutral here about the ontological status of these elements of content, but I think of them along the lines of what Husserl called the “noematic content” of an experience. For Husserl, the “noema” of an experience divides into a *Sinn* content, presenting the object in a certain way, and a “thetic” content modifying the *Sinn* content: thus, for example, I am presented “that VW bus” (*Sinn*) and furthermore the object is presented “visually” and “attentively” (thetic characters). What I call *modal* characters in an experience—phenomenality, subjectivity, etc.—can be seen as a ramification of what Husserl called thetic characters, though the specific distinctions I want to draw in the “modality” of presentation are not mapped by Husserl himself. (Compare the reconstruction of Husserl’s theory of noematic content in Smith 2013b, including the ontology of noema in Chapter 9.)

In the modal model, as exemplified in the two phenomenological descriptions just above, we distinguish several importantly different elements of *phenomenological structure* in a given experience:

- Phenomenality—specified by the content <phenomenally>,
- Inner awareness—specified by the content <in this very experience>,
- Egocentricity or subjectivity—specified by the content,
- Location—specified by the content <now here>,
- Act type—specified by <see> or <think> (in Case 1 and Case 2 respectively),
- Intended object—specified by the visual percept <that speeding purple VW bus> or the propositional thought <purple VW buses were popular in the Sixties> (in Case 1 and Case 2 respectively).

These six elements of structure define six formal slots in the overall structure of a typical experience.



In the idiom I've adopted, the *mode of presentation* in the experience is defined by the objectual content:

<that speeding purple VW bus> in the first case,

or

<VW buses were popular in the Sixties> in the second case.

By contrast, the *modality of presentation* in the experience is defined by the further content:

<phenomenally in this very experience I how here see/think>.

On this analysis, the content of the experience is formally structured into two components: the mode of presentation and the modality of presentation, where the modality modifies the mode. We might say the modality defines the adverbial character of an experience, whereas the mode defines the object-directed character of the experience. (The term “mode of presentation” echoes the Husserlian notion of *Sinn* as elaborated in Smith 2013b and elsewhere. I choose the term “modality of presentation” to echo the logic of intentional modalities such as perception, as modeled in Hintikka 1969. Compare Smith and McIntyre 1982 on Husserlian vis-à-vis Hintik- kian models of intentionality.)

Nearly all accounts of intentionality focus only on the “intended” or “Intentional” object of consciousness, thus on objectual content (aka *Sinn*). But the point of the modal model is to distinguish several different elements of content in the *modality* of presentation, as opposed to the mode of presentation. It is these elements of content that define self-consciousness, including phenomenal character and other “modal” characters in a given experience. These modal characters do not characterize the *object* of consciousness, say, the vehicle experienced as “that speeding purple VW bus.” Rather, these modal features characterize the *act* of consciousness, that is, the way the experience itself is *executed*: phenomenally, visually, subjectively, or from the first-person perspective, etc.

Assuming the formal structures defined in the modal model of consciousness, we can now press the issue of cognitive phenomenology in a very specific way: What is the scope of <phenomenally> in the overall structure of a given conscious experience?

Fundamentally, phenomenality—phenomenal character—defines what “appears” in consciousness. Phenomenality turns on the lights: no phenomenality, no consciousness, no conscious experience, no consciousness of such-and-such—no consciousness, period. So, we ask, does phenomenality cover—enlighten—only purely sensory contents, or also sensory-intentional contents, sensorimotor contents, purely cognitive contents in thinking, or

what? Well, I submit, phenomenality covers *all* that “appears” in consciousness; without phenomenality, things simply don’t show up in consciousness at all. If you will, the ultra-conservative theorist would turn out the lights, except perhaps for the purely sensuous elements of mental activity, and that theoretical move is untrue to our experience.

To flesh out our analysis of the featured cases, we draw in the observation, developed by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, that in everyday perception the sensory and intentional aspects are normally fused. Thus, when I consciously see a purple VW bus, my sensory experience of a purple expanse is integrated with my intentional experience of a VW bus. In Husserlian terms, the sensuous content <purple> and the intentional content <VW bus> are interdependent parts (“moments”) of the visual content <that speeding purple VW bus>. Since I am *consciously* seeing the purple VW bus, the modal content <phenomenally> modifies the sensory-intentional content <I now here see that speeding purple VW bus>. In such an experience, there is no separable sensory “feel” of purple, only the visual “feel” of my seeing a purple VW bus. All the rich sensory-intentional content in the mode-of-presentation is modified by the content <phenomenally> in the modality-of-presentation. All that rich content is “felt,” phenomenally experienced.

And in the second case, where I consciously think that VW buses were popular in the Sixties, the content <phenomenally> modifies the intentional content <I now here think that VW buses were popular in the Sixties>. Recognizing the formal role of phenomenality in the structure of consciousness, we should find that the propositional content <VW buses were popular in the Sixties> falls within the scope of the modal content <phenomenally>. For that is what I am consciously thinking, what is “appearing” in the course of my so thinking, appearing thanks to the force of the modal content <phenomenally>.

We may be able to experience pure phenomenality in very special circumstances; indeed, I suspect that is what happens for some masters of deep meditation when they report experiencing “pure consciousness.” (See Smith 2013a, 97.) For the rest of us, however, we experience phenomenality only in the rich structure of experiences like those we have dissected, where phenomenality infuses the full structure of the experience.

Accordingly, as we distinguish the form of phenomenality per se, as a feature in the modal structure of consciousness, we should come to see that in everyday experience phenomenal character imbues much more than purely sensory contents. In everyday perception, things are phenomenally presented as having complex properties far beyond color and shape (where “I see *that speeding purple VW bus*”). And, further, we should come to see where phenomenality plays in purely cognitive experiences of consciously thinking (where “I think that *VW buses were popular in the Sixties*”). In short, the modal model of consciousness—pinpointing the role and scope of the modal character <phenomenally>—opens the space of the “phenomenal” to the full range of our experience. The complex phenomenological

structure so charted offers both space and support for the expansive view of cognitive “phenomenology.”

For, when we see how the form <phenomenally> operates, we should see how it operates in the complexities of everyday consciousness—far beyond the scope of pure sensation.

## 6. PHENOMENAL EMBODIMENT

Bodily awareness poses a unique issue for cognitive phenomenology: How does my body “appear” to me in the course of my everyday experience—beyond, say, seeing myself in the mirror and thinking about my appearance?

The phenomenology of embodiment has a remarkable history. As noted earlier, Husserl introduced the notion of the “lived body” (*Leib*) and Merleau-Ponty made the notion central to his conception of phenomenology itself. More recently, a number of philosophers have again emphasized the role of the body in perception as well as in action, and thus the role of embodiment in the nature of consciousness itself. Now, the *sense of embodiment* has a bona fide *phenomenal character*, a character that transcends the kinesthetic and proprioceptive sensations emphasized in psychological theory. In particular, I submit, on the modal model of (self-) consciousness, the phenomenal character of embodiment plays a very specific role in the “logical” structure of consciousness, notably, in everyday perception and action. Let us look more closely at the experience of embodiment. (Recent studies of the role of the body in mind and action include: Gallagher 2005, Noë 2004, Rowlands 2006,2010, Varela, Thompson, and Roesch 1991. These studies often mix phenomenology with cognitive science, rather as Merleau-Ponty brought physiology into his conception of phenomenology. Amplifying the “embodied mind” model, Rowlands 2010 amalgamates external “information” with internal “representation,” joining the cognitivist paradigm with the phenomenology of embodiment. Still, the notion of information remains vexed. David Chalmers has argued that we need a “double-aspect theory of information,” correlating “physically embodied information spaces” à la Shannon with “*phenomenal* (or experiential) information spaces”: see Chalmers 2010, 25. In that spirit, my approach here is to articulate a crucial aspect of the phenomenal presence of my body in my phenomenal field.)

Briefly, the modal structure of everyday consciousness includes an awareness of myself as *embodied subject* situated and acting *in my surrounding world* insofar as “I now here” see and act. This form of awareness is part of *what it is like* to see and deal with things in everyday life, and so phenomenality infuses my sense of embodiment. But exactly how does the sense of embodiment thus appear in the structure of everyday activities?

In everyday perception I am engaged in bodily action even as I am engaged in perception. I move around as I look around, and my movement is part

of the complex experience of perception *cum* action, their union forming a natural unit of experience. This link between perception and action should be obvious, but the link needs careful articulation. I should like to note its place in the formal structure of consciousness, assuming the modal model. (On the link between perception and action, compare Noë 2004 and Rowlands 2006, and note Husserl 1952, *Ideas II*.)

Recall the form we elaborated for the structure of consciousness in our exemplified case of visual experience:

Phenomenally in this very experience I now here see that speeding purple VW bus.

The content <I now here see> opens up to a rich phenomenology of embodied visual consciousness. For that content points (indexically!) to a complex phenomenological structure situating the subject “I” in the spatiotemporal circumstance (or “*Umwelt*”) of perceptual consciousness in the “here” and “now.” These elements of content are grounded in the rich structure of my awareness of time and space and body and self and other. The variegated structures of time-consciousness, of space-consciousness, of “I” qua “lived” body, and of intersubjectivity relating “I” and “other”—all these phenomenological structures are famously detailed in Husserl’s extensive analyses. And as I interact with things in perception, my experience is such that “phenomenally I now here see” things before me and impacting me, say, “that speeding purple VW bus.” That is, in virtue of the modal content <phenomenally I now here see>, I experience the bus and other things around me *from an embodied first-person perspective*. The perceiving “I” is not a disembodied subject and is not experienced as disembodied. Rather, in perception-*cum*-action I experience myself as the *origin-point* of an intentional relation to the VW bus, an intentional relationship embedded in the present circumstance. And, on the modal model, that form of self-experience is carried by the modal content <I now here>. (Compare: Husserl 1913, *Ideas I*, §§27–29, on the “surrounding world of everyday life”; Husserl 1952, *Ideas II*, §§ 36–41, on the lived body as “organ of will” and as “center of orientation.” For Husserl, the “pure” I is an abstraction from the experiencing subject, rather than, as some interpretations assume, a purely mental substance à la Descartes.)

In everyday perception, as we have stressed, I am phenomenally presented not merely a patch of color (“purple,” period), nor simply a meaningful object or state of affairs somewhere (“that purple VW bus” or “that purple VW bus is speeding”). What I see is normally presented as being there before me, spatiotemporally before me, and impacting me. Accordingly, Husserl emphasized that “my body” (my lived body, my *Leib*) is the center of my visual surroundings (my *Umwelt*). Merleau-Ponty carried the phenomenology of embodiment still further: “The theory of the body is already a theory of perception” (Merleau-Ponty 1945/2012, 209). My body,

in this sense, is just myself as an embodied subject of perception. Inversely, we may also say, “The theory of perception is already a theory of the body.” And so the surrounding world I experience as a world oriented around myself as embodied. Accordingly, that sense of embodiment is part of the *phenomenal character* of seeing things around me.

My body may appear explicitly in my visual field, as part of the “background” of the “figure” visually presented (according to the Gestalt model). Thus, when I reach to open the window for a look at the rumbling VW bus, my hand may appear momentarily in my field of vision. Typically, though, my attention is focused on what I am looking at, so that I have no particular visual awareness of my body per se. Nonetheless, my “lived” body normally plays a pivotal role in the “horizon” of my experience. Following Husserl’s familiar account, we note, the backside of the VW bus is part of *what I see*, implicit in the meaning of my experience. And similarly, my bodily presence is part of what I see, implicit in my experience, as I turn my eyes and my torso to see the vehicle, its front side facing my body, confronting my eyes. On that line of analysis, my body is treated as part of the *field* of things surrounding the object *as presented* in my visual experience. On such a view, my body may or may not appear explicitly in my visual field, yet it normally appears implicitly in the horizon of my visual experience, say, as I see “that purple VW bus (now there before me and affecting my eyes).” (Compare Husserl 1952, Merleau-Ponty 1945, Gurwitsch 1964, and Gurwitsch 1985.)

However, the modal model articulates a quite different sense of embodiment in perception. On that analysis, my sense of myself as embodied subject appears not only in virtue of the *objectual* content <that speeding purple VW bus (*now there before me and affecting my eyes*)>, but rather—and more fundamentally—in virtue of the *modal* content <I now here see>. Thus, we recount the full structure of my visual experience:

<Phenomenally in this very experience I now here see that speeding purple VW bus (now there before me)>.

As I turn to see the VW bus, my consciousness includes a certain immediate awareness of my enacting the activity, my consciously turning and seeing, as “I now here see” the VW bus. My activity itself is not thematized in the experience, along with the bus, yet neither is it phenomenally absent: it is present, experienced, in the *way* I am aware of the bus. . . . All this I experience *phenomenally*.

Thus, the modal model allows for a subtle distinction we would otherwise overlook. My primary sense of embodiment, my sense of myself as lived body, is not part of the *object* I see, an implicit aspect of the VW bus; rather, it is part of my *way* of seeing the bus. And so my sense of embodiment is *phenomenally* given in my perception insofar as “I now here see.” This embodied “I” remains a part of the *Umwelt* within which I am visually

confronting the bus. But my primordial sense of embodiment, as *subject* of perceptual consciousness, emerges in the world as part of the modal character of my experience.

## 7. BEYOND THE PHENOMENOLOGY

The experience of embodiment, with due phenomenal character, carries us beyond phenomenality and into the world. We experience our interaction with the surrounding world through our bodies. Most of the reality of that interaction is far beyond “what it is like” for us. Think of the quantum mechanics involved, not to mention the dopamine at work. Nonetheless, the world appears to us, phenomenally, in our perception and action.

Phenomenality weaves its tangled web. Without which, for us: naught.

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## 2 For-Me-Ness

### What It Is and What It Is Not

*Dan Zahavi and Uriah Kriegel*

#### 1. INTRODUCTION: PHENOMENAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND FOR-ME-NESS

Compare your experiences of perceiving an apple and remembering a banana. In one respect, these experiences are very different. They differ both with regard to their object or content and with regard to their act type or attitude. In another respect, however, the two experiences have something very fundamental in common: in both cases, it is *for you* that it is like something to have them. Arguably, for every possible experience that we have, each of us can say: whatever it is like for me to have the experience, it is *for me* that it is like that to have it. What-it-is-like-ness is properly speaking what-it-is-like-*for-me*-ness.

On our view, this for-me-ness is a universal feature of experience. Some philosophers maintain that this for-me-ness is a philosophical myth, with no psychological reality whatsoever. Others accept the existence of for-me-ness but do not think it is an essential or even universal characteristic of consciousness. We have argued elsewhere (Kriegel 2003, 2009, Zahavi 2000, 2005, 2011, 2014) for our view that it is universal and essential and will take it for granted here.

The for-me-ness of experience still admits of two crucially different interpretations. According to a deflationary interpretation, it consists simply in the experience *occurring* in someone (a 'me'). On this view, for-me-ness is a non-experiential aspect of mental life—a merely metaphysical fact, so to speak, not a phenomenological fact. The idea is that we ought to resist a no-ownership view according to which experiences can occur as free-floating unowned entities. Just as horse-riding presupposes the existence of a horse, experiencing presupposes a subject of experience. In contrast, a non-deflationary interpretation construes for-me-ness as an experiential aspect of mental life, a bona fide *phenomenal* dimension of consciousness. On this view, to say that an experience is *for me* is precisely to say something more than that it is *in me*. It is to state not only a metaphysical fact, but also a phenomenological fact. Here the relationship between experiencing and the subject goes deeper than that between horse-riding and the horse.

We favor a non-deflationary interpretation of the for-me-ness of experience; again, we have argued for it separately in various places.<sup>1</sup> Here our goal is relatively modest: to clarify certain commitments, and certain non-commitments, of the non-deflationary notion (or construal).

The non-deflationary conception of for-me-ness comes in a weaker and a stronger variety, depending on whether the central claim is construed as existential or universal. The weaker claim is that *sometimes* for-me-ness is an experiential dimension of phenomenal character. That is, there exists a phenomenal or experiential for-me-ness, manifest in some conscious states. More precisely:

(WC) Some conscious states' phenomenal character involves for-me-ness as an experiential constituent.

The stronger claim is that for-me-ness is *always* an experiential dimension of phenomenal character. That is, phenomenal or experiential for-me-ness is a universal aspect of conscious experience. There are no conscious states whose phenomenal character lacks for-me-ness. More precisely:

(SC) All conscious states' phenomenal character involves for-me-ness as an experiential constituent.

We are, as already mentioned, prepared to defend the stronger claim, but some of the objections we will consider target even the weaker claim, since some philosophers deny the very existence of a phenomenal or experiential for-me-ness. Others accept its existence, denying only its ubiquity in conscious experience.

## 2. INTROSPECTIVE OBJECTIONS

The literature features two central introspectively based objections to experiential for-me-ness. The first targets specifically the 'me' part of for-me-ness, claiming that there simply is no introspective trace of an experiential self that could be built into conscious states. The second is more general and contends that the so-called transparency of experience undermines the notion of for-me-ness.

The first objection takes its cue from Hume's well-known introspective claim that "when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other . . . I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but a perception" (Hume 1740/1888, 252). Since there is no introspective trace of a self, a 'me,' a fortiori there can be no introspective trace of for-me-ness. Modern variations on this theme are quite rife in the literature (see Bayne 2010, 286, Bermudez 2011, 162–5, Dainton 2004, 150, 242, 380).

However, the existence of an experiential for-me-ness does not require there to be a detachable self quale that one could introspect in isolation from any other content of consciousness. Experiential for-me-ness is not a quality or datum of experience on a par with, say, the taste of lemon or the smell of crushed mint leaves. In fact, it is not supposed to be any specific qualitative content at all. Nor is it supposed to be a synchronic or diachronic sum of such contents (or any other relation that might obtain among such contents). Our view is not that in addition to the objects in one's experiential field—the books, computer screen, half-empty cup of coffee, and so on—there is also a *self-object*. Rather the point is that each of these objects, when experienced, is given to one in a distinctly first-personal way, and that this givenness is a pervasive dimension of phenomenal life. On our view, one does not grasp for-me-ness by introspecting a self-standing quale, in the same way one grasps the taste of lemon or smell of mint. Rather, there is lemon-taste-for-me-ness, mint-smell-for-me-ness, and many other types of phenomenal character; one grasps such experiential elements as lemon-qualia and mint-qualia by appreciating what *varies across* such phenomenal characters, but grasps what for-me-ness is by appreciating what *remains constant* across them.<sup>2</sup> We can put this by saying that the 'me' of for-me-ness is not in the first instance an aspect of *what* is experienced but of *how* it is experienced; not an object of experience, but a constitutive manner of experiencing. To deny that such a feature is present in our experiential life, to deny the for-me-ness or mineness of experience, is to fail to recognize the very subjectivity of experience.

In this sense, experiential for-me-ness is fully consistent with the Humean observation that "I can never catch myself without a perception." Since for-me-ness, as we conceive of it, is a feature of every experiential content without being a self-standing experiential content, there can be no conscious state consisting in nothing but for-me-ness. A consciousness without content but only for-me-ness is impossible. And yet once *anything* occurs consciously, it must be given to the subject and thus exhibit for-me-ness. In other words, the 'me' of for-me-ness is not a separate and distinct item but rather a pervasive feature of experiential life as such. Thus to hold that the Humean observation somehow undermines the notion of an experiential for-me-ness is to misunderstand that notion. When correctly understood, the view is fully compatible with the Humean observation (cf. Margolis 1988).

The same misconstrual of for-me-ness can be seen in neo-Humeans such as Jesse Prinz. Prinz does not deny that the self can be the *object* of conscious experience. What he denies is that it is phenomenally present qua *subject* of experience. In this same vein, Prinz does not deny that we can form judgments about ownership, or that there may be experiences on the basis of which we infer ownership; but there is, on his view, no experience of ownership, no mineness of experience (Prinz 2012, 140). Prinz argues for this by elimination, considering three options about the concrete elements of

conscious experience: first, that among the concrete qualities of the experience there is a specific item that we can label ‘the I’; secondly, that there is an I-qualé, but one that is reducible to other kinds of qualé (such that the I-qualé is nothing over and above the qualities of perception, sensation, and emotion); thirdly, that there is simply no I-qualé. It is this final possibility that Prinz favors (Prinz 2012, 123–4). Interestingly, Prinz’s eliminativism must not be taken as a defense of an ontological antirealism about the self. Prinz is not arguing that consciousness is selfless. Rather, consciousness is, as he puts it, “thoroughly permeated by the self” (Prinz 2012, 149). We always experience the world from a perspective or point of view. Who we are, our goals, interests, and histories—all this very much filters and constrains what we experience. Thus, the self might be said to be present, not as an item of experience, but as a kind of constraint (*ibid.*). Nonetheless, this remains a mere metaphysical fact about consciousness, not a phenomenological fact.

The main problem with Prinz’s argument by elimination is that it fails to exhaust the available options. A fourth option he fails to consider is the account of for-me-ness described above, where experiential for-me-ness is not a detachable self qualé that one could introspect in isolation from any other content of consciousness, but rather an experiential feature of all phenomenal episodes that remains constant across them and constitutes the subjectivity of experience. To deny that such a feature is present in our experiential life, to deny the for-me-ness or mineness of experience, is to fail to recognize an essential constituent of experience. It is to ignore the subjectivity of experience. Thus Prinz’s argument can precisely highlight a certain blindspot not uncommon among contemporary critics of the notion of for-me-ness. In fact, our notion of for-me-ness is compatible even with the kind of radical social constructivism defended by Wolfgang Prinz, according to whom the construction of subjectivity and selfhood “relies on, and is maintained by, various discourses on subjectivity” (Prinz 2003, 515). On this view, the ‘me’ of for-me-ness is a sociocultural construct, rather than something naturally given. We independently find this view highly implausible and would hasten to reject it.<sup>3</sup> But, remarkably, there is nothing about the claim that conscious states necessarily involve for-me-ness as a phenomenal constituent that requires one to reject it. The claim is about the nature of phenomenal consciousness but is completely silent on how that nature comes to be.<sup>4</sup> This demonstrates the theoretical flexibility of the experiential notion of for-me-ness.

Experiential for-me-ness is sometimes referred to as ‘pre-reflective self-consciousness.’ As Sartre writes at one point, “pre-reflective consciousness is self-consciousness. It is this same notion of self which must be studied, for it defines the very being of consciousness” (Sartre 2003, 100). The expression ‘pre-reflective self-consciousness’ is in some respects very apt, as it highlights the fact that for-me-ness requires no (and is prior to any) act of reflection. However, the term ‘self-consciousness’ has sometimes misled commentators to suppose that the notion is more demanding than it

really is. For some, to be self-conscious is to think of oneself *as* oneself, or to be aware of one's states or features *as* one's own. Some take this to require that one be conscious of one's identity as the subject, bearer, or owner of different experiences. For others, it requires having a sense of 'who one is,' that is, having a sense of one's own particular character or personality. Clearly, on such understandings of the term 'self-consciousness,' it would be quite implausible to suggest that all phenomenal consciousness involves pre-reflective self-consciousness. It should be clear, however, that this is not how we understand the notion of an experiential for-me-ness. On our view, phenomenally conscious states involve for-me-ness, and to that extent pre-reflective self-consciousness, regardless and independently of whether any of these other capacities are possessed by their subject. An implication of this is obviously that the self-consciousness in question can be ascribed to all creatures that are phenomenally conscious, including various non-human animals. More generally, it is important to distinguish, on the one hand, having a for-me-ness that embodies one's subjective first-person perspective and, on the other hand, having the capacity to conceptualize and articulate any of this in thought or language. Only the former is constitutive of experiential for-me-ness; the latter appears in sophisticated forms of self-consciousness but not in its minimal form.

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So much for the first introspectively based objection to experiential for-me-ness. Let us consider now the second objection: that the existence of experiential for-me-ness is disproved by the so-called transparency of experience. According to the thesis of the transparency of experience, whenever we try to introspectively attend to our conscious experience, we cannot help but become aware of what the experience presents in the world (Harman 1990; see also Shoemaker 1994 and Tye 1995 *inter alia*). In this sense, phenomenal consciousness does not present one with aspects or dimensions of one's own consciousness; rather, it is strictly world-presenting.

In keeping with our claim that for-me-ness is not a detachable item in the content of experience, we find that there is a cogent insight behind the transparency claim, at least for perceptual experience. The reason why an experience of a red apple differs from an experience of a yellow sunflower is indeed that the two experiences target two different objects with different properties. It is not clear that the same is true of mood and emotional experiences: being angry at *x* and being indignant about *x* do not quite seem to differ only in the properties they ascribe to *x*. More deeply, phenomenal consciousness does not only represent but also *presents* something (to someone). Compare a conscious perceptual experience of the color and shape of a yellow lemon and a subliminal or blindsighted representation of the same color and shape. Both represent the same distal features in the environment. But only the experience *presents* those features, in the sense of making *someone* phenomenally aware of them. To that extent, although all the presented items are worldly items, the presenting itself—presenting to

someone—is an aspect of phenomenal consciousness as well. There is thus a minimal dimension of for-me-ness without which we cannot distinguish consciousness from unconscious representations of the same environmental features. This minimal for-me-ness is fully consistent with the contention that *once* a state of a subject presents something to the subject, it is necessarily some putative environmental feature that it presents (at least in perceptual experience). If we interpret the transparency claim as exhausted by this contention, we can appreciate that transparency is compatible with for-me-ness.

There are, of course, more ambitious interpretations of transparency with which the notion of experiential for-me-ness is not and should not be compatible. Thus, the transparency claim is sometimes understood as the claim that, ultimately, the phenomenology of experiencing and the phenomenology of introspecting experience are strictly the same. As Dretske would have it, that of which one is aware in having a conscious experience is completely objective; it would be exactly the same even if one were not aware of it. In fact, everything “you are aware of would be the same if you were a zombie” (Dretske 2003, 1). As Dretske notes, his view gives rise to the following challenge: If I am only aware of the properties represented by my mental states, and not of the mental states themselves, how then can I at all know that I am phenomenally conscious? As he puts it, there is nothing of which I am aware that tells me that I am aware of it, and since everything I am aware of—namely, the world as I experience it—would be exactly the same if I were a zombie, I cannot know, at least not in any direct manner, that I am not a zombie (Dretske 2003, 1). It might be suggested that we can know that we are having experiences by introspection, and hence that we are not zombies; but according to Dretske, introspection only tells us *what* we are aware of and not *that* we are aware (Dretske 2003, 8). We consequently have no direct access to the fact that we are conscious rather than non-conscious, and our conviction that we are is most likely based on a confusion (Dretske 2003, 9).

Dretske’s outlook strikes us as indeed incompatible with the experiential notion of for-me-ness, but also as independently undesirable. In particular, the claim that the phenomenology of experiencing and the phenomenology of introspecting experience are strictly the same seems implausible. To all appearances, one can tell from the first-person perspective whether one is just having an experience of a yellow lemon or also introspecting that experience. There is thus a dimension of self-consciousness that lends itself to introspective or first-person appreciation after all. Our present point is that denying this minimal for-me-ness commits one to radically implausible claims, such as (i) that introspection cannot tell us *that* we are conscious and (ii) that there is no phenomenal difference between introspecting an experience and just having it.

It might be asked: How could one know *first-personally* that one is just having an experience, but not introspecting it? Isn’t first-person

knowledge precisely knowledge based on introspection? Our answer is that once one recognizes the existence of for-me-ness (hence, pre-reflective self-consciousness), it is clear that not all first-person knowledge is based on introspection. For not all first-person knowledge is based on *reflective* self-consciousness, which is what introspection is. Some such knowledge is based on *pre-reflective* self-consciousness—which is what for-me-ness is.

### 3. OBJECTIONS FROM PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Let us now consider two objections against SC from proponents of WC.<sup>5</sup> According to these objections, conscious states may occasionally be characterized by experiential for-me-ness, but this characteristic cannot be essential and necessary to them, since pathology presents us with exceptions: cases where experiences are ‘anonymous’ and exhibit an absence of for-me-ness or mineness.

Consider, first, schizophrenic thought insertion, where patients complain that they have thoughts ‘in them’ that are not theirs, thoughts that they experience as ‘inserted in them’ by external forces or agents (see, e.g., Jaspers 1963, 124). Metzinger interprets this pathology as involving introspectively alienated conscious thoughts, for which patients have no sense of agency or ownership. He takes such cases to demonstrate that phenomenological mineness is not a necessary component of experience (Metzinger 2003, 334, 382, 445–6). However, we find that there are better interpretations of the clinical data.

In an influential paper, Campbell once made the following observation about schizophrenic thought insertion:

The thought inserted into the subject’s mind is indeed in some sense his, just because it has been successfully inserted into his mind; it has some special relation to him. He has, for example, some especially direct knowledge of it. On the other hand, there is, the patient insists, a sense in which the thought is not his, a sense in which the thought is someone else’s, and not just in that someone else originated the thought and communicated it to the subject. . . .

(Campbell 1999, 610)

Following Campbell, and despite all manners of other disagreement, many have accepted the distinction between two forms of ownership: one linked to the fact that the experiences one lives through are given differently to one than to anybody else, and another that concerns whether or not one explicitly recognizes oneself as the agent or author of one’s thoughts. Whereas thoughts can be disowned when it comes to the latter form of ownership (or authorship), most would agree that the first kind of ownership is not lost in thought insertion. When a thought-insertion patient reports that certain

thoughts are not hers, that someone else is generating these thoughts, she is also indicating that these thoughts are present, not ‘over there’ in someone else’s head, but within *her own* stream of consciousness, a stream of consciousness for which she claims ownership. Even if the inserted thoughts are felt as intrusive and foreign, they cannot lack minimal ownership altogether, since the afflicted subject is aware that it is she herself rather than somebody else who is experiencing them (Billon and Kriegel 2015, Zahavi 1999). Indeed, the only reason the patients *complain* is that they feel an experience of *theirs* to be inserted from without. As Gallagher remarks:

For that reason, the schizophrenic should provide a positive answer to what he might rightly regard as a nonsensical question: Are you sure that *you* are the one who is experiencing these thoughts? After all, this is precisely his complaint. *He* is experiencing thoughts that seem to be generated by others.

(Gallagher 2000, 231)

In short, some sense of ownership is still retained, and that is the basis for the patient’s complaint. This is also the view of Graham, who argues that subjects of thought insertion recognize that certain thoughts occur to them and that “the *subjectivity* sense” of ownership is consequently retained, but that their sense of self as agent, or the agency sense of ownership, is disrupted (Graham 2010, 247–8).

To deny that a patient suffering from thought insertion is completely bereft of a sense of ownership, or that such phenomena involve a complete effacement of for-me-ness, is not to deny that her overall sense of self is importantly different from ours. The clinician should recognize that such patients are subject to a kind of self-alienation or alienated self-consciousness. But as these very phrasings suggest, some dimension of self and of self-consciousness is preserved even under those conditions—namely, for-me-ness proper. It is just that *something else* has changed. There are different views about what it is that *has* changed. According to Graham (2010), as we have just seen, what is missing in thought-insertion patients is not for-me-ness, but a sense of agency—the patients feel there is something it is like *for them* to have the inserted thought, but they also feel as though it is not they who are doing the thinking. Other philosophers have suggested that the crucial experiential element missing in thought-insertion patients is not the sense of agency, but the sense of *endorsing* the thought or being *committed* to it (Bortolotti 2010, Fernández 2010). But for the purposes of defending the experiential ubiquity of for-me-ness, one need not be committed to any specific account of what is missing in thought-insertion patients; one needs to insist only on what is *not* missing, namely, for-me-ness. Indeed, our view is even consistent with there being *nothing* missing in the experience of thought-insertion patients. For the difference between thought-insertion patients and healthy subjects may pertain not to an element in the experience of the latter missing



from that of the former, but, on the contrary, to a new, additional element in the experience of the former that is absent from the latter. For example, thought-insertion patients may simply have a phenomenology of alienation from (some of) their own thoughts that healthy subjects do not experience.

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Consider next the claim that other forms of pathology can exemplify a dissociation between introspective access and felt ownership. Although patient DP was able to see everything normally, he did not immediately recognize that he himself was the perceiving subject. In order to become aware that it was he himself who was the perceiver, he had to undertake a subsequent inferential step (Lane 2012, 269). Lane argues that this patient's experience, prior to this inferential step, lacked any quality of mineness, so that, phenomenologically speaking, it was nobody's. More generally:

. . . the mental states of organisms can be conscious states, even if they are not taken as belonging to self. Phenomenal consciousness does not entail self-awareness; it is not stamped with a *meish* quality; and, for-me-ness does not play a determining role in its constitution. Appearances notwithstanding, the awareness of a mental state's existence is never more than conditionally related to the attribution of that state to a given subject. Matters only seem otherwise, because in all ordinary situations self and consciousness are tightly interwoven.

(Lane 2012, 281)

We find Lane's conclusion unwarranted. Again, part of the problem is an overly robust construal of for-me-ness. Consider the following variety of overall conscious experiences: being absorbed in a movie; laboriously trying to decipher a menu written in a language you barely know; being suddenly hit in the face by a snowball; being humiliated by your peers; standing on the ten-meter diving board, trying to convince yourself to jump. In addition to the various items such experiences present, they also differ phenomenally with respect to the kind of self-consciousness they instantiate. When comparing such experiences, it should be evident that self-consciousness can vary quite a bit along a spectrum in its experiential acuity or intensity. The kind of experiential for-me-ness we have in mind is a sort of *minimum point* of self-consciousness. This minimal self-consciousness is present in DP's experience in the same way it is present in thought-insertion patients.

Lane actually allows that there is an utterly trivial sense in which the first-person perspective is retained even in pathological cases, but claims that this has no bearing on the issue of for-me-ness. Lane here refers to Blanke and Metzinger's (2009) claim that a weak first-person perspective merely amounts to a "purely geometrical feature" of our visuospatial presentation of reality. When we perceive objects, we see them as to the right or left, further away or closer by. This weak first-person perspective is simply the point of projection, which functions as the geometrical origin of the

‘seeing’ organism’s embodied perspective. We agree that this weak notion of a first-person perspective has nothing to do with subjectivity, mineness, and for-me-ness. In fact, we think it would be better to avoid using the term ‘first-person perspective’ as a label for this geometrical feature. But the experiential perspectivalness that is retained even in the pathological cases goes beyond this geometrical feature. Even in the cases discussed, epistemic asymmetry still obtains: they are available in a special way to the subject in whom they occur. These experiences continue to be characterized by a subjective presence that makes them utterly unlike public objects, which are accessible in the same way to a plurality of subjects. Regardless of how alienated the patient feels vis-à-vis the experience, the experience does not manifest itself entirely in the public domain. It continues to be phenomenally present to the patient in a way that is, in principle, unavailable to others. This is part of what its first-personal character amounts to, and why it remains correct to say that the pathological experience retains its for-me-ness.

#### 4. EXPLANATORY OBJECTIONS

There are two kinds of *explanatory* objection to the experiential notion of for-me-ness: from explanatory vacuity and from explanatory dispensability. The first is that there is nothing the experiential notion of for-me-ness explains, so there is no reason to posit it. The second is that whatever phenomena the notion explains, there are better explanations of these phenomena that do not cite experiential for-me-ness; the latter is to that extent dispensable.

Our response is threefold. We deny both the explanatory vacuity of experiential for-me-ness and its explanatory dispensability. But in addition, we also reject the idea that belief in the existence of experiential for-me-ness can be rational or warranted *only if* experiential for-me-ness can be shown to be explanatorily potent and indeed indispensable. To see why, consider that argumentation from explanatory vacuity and dispensability presupposes a description of that which needs to be explained. Before we can assess the explanatory potency of any posit, we must have a grasp of some phenomena in need of explanation. Presumably this means that *some* phenomena would have to be accepted as real independently of their own explanatory potency. In other words, *explanatory* dispensability can support rejection of a posit only when combined with *descriptive* dispensability. Given this, rejecting the existence of for-me-ness requires showing not only that citing for-me-ness is useless and/or unnecessary for *explaining* the phenomena, but also that it is useless and/or unnecessary for *describing* the phenomena. But in our opinion, it is impossible to correctly *describe* the structure of phenomenal consciousness without citing for-me-ness.<sup>6</sup>

Critics of experiential for-me-ness have nonetheless often treated for-me-ness as a theoretical posit in need of earning its explanatory keep. Schear

(2009), for example, construes for-me-ness as a posit designed to explain a certain epistemic datum. Right now you are having an experience as of reading this article. Schear (2009, 100) isolates the following datum in need of explanation: “it is not exactly news to me that I am [having an experience as of] reading. When asked what I am doing [or experiencing], and then responding, I did not discover something.” The idea is that when we consider what experience we are having, there is never any sense of surprise regarding what the experience is; instead, there is a sense of familiarity. Consequently, when asked what experience we are having, we can respond immediately and effortlessly. Given this datum, one can offer an argument from inference to the best explanation for for-me-ness: the best explanation of the sense of familiarity with, and lack of surprise regarding, my concurrent experience is that I was aware of it all along, in that it is built into the very phenomenal character of the experience that it is like something *for me*. The problem with this argument, according to Schear, is double: (i) for-me-ness does not really explain the datum, and anyway, (ii) there are other superior explanations available.

Start with (i). According to Schear, the explanatory force of for-me-ness is illusory. It is true that when one is asked what one is experiencing, one can respond immediately and effortlessly. However, one can respond immediately and effortlessly to many questions not concerned with experience. If asked whether the world is more than five minutes old, one can respond immediately and effortlessly. But it is implausible to suppose that one was consciously aware of the world’s being older than five minutes all along (and supposing that one was would quickly lead to experiential explosion).

However, we find there is a crucial disanalogy between the fact that the world is older than five minutes and the fact that you have an experience as of reading. Even if you *just started* reading, it is “not news to you” that you have an experience as of reading. The sense of familiarity and lack of surprise follows immediately upon the onset of your experience. Moreover, the instant you have a new experience—say, of someone knocking on your office door—you will be in a position to report that you are having this new experience. It may be news to you that someone is knocking on the door, but it is no further news to you that you have an experience as of someone knocking on the door. This is not the case with non-experiential facts (facts about the external world): if you are not consciously aware of them when they come into existence, you will not be immediately in a position to report on them. The fact that the world has been older than five minutes has been around for a long time—long enough for you to acquire the knowledge of it (indeed *familiarity* with it) that you now possess independently of any conscious awareness of this fact. But at the time a fact comes into being, the only way you can be in a position to report on it is if you are consciously aware of it. Therefore, the fact that as soon as a conscious experience comes into being you are in a position to report on it—if also endowed with the

requisite conceptual skills—means that as soon as it comes into existence you are consciously aware of it. This would very much be explained by an account according to which it is in the very nature of the experience that it is like something *for you*. Thus experiential for-me-ness appears explanatorily useful (non-vacuous) after all.

Schear may yet retort that there are better—simpler and more elegant—explanations we could appeal to. This is (ii), the claim that experiential for-me-ness is explanatorily dispensable, even if not altogether explanatorily vacuous. Schear himself offers the following alternative explanation: because it is permanently true of us that we have the capacity for first-person thought, and that this capacity is poised to be exercised throughout our waking life, we can immediately and effortlessly *become* aware of our conscious experiences and then report on them. Thus what is built into every conscious experience is only the *disposition* to become aware of it (in the right way), not any *occurrent* awareness of it. Every experience includes a *potential* for the experience to be for me, not *actual* for-me-ness. This capacity-based explanation, echoing Carruthers' (2000) so-called dispositional higher-order thought theory of consciousness, may be taken to be superior to the one we offer, in being simpler and more economical.

We concede that, somewhat trivially, there exist many possible explanations of the epistemic datum isolated by Schear. The real question is which is the best explanation.<sup>7</sup> The Schear-Carruthers dispositionalist explanation faces serious difficulties. For one thing, in citing the capacity for first-person thought, this explanation restricts itself to creatures who *have* this capacity, and it is widely recognized that some creatures are conscious despite lacking such a capacity.<sup>8</sup> More deeply, while the dispositionalist explanation proposes to account for the immediate and effortless capacity to respond to questions about one's experiences, it is not clear that it does anything to illuminate the sense of familiarity and lack of surprise underlying this capacity. This is important, because insofar as the original datum is itself construed dispositionally (the 'capacity to respond'), it is somewhat inviting to offer a dispositional explanation of it. Plausibly, however, dispositional phenomena always presuppose categorical bases, so in the vicinity of every dispositional explanandum there must also be a categorical explanandum that underlies it. In this case, the categorical explanandum with which we started is the occurrent sense of familiarity and lack of surprise with respect to what one is experiencing as the experience unfolds. It is natural to suppose that this occurrent sense is precisely the categorical basis of the capacity to answer questions immediately and effortlessly, so it is this more fundamental phenomenon that is most in need of explanation. Our own explanation is that this ever-present sense of familiarity and lack of surprise is grounded in the ubiquitous for-me-ness of experience, which itself is the categorical basis of one's capacity for first-person thought in the right kind of creatures. Thus, whereas the Schear-Carruthers account focuses on a dispositional

explanandum and offers a dispositional explanans for it, but without illuminating the more fundamental categorical phenomena underlying these, we identify the categorical explanandum that underlies the relevant dispositional explanandum and offer a categorical explanans that (we claim) underlies the relevant dispositional one. There is here an undeniable gain in explanatory depth, since in general the dispositional can be explained in terms of the categorical but not the other way round (the vase's fragility can be explained in terms of its being made of thin glass but its being made of thin glass cannot be explained in terms of its fragility).

In any case, in addition to the explanandum Schear isolates, there are other explananda naturally explained by invoking experiential for-me-ness. Consider the phenomenon of first-person authority. When somebody says "my arm hurts," or "I thought you had forgotten our appointment," or "I plan to work at home tomorrow," it is customary to say that such statements are made with first-person authority. In making them, one is not necessarily infallible or incorrigible, but when others disbelieve one, it is generally because they think one is insincere rather than mistaken. On what is such first-person authority based? It is noteworthy that we only speak with first-person authority about our *conscious* mental states. We do not speak with such authority about our un- or non-conscious mental states, even though we might know about them through various indirect means (say, through conversations with a psychoanalyst or cognitive scientist). Of course, insofar as we come to know about these states, they are to some extent something of which we become conscious, but that does not guarantee that they are *phenomenally* conscious. No, for us to be able to speak with first-person authority about a mental state, the mental state must be one we consciously live through. It is natural to claim that the notion of experiential for-me-ness (and pre-reflective self-consciousness) provides a ready answer to the question regarding the basis of first-person authority.

In our everyday life, we are absorbed by and preoccupied with projects and objects in the world, and as such do not *attend* to our experiential life. We tend to ignore it in favor of its objects. We can, of course, reflect on and attend to our experiences; we can make them the theme or object of our attention. But even prior to reflection, we are not quite 'mindblind.' Arguably, reflection aims to grasp what was there already prior to the grasping—it is *constrained* by what is pre-reflectively lived through. Thus experiential for-me-ness *determines* the sphere of what we may have first-person authority about.

There may be other potential explananda for experiential for-me-ness.<sup>9</sup> But what has already been said establishes that experiential for-me-ness is far from explanatorily vacuous, and may well be explanatorily indispensable with respect to certain phenomena. In addition, it is possible to maintain rational and warranted belief in the existence of experiential for-me-ness even in the absence of any explanatory profit in doing so, since for-me-ness may well be *descriptively* indispensable in the sense explained above.

## 5. CONCLUSION

We have considered introspective, psychopathological, and explanatory objections to the experiential notion of for-me-ness, the notion that conscious experiences have a for-me-ness or mine-ness or subjective givenness as an integral feature and constitutive aspect of their phenomenal character. In the process, a number of precisifications of our notion of for-me-ness have emerged. They can be divided into three groups. The first concerns what for-me-ness is:

- For-me-ness is an invariant dimension of phenomenal character.
- For-me-ness distinguishes conscious experiences that present something to someone from non-conscious representations (e.g., blindsight) of the same objects.
- For-me-ness pertains in the first instance not to what is experienced but to how it is experienced.
- For-me-ness is what remains present in thought-insertion pathologies.
- For-me-ness is a minimum point of self-consciousness.
- For-me-ness is the categorical basis of our capacity for first-person thought, which explains why we can usually (and if in possession of the requisite conceptual skills) report on our experiences immediately and effortlessly.

The second group of specifications pertains to what for-me-ness is *not*:

- For-me-ness is not a detachable self quale; it cannot occur on its own.
- For-me-ness does not necessarily involve a capacity to think of oneself *as* oneself, be aware of one's states *as* one's own, or any such cognitively demanding capacities.
- For-me-ness does not involve the kind of sense of ownership or authorship impaired in thought insertion pathologies.
- For-me-ness is not just a geometrical feature of perceptual experience.
- For-me-ness is not a merely dispositional feature of experience.

A third and related group pertains to what the experiential construal of for-me-ness is compatible with (which reveals what it is *not* committed to):

- The experiential construal of for-me-ness is compatible with the Humean claim that one cannot find a detachable self in experience.
- The experiential construal of for-me-ness is compatible with (independently dubious) social-constructivist approaches to the self.
- The experiential construal of for-me-ness is compatible with modest transparency claims that phenomenal differences between perceptual experiences pertain to what these are experiences of.
- The existence of for-me-ness is compatible with its explanatory dispensability.

If nothing else, these clarifications exhibit the theoretical flexibility of the experiential notion of for-me-ness.

We do not expect, of course, that these clarifications will remove all discomfort with the experiential notion of for-me-ness. Many philosophers will still feel that there is something elusive and slightly mysterious about for-me-ness. In fact, we do not wish to deny this: we think that for-me-ness is just as mysterious as phenomenal consciousness! Some approaches to phenomenal consciousness make it utterly mysterious why phenomenal consciousness is consistently felt to be *problematic*—why we have a *problem of consciousness* on our hands. Like others (e.g., Levine 2001, Strawson 2011), we think that for-me-ness (or mineness, or subjective givenness) is the *most fundamental fact* about phenomenal consciousness, is indeed what makes it challenging in the first place. It would be nice to ultimately demystify phenomenal consciousness. But a first step is to identify correctly the source of the mystery. Our contention is that that source—the most fundamental, most general, most elemental dimension of phenomenal consciousness—is for-me-ness.

## NOTES

1. See, again, Kriegel 2003 and 2009; Zahavi 2000, 2005, 2011, and 2014.
2. Consider, by comparison, temporality. Temporality is a pervasive feature of all phenomenal consciousness. Each and every experience has a certain temporal extension, structure and articulation. We are here not simply dealing with a formal (but non-experiential) aspect of phenomenality, but with one of its fundamental constituents. An investigation of the temporal character of phenomenality obviously targets a quite different dimension of phenomenality than an investigation of some specific variable phenomenal content. For reflections on the relationship between temporality and for-me-ness, see Zahavi 1999, 2005, 2014.
3. Indeed, we think that Prinz (2003, 526) himself provides the *reductio ad absurdum* of the position when he claims that human beings who were denied all socially mediated attributions of self would be “completely self-less and thus without consciousness” and consequently be “unconscious zombies.”
4. In Bretano’s (1982/1995) terms, it is a claim in descriptive psychology, not genetic psychology. It attempts to describe an aspect of conscious experience, but is silent about the correct causal explanation of it.
5. Recall that WC is the weaker for-me-ness claim, according to which the phenomenal character sometimes but not always involves for-me-ness as an experiential and not merely metaphysical constituent.
6. We say this fully aware that others may not feel that for-me-ness is descriptively indispensable. Our claim here is not that descriptive indispensability can be cited as an argument intended to convince skeptics for the existence of experiential for-me-ness. This is merely a defense of non-skeptics from the requirement that they be able to demonstrate explanatory indispensability in order to rationally maintain their belief in the existence of experiential for-me-ness.
7. For example, one could offer the occasionalist explanation according to which whenever we want to know what experience we have, God immediately



intervenes and beams the relevant knowledge to us instantaneously. This would indeed explain the epistemic datum, but obviously there are superior explanations we should adopt rather than this one.

8. Carruthers (2000) himself is happy to bite the bullet on this and deny consciousness to non-human animals. This move is possible but should not be confused for a strength of the proposed explanation. It is not clear in print what Schear's attitude to this problem is.
9. For example, one of the most intuitively fundamental facts about consciousness is sometimes said to be that conscious states are states we are aware of (Rosenthal 1990), or at least have aware-ly (Thomasson 2000). What explains the intuitiveness of this idea? It cannot be just the universality, since some universal truths about consciousness are not characterized by intuitiveness. Thus, all conscious states have a distinctive impact on short-term memory: this seems true, perhaps universally so, but does not seem to be intuitive. One straightforward explanation of the intuitiveness of the claim that all conscious states are states we are aware of is that every conscious state has a for-me-ness built into its very phenomenal character. Here, too, other explanations are conceivable, of course. Rosenthal himself maintains that every conscious state is the target of a higher-order thought, though one that is ordinarily unconscious. However, it is not clear how the presence of an unconscious higher-order state can illuminate the intuitiveness of the idea that every conscious state is a state one is aware of. In general, the presence of unconscious states in us is not available to the folk in a way that makes for intuitiveness. Consider the subpersonal, unconscious visual representations in the dorsal stream of visual cortex, which allegedly control action on the go. Since such states are unconscious, the folk are unaware of their existence, so obviously it is not going to be intuitive that they exist. Even if cognitive science establishes beyond doubt that they do exist, this does not render their existence intuitive. By the same token, since Rosenthal's higher-order thoughts are unconscious, the folk are unaware of their existence, so it cannot be intuitive that they exist. Nothing in a philosophical theory of consciousness can render it intuitive that conscious states are states we are aware of. But the notion that the very phenomenal character of conscious states includes as constituent a for-me-ness would explain the intuitiveness of all conscious states being states we are aware of. (Let us add that we disagree somewhat among ourselves on the question of whether we are intentionally "aware of" our occurrent experiences, or whether our basic familiarity with our ongoing experiential life has a more primitive and pre-intentional character; see Zahavi 1999 and 2005; Kriegel 2009, Ch.4.)

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Section II

# Embodiment and Sociality



### 3 Lived Body, Intercorporeality, Intersubjectivity

#### The Body as a Phenomenological Theme

*Dermot Moran*

Phenomenological intentional description begins from the living body as subjectively experienced, or, simply, from what Husserl calls “lived experiences” (*Erlebnisse*) that are always necessarily embodied and subjective, that is to say, first-personal or “egoic” (in Husserlian language). Human consciousness is itself sustained by the pre-reflective and pre-objective unity of the lived body, as Merleau-Ponty points out (1964, 184/1968, 141–42). Embodiment and subjectivity, moreover, are not themes that can be treated fully in isolation from each other or from the wider context of the environing lived world (Husserl’s *Lebenswelt* or *Lebensumwelt*; Merleau-Ponty’s *monde de vie*). Although embodiment is always in each case *mine* (cf. Heidegger’s *Jemeinigkeit*), the experience of embodiment is *also* always already expressive and communicative, intersubjective and intercorporeal, and intimately and seamlessly integrated into and mediating the social and collective cultural and symbolic worlds.

Phenomenology begins from intentionality and the manner in which objects in the experiential field are constituted through intendings that are always sense-giving (*sinngebende*) or meaning-constituting. Human beings weave their elaborate meaning-constructions around events and experiences that are experienced “naturally.” Husserlian phenomenology in particular examines the manner in which the shared, objective, commonly experienced world that forms the backdrop for all possible experience is co-constituted by embodied intentional subjects cooperating together in meaning-making and who constitute even their own bodies and their selves in intentional interaction with one another (*Ineinandersein*), shaping and being shaped by their surrounding worlds.

Long before philosophy of mind and cognitive science started to talk of the human mind as extended, embodied, embedded, and enactive, the classical phenomenologists were carefully describing the nature of intersubjective embodied being-in-the-world. This life-world, furthermore, should never be understood objectively or naturalistically as the sum total of “the furniture of the universe” but rather as a set of living enfolding and unfolding contexts and horizons, presences and absences, open to the future and carrying the past. The life-world is through and through historical. Indeed, the

temporality and historicity of the body, its facticity, fragility and finitude, its closures and disclosures, are the themes of phenomenological inquiry. As we shall also emphasize in this chapter, the peculiar lived and subjective character of embodiment as understood within phenomenology puts it at a distance from the more naturalistic approaches to the body found in contemporary philosophy of mind (and indeed sometimes imputed to Merleau-Ponty).

The Husserlian phenomenological tradition (in which we shall include Merleau-Ponty) operates with two different and parallel approaches to human embodiment in the world. As Husserl puts it in the *Crisis of European Sciences* (1954/1970), the human being is both “in the world” and “for the world.” That is to say, the human conscious embodied subject is both an animate organism intimately connected to the organic biosphere, a “child of the world” (*Weltkind*), as Husserl says, and also a transcendental source of all “meaning and being” (*Sinn und Sein*). In the *Crisis*, Husserl calls this the “paradox” or “enigma” (*Rätsel*) of subjectivity (1954, 3/1970, 5), according to which human subjects must be considered both as transcendental subjects “for the world” as well as embodied subjects objectified “in the world.” All the major phenomenological figures—including Merleau-Ponty, as we shall see—defend this dual role of the human subject that is, as Husserl himself says, a deep paradox, but which also expresses a deep and mysterious truth. The lived body is at the intersection of the transcendental and the empirical (Taipale 2014). It is therefore worth reviewing the phenomenological conception of the body for its extremely rich and still not fully exploited dimension of phenomenological research (for an overview of this area, see Todes 2001 and Welton 1998, 1999).

It is a central claim made by Husserl, Stein, Merleau-Ponty, and other phenomenologists that the lived body (Husserl’s *Leib* or *Leibkörper*) is inextricably present in all perception and is an organ of sensation, action, and voluntary movement, although it is rarely noticed in this role “in the natural attitude.” The body, including its sensory, imagistic, and volitional capacities, also plays a role that is only now being made prominent in the phenomenology of cognitive experiences. The lived body plays a central role in the constitution of the physical objects encountered in the environment, in terms of their disclosed profiles, their resistance, visible and tactile surface character, and so on. The lived body also mediates the encounter with others in what phenomenologists, following nineteenth-century German psychology, call *Einfühlung*, or “empathy” (Moran 2004).

Phenomenology carefully describes this insertion of the body in the world, of embodied being-in-the-world, this “incorporation.” Husserl himself speaks of it as an “en-worlding” (*Verweltlichung*, see Bruzina 1986, or *Mundanisierung*, Husserl 1954, 210/1970, 206), and as the “humanization” (*Vermenschlichung*, Hua XV/1973c, 705; Hua XXXIX/2008, 120) of transcendental subjectivity. Likewise, Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* (1943/1995) and Merleau-Ponty in his *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945/1962) both speak of this incorporation as “incarnation” (*incarnation*)

with all the implied resonance of Christian theology, albeit secularized (but see Frank 2014 and Henry 1996). Sometimes, it is suggested that embodiment is not a major theme in the phenomenological writings of Martin Heidegger (see Aho 2009), but his whole effort to describe Dasein's involvement in the world through care (*Sorge*), as well as his account of human practical comportment (*Verhalten*) in a world of pre-given significance, his accounts of *Vorhandensein* and *Zuhandensein*, are all ways of expressing embodied being-in-the-world (Dreyfus 1991, Overgaard 2004).

In the past two decades especially, embodiment has also gradually become a central theme in analytic philosophy of mind (Bermudez et al. 1998, Haugeland 1998, Proudfoot 2003, Rowlands 2010, Shapiro 2004), in the philosophy of consciousness and action (Noë 2004, 2010, 2012), in psychology, especially in discussions of the emotions (Prinz 2003), and in the cognitive sciences more generally (Clark 1997, Damasio 1999, Gallese 2014, Thompson and Varela 2000, Varela, Thompson and Rosch 1991). Increasingly, it is an emerging theme in the medical humanities (Aho and Aho 2008, Matthews 2007, Svenaeus 2009), as well as in the arts and humanities more generally (Sheets-Johnstone 2009). There is a general concern that the medical sciences have objectified the body such that its subjective and intersubjective comportments are not fully appreciated.

While contemporary philosophical discussions of embodiment (Carman 1999; Dreyfus 1996, 1999) very often acknowledge the importance of the classical phenomenological discussions of the "body-subject" (*le corps sujet*), as found in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945/1962), and also recognize that Merleau-Ponty drew heavily on Edmund Husserl's unpublished research notes on the "lived-body" (*Leib*) and its "embodiment" (*Leiblichkeit*), especially as found in his *Ideas II* (Husserl 1952/1989), there is not a widespread understanding of the full depth of phenomenological treatments of the body. In fact, the phenomenological tradition has a very rich heritage of discussions of embodiment and indeed of the relations between bodies. Merleau-Ponty's intercorporeity (*intercorporéité*), Sartre's provocative analyses of the "body for others" (*le corps de l'autrui*), the "look" (*le regard*) of others, and the "caress" (*la caresse*, Sartre 1943/1995), and Levinas's conception of "the face of the other" (*le visage d'autrui*, Levinas 1961/1969) have all contributed to a much richer, more sensuous, emotive, and indeed sensual and erotic appreciation of lived embodied experience with other embodied subjects (see also Henry 1975, Leder 1990, Moran and Jensen 2013, Ratcliffe 2008, Strasser 1977, Welton 1999).

Phenomenological explorations of embodiment have also had an enduring impact outside of philosophy, influencing the writings of the neurologist Oliver Sacks (Sacks 1985) or the neuroscientist Francisco Varela (see Thompson and Varela 2000). Phenomenological accounts of the body have also deeply stimulated and influenced feminist discussions (see Butler 1989, Heinämaa 2003, Shildrick and Price 1998, Weiss and Fern Haber 1999,



Young 2005), including Judith Butler's critique of Merleau-Ponty for his alleged privileging of the male heterosexual body and its assumed erotic desire (Butler 1989). Butler praises Merleau-Ponty for recognizing the plasticity of the body and its normative character, but goes on to criticize him for assuming the priority of the heterosexual outlook and the implicit universalization of the male perspective as normatively "natural."

Feminist discussions of embodiment often take their starting point from critical analyses of the foundational analysis of the female condition in Simone de Beauvoir's classic *The Second Sex* (1949, 2009). Although not explicitly a committed phenomenologist in her methodology, Beauvoir draws heavily on phenomenological insights, especially those of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, in discussing the nature of gender and male and female identity in that work (see Deutscher 2008, Heinämaa 2003). As Merleau-Ponty puts it in his *Phenomenology of Perception*, the body is a "historical idea" rather than picking out a natural kind or species (1962, 170). The body, for Merleau-Ponty, as Judith Butler puts out, is a "place of appropriation" and a mechanism of transformation and conversion (Butler 1989). Although Butler finds fault with a certain assumption in Merleau-Ponty concerning the "natural" aspect of human embodied desire, she approves of his conception of the social constitution of the body.

For phenomenologists in general, indeed gender is "constructed" or "constituted"; that is to say, it is meaning-loaded and shaped by cultural norms and societal practices (including those of the current medical sciences), rather than belonging exclusively to whatever might be construed as "biological" nature ("sex" is used by some theorists to refer to the biological differences between male and female, but see Butler 1990 and 2004, who argues that both sex and gender are discursively constructed; see also Edward S. Casey, "The Ghost of Embodiment: Is the Body a Natural or a Cultural Entity?" in Welton 1998). Phenomenology, however, also recognizes human finitude and frailty.

The starting point of the phenomenology of embodiment is that the body is never *simply* a physical object or body (*Körper*) in nature, although it certainly *is* a natural physical body that is governed by the laws of nature, physics (e.g., gravity), causal interaction with other bodies, and so on. The living organic body is not purely a spatial material object that has its "parts outside of its parts" (*partes extra partes*), as Merleau-Ponty puts it (1962, 73). As Merleau-Ponty constantly underscores, the body is that which mediates world to the experiencing subject:

My body is the fabric into which all objects are woven (*la texture commune de tous les objets*), and it is, at least in relation to the perceived world, the general instrument of my "comprehension" (*l'instrument general de ma 'compréhension'*). (1945, 272/1962, 235)

The body is indeed an object in space but it is also an object that *inhabits* space, *creates* space, *defines* its place and space. As Merleau-Ponty writes

in his wonderful essay dedicated to Husserl, “The Philosopher and His Shadow”:

And yet my body must itself be meshed into the visible world; its power depends precisely on the fact that it has a place from which it sees. Thus it is a thing, but a thing I dwell in. It is, if you wish, on the side of the subject; but it is not a stranger to the locality of things. (1960, 210/1964a, 166)

The body not only is acted upon but also acts. Just think of the different scenarios that unfold between a body falling out of a window or jumping out of a window (as in the horror of the World Trade Center attack). The body domesticates space into place (Casey 1998, Malpas 2012), and indeed orients space from the “zero-point of orientation” (Husserl’s *Nullpunkt der Orientierung, Ideas II*) of its own body. As Edith Stein writes in *On the Problem of Empathy*, “bodily space” (*Leibraum*) and “outer space” (*Aussenraum*) are completely different from each other (Stein 1917/1989, 43).

Following Fichte and earlier German idealism, the phenomenological tradition—i.e., Husserl, Scheler, Stein, Schutz, and others, e.g., Helmuth Plessner, *Ich habe meinen Körper, ich bin mein Leib* (Plessner 1981, 1982, 1983)—speaks of the animate, “lived body” (*Leib*) and distinguishes this from the physical material “body” (*Körper*). Furthermore, the German term *Leib* is rendered as *la chair* or “flesh” in Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and the French tradition generally (indeed Husserl’s favorite adjective to characterize the presence of the object in direct perception, i.e., *leibhaftig*, “bodily present” is rendered in French as *en chair et os*, literally: “in flesh and bone”). In fact, it was Sartre who, in *Being and Nothingness* (1943/1995), first introduced the terminology of “flesh” (*la chair*) now more usually associated with Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968). For Sartre, flesh is “the pure contingency of presence” (1995, 343). We experience ourselves, Sartre claims, as a living flesh, neither pure thing nor pure consciousness, but as something in between, *sui generis*, what Merleau-Ponty will speak of as the “monism” of flesh. Husserl will write on a research note written on holidays in St. Margen, Switzerland in 1921: “My body is among all things the closest, the closest in perception, the closest in feeling and will. And so I am, the functioning I, before all other worldly objects united with it [the body] in a special way (Hua XIV/1973b, 58).

Moreover, one’s flesh interacts with and even *constitutes* the other’s flesh, especially in the acts of touching and caressing as Sartre writes:

The caress reveals the Other’s flesh as flesh to myself *and to the Other*. But it reveals this flesh in a very special way. To take hold of the Other reveals to her her inertia and her passivity as a transcendence-transcended; but this is not to caress her. In the caress, it is not my body as a synthetic form in action which caresses the Other; it is my body as flesh which

causes the Other's flesh to be born [*qui fait naître la chair d'autrui*]. (1995, 390)

Sartre in fact offers a phenomenological analysis that distinguishes three different levels of encounter with the body in his famous chapter on "The Body" in *Being and Nothingness* (see Moran 2010a). There is the body as it is lived and experienced by me. This is, in Sartre's terminology, the body "for me," the body as it is existed or lived (*le corps-existé*). This is equivalent to Husserl's experience of the body as "governing" (*walten*) over its organs. The body is experienced under the mode of "I can." I can move my limbs, I can turn my head, and so on. As Drew Leder puts it, there is the experience of a "tacit command over my body, accomplishing without the slightest difficulty actions I could not begin to comprehend or carry out in a reflective fashion" (Leder 1990, 20). As Merleau-Ponty says, echoing Husserl, my experience is not first and foremost an "I think" but an "I can."

There is, in Sartre's provocative analysis, also the body as it is experienced by and for others, the body "for the other" (*pour l'autrui*), "*le corps-vu*," the body as seen from the perspective of the other (1995, 358). These two ontological dimensions are, according to Sartre, "incommunicable" and "irreconcilable": "Either it [the body] is a thing among other things, or else it is that by which things are revealed to me. But it cannot be both at the same time" (1995, 304). The third dimension is more difficult to characterize adequately—it is my body as I experience others experiencing it. As Sartre says, "I exist for myself as a body known by the Other" (1995, 351). This is the body in its intersubjective, intercorporeal, and interactive dimension. It is this body that I experience in shame or in anorexia and other conditions. For Sartre, for instance, "I cannot be embarrassed by my own body as I exist it. It is my body as it may exist for the other which may embarrass me" (1995, 353).

One cannot discuss the phenomenological experience of embodiment without adverting to Emmanuel Levinas's evocative description of the experience of the "face" (*le visage*). As made clear in current legal and political discussions in many countries about the wearing of full head cover (e.g., the Muslim *niqab*) that conceals the face, the face has a special resonance in the experience of the person (the European Court of Human Rights recently upheld the French ban on wearing the full *niqab*, saying that the court "took into account the state's submission that the face played a significant role in social interaction"). In *Totality and Infinity* (1961/1969), Levinas contrasts the experience of the "face" with the way in which humans relate to things in the world, the manner in which objects are "represented" in our intentional acts (Husserl), and the way tools are used for certain purposes (Heidegger). Against this region of utilization and representation, Levinas wants to invoke the manner in which others appear to us, presenting us with an ineliminable ethical demand. Levinas explains the face as follows:

The way in which the other presents himself, exceeding the idea of the other in me, we here name face. . . . The face of the Other at each

moment destroys and overflows the plastic image it leaves me, the idea existing to my own measure. . . . It expresses itself. (1969, 50–51)

And he goes on to say:

The face is a living presence; it is expression. The life of expression consists in undoing the form in which the existent, exposed as a theme, is thereby dissimulated. The face speaks. The manifestation of the face is already discourse. (1969, 66)

The other breaks through and threatens my being-at-home with myself. For Levinas, “the face is present in its refusal to be contained,” “the face resists possession, resists my powers”; “it cannot be comprehended, that is, encompassed [*englobé*]” (1969, 194, 197). Levinas uses the term “face” to refer both to the real concrete presence of another person, as for example when we “confront” someone “face to face” (*face à face*), but in his writing the term blossoms into a metaphor for all those aspects of human personhood and culture that escape objectification, which cannot be treated in the manner in which we treat objects in the world, which cannot be the object of an intentional act. He even claims paradoxically that the face is not a concrete entity but something “abstract”; it is “signification” itself. In fact, the “face,” in Levinas’s sense, escapes all categorical representation. Levinas’s phenomenology describes the experience of being confronted by the other, but not in terms of some abstract or universal demand to respect persons, but rather in the experience of the face of the stranger, of the beggar, of the sick, of those who need our assistance, of those to whom we are called and to whom we must respond. The experience of the other—*not* self-experience (Husserl’s *Selbsterfahrung*)—is primary for Levinas.

Husserl’s *Leib* which experiences itself in a series of “I can’s” (*Ich kann*), Sartre and Merleau-Ponty’s flesh (*la chair*), and Levinas’s “face” (*le visage*), all highlight aspects of the phenomenological experience of the embodied subject. It is clear, furthermore, that, in the phenomenological tradition, the lived organic expressive body cannot be naturalized. Phenomenology resists naturalization and indeed the current projects to naturalize phenomenology misunderstand the complex manner in which the embodied subject both is incarnated in the world and in a sense gives birth to the world (see Moran 2008, 2013a). Indeed Husserl’s first move is to reject all naturalism with regard to the body. He is here seeking to overcome several centuries of modern philosophy and science since Descartes that regarded the body as a machine, a highly intricate piece of biomechanical clockwork. Descartes’ account of the muscles and the nerves and Julien Offray de La Mettrie’s *L’homme-machine* (1748/1996) are typical of this movement to understand the body as a thing in nature. But the lived body always transcends its embeddedness in nature.

The phenomenological description of embodiment is very subtle and detailed. The human bodily subject’s self-presence is, for instance, permeated

by absence. There are, for example, memories that color and inform our experience, and projections and protentions that make us already participate in the future to come. There is, moreover, a mix of empty and full experiences such that every full experience is surrounded by a “halo” or “horizon” of emptiness, of possibility, anticipation, presentments of further disclosure, and so on. The self, moreover, is never given in a complete self-disclosure but it experiences itself as mediated through others.

In terms of the embodied being in the world, phenomenology emphasizes that consciousness reaches down into unconscious living experience. The self “sinks its tap roots into nature,” as Edith Stein says (2000, 115). In this regard, one has to accept a certain legitimate naturalization of the body (see Bernet 2013). The body belongs within organic nature and is affected by it—by changes in temperature, pressure, and so on. But the way the body responds and adapts, the way pains, feelings, and emotions are taken up by the embodied subject speaks to the nature of the body as expressive or, as Merleau-Ponty will say, ambiguous. As Husserl puts it, the body is involved in its own self-constitution.

The self-constitution of the body is a very complex theme and phenomenologists—including Sartre—have recognized that self-constitution is not produced by a monadic consciousness operating on its own but is interwoven with the experiencing of oneself by the others in one’s environment, others who interact with the conscious subject in struggles of domination, submission, and mutual recognition, analyses that were inspired by a certain existential reading of Hegel’s master/slave dialectic. There is a level of self-constitution of the body understood as bodily self-expression—experienced in one’s own personal style (Husserl’s *Stil*). Each of us develops environmentally and in relation to others, one’s own style of walking, of talking, individual accent, vocabulary and inflexion, individual ways of holding one’s posture, of listening, and so on. Moreover, the body is constituted and its meaning articulated and expressed in acts of bodily enhancement, modification, or alteration. This can take place through hairstyle, makeup, clothes, tattoos, piercings, and physical activity or through intentional bodily modification. A guitarist’s fingers have a flattened thickness at the tips; a dancer will walk differently from a farmer, and so on. The body is cloaked in practical cultural significance.

Classical phenomenology takes for granted that all experience not just involves and depends upon embodiment but is radically inflected by it. Perception is an embodied intentional action, especially when one considers that one needs to make a range of bodily movements in seeing, touching, smelling, and indeed in all sensorily based perceptual engagements with the world. But embodiment is not just the framework for perception and for the lived fleshly encounter with objects and with others in the world. Husserl, Scheler, and Edith Stein paid close account to the layerings of the self, including the domains of sensation, passive affectivity, drives (*Triebe*—the same term as used by Freud), and tendencies, through the levels of pain and pleasure, feelings, moods and desires, right up to the highest spiritual

experiences of love, longing, and the desire to be governed by values such as truth and beauty.

Phenomenology has much to say about the manner in which pain is experienced, its nearness or distance from the ego, and so on. Embodiment, moreover, cannot be understood unless its relation to the concepts of normality and optimality are understood. The lived embodied self constitutes certain situations as normal (e.g., able-bodiedness, possession of all functioning senses, range of motility, etc.) and also degrees of optimality (looking at objects in the upright posture, under clear daylight, with both eyes, and so on).

Furthermore, embodiment raises broader issues about human experience in imagination, fantasy, and dreams. Hence, Sartre asserts: “The body is the psychic object *par excellence*—*the only psychic object*” (1995, 347). There is the intricate problem of the “body schema” (*le schéma corporel*), a concept that was originally proposed by the Austrian psychiatrist Paul Ferdinand Schilder (1923 and 1950) and taken up by Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962, see also Gallagher 1995), the body as it is fantasized in erotic fantasy, the body in dreams, the imaginary body (Gatens 1996), the body as it is experienced in illness (Carel 2013) or in conditions such as anorexia nervosa (Legrand 2013). Even in dreams our seeing is embodied. There is no completely disembodied experience because in dreams there is still a sense of the “here.” I can dream that I am flying and soaring over the landscape, but I am seeing it from my own point of view and that point of view is bodily situated. Furthermore, as Merleau-Ponty says, I weave dreams around things. One could devote a whole chapter to phenomenology’s extraordinarily rich discussions of the erotic body as found in Sartre, Levinas, and others.

Illness, Carel argues, creates a gap between the biological body and the lived body. Long-term illness presents itself phenomenologically as a disruption of the lived body’s connection with the world and has to be integrated into one’s living a good life. Anorexia is typically described in individualistic terms, but may be better understood if its intersubjective nature is highlighted. It is, Legrand suggests, a form of communication with others, a form of self-manifestation. The areas of exploration of embodiment are expanding rapidly. New issues are raised by the possibilities of radical body modifications, gender reassignments, and enhancements of the body enabled by advances in biotechnology, such that there is even talk of the “posthuman” condition (Bostrom 2003, Hayles 1999).

Husserl’s phenomenology of intentional consciousness—like that of Merleau-Ponty—begins with the world of perception. Perception is an embodied act *par excellence*, and the nature of the revealed world of perception is intimately and necessarily correlated with the experience. Furthermore, perception founds other higher intuitive acts, e.g., categorical intuitions, and even judgments and chains of reasoning. The body is always present in all conscious experiences, but in unique ways. It is not the case therefore that the phenomenology of cognitive states can be reduced to accompanying sensory experiences. There is a genuine experience of surprise,

astonishment, intense understanding, insight, the “eureka” moment. All of these deserve phenomenological attention in themselves.

There are certain bodily functionings, seeings, touchings, movements of limbs and organs that reveal the world of objects, colors, feels, touches, smells, and so on. As Merleau-Ponty writes:

All tactile perception, while opening itself to an objective “property,” includes a bodily component; the tactile localization of an object, for example, assigns to it its place in relation to the cardinal points of the body image. This property which, at first sight, draws an absolute distinction between touch and vision, in fact makes it possible to draw them together. (1962, 315)

Furthermore, and this will become important in the phenomenological account of perception, there is always a *gap* between the sensed content and the more dominant perception of the thing (in the natural attitude). This “excess” (*Überschuss*) or *plus ultra* of perception is provided by the apprehension. In so far as these contents are apprehended so as to present the object, Husserl calls them “displaying” or “presentational contents” (*darstellende Inhalte*), see for instance *Thing and Space* (1998, § 15), see also *Ideas I* (2014, § 36). Thus, in seeing a white paper, the presentational sensation of white is a “bearer” of intentionality, of an interpretation, but not in itself consciousness of an object. Husserl recognizes a difference between *presenting* and *presented* sensations. The former sensations motivate our attribution of certain sensory features to a body. When I touch a smooth and cold surface, I have certain sensations in my fingers, but I attend through these sensations to the properties of smoothness and coolness of the surface. It takes a reflective turn of regard to notice the sensations in my fingers. The sensations are double-sided. They present themselves as belonging to the fingers, but also as “presenting” (*darstellen*) properties of the object. The body has a series of sensings (*Empfindnisse*, see Al-Saji 2000 and 2010)—its seeings, touchings, and movings—that themselves disclose features of the surrounding world. Certain sensations are routinely attributed to external things, while others are located in us in a certain way. But this is different in the different senses—vision, for instance, is more “distal” than touch. In his *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty claims that touch brings body and world literally into contact with one another in specific places, unlike the experience of sight, which gives me the sense that I am “everywhere and nowhere”:

Tactile experience, on the other hand, adheres to the surface of the body; we cannot unfold it before us and it never quite becomes an object. Correspondingly, as the subject of touch, I cannot flatter myself that I am everywhere and nowhere; I cannot forget in this case that it is through my body that I go to the world. (1945, 365/ 1962, 316)



All our experiencing—and indeed the whole sensory world that surrounds us—is coordinated in complex ways with my own bodily movements. Merleau-Ponty claims that human action presupposes a “global bodily knowledge” (*un savoir global du corps*) that systematically unifies the different dimensions of the body (1945, 363/1962, 314). He writes: “Apart from the probing of my eye or my hand, and before my body synchronizes with it, the sensible is nothing but a vague beckoning” (1945, 248/1962, 214). The room feels warm because we are sensitive to heat. Moreover, I may become aware that the *room* feels cold or I may be aware that *my body* feels cold in the room. There are feelings (like my sense of where parts of my body are) that seem to be constituted internally, so to speak, while others definitely come marked with transcendence. A person suffering from tinnitus may hear the irritating ringing noise as “inside her head” and can separate it from persistent ringing noises that appear to be transcendent. The lived body is thus always in a complex relationship with itself through proprioception and is also in intercorporeal relations with others (human and animal).

In fact, with Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, the discussion concerning the self-constitution of one’s own body begins much deeper down in consciousness. Both phenomenologists are fascinated by the kind of “interwovenness” (Husserl’s *Verflechtung*, Merleau-Ponty’s *l’interlacs*) that belongs to the senses—how touch tracks vision and vice versa, how what is *seen* is in principle *touchable*; there are shared qualities in both touch and vision, e.g., the *smoothness* that I touch can also be seen by the eye. I see from the handle on the cup that it can be picked up. I can even see so-called “dispositional” properties—that the cup is fragile, the glass brittle. Furthermore, I integrate these properties seamlessly into a single experience of the object. Merleau-Ponty writes that “the brittleness, hardness, transparency and crystal ring of a glass all translate a single manner of being” (1945, 368/1962, 319). Merleau-Ponty speaks of a “synaesthesia” that, for him, is not an unusual condition but rather belongs essentially to our sensuous embodiment. There is, he writes, an “inscription of touching in the visible, of the seeing in the tangible—and the converse” (1964, 186/1968, 143). I can *see* that a rock will make a comfortable seat. My hand grasps a good holding point when climbing. It is these deep “affordances” in nature that are correlated to the body’s experiential movements.

In his 1907 lectures on *Thing and Space* (1998), Husserl is first interested in how sight unfolds in terms of the movements of the eyes, their combination, the manner in which near and far is constituted just within the visual field. He moves to consider the field of touch. Husserl argues that there is an essential and irrevocable priority of touch in the constitution of the lived body. The situation of the so-called “double sensation,” a phenomenon already discussed by nineteenth-century German psychologists, is one that for Husserl reveals the extraordinary manner in which the body is in the world and constitutes itself through its own touch sensations. The double



sensation refers to the fact that, in touch, I can feel myself touching and, more or less at the same time, I can feel the surface touched. In the case in which I touch myself, one finger or hand touching another, then there is an unusual circuit of touching and touched. Husserl discusses it also at some length in *Ideas II*. Merleau-Ponty takes up this double sensation in his *The Visible and Invisible* and makes it central to his analysis of flesh. Flesh, for him, is essentially characterized by reversibility. For Merleau-Ponty, there is a circle or circuit of touching and touched, and, similarly, although this is not as immediately intuitable, there is a circle of seeing and the visible (1964, 185–86/1968, 143). Merleau-Ponty writes:

When one of my hands touches the other, the world of each opens upon that of the other because the operation is reversible at will, because they both belong (as we say) to one sole space of consciousness, because one sole man touches one sole thing through both hands. (1964, 183/1968, 141)

Merleau-Ponty claims that the unity of the experience of both hands is akin to the unity of both eyes. Moreover, what unifies my body is also that which opens my body to the experience of others' bodies. Two human subjects' bodies touch each other in a handshake, and this reversibility is already prefigured in the single subject. The world is therefore an "intercorporeal being"; my body "couples" with the "flesh of the world" (*la chair du monde*) (1964, 187/1968, 144). Merleau-Ponty finds this embodiment and reversibility in other areas, especially in the coupling of vocalization and being heard. I can hear my own voice; I can listen to myself speaking. He takes reversibility to be indicative of human being-in-the-world. This reversibility, furthermore, has within it a certain distantiation. I can never completely *coincide* with my self in the act of self-touching, rather I have a presence to myself that at the same time indicates the absence of self (*une presence à Soi qui est absence de soi*). Thus the self-constitution of the body includes absences and gaps. As Edith Stein points out, I cannot see the back of my body (without a mirror).

Husserl, Scheler, Edith Stein, and others have a layered conception of the body. The body appears differently at different levels of our experiences. The body is a seat of sensations including proprioceptive sensations, pains, pleasures, itches, or scratches. In *Ideas II* § 54 (Hua IV/1952), Husserl speaks of the body as a "bearer of fields of sense" (*als Träger der Sinnesfelder*), and he talks about the "stratum of sensation" (*die Empfindungsschicht*) as including both "sensuous pleasure" (*sinnliche Lust*) and "sensuous pain" (*sinnliche Schmerz*) (1952/1989, 212). For Husserl, these "lower" strata do not belong to the ego, properly speaking:

Just as the body in general is over and against the ego, so is everything "not-I" [„*Nicht-Ich*“] which makes it an object, and only in the mode

of “over and against” does it appertain to the ego, precisely as existing object of the ego’s experiences. (1952, 212/1989, 223)

Husserl here appears to be making pleasure and pain of a sensory kind a sensory stratum or “content” that belongs to the “not-I” rather than to the ego itself. They have the character of “belonging to the ego” (*in dieser Weise ich-zugehörig*) rather than being properly “egoic” (*ichlich*). In contrast, *acts* of the ego, such as judgments and valuations, for Husserl do not appear as foreign to the ego, but are grasped as essentially belonging to it. They are not “alien to the ego” but are operations and “states” of the ego itself (*sie sind nicht ichfremd, sondern selbst ichlich, sie sind Betätigungen (Akte), Zustände des Ich selbst*). In other words, acts and operations of the ego—even in reflection—do not appear as *objects* of the ego but as integral “parts” of its essence. Husserl thinks that this experience of the “not-I” so deep in my experience is the foundation for my experience of other kinds of alterity, including the alterity of the other subject, which is experienced in what psychologists at that time called *Einfühlung* or empathy. I experience otherness even in my own body. For Husserl, when I bang my hand against something, then I encounter my hand as a physical object, perhaps even as an obstacle (when my hand falls asleep) and not as belonging to me as *Leib* (Hua IV/1952, 317). I cannot escape experiencing myself as a vulnerable body in the world in this regard. For Husserl:

Acts are subjective in quite a different sense than my body is. (*Aber die Akte sind in ganz anderem Sinn subjektiv als mein Leib*). (Hua IV/1952, 317/1989, 329)

Sensations are *mine* in a different sense than my acts are. Feelings of pleasure, warmth, pain, etc., pervade the body. As Husserl elaborates, feelings of free movement (Husserl’s “I can’s”) are felt as egoic in a sense different from the kinaesthetic sensations that underlie them. This difference between what I have and what I am speaks to a central intuited difference. (Gabriel Marcel tried to capture these different senses in which we have our body in his “phenomenology of having” in *Being and Having* (1935/1949), which itself is based, as Marcel acknowledges, on the phenomenological analyses of Günther Stern, a former student of Husserl; see Stern 1928). Some experiences have the character of nearness to me and others are more at a distance. The self is entirely permeated by emotions, but even these can be at different *depth*. As Edith Stein writes:

Anger over the loss of a piece of jewellery comes from a more superficial level or does not penetrate as deeply as losing the same object as the souvenir of a loved one. Furthermore, pain over the loss of this person would be even deeper. (1917, 113/1989, 101)

The body also feels the pull of various tendencies and drives. There is just an idiosyncratic attraction towards a particular color, sound, texture, taste. We experience the “stimulus” (*Reiz*) or allure of experiences, but we also experience a certain attraction or “pull” (*Zug*). Husserl writes in *Ideas II* (Hua IV):

The primal intellective [*Das Urintellektive*] also does not arise “psychically” [*seelisch*] from association, but from a ray emanating out of the ego; it is not something foreign to the ego [*ichfremd*], but is precisely absolute. On the other hand, the ego presupposes sensibility as affection, as stimulus [*Reiz*], first of all primal sensibility [*Ursinnlichkeit*], and then the secondary. The ego always has possessions. Primal sensibility [*Ursinnlichkeit*] is its primal possession [*Urhabe*]. (1952, 335/1989, 346)

Husserl in particular notices how this individuality is very deeply seated in the embodied person. A baby will laugh and try to imitate a particular sound or will ignore another. Alongside these idiosyncratic tendencies are more anonymous drives—hunger, thirst, the desire for sex, for rest, for excitement. These drives can become controlling, as in the case of addictions. Similarly some of these negative drives can develop into phobias. For Husserl, all these experienced drives, cravings, aversions, etc. can be brought to awareness. They achieve a certain prominence in our experience and cannot be ignored. But at that point, the ego (as Husserl calls it) can take a stance towards a drive. A person can allow herself to yield to a drive or establish a habit of resisting the drive or at least valuing it negatively (e.g., I know I should not smoke, I have a craving to smoke, I give in to the craving but I evaluate this negatively). Husserl writes in *Ideas II* (Hua IV), §59:

Habits are necessarily formed, just as much with regard to originally instinctive behavior . . . as with regard to free behavior. To yield to a drive establishes the drive to yield: habitually. Likewise, to let oneself be determined by a value-motive and to resist a drive establishes a tendency (a “drive”) to let oneself be determined once again by such a value-motive . . . and to resist these drives. (1952, 255/1989, 267; translation altered)

Drives and instincts, for Husserl and for Stein, shape our embodied comportment and our habits, but they also penetrate consciousness and they can be altered by active position-takings of the ego.

Following Husserl and Scheler, Stein maintains that sensations in themselves are not closely involving the ego. She writes:

Sensations (*Empfindungen*) result in nothing for the experienced “I” [*für das erlebte Ich*]. The pressure, warmth, or attraction to light that

I sense are nothing in which I experience myself, in no way issue from my “I.” On the contrary, if they are made into an object, they “announce” [*bekunden*] “sensitivity” [*Empfindlichkeit*] to me as a persistent psychic attribute [*als beharrlich seelische Eigenschaft*]. (1917, 111/1989, 100)

Earlier in *On the Problem of Empathy*, Chapter Two, Stein writes:

The sensation of pressure or pain or cold is just as absolutely given as the experience of judging, willing, perceiving, etc. Yet, in contrast with these acts, sensation is peculiarly characterized. It does not issue from the pure “I” as they do, and it never takes on the form of the “*cogito*” in which the “I” turns towards an object. Since sensation is always spatially localized “somewhere” at a distance from the “I” (perhaps very near to it but never in it), I can never find the “I” in it by reflection. (1917, 46/1989, 42)

According to Stein, sensations such as pleasure and pain are, as she puts it, “on the surface of my ‘I’ [*an der Oberfläche meines Ich*]” (1917, 111/1989, 100). Stein distinguishes in the ego superficial and deeper layers, areas of nearness and distance.

Closer to the ego are the emotions and moods. According to Edith Stein, every feeling has a certain mood component “that causes the feeling to spread throughout the ‘I’ from the feeling’s place of origin and fill it up” (1917, 116/1989, 104). A slight resentment can fester and grow and ultimately consume me completely. Emotions can be episodes in conscious life or they can be ways in which other experiences display themselves. There is not only “depth” and expanse (“width”), and “reach” in relation to emotions and feelings, but there is also duration. Emotions and feelings develop, evolve, change over time. Stein believes that the length of time a feeling remains in me is subject to motivational, not natural, laws. In other words, they are explicable under the overall laws of *motivation*. The feeling of anger has its appropriate time. If one remains angry too long, one loses control of one’s anger and it becomes an obsession or a wound in the psyche. Interestingly, Stein acknowledges that every individual person has a “core” and a quota of “psychic strength.” She suggests this tentatively:

Perhaps one could show that every individual has a total measure of psychic strength determining intensity, which intensity may claim every single experience. So the rational duration of a feeling may exceed an individual’s “psychic strength.” (1917, 117/1989, 105)

Our very tentative discussions here have sought to emphasize the centrality of the body in all conscious experiences and also the depth and breadth of the thematic of embodiment—which moves from the body in everyday experience through the imagined, fetishized, or dream body to the experiences of

the body in relations with other bodies in what Merleau-Ponty calls “intercorporeality.” He introduces this concept in his late work *The Visible and the Invisible*:

If we can show that the flesh is an ultimate notion, that it is not the union or compound of two substances, but thinkable by itself, if there is a relation of the visible with itself that traverses me and constitutes me as a seer, this circle which I do not form, which forms me, this coiling over of the visible upon the visible, can traverse, animate other bodies as well as my own. And if I was able to understand how this wave arises within me, how the visible which is yonder is simultaneously my landscape, I can understand a fortiori that elsewhere it also closes over upon itself and that there are other landscapes besides my own. If it lets itself be captivated by one of its fragments, the principle of captivation is established, the field open for other Narcissus, for an “intercorporeity.” (1964/1968, 140–1)

Intercorporeality has many different forms and, indeed, Merleau-Ponty himself also speaks of “interanimality” (1968, 172). In *The Visible and the Invisible*, he sees intercorporeality as belonging to “pre-objective being” (*l'être préobjectif: l'intercorporéité*). The concept of intercorporeality is also explored in psychology. The developmental psychologist Colin Trevarthan has proposed the concept of “primary intersubjectivity” to capture the intercorporeal interaction taking place already in the womb when mother and baby are in symbiotic communication—the mother hums to the child, the child in the womb has been observed to move or wriggle in time to the music. The child in the womb responds already to the mother’s voice, to external sounds, to music, and so on. There is the mother’s intercorporeal experience of the child kicking in the womb, or just the sense of another subject being present, who is listening, who is aware. In early pregnancy, the child is first aware through touch and can be observed (in ultrasound) reaching and touching itself. By 25 or 26 weeks, the child is moving in the womb and responding to sounds. The baby will gradually show a particular adaption to the rhythm of the mother’s language.

But it is important to understand that the rich field of embodiment and intercorporeality explored by phenomenology cannot simply be imported into naturalized science. The Husserlian and Merleau-Pontyan phenomenological projects remain resolutely transcendental, although with different emphases. Even Merleau-Ponty does not want to reduce the human to animal embodiment in a world understood naturalistically, but rather to show the interplay between the corporeal and the sense-constituting transcendental domain. He writes:

But a sufficient reduction leads beyond the alleged transcendental “immanence,” it leads to the absolute spirit understood as *Weltlichkeit*,

to *Geist* as *Ineinander* of the spontaneities, itself founded on the aesthe-  
siological *Ineinander* and on the sphere of life as sphere of *Einfühlung*  
and intercorporeity—The notion of species = notion of interanimality.  
The intertwining of biology or psychology and philosophy = *Selbstheit*  
of the world. (1968, 172)

The phenomenology of embodiment reveals—as we saw at the outset—the  
two-sidedness of the embodied subject as in the world and for the world.

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# 4 The Body and Its Image in the Clinical Encounter

*Dorothee Legrand*

Intersections between philosophy and clinical practice are rich and diverse. In the following, I will propose neither a philosophy of *the clinician's conceptual apparatus*, nor a philosophy of *the patient's experience*, but a philosophy of *the encounter between a clinician and a patient*.<sup>1</sup> “The confrontation between the partners in the clinical encounter is irreducible” (Komesaroff 2001, 326) because each partner composing this encounter is irreducible to the other (Levinas 1969). The juncture of the clinician's expertise and the patient's experience—which their encounter requires—is considered here within the particular framework of an investigation of *the place the (mentally) ill body occupies in the clinical encounter*.

It should be noted that different issues are raised in different clinical situations, whether, say, an X-ray is taken when my leg is broken, or a brain scan is taken when I suffer from persistent depressive states. The present paper is not the relevant context to address these differences. Rather, what will be considered here is what is at stake across these differences, i.e., the general issue of the impact that medical images of the (mentally) ill body may have on the clinical encounter.

## 1. NON-REDUCTIONIST CLINICAL PRACTICES

According to one of the dominant approaches in medicine today (i.e., evidence-based medicine), clinical decisions should be objective and thus based on scientific results. Clinicians, patients, care-takers, family members, relatives of the patients, and philosophers, too, may be worried that the massive development of evidence-based medicine leaves aside the patient's *lived* body to the benefit of his *living* body. The whole history of Western medicine has been animated by such oppositions between “the disease-as-scientifically-constructed” and the “illness-as-lived” (Zaner 1992, 111), and, in contemporary debates as well, evidence-based medicine is challenged by many alternative conceptions and practices.

Adopting and adapting a narrative approach, it has been argued that “like the [psycho]analyst, the ordinary doctor is confronted by materiality

saturated with metaphor” (Charon 2008a, 290). The body “is not seeable as an object” (*ibid.*) since it manifests a capacity to tell something that the patient may not know consciously. Thus, “illness occasions the telling of two tales at once, one told by the ‘person’ and the other told by the body” (Charon 2008b, 30). However, “the body is heteroglossic” (*ibid.*, 24) and “it is sometimes as if the body speaks a foreign language, relying on bilingual others to translate or interpret or in some way make transparent what it means to say” (*ibid.*, 30). In this view of narrative medicine, the body is conceived of not only as an object of medical manipulation, but also as a subject telling a story that adequately trained others can decipher to “increase their clinical effectiveness” (*ibid.*, 26). The (mentally) ill body resists understanding and must be “rescued from formlessness” (*ibid.*) thanks to an attention paid to its narratives.

Rather than the narrative competence of the clinician cultivating the act of listening, another narrative approach emphasizes the narration of the patient cultivating the act of talking. Here, the “personal issue of telling stories about illness is to give voice to the body [. . .]. The ill body is certainly not mute—it speaks eloquently in pains and symptoms—but it is inarticulate. We must speak for the body” (Frank 1995, 2). The patient’s voice must articulate his inarticulate body. “Ill people still surrender their bodies to medicine, but increasingly they try to hold onto their own stories” (*ibid.*, 16), giving their own voice to what their own illness means in their own life, and creating “alternative ways of being ill” (*ibid.*, 117) by using their illness to inspire fellow-sufferers by narrating “what is possible in impossible situations” (*ibid.*, 133). Here, narration is thought to benefit the patient in that it promises that he will keep or regain his sense of being himself, despite or thanks to what happens to him in illness: “the performance of narrative [is] integral to the experience of identity” (Eakin 2004, 130).

All together, narrative medicine can be generally defined as “medicine practiced with narrative competence” (Charon 2001, 1897), a competence involving “the ability to acknowledge, absorb, interpret, and act on the stories and plights of others” (*ibid.*), the aim being to achieve a position that is “relaxed, absorbing, accepting, oceanic, filling” (Charon 2008b, 23). Empathy is a key ingredient here. In contrast, it has been argued that genuine empathy is neither possible nor advisable in the practice of medicine. What the clinician experiences “is so different from what the patient is feeling that it seems disrespectful to suggest that I somehow participate in his or her experience. [. . .] what we maintain is sympathy (feeling for not with the patient) and the need to respond” (Macnaughton 2009, 1940). Considering how “clinical empathy” developed historically also helps underline that “the problem of empathy begins with the preoccupation with self that obscures the other. Empathy depends on the experiences and imagination of the person who is empathizing, and this dependency has the potential to obfuscate or exclude the patient’s suffering and the meaning the patient makes of suffering” (Garden 2007, 555).

Moreover, the field of medical humanities, together with the call for empathy, has urged the empowerment of patients (Frank 1995). However, it is highly questionable whether such empowerment should be an aim; it should not be overlooked that “patients seem to be better off when they are taken seriously as patients, i.e., as people sharing agency rather than having autonomy” (Radstake 2007, 142; see also Legrand 2013a, b, c).

Despite these shortcomings, narrative approaches have become an influential way of countering the “reification” of evidence-based medicine, i.e., ways of working against its transformation “from merely one of many ways to grasp human agony into a reality” (Aho 2008, 8).

As another way of countering such “reification,” by adopting and adapting a phenomenological approach to medicine, one may expose not only the practical and technical, but also the ontological (Leder 1992) and ethical (Zaner 1988) flaws of evidence-based medicine. However, phenomenology does not merely discourage the objectifying perspective of the clinician, and does not merely encourage the consideration of the subjective perspective of the patient. It also underscores our own responsibility as contributing subjects. That is to say, “when it comes to biomedical hegemony, few of us are just passive victims. We are also willing co-conspirators [. . .]. Addressing the problematic of health care, then, must involve more than simply mounting attacks against a sinister *them*” (Aho 2008, 9). Avoiding sterile accusations of medicine, we must “critically examine our *own* [. . .] preconceptions about the body, suffering, and death” (ibid., 9–10), and realize that “the most pivotal vehicle in the reification of biomedicine is our own willful appropriation of it to empower ourselves: to enhance our individual autonomy, attractiveness, and marketability” (ibid., 8–9; see also Cohn 2010).

As another move away from “attacks against a sinister *them*,” it may be proposed that “instead of underscoring the difference (or opposition) between the patient’s perspective and the physician’s perspective on the body, [one can or should] solely concentrate on the patient’s perspective” (Slatman 2014, 2). In such an approach, it has been underlined that “the so-called ‘lived body’ involves experiences of one’s body both as subject (*Leib*) and as object (*Körper*)” and that “for that reason phenomenology in the field of health and medicine should abandon its unilateral criticism on the ‘body as object ontology.’” Rather, “the first person’s perspective is itself constituted and conditioned by the world it discloses” (ibid.). In this view, “the body can neither be considered as a fixed, self-contained, self-sufficient entity, nor as clearly demarcated from the outside physical and social world” (Van de Vall 2009a, 4). In particular, “the clinical gaze distributed in culture affects and shapes our collective view of the body and the way it can and should be treated in medicine” (van Dijck 2005, 12).

Also avoiding the opposition between the clinician’s and the patient’s perspectives, one may favor neither one, but rather focus on the clinical encounter, i.e., on “what happens in every interaction between every doctor and every patient” (Komesaroff 2008, 26). The focus here is on the

“ethical interchange in the clinic” (ibid., 14), “the ‘microethical structure’ of medicine” (ibid., 6). In this view, “every clinical relationship consists of a continuous series of ethical events, each of infinitesimal dimension and often inconspicuous to the participants” (ibid., 5). Hence, such questions as the following arise: “How does one gain the trust of a person one has never met before, to such an extent that she will grant access to her most private experiences?” and “How do I apply the uncompromising, analytical touch of the scientist to someone who is in pain and is undoubtedly frightened and anxious?” (ibid., 28). Confronted by such unceasingly unprecedented questions, medicine as “a practice of ethics” is “not only structurally committed to heterogeneity and diversity, but is also radically disengaged from any unitary notion of the good” (ibid., 5, 17). Moreover, such practice “is not a matter of treating the ‘whole’ patient. The doctor has access to no more than a fragment of the patient’s life—that part for which he or she has come to the clinic for attention. Nor is it a matter of adding empathy and friendship to the clinical discourse, as these may well hinder critical reflection on the part of both doctor and patient” (Lingis 2008, x). Rather, (micro) ethical clinical practice involves mutual decision-making, in ways that allow respecting the singularity of each participant, i.e., their alterity relative to each other, as well as their co-dependency.

In the present essay, my focus is neither on the clinician nor on the patient, neither on individual perspectives nor on their sociocultural contexts. Instead my focus is on the clinical practice conceived of as an ethical practice, i.e., as a practice of the encounter *between* the clinician and the patient. I will underline how, in the clinical encounter, multiple perspectives, which remain irreducible to each other, are related to multiple bodily dimensions, which remain irreducible to each other. In other terms, I will propose to conceive of the clinical encounter as operating at the juncture of un-integrate-able bodily experiences.

## 2. THE CLINICAL IMPACT OF IMAGERY

One of the many ways of considering how clinicians and patients may work together in the clinical room is to consider the reliance of clinicians on medical images. Paradigmatically, medical imagery aims at rendering *visible* the causes, effects, or at least correlates of a given symptom. By rendering it visible, the promise is to render the pathology comprehensible and, in turn, curable. As an “ethics of the fact,” medicine here involves an “ethics of seeing,” relying on visibility to interweave the ineffability of sufferance with its mastery (Didi-Huberman 2003, 8, 20, 28).

As medical imagery defies “the crucial phenomenological problem of approaching the body of the Other and of the intimacy of its pain” (ibid., 8), it activates “the myth of total transparency [that] generally rests on two underlying assumptions: the idea that seeing [participates in] curing and



the idea that peering into the body is an innocent activity, which has no consequences” (van Dijck 2005, 6–7). But the impact of medical images on *the clinical encounter* should not be underestimated. Medical images are increasingly present throughout public media to describe the exponential scientific mastery of our mental and bodily states. In this socio-cultural context, medical images may be used by the clinician to explain the pathology to the patient, and by the patient to target his demand to the clinician and relate to his own illness. As an example of how medical imagery may be explicitly present in the clinical encounter, a psychiatrist receiving patients who suffer from eating disorders reports the following:

Families have condemned themselves for failing to prevent the disorder. Individuals with eating disorders find themselves deeply deficient in the face of life. It is profoundly comforting for families and individuals to know that this was not something that they have brought upon themselves, but a ‘malignancy’ that we are facing with the same professionalism and scientific rigour as we would epilepsy, diabetes and ulcerative colitis. When I explain that the abhorrence with the self, the intense anxiety and sensitivity, the dread of weight gain, the food avoidance and the distorted body image are all mediated by a failure of a network centred in the insula, patients and their families are intrigued, relieved and can finally make sense of the seemingly incomprehensible. (Nunn 2013, 92)

The sense of culpability felt by patients suffering from mental disorders and their family is too often triggered or reinforced by the blaming and stigmatizing discourse they are part of. In the aim of lowering the patient’s sense of culpability, a clinician may be tempted to provide an explanation of a mental disorder in terms of cerebral patterns of activations and deactivations, conveying the idea that a mental disorder is a brain disorder, the patient being no more guilty of this than of epilepsy.

Brain images can be used to validate and support the patient’s experiences and symptoms, or to make him believe in his pathology, the reality of which he may deny. As made visible for himself and others, he suffers from something that can be measured objectively. As photography, medical images are “always credited with [. . .] the truth of existence: a photograph is always supposed to authenticate the existence of its referent” (Barthes 1981, Didi-Huberman 2003, 60–61). In this way, “the role of the visual images for patients is central to how they attempt to legitimize their conditions [. . .] and make them ‘real’” via a “transference of technological impartiality: the object-ness of the machinery is transferred to the object-ness of the condition” (Cohn 2010, 67, 76). Consistently, some patients report that “making their illness physical [is] about not wanting to completely divorce themselves from their condition [. . .] Here, the illness is no longer determined ‘indirectly’ through discursive words but is demonstrable in a physical form that is taken to be indisputable” (Cohn 2012, 188).



It has also been suggested that patients “might experience it as a relief to identify their [condition] with their brains instead of with themselves as persons and indeed refashion their notions of their personhood in terms of the brain they ‘have’ as against the brain they ‘are.’” In such a way, they “might restore a sense of integrity by a certain measure of self-alienation, in which a part of their body [the diseased brain] is separated and recognized as both self and not-self” (van de Vall 2009b, 95, 97).

In both cases, patients “might incorporate the kind of ‘facts’ visualized by brain-scans into their notions of self and personhood” (ibid., 95) and interviews with patients suggest that, for many of them, “the imperative is clear: to establish a physical basis for their suffering, and in so doing to potentially find a way of re-conceptualizing their suffering—both in terms of cause and how it might be lived out through interactions with others [. . .] necessitating the disease to be external, even if it resides on the inside” (Cohn 2010, 74).

It should be underlined that, whether the patient detaches himself from his diseased brain or whether he embraces the latter as a neuronal identity confirming his own fleeting experiences, in both cases, if a clinical encounter based on medical images allows a restoration of one’s “sense of integrity,” it is thanks to an operation that aims at keeping the disease under control, notably by localizing it at a sanitized distance, externalizing it, turning the pervasive experience of being ill into what can be visualized, circumscribed, or even comprehended and operated on.

One of the *risks* inherent in such an operation, however, is to position the patient in a state of passivity relative to his own symptoms, sufferance, and potential recovery, especially if the clinician positions himself or is positioned by the patient as the one who knows the causes of the patient’s distress, as the one who knows what to do to fix it, and how to do it (e.g., fixing the insula). It is, however, crucial to avoid a situation that would deprive the patient of a certain sense of *responsibility* over his own symptoms and their evolution. The notion of responsibility at stake here does not involve the idea that the patient could or should be(come) an expert master of his own illness. Instead it calls for the assumption that one ought *to respond* to one’s condition, to what one is affected by, to what happens to oneself, beyond one’s control, rationalization, comprehension, domestication (see also Legrand 2013a, b, c). It is *one’s* responsibility, *one’s* response that is at stake here and that should not be prevented or downplayed, as it strongly influences the way one’s symptoms impact one’s life.

But what does it mean “to respond” here? To respond is *not* to distance the causes and consequences of one’s distress away from oneself, by localizing them on someone or something *external* to oneself; to respond is *not* to master the insufferable sufferance that one is struck by and stuck in; to respond is *not* to reduce meaningless and useless suffering to a controlled understanding (Levinas 1998); to respond is *not* to eclipse the ineluctable reality of one’s “subjectivity of flesh and blood in matter” (Levinas 1991, 78). To respond is to realize that, as subject, one is subjected (Habib 2005,

Waldenfels 2011, 28), one is “touched, affected, stimulated, surprised and to some extent violated” by what happens, by illness, by suffering (Waldenfels 2004, 238); to respond is to assume that the one who suffers one’s sufferance is oneself; to respond is to position one’s illness into one’s own life. But the patient is not the only one to respond to his own illness. By encountering a clinician, by addressing the clinician with the demand to be taken care of adequately, the patient is putting the clinician in the position of responding to *this* demand, and of responding to the peculiarity that *this* illness is challenging him with (Ingerslev & Legrand, In Press). To respond, here, for the clinician, is *not* to dominate the patient, *not* to master the model of a disease, but to assume to put oneself at the service of *this* ill person. By responding to the illness in such a way, the patient and the clinician are in a position to *respond to each other*, putting one’s experience and expertise at the service of the encounter of the one *with* the other.

Whereas “the doctor maintains responsibility for the patient’s biological body, shaped by past traumas and by present commitments to work and to social, political and economic possibilities and constraints,” meanwhile, the clinical encounter should constantly favor the possibility of the patient maintaining “responsibility for his or her activities, engagements with work and with others, his or her state of wellbeing, illness and oncoming death. [. . .] Ethical consciousness and decision-making require communication between these multiple and divergent responsibilities, which form an individual configuration in each clinical interaction” (Lingis 2008, x). This is a general difficulty for evidence-based medicine: how to *keep the balance between the clinician’s and the patient’s responsibility*. The use of medical images may impact the clinical encounter detrimentally, as it may favor the allocation of responsibility to the one constructing and operating with these images, i.e., the clinician (only), thereby favoring the patient’s passivity, a passivity that, in and of itself, may not be favorable to the evolution of his symptoms, whether the patient consciously realizes this or not, and whether he himself consciously favors this passive stance or not.

The use of medical images may also impact in a detrimental way the place the (mentally) ill body takes in the clinical encounter. In some cases, “the transformation of a patient’s body into an object of medical visualization brings along a transformation of the embodied subject as well. [The patient] no longer relies on his own physical sensations to know whether or not he is healthy, but needs a physician to virtually open up his body and look inside” (Radstake 2007, 16). Focusing on the particular example of anorexia will make this issue concrete. In an encounter with a clinician relying on brain imagery, the fragile bodily experience that individuals with anorexia suffer from may be confronted with the strength of the scientific status of brain images. An individual with anorexia can barely trust her bodily feelings and sensations, and she is in constant search for external verification of her weight, shape, appearance, presence. With images of her brain, she now gains a new access to her body, objectively, rather than subjectively. But as no sensation can be associated with brain images directly, there is no way

for the individual with anorexia to correlate her symptoms with the images of “herself” the clinician relies upon. Rather than her own bodily sensations, she is thus asked to trust the clinician’s knowledge of what *she* does *not* feel (Potier 2009, 167). “These experiences, especially when repeated, may lead to a sense of alienation from one’s body, and indeed to treating that body as an aberrant object” (Carel and Macnaughton 2012, 2335). By the clinician’s use of brain images, the patient may be all the more deprived of her own bodily presence, which she constantly fights to maintain despite its paucity. By relying on brain images, the clinician would thereby confirm to the individual with anorexia that she knows little, if anything, about her own body, whereas, he, the clinician, does know and also knows how to operate on it (Potier 2007, 2009).

These considerations underline ethical questions that are raised by the use of neuroimaging in psychiatry and, more generally, by the use of medical images in the clinical encounter. Beyond the specific issues raised in each singular case and, in particular, beyond the differences there are between the use of medical images in psychiatry and in somatic medicine, it remains that the (mentally) ill body confronts the patient with a “bodily doubt” characterized by a lack of continuity in his bodily experiences, a lack of bodily familiarity, a lack of faith in his body (Carel 2013). In the aim of (re-)appropriating what he struggles with, his own (mentally) ill body, the patient, when confronted with medical imagery, needs to be given the possibility to appropriate what he can never have direct access to: his own body as pictured in medical images. In interviews with patients, “what is striking is just how common the desire to do something actively with the image is [. . .] It is as though the many various activities serve as means both to appropriate [the images] and convert them, so that they can be incorporated into some part of people’s life as something that is active and performative” (Cohn 2010, 78). The use of medical images in the clinical encounter thus requires operating at a complex juncture, i.e., a place that joins the scientific and objective status of such images with the meaning and role they may have for each patient individually, especially when the pathology the patient suffers from is centered on one’s body and body image, i.e., in somatic conditions but also in psychopathological conditions that rarely leave (the experience of) the body unaffected. It should be clear that what is at stake here is not a rejection of medical images of the body, to the benefit of subjective reports about how the patient himself feels his body. Instead, what is advocated is the necessity of heeding the precise juncture of the medical image of the body with the body as living and lived by the patient.

### 3. THE IMAGE OF THE BODY IS WHAT THE BODY IS NOT

Rather than accusingly describing how technology “alienates patients from their bodies,” one may underline how “subjective and objective dimensions

shape each other in visualization practices” (Radstake 2007, 6). I agree, but this, I argue, does *not* suggest that “bodies cannot self-evidently be distinguished from their images” and does not beg “for any subject-object distinction to be bypassed” (ibid.). Indeed, if the subject-object distinction did not hold, then bodily experiences would be *monolithic*. Rather, it is because they are irreducible to each other that these bodily dimensions are joined to each other to compose a *multidimensional* bodily experience (Legrand 2010, 2012).

Among other possibilities, in a clinical encounter using medical images, the juncture of the *irreducibly different* perspectives on the body, held by the clinician and by the patient, is made possible, and even indispensable, by the image itself. This may become clear by considering how, in his phenomenological investigation, Husserl differentiated between three components of image consciousness (Husserl 2005, 21), which, when applied to the special case of medical images, allow the differentiation between (1) *the physical image*, e.g., the physical thing made from a photographic paper or the surface of a computer screen; (2) *the image-object*, which is the representing object, e.g., a representation of bodily tissues; and (3) *the image-subject*, which is what is represented, e.g., bodily tissues. Involving these three components, any experience of any image is thus “complex” (Brough 2005, xlv), “stratified” (de Warren 2009, 147).

*The image-object* is reducible neither to its physical supports nor to what it depicts (Brough 2005, xlvi). Unlike the physical image, the image-object is “what directly and genuinely appears” (Husserl 1980/2005, 48): typically, when looking at an image, one doesn’t look at the physical image (e.g., the paper it is printed on), but at the image-object (the shapes and shades that can be discriminated on the paper). Moreover, the image-object “is conspicuous in a specific way: it *exhibits*, it *represents*, pictorializes, *makes intuitable*,” but “it is evident that this exhibited something [. . .] can only exhibit [. . .] something not present”: the image-subject (ibid., 31, 52). *The image-subject* indeed “remains absent. [. . .] the [image-]subject does not appear but is meant” (Brough 2005, xlvi). Thus, the image-object appears, but it “does not merely appear”; it is “permeated” with a reference to the image-subject “not simply at a distance from the content of what appears, but *in it*, or [. . .] through this content” (Husserl 2005, 31). Given the intrinsic complexity of image consciousness, as long as we experience the image *as an image*, we do not experience it “as if the image object signified nothing else” (ibid., 187). On the contrary, image consciousness gives “what does not appear in what does appear” (ibid., 32).

In the case of medical imagery, the image of the body exhibits the body that remains absent from its image but is referred to. This may explain why patients may have ambivalent reactions to medical imagery, which remains “alienating and exciting simultaneously,” more than a century after the discovery of X-rays (Kevles 1997, 267); the body both is given and is not given in the image. Moreover, “the vertiginous experience of looking with

your brain into your own brain, looking at your own looking” complicates the complexity inherent in image consciousness (van de Vall 2009b, 92). In high-tech mirroring, the body is both at once the subject who sees and the object that is seen in what it is not: its image.

Importantly, Husserl’s phenomenological description of image consciousness allows understanding that *conflict* is inherent to image consciousness; “what constitutes the consciousness of an image is precisely the consciousness of the *difference* between image-object and image-subject” (de Warren 2009, 149). This conflict marks the image-subject “as nonpresent” (Husserl 2005, 61). “As soon as the difference, or distance, between image-object and image-subject collapses, the god, so to speak, becomes the image” (de Warren 2009, 150). In medical imagery, if the conflict collapses, the body becomes the image, the image loses its otherness relative to the body. We thus understand here that the confrontation with the *otherness* of its image *preserves* the integrity of the patient’s body, rather than damaging it. Reducing this conflict between the body and its image would not appease the distress felt by a patient when confronted with the image of his interior; quite on the contrary, it would reinforce the sense of violation of his body.

“Thanks to the perpetual and irresolvable conflicts supporting [image consciousness], I am secure in the knowledge that it is an image I am experiencing, not a real thing or person” (Brough 2005, xlix). The image is “*clearly* set apart from reality,” and some aspects of the image (its location, its size, etc.) “are not *accepted* as being true of the image subject” (Husserl 2005, 44, 187). On the contrary, without the conflict between the present image-object and the absent image-subject it refers to, there would be no image consciousness but a direct perception of the subject, or some uncanny experience. Unsecure image consciousness, where “reality and semblance [play] hide-and-seek with each other,” would lead, according to Husserl, to “the most extreme antithesis to aesthetic pleasure” (*ibid.*, 44). In the case of medical imagery, less than a fixation on the image to the exclusion of the body ‘itself,’ it is the *confusion* of the body with the image of the body that may indeed lead to distressing experiences, as the image of the body may be experienced as a disgusting insult relative to what the patient takes his body to be.

#### 4. THE IMAGE AND WHAT IT IS A TRACE OF

Medical imagery is inhabited by the “paradox of spectacular evidence”: “a paradox of a sort of *knowledge* that slips away from itself, despite itself; the endless flight of knowledge, even as the object of knowledge is photographically detained for observation, fixed to objectivity” (Didi-Huberman 2003, 59). In the way Husserl unfolded the complexity of image consciousness, this paradox appears: knowledge of the image-subject slips away from any fixation of the image-object, since the image-subject always remains absent

as image-subject from its representation in an image-object. Scientists who produce and operate with medical images know all too well the distinction between “the thing that *is an image* and the thing that *is depicted in the image*” (Fielding and Marwede 2011, 288–9; Cohn 2010, 69). This distinction holds for any image, but it is critical in medical imagery where images of the body are complex technical *constructions*, “the result of many different decisions, calculations and manipulations” (Cohn 2010, 72). “The ways in which bodily entities appear on the image depend highly on the imaging modality applied [. . .] different techniques result in different visual material” (Fielding and Marwede 2011, 295). Due to these technical constructions determining the visual product of medical imagery, *the image must be deciphered*: “a story determining what this image means, based on the clinician’s knowledge of the patients and their condition, is literally transcribed to make sense of what the image represents. [. . . This process is] consequently, open to various disagreements among practitioners” (ibid., 292). In Husserlian terms: it is not so obvious to determine which image-subject is given in an image-object.

What is important here is to underline that the lack of consensus about what an image is an image of is not due to a mere technical limitation, nor is it a contingent impasse; rather, what is at stake is the very status of the image itself. An image is an image inasmuch as it emerges from an absence, from the absence of what it is an image of; it emerges as the trace of such absence, as revealing such absence, and thus as assuring a mode of presence of the absent, resisting the total lack or loss of what the image is an image of. As such a trace, the image of the body is *what the body is not*; the image of a brain area whose activity is correlated with the performance of a cognitive task by schizophrenic patients is *what schizophrenia is not*. Otherwise, the image would lose its status; it would cease to be an image to become what it is an image of. In Husserlian terms: any image hosts an inherent conflict. And this holds true for all kinds of images, included technically construed images of brain activity—which should not be confused with a direct photograph of what’s inside the patient’s head.

Anyone who is mentally equipped to experience an image as an image experiences that the image is not what it is an image of. Recalling this is thus a triviality (Grünbaum and Raballo 2011). Or is it? In a clinical situation, “when someone holds their brain scan in front of them, [patients] tend to assume, irrespective of the complex technical processes, that it is a straightforward picture of inside their head” (Cohn 2010, 74–5). The epistemic prudence of the scientists “is regularly ignored by the patients who pursue an imperative to find definite meaning and certainty” (ibid., 67). Somewhat paradoxically, images here play the role of masking their own mode of givenness, not because patients would be ignorant of the human and technological processes involved in constructing images of their bodies, but because they imbue the latter with personal meanings. In this way, “though the medical scientists are both modest and reticent about their current

understandings, for patients the idea that their own illness can finally be conceptualized as an apparently neutral ‘thing’ is already proving to have a radical impact” (ibid.).

Therefore, it cannot be so sterile to emphasize the “paradox of spectacular evidence” during the clinical encounter. Indeed, this would allow the patient to participate in the reading of the image, an image he can now see as being only a mediated and partial representation of what may be affecting him. If an image is not presented as an image but as that which it may be an image of, the gap is not maintained between the body and the image of the body, between the brain and the image of the brain, between a pathology and the brain image correlated with the cognitive performance it is correlated to. But these gaps can be maintained between the body seen scientifically and the body felt subjectively, opening a space for the cooperation between the clinician’s expertise and the patient’s experience.

In this context, rather than being a hindrance, medical images can allow the clinical encounter to occur in a way that gives full priority neither to the clinician’s expertise nor to the patient’s experience. If—and only if—the image is taken as what it is, i.e., if the image of the body is taken as what the body is not, then the clinical encounter becomes the place to read what this image is a trace of, be it the living body or the lived body, both inherently absent from the image. The lived body is no more absent from the image than the living body. Moreover, it is their very absence from the image that allows both these bodily dimensions to be present in the process of reading the image.

Again, these considerations do not aim at downplaying the expertise of the clinician, nor his ability to read medical images, an ability that the patient himself doesn’t have or is not in a position of applying, even if it so happens that he has such ability. The point here is not that the patient should be(come) an expert of the condition he suffers from. The point is rather that, even in circumstances in which the clinical encounter is hierarchically structured in such a way that one (the clinician) has an expertise (generating and reading medical images) that the other (the patient) does not have, this can nonetheless be put at the service of the juncture of the clinician’s expertise and the patient’s experience.

What is at stake here is “the extent to which new technical and scientific practices might alter the nature of the encounter between doctor and patient” (Cohn 2012, 180). Indeed, “the emerging role of neuroscience in [medicine] suggests the role of individual experts and doctors might be deferred by the apparently objective, and self-determining technology” (ibid.). Symptomatically, the worry is that clinicians and patients may not look at each other as much as they look at a screen displaying images of the patient’s body (Kevles 1997, 291–2). At the *epistemic* level, the priority given to the image problematically ignores the inherent gap between the image and what this image is a trace of. And at the *clinical* level, prioritizing the image fails to exploit this gap, by failing to *use the image to mediate the clinical encounter*, i.e.,



use the image as revealing the absence of what it is not, thereby pointing at the presence elsewhere of what does not appear in the image: the body palpated by the clinician, and/or the body felt and talked about by the patient. The image does not stand alone, it never does; it must be supported by the living body as well as by the lived body. Medical images, therefore, can/should act as a mediator between the clinician and the patient, a mediator sometimes necessary to ‘triangulate’ the relation, thereby limiting the negative effects of a hierarchical excess of authority given to or taken by the clinician’s expertise over the patient’s experience (or conversely).

## 5. THE OPEN IMAGE

For that to happen, it is essential “to move from viewing the physician’s perspective as objective and the patient’s perspective as subjective towards a greater appreciation of the oscillation from one position to the other” (Carel and Macnaughton 2012, 2335). At the same time, it is crucial to retain that the clinician and the patient do hold radically different perspectives, irreducible to each other. This is exactly what motivates a patient to consult a clinician in the first place, to get a perspective on what affects him, which he could not have on his own; that is to say, “heterogeneity is typical of clinical discourse” (Komesaroff 2001, 318). It is precisely because they irreducibly differ from each other that the clinician’s expertise and the patient’s experience can jointly work *with* each other to the benefit of the encounter. Likewise, it is precisely because they irreducibly differ from each other that a juncture can be formed between the body and the image of the body.

However, Husserl insists, the difference between the image (the image-object) and that which it is an image of (the image-subject) is overridden by their resemblance. The image-object is not the image-subject but like it. An image is a presentation “in which a perceived object is designed to present and is capable of presenting another object by means of resemblance” (Husserl 2005, 19); the image is taken “as the representant of another object like it or resembling it” (ibid.).

“The image object re-presents in itself the subject by means of analogizing traits” (ibid., 161). Nonetheless, the latter “are interwoven with” other traits of the image-subject “which disagree with those appearing and belonging to the image object” (ibid.). This is why Husserl can assert that the image-subject is in the image-object while transcending it: “Something different from what appears is meant—something different, and yet something re-presented in what appears (with respect to the resembling traits)” (ibid., 162). Truly seeing the image-subject in the image-object involves “pure coinciding (consciousness of perfect likeness, indeed, consciousness of identity [. . .]),” even if, Husserl acknowledges, “impure, imperfect coinciding is also possible” (ibid.). “We still have the exhibiting of the subject *in* the image object here, but the exhibiting is impure” (ibid., 163). Nonetheless,



Husserl insists, “depiction obviously presupposes resemblance, indeed, even perfect likeness. This must be our point of departure” (ibid., 155).

In this perspective, priority is given to the image-object, which is thought of as the only element to genuinely appear in image consciousness, the image-subject being merely “meant” (ibid., 48). We understand here that, in this conception of image consciousness, the image-subject may be eclipsed behind the image-object, the body of the patient may be eclipsed behind its image. We thus find ourselves confronted with “the paradox of photographic *resemblance*, which is not the essence of photography though it wanted to be” (Didi-Huberman 2003, 59).

In Husserl’s view, “in order to present the [image-subject], we are supposed to immerse ourselves *in* the image” as one sees the image-subject *in* or *through* the image-object (Husserl 2005, 37, 31). But seeing *in* and seeing *through* are not quite the same phenomenological operations, as we shall now see. Instead of conceiving image consciousness as an experience of seeing the image-subject *in* the resemblance of the image-object, we may conceive of image consciousness as an experience of seeing the image-subject *through* the aperture opened by the image-object. The notion of “open image” is here essential to understand what is at stake. “The expression *open image* aims at a very peculiar economy of the image—most of the images that surround us merely proposing us screens, stopgaps, sutures by *semblance*—where forms, aspects, resemblances tear themselves apart and suddenly let a fundamental *dissemblance* appear” (Didi-Huberman 2007, 35). “The *open image* therefore designates less a given category of images than a privileged moment, an *image event* where the aspectual organization of semblance deeply tears itself apart” (ibid.). “Opening is then equivalent to *unveiling*. It is the act of distancing that which, hitherto, prevented from seeing [. . .] and it is positioning, presenting the thing now ‘open’ in a spatial relation that makes an inside communicate with an outside” (ibid., 42). But what is this “inside” unveiled by the opening of the image? It should be clear that this “inside” is not what resembles the outside, i.e., it is not what resembles what appears on the surface of the image (Husserl’s image-object); rather the “inside” is unveiled as one works on what dissembles, against what resembles, tearing it apart, opening it up (ibid., 123), unveiling the “inside” against its visible appearance, crossing the boundaries of the image, overstepping the locus of the image, ripping its surface (ibid., 134).

This may become clear by considering two distinct ways of understanding the body in relation to images of it. As underlined above, images of the body are what the body is not. Husserl would insist that an image of the body is an image *in* which I see the body, by means of the *resemblance* of the body with its image. By contrast, in the framework of the analysis of the image offered by Didi-Huberman, we understand that the body is what appears *through* the image of the body, by operating with an opening of its image, by means of its *dissemblance* with this image. In the particular case of medical images, therefore, rather than immersing himself in the image

of the body in the aim of detecting how the body resembles it, the clinician may explicitly aim, through the image of the body, at what constitutively dissembles it: the body itself. It is by prioritizing the real body, the suffering body, the healing body, the decaying body, the body to be cured and to be cared for, the living and lived body, that the clinician would be able to read the medical image of the body. He can read it by tearing its surface apart, always prioritizing what dissembles the image-object, to be given the image-subject through it.

Opening the image wrests the body from the visible realm. The realm of visibility, the realm of an image that would be closed upon itself, “is the world of idolatry, a world where the image is everywhere, exhibits itself, puts itself in representations” (ibid., 119). But this is not the only place where the image operates. On the contrary, the world of the open image “characterizes a world where the image is in presence and promise all at once” (ibid.). Opening medical images through their contact with the real of the body (ibid., 35) is experiencing the image inasmuch as its present appearance promises more than the experience of what resembles it, i.e., inasmuch as it promises the experience of what dissembles it, the living and lived body. Experiencing the body through the opening of the image of the body forces us to make a detour through the absence of what the appearance of the image cannot represent, but can give a trace of (ibid., 151). It is the “non iconic, non mimetic nature” of this trace that guaranties to the image its indicial value (ibid., 241). In medical imagery, the body is indicated by the image as what dissembles it.

## 6. NOT DEAD YET

Medical imagery would be utterly different if the clinical encounter unveiled to me my body as inert matter, as if I could attend to the dissection of my own body when it has become a carcass. But what is pictured in medical images is not the *dead* body, the body as inanimate matter; rather, what is manifest in the clinical encounter is the *lived-living* body, the body that is not dead, *not yet*. This contrasts with the idea that medicine would be based on an “ontology of death” (Leder 1992, 21) into which, just like dissection, medical imagery would remain “a science or a practice of dead bodies” that “cannot show anything else than our thinghood” (Slatman 2009, 110). Rather than *separating* the “dead” dimension of the body from its living and lived dimensions (ibid.), rather than operating only on the former at the expense of the latter, the practice of medicine requires us to take into account the processes of healing, as well as the processes of decay proper to a body that evolves towards death. It is this body, *not-dead-yet*, this body always about to die, that both the patient and the clinician are subjected to, and that they both ought to respond to (Gadamer 1998, 100, Zaner 1992, 105).

If medical images are fascinatingly disturbing, it is *not* because they reduce me to what I am *not*; it is rather because they show me what I am *too*. Medical images reveal something of *me*, which silently and impersonally participates in my bodily experiences unbeknownst to me, something I would rather “repress”: the participation of my *living* body in my *lived* body (Merleau-Ponty 1962), the root of my subjectivity in my biological life, i.e., in my death. It would be a mistake—not only from the point of view of medicine, but also from the point of view of a phenomenology of the body—to neglect how much biological life and death, these pre- and post-historical dimensions of my body, are part of myself (Trigg forthcoming, 2014). Common, indifferent, anonymous, they are; but they are *my own anonymity*, my anonymous intimacy, my “almost impersonal” life (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 96), *my own* inexorable decay.

## 7. JUNCTURE, NOT INTEGRATION

More than being a threat to our bodily subjectivity, medical images question what we dare to bare about ourselves, they question how much we are ready to lift the repression of life and death that unceasingly operates within our bodily subjectivity. Challenging, medical images come with the fear of their “invasive gaze,” the fear of their power to tie lived experience and living processes to the exhibition of dead matter, their power to “reinforce,” to “intensify” instead of “neutralizing” the “strangeness” of bodily experience (Slatman 2009, 122).

In various interesting and constructive ways, it has been argued that medical images do not necessarily alienate one’s bodily experiences, if the former “coincide” with the latter, if they are “connected” to each other, if medical images are “incorporated, in becoming part of the body’s experience of itself and of its orientation and comportment within its world” (van de Vall 2009a, 797), if “medical images and patients’ bodies are linked to each other in series of translations that entail material transformations,” if an “identification” allows “the objectified bodies that physicians refer to in their production and reading of images [to] become part of patients’ own bodies” (Radstake 2007, 26, 119).

But the *subject* and the *object*, the *body* and *images of the body* cannot be integrated into any uniform experience of oneself as a harmonious whole—just like *life* and *death* cannot coincide with each other, cannot be aligned with each other, cannot be reduced to each other, cannot neutralize each other, cannot be translated into each other, cannot be identified with each other. Rather than integrated (in)to each other, multiple dimensions of the lived body and multiple dimensions of the living body remain irremediably foreign relative to each other, but it is as such, at their complex juncture (where they meet, as it were, at the joint) that they can jointly compose our multidimensional experience of ourselves.

Likewise, the clinical encounter is a practice occurring between two partners who remain irreducible to each other. It is not, and does not aim at being only a relationship “of support and affirmation, but also of subversion and confrontation” (Lingis 2008, xii). The encounter is “asymmetrical and non-reciprocal. The otherness of the other is irreducible and unfathomable” (Komesaroff 2001, 324, Levinas 1969). *Thanks* to that, multiple perspectives, which remain irreducible to each other, are related to multiple bodily dimensions, which remain irreducible to each other. This irreducibility is not what prevents but what allows the clinical encounter to operate at the juncture of un-integrate-able bodily experiences.

## NOTE

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# 5 Merleau-Ponty

## Actions, Habits, and Skilled Expertise

*Komarine Romdenh-Romluc*

### INTRODUCTION

Merleau-Ponty offers an account of agency that centres on habit. He intends his view to tread a middle path between attempts to explain action in purely causal, mechanical terms ('empiricist' views), and those that understand action as brute bodily movement, controlled by thought ('intellectualist' accounts). He also takes his view to illustrate how the conceptual framework that gives rise to these positions is mistaken. Here, I will consider whether Merleau-Ponty manages to achieve these ends. However, I will do this by relating his views to contemporary thinking in the philosophy of action. I will begin by recasting the dialectic between Empiricist and Intellectualist accounts of action in contemporary terms, before presenting Merleau-Ponty's view of agency, locating it within this dialectic. I will then consider the charge that Merleau-Ponty's account collapses into Empiricism, and argue that this worry can be overcome by paying greater attention to a difference noted by Annas (2012) between habits and skills. A second objection will then be considered, which claims that the revised Merleau-Pontyan account collapses into Intellectualism. In response, I will further develop a Merleau-Pontyan view of agency that is immune to this worry. Finally, I will tentatively indicate ways in which this view challenges traditional thinking about action.

### 1. THE DIALECTIC BETWEEN EMPIRICISM AND INTELLECTUALISM

Throughout his work, Merleau-Ponty sets his analyses of human subjectivity—including his account of agency—against those offered by empiricism and intellectualism. Empiricism attempts to explain agency in terms of cause and effect. Merleau-Ponty objects to this approach on the grounds that it reduces actions to events in the world that simply happen, leaving no room for the agent who *performs* the action. Intellectualism tries to remedy this lack by introducing a subject into the picture. However, the



subject it introduces is a Cartesian self. Intellectualism thus takes action to be brute bodily movement that is controlled and guided by the agent's thoughts. Merleau-Ponty holds that intellectualism fares slightly better than empiricism since it at least tries to make room for the agent, but it must ultimately be rejected because it misconstrues the phenomena of human action.<sup>1</sup>

Contemporary readers will balk at Merleau-Ponty's claim that no causal analysis of action is possible. A widely held view is that human subjectivity is part of the natural world and so obeys the laws of causation. Moreover, a lot is now known about the physiological processes involved in action, and these processes are causal. Conversely, very few theorists now accept the notion of a Cartesian self. However, two ideas allow the dialectic between empiricist and intellectualist views of action to be recast in contemporary terms. First, it is common to distinguish between two different explanations of agency. Actions are performed by creatures *qua* creatures. When we say that someone performed a particular action, we mean that the person *herself* did something. But there are various mechanisms and processes that happen within the creature and underlie her performance of the action—things in which *she* has no hand. One sort of explanation refers to what goes on at the level of the creature herself—a *personal-level* explanation. Another explains the mechanisms that underlie agency—a *subpersonal* explanation. Second, the majority of contemporary theorists take actions to be essentially brought about and guided by the agent's thoughts. According to such views, the same bodily movement can be either an action or a happening. The difference lies not in the bodily movement itself, but in whether it resulted (in the appropriate way) from the agent's thoughts.

With these ideas on the table, the dialectic between empiricist and intellectualist accounts of action can be recast in the following manner. Merleau-Ponty's complaint against the empiricist can be understood as the objection that an analysis of action in terms of causal processes within the agent is subpersonal, and as such, it is an incomplete explanation of agency because it leaves out what is going on at the personal level. (What is left out can be understood in different ways. For example, it is sometimes claimed that personal-level goings-on are essentially normative, and this cannot be captured in causal terms. Alternatively, one might hold that the personal level is characterized by the first-person perspective, which will inevitably be missed by an account of causal processes.) The dominant view of action makes some progress since it is a personal-level account. However, it is intellectualist insofar as it conceives of action as brute bodily movement guided by thought, and this misconstrues the nature of human agency.<sup>2</sup> Merleau-Ponty aims to tread a middle path between these two views by giving a personal-level account of agency, but one that does justice to the phenomena and so eschews an explanation that construes action as thought-controlled bodily movement.



## 2. MERLEAU-PONTY'S ACCOUNT

Merleau-Ponty analyzes action as bound up with perception. He holds that the world is perceived as “soliciting” the perceiver to engage with it. The opportunities for action offered to a creature by her environment solicit her with varying degrees of urgency depending on how “salient” they are for her. When I am hungry, food solicits me more strongly to eat it. If I am satiated, the “pull” to eat is much weaker, and if I have overeaten, food may repel me entirely. Merleau-Ponty holds that these solicitations can initiate and guide action without the need for thought. Action is brought about by the most urgent solicitations.

Habit makes this possible. One acquires a habit by repeatedly doing the same thing. Through this repeated activity, the body becomes familiar with the behavior, so that engaging in it comes to feel like “second nature.” In this way, one acquires a pattern of motor activity. The body’s familiarity with the activity also manifests in perception of the relevant environment as soliciting the behavior. Habits thus have both a motor and a perceptual component. Suppose, e.g., that I repeatedly cycle the same route to work each day. Through repetition of this behavior, cycling to work along this route comes to feel familiar, and I come to see the world as soliciting me to engage in this behavior. When I get up in the morning, my cycling helmet solicits me to put it on, my bike solicits me to ride it, my usual route solicits me to take it, and so on. I can respond to these solicitations without needing to think about what I am doing.

The way that the agent’s habits enable her to perceive solicitations to act, and to immediately respond by acting without thinking about what she is doing, forms the core of Merleau-Ponty’s account of action, but does not exhaust it. I will return to this issue later.

### 2.1 First Objection

The first objection aims to show that Merleau-Ponty’s analysis is not a personal-level, but a subpersonal account of (one of) the mechanism(s) that underlies agency, and as such, his view collapses into empiricism.

I will develop the objection by focusing on unintended habitual behavior because, to assess whether or not Merleau-Ponty’s account of agency is a personal-level analysis, we need to determine whether or not habits as he conceives them are a personal-level phenomenon. In order to do this, we need to isolate habits. Plausibly, unintended habitual behavior is not guided by the agent’s thoughts, and so can be considered the isolated exercise of habits.<sup>3</sup> If it can be shown that Merleau-Ponty’s conception of unintended habitual behavior construes it as a personal-level phenomenon, it will follow that his analysis of agency is likewise personal-level. Consider this case. I consciously decide to make a cup of tea containing no sugar for my friend. I become engrossed in conversation with him as I make the tea, and in my

distracted state, add two spoonfuls of sugar—how I habitually make tea. As I add the second spoonful, I realize my mistake with annoyance, and make him another, sugarless, cup of tea. Merleau-Ponty's account can easily explain how such behavior is produced. Once the agent has developed a habit, she can perceive the world as soliciting the relevant behavior and respond by engaging in it, without the need for thought. In the case described, I perceive the cup of tea as soliciting me to put sugar in it, and this perception draws forth my behavior without the need for me to think about what I am doing.

Is this a personal-level analysis? There are different ways of drawing the personal/subpersonal distinction. In Romdenh-Romluc (2014), I appeal to three central understandings of it to try to show that Merleau-Ponty's account is personal-level. However, as I will argue below, there are grounds for thinking that neither of the first two conceptions picks out a feature (or set of features) possessed exclusively by personal phenomena. Thus, whereas the production of unintended habitual behavior—as Merleau-Ponty envisages it—displays features possessed by personal-level phenomena according to these conceptions, this is insufficient to show that it is personal-level. The third conception *does* seem to provide a clear-cut way of distinguishing between the personal and subpersonal, but—contrary to what I argued in Romdenh-Romluc (2014)—unintended habitual behavior as Merleau-Ponty analyzes it does not come out as a personal-level phenomenon according to this conception.

On the first conception, subpersonal explanations appeal to causal, mechanistic processes, whereas personal explanations do not (see, e.g., Dennett 1969 and Hornsby 2000). Subpersonal explanations thus posit processes that are characterized by the sort of regularity that can be captured by causal laws. There is a question over what kind of regularity this is. Merleau-Ponty (1945) assumes that flexible responses to varying situations are *irregular* and cannot be captured by causal laws. Habitual behavior exhibits flexibility. Consider my daily tea-making. Some days, I will take a mug from the draining board. Other times, I will take one from the cupboard shelf. Sometimes there will be milk in the fridge. Other times, I will take and open a new carton from the cupboard. Merleau-Ponty's explanation of habitual actions accommodates this flexibility, because it does not require the agent's responses to her environment to be regular. Thus he seems to offer a personal explanation. However, his assumption that a mechanistic system cannot respond flexibly to a changing environment is now outdated. Most theorists accept that causal mechanistic processes can exhibit a high degree of flexibility, so this argument is not compelling.

The second conception claims that the notion of meaning belongs to the personal level of explanation (see, e.g., Dennett 1969). On Merleau-Ponty's account, the agent perceives her surroundings as soliciting action, and these solicitations are ordered in terms of their salience, so that the most salient draw her to act most strongly. The agent's actions—including her unintended habitual behavior—are thus initiated and guided by the *meaning* her

environment has for her. It therefore seems that Merleau-Ponty's account is a personal analysis of action. However, it is not clear that the notion of meaning allows for a neat distinction between the personal and the subpersonal. Some of the processes conceived as subpersonal involve representations, e.g., the issuing of motor commands, which are representations specifying the performance of particular movements (see, e.g., Jeannerod and Pacherie 2004). It is usual to think of a representation's content as a meaning (this does not commit one to the claim that *all* meaning involves representation). Thus, the fact that the agent responds to the meaning her environment has for her is not sufficient to show that Merleau-Ponty's analysis is personal-level.

The third conception focuses more directly on the underlying thought that the personal level involves the agent *qua* agent, whereas the subpersonal does not. One might suppose that unintended habitual behavior fits this definition. In the above case, one naturally says that *I*—the agent—made a cup of sugary tea for my friend. We do not say that some subsystem or part of me made it. However, this linguistic evidence is not compelling. Digesting food is a subpersonal process carried out by the agent's digestive system. Nevertheless, one might say of one's friend who is sitting on the sofa: "Jolomie is just digesting his food before playing hockey." One *says* that the agent *qua* agent, i.e., Jolomie, is digesting his food. But this should not be taken literally.

How should we understand what it is for something to involve the agent *qua* agent? There are different ways to cash this out. Here is one. The agent's conscious mental states—her perceptions, intentions, beliefs, desires, etc.—are paradigmatic personal-level phenomena. Something will involve the agent *qua* agent if it is integrated, in the right sort of way, with her conscious mental states. What it is for something to be so integrated is a difficult question. I am not able to give a general answer here—integration may mean different things in different cases. However, in the case of behavior, it seems we can understand integration as follows. The agent is aware of the behavior (it is integrated with her conscious perceptions); she has conscious control over it; it is in line with her conscious intentions, beliefs, desires, etc. (I take it that there is likely to be some relation between these since it seems that to have conscious control over some behavior, one must first be aware of it, and having conscious control means that the behavior can be brought into line with one's conscious intentions, and so forth.)

The problem is that unintended habitual behavior on Merleau-Ponty's analysis is *not* integrated with the agent's conscious mental states in the requisite way.

Unintended habitual behavior is clearly not integrated with the agent's conscious beliefs, desires, intentions, etc., since it is unintended. But, one may suppose that, since Merleau-Ponty takes unintended habitual behavior to be brought about by the agent's perceptions, it is integrated with her conscious mental states, and so can be classed as personal-level. However,

whereas it is true that *conscious* perceptions are personal-level states, it is not obvious that this is the case for all perceptual or perception-like phenomena. Consider, e.g., blindsight. In this condition, damage to the primary visual cortex means that the subject has no visual awareness, yet is able to register the presence of certain objects within a detectable range of her visual system (i.e., those located in her “blind field”). Blindsight is a perception-like phenomenon insofar as it involves the visual system. But it is implausible to think that blindsight states are personal-level. Intuitively, the unconscious detection of items in the blind field is not something *the perceiver* does, but is something carried out by subsystems within her. One may argue that the perceptual states that initiate and guide unintended habitual behavior on Merleau-Ponty’s account are likewise subpersonal. Whereas the agent must, on some level, detect her surroundings for the behavior to occur, this seems to happen below the level of conscious awareness. Consider the above example. To add sugar to a mug, I must register its presence, the sugar, the spoon, and so on. But I do not seem to be *consciously* aware of these things when I make the tea. Indeed, once I become consciously aware of what I am doing, I stop doing it.

In response, one may note that conscious perception is not a uniform phenomenon. As Merleau-Ponty and others have pointed out, it has a figure-background structure. The figure—the focus of one’s perceptual attention—is perceived clearly and in detail. The rest of the perceptual scene forms the background against which the figure is seen. It is perceived less distinctly. One can be aware of items as vague presences, without being aware of them as particular sorts of things. Since both focal and background forms of awareness are part of conscious perception, both belong to the personal level. One might then argue that the agent has background awareness of her environment when she engages in unintended habitual behavior, and so the perceptual states that bring it about occur on the personal level.

However, for this suggestion to be correct, the agent must have background awareness of those elements of her surroundings that release her unintended habitual behavior—she must see them indistinctly “out of the corner of her eye”—when focusing on another part of her visual field—the figure. But this description does not fit the cases concerned. Consider the above example. I must register the sugar, mug, spoon, as determinate items of certain sorts—rather than having indistinct experience of them—in order for them to guide my actions. I cannot use the spoon for putting sugar in tea if I register it only as a vague presence. I must register it as a spoon in order to use it for this purpose. Alone, this point is inconclusive, since background awareness can still present one with determinate items—one’s experience of them will just be less clear and distinct than those presented as the figure. More significantly, in the example, there is no figure on which my perceptual attention is focused, and against which the sugar, mug, spoon, and so on are perceived as background. Indeed, I am looking directly at the sugar, mug, and spoon as I make the tea rather than seeing them “out of

the corner of my eye.” It follows that unintended habitual behavior does not seem to be guided by the agent’s *conscious* perceptions, and so is not integrated with her conscious mental states on this basis.

Of course, it is not just the agent’s *conscious* states that count as being personal-level. For example, everyone has background beliefs that inform their dealings with the world without being conscious. It is usual to think of these as personal-level states. It follows that, while blindsight is plausibly subpersonal, it cannot thereby be concluded that *all* unconscious perception-like states are likewise subpersonal. Thus the perception-like states that control unintended habitual behavior might be personal-level despite being unconscious. If this is so, then unintended habitual behavior will similarly be personal-level, in virtue of being integrated with these states.

However, there are problems with this line of thought. First, unconscious perceptions cannot be thought of on the same model as unconscious beliefs. It is usual to think of unconscious beliefs as states that are stored in the recesses of the subject’s mind, which can be consciously recalled, i.e., brought before the subject’s mind, when required. There is scope to question whether the idea of states coming before the light of consciousness should really be taken literally. But even if one accepts this as a literal description of what happens in the case of belief, it is clear that unconscious perception-like states cannot behave in exactly the same way. Unlike beliefs, perception—by its nature—is tied to context, so that if one’s perceptual systems are working correctly, one will perceive only what is currently within range of one’s senses. To bring an earlier perception (or perception-like state) before one’s mind would be to have a conscious perception without its worldly object being present before one’s senses. One can, of course, *remember* what one has previously perceived. But this cannot consist in literally bringing the very same perception before one’s mind, because this would be to have a perception of something without that item being present to one’s senses.

An alternative tack is to hold that an unconscious perception should be classed as personal-level if its content coheres with that of one’s other personal-level states. However, this will not do. If one takes subpersonal perceptions to play a role in the mechanisms that underlie personal-level perception, then it is plausible to suppose that their content will cohere with that of the subject’s personal-level perceptions. This is because perception—if working correctly—provides the subject with information about the world. Hence, we should expect information about the world to be gathered by the subpersonal mechanisms underlying perception, and then “passed on”—as it were—to the personal-level states that result. A further option is to hold that an unconscious perception will be personal-level if its content can be used by the subject in the formation of her personal-level states. But this runs into essentially the same difficulty. If things are working as they should, then the content of the subpersonal perception will cohere with that of the subject’s personal-level perceptions. In this sense, the subpersonal content

will be available to the subject. One could try to circumvent this problem by stipulating that it is the exact token content of the state that must be available. But it is not clear that this stipulation helps, as it is not clear that talking of states as entities in this way is anything more than a metaphor. These brief considerations suggest that for a perceptual state to be personal-level, it must be conscious. If this is correct, then the perceptions that control unintended habitual behavior are subpersonal and, as such, cannot confer personal-level status on the behavior they produce.<sup>4</sup>

The third way in which some behavior may be integrated with the agent's conscious mental states is if she has conscious control over it. One may initially suppose that I do have conscious control over at least some of my unintended habitual behavior. In the example above, once I notice that I am putting sugar in the tea, I can stop doing it. I can directly intervene in the behavior through an act of conscious will. However, it is true that in the case described, I intervene to stop the unintended habitual behavior once I become aware of what I am doing, and so at this point, I have conscious control over it. But before this—when the behavior is occurring—it is not clear that it is under my conscious control. I am not even aware of what I am doing, so it is surely incorrect to claim that I have conscious control over my behavior.

In summary, it appears that unintended habitual behavior, as Merleau-Ponty construes it, is not a personal-level phenomenon. Thus, Merleau-Ponty may be right in claiming that habits play a central role in human agency, but this role is as part of the mechanism that underlies action. It follows that his account of agency, which places habits at its center, is not an account of agency *per se*, but an account of its subpersonal underpinnings. His view thus collapses into the empiricist position he wishes to avoid.

## 2.2 Response: Skills versus Habits

Annas (2012) draws a distinction between mere habit and skill or practical expertise, which provides the resources for a Merleau-Pontyan response.

Habits and skills are alike in that both involve “habituation,” whereby the repeated engagement in some behavior results in one's performance of it becoming familiar, fluid, easy (relative to one's first attempts to do the thing in question), and requiring less input from conscious thought. However, Annas points out, there are also important differences between habit and skill.

The most important difference in the current context is a striking contrast between the phenomenology of exercising a habit and exercising a skill. As we have seen, habitual behavior can occur without the *agent* being aware of what she is doing. In other words, habits can be exercised absentmindedly. Moreover, when a habit is exercised in this way, it is not integrated with the agent's conscious mental states. Thus habits—so the first objection

goes—are best thought of as belonging to the subpersonal level. In contrast, skills can be exercised “in flow”—a phenomenon studied extensively by Csikszentmihalyi (see, e.g., Csikszentmihalyi 1975, 1990). Flow is a heightened state of awareness in which the agent’s attention is fully focused on the activity. It is also characterized by the fact that the agent engages in the activity fluidly and finds it enjoyable. The exercise of skills in flow is integrated with the agent’s conscious mental states. She is aware of what she is doing; the skilled behavior is typically in line with her conscious intentions, desires, and so on; and it is under the agent’s conscious control. The exercise of skills in flow is thus a personal-level phenomenon.

The fact that skills involve habituation means that their exercise can be easily accommodated on Merleau-Ponty’s account. Skills are acquired through practice, which is the body’s familiarization of itself with the behavior. Through practice, one acquires the ability to engage in a pattern of motor activity and to see relevant parts of the world as soliciting one to engage in it. These perceived solicitations can guide the agent’s behavior without the need for thought. Moreover, since the exercise of skills should be classed as personal-level, if Merleau-Ponty puts skills rather than habits at the center of his account of agency, his view will not be vulnerable to the first objection. There is reason to take this line. Although Merleau-Ponty talks of motor *habits*, it seems from the examples he presents—e.g., playing football (Merleau-Ponty 1942), and playing the church organ (Merleau-Ponty 1945)—that he is more interested in skills. Both of these activities usually require the agent to pay attention, and they are apt to produce a state of flow. Moreover, Dreyfus, who has pioneered work on Merleau-Ponty’s account of action, takes motor skills to be at the heart of his view, rather than what we ordinarily call habits (see, e.g., Dreyfus 2000, 2002, 2005). Indeed, Dreyfus often emphasizes the experience of flow in expounding Merleau-Ponty’s views. The distinction between habits and skills thus seems to offer a way for Merleau-Ponty to respond to the first objection.

### 2.3 Second Objection

However, there is now a further problem. The second objection is the charge that the revised version of Merleau-Ponty’s account collapses into the intellectualist position that he wishes to avoid because skilled behavior is essentially guided by the agent’s conscious thoughts. I will develop the second objection by drawing on Annas’s (2012) characterization of the difference between skills and habits.

Annas contends that skills are flexible and dynamic in a way that habits are not. Skills are flexible because they can be exercised in a range of different situations. Consider playing the piano. One can play a variety of different pieces (someone who could only play one tune would not be considered a skilled pianist) and in a variety of different contexts—on an upright piano



at a friend's house, on a grand piano in a concert hall, on an electric keyboard in a pub, etc. Contrast this with my habit of putting two sugars in my tea, which is exercised only in one context: tea-making. Annas argues that this flexibility means that there is far more scope for improving one's skills than there is for improving one's habits. To some extent, I can improve my tea-making—the more I practice, the defter I become at putting the tea bag in the mug, pouring the water in, etc. But I very quickly reach a plateau where I can improve no further. Playing the piano, by contrast, allows for a far larger degree of improvement. There are an almost infinite number of new pieces I can learn to play; each piece can be played in different ways; etc. Skills are thus dynamic; they change and develop over time as the agent hones them.

Annas then argues that the flexibility inherent to skills requires a sort of understanding on the part of the agent, which can be considered essential to the skill. One has to learn a skill in a particular context or range of contexts—those in which the skill is demonstrated (if one has learned partly through watching someone else) and in which one practices it. In order to exercise one's skill in new contexts, one must distinguish between essential and contingent features of its exercise in the contexts in which it is demonstrated/practiced. Annas takes this to mean that one must understand, for any component of a skill, *why* one does—or should do—it. To cook pasta, e.g., one must know that one heats the water to boil it, which allows one to distinguish between essential features of a pasta-cooking situation (the water is boiling) from contingent features (the water has been heated for ten minutes). Annas argues that, by contrast, possessing a habit does not involve understanding which components are essential and which are incidental. To develop the habit of tying one's shoelaces, e.g., one need not distinguish between essential and contingent features of the situation in which one has developed this habit. As long as one's shoes get tied, one's habit can incorporate all sorts of idiosyncrasies (Annas 2012, 104). Annas then claims that the agent can articulate the sort of understanding that is essential to skills. She points out that, if someone cannot explain why they are doing something, we are justified in doubting their expertise—e.g., we can legitimately doubt that someone is skilled at cooking pasta if they cannot say why they have heated the water for ten minutes rather than five. It seems plausible to suppose that, if someone can articulate her understanding, she must have it before her mind. In other words, she must be consciously thinking about it. The upshot for Annas is that exercising a skill is an essentially thought-governed activity. As she puts it, “my [piano] playing is constantly informed by and sensitive to my thinking” (Annas 2012, 102).<sup>5</sup>

If Annas is right about the difference between skills and habits, then by putting skills at the heart of his account, Merleau-Ponty must hold that action is brute bodily movement guided by thought. His account thus collapses into the intellectualist position he wishes to avoid.



## 2.4 Merleau-Ponty and Thought-Guided Action

The second objection appeals to Annas's analysis of skilled behavior as essentially driven by conscious thought. The problem is that this does not fit the phenomenology. As Annas points out, skilled activity lends itself to the experience of "flow," where the agent's attention is absorbed in the task at hand, and her engagement in the activity is fluid. It is well-documented that consciously thinking about what one is doing disrupts the experience of flow. Here is cricketer Ken Barrington describing the phenomenon:

*Everything* went wrong with my batting . . . When you're playing well you don't think about *anything* and run-making comes naturally. When you're out of form you're conscious of needing to do things right, so you have to think first and act second. To make runs under those conditions is mighty difficult (Barrington 1968, 97f).

An account of skilled behavior as though it were something guided by the agent's conscious thoughts is thus implausible.

Annas is aware of the way in which thinking interrupts flow and tries to accommodate it by claiming that the thoughts that drive skilled activity "efface" themselves in the expert's performance, but do not entirely "evaporate" because they are "recoverable," as shown by the fact that the expert can always describe what she is doing (Annas 2012, 110–1). However, she offers no explanation of what it means to say that the thoughts "efface" themselves, and so her proposal remains mysterious. Perhaps she simply means that the thoughts are *unconscious*. (In fact, Annas does not explicitly claim that it is the agent's *conscious* thoughts that drive her skilled behavior, although, as noted above, this seems to be implied by her claim that the agent can always articulate her understanding of what she is doing.) The claim that the thoughts that guide skilled behavior are unconscious does seem to remove the conflict with the phenomenology of flow. Yet the sense in which they are "recoverable" when they are unconscious still stands in need of explanation.

However, there is a further problem. Nothing in the account of skilled behavior as something guided by thought properly accommodates the crucial role played by habituation. We thus have grounds for seeking a better alternative to the intellectualist account of skilled behavior.

The situation is this: (at least some sorts of) skilled activities have the three characteristics identified above. They involve knowledge of *why* one does things thus-and-so, which can be articulated; they involve habituation; and they give rise to flow-experiences. A satisfactory analysis of skilled behavior must account for these features. Merleau-Ponty's framework provides such an account.

We have already seen how he accounts for habituation. The body familiarizes itself with the relevant activity through practice. In so doing, the

agent acquires the capacity to engage in a pattern of motor activity and to see appropriate parts of the world as soliciting her to engage in it. The control and guidance of her behavior can then be given over to these solicitations, obviating the need for conscious thought.

Turning to the knowledge involved in skilled behavior, it seems that Annas is right to connect this with thought. However, as we have seen, it is implausible to suppose that skilled behavior is guided by conscious thought. Moreover, however we understand thought's role in action, it needs to be compatible with the fact that skilled behavior involves habituation. Merleau-Ponty does not address thought's role in action in any detail. However, I have proposed the following development of his framework, which provides the required account (Romdenh-Romluc 2012, 2014). Merleau-Ponty's basic insight is that actions are drawn forth and guided by the agent's apprehension of her environment. The most fundamental means of apprehending one's surroundings is perceptual. The agent perceives the world as soliciting her to perform various actions. These perceived solicitations then draw forth her behavior. Thought can play a role in action on this view by affecting the agent's apprehension of her environment. There are two central ways that it might do this.

First, we saw above that the agent is solicited by the opportunities for action afforded by her environment with varying degrees of urgency. The most urgent solicitations will be those that control her actions. The urgency of solicitations varies with their salience, so that those that are most salient for the agent will solicit her most strongly. For example, when it's time for my dog's morning walk, opportunities for action relevant to this task become salient for me and exert a stronger pull on me than when it's tea-time. I may still perceive tea-making equipment as soliciting me to make tea, but my dog's lead will strongly draw me to fetch it from the hook and attach it to his collar, his tennis ball will urgently invite me to put it in my bag, and so on. Thought can affect the agent's apprehension of her environment by affecting the salience of the opportunities for action it offers to her. My desire for cake, for example, will make cake-eating opportunities salient for me; my intention to now knit some gloves for my friend will mean that knitting opportunities solicit me more strongly than dog-walking opportunities. Since the agent's actions will be drawn forth by the opportunities for action that solicit her most strongly, where these are made salient by the agent's thoughts, the latter play a role in bringing about action.

The second way in which thought may affect the agent's apprehension of her environment is by building in more opportunities for action than those she actually perceives. The agent conceptually represents an invitation or requirement to act. These conceptual representations add further opportunities for action to the agent's environment, over and above those that she perceives. The conceptually represented invitations to act function like perceived solicitations, drawing forth and guiding the agent's behavior. Thus where an agent conceptually represents requirements for action, her activity

will be guided by a composite apprehension of her environment—perceived and conceptually represented requirements for action. For example, a group of actors rehearsing a play know that when the set is built, there will be a wall at a certain location in the rehearsal space. They cannot *perceive* the wall as a boundary requiring them to stop, because there *is* no wall. Instead, the actors represent the spatial boundary in thought; they imagine that there is a boundary at a specific location, restricting their movements to one portion of the space. The conceptually represented requirement functions in tandem with the perceived solicitations—the perception of the stage edge as requiring them to stay away from it, the perception of the other actors as requiring certain actions, etc.—to guide the actors' behavior.

Thought may guide the acquisition and exercise of skills in the two ways outlined. First, it may make skill-relevant opportunities to act salient, so that they solicit the agent more urgently. My intention to practice the piano, for example, makes the piano's invitation to play it salient for me, so that it strongly draws me to do so. Once I have formed the intention, I don't need to have it constantly before my mind in order for it to guide my activity—I just need to pay attention to what I am doing. I will say more about this below.

Second, thought may contribute to the acquisition or exercise of a skill by adding requirements for action to the agent's apprehended environment, over and above those she perceives. It is this aspect of the Merleau-Pontyan framework that is key to accommodating the puzzling features of skill exercise and acquisition identified above. Consider a typical case of skill acquisition. The agent only comes to perceive the world as inviting her to act once she has acquired the skill. Thus her first attempts to acquire a skill cannot be entirely guided by *perception* of what to do. In many cases, it will be the agent's thoughts that guide her actions instead.<sup>6</sup> The agent conceptually represents a requirement for action, and it—along with the solicitations she perceives—draws forth and guides her activity. The buttons on a Cajun accordion, for example, each produce two different notes depending on whether they are pressed when the bellows are drawn out or pushed in. When one first learns to play, one *perceives* the buttons as for-pressing and the bellows as for-pushing-and-pulling, but one has to *think* about which notes are produced. The learner conceptually represents a certain button as producing the note *E* on an inward push of the bellows and the note *G* when they are pulled outwards. These conceptually represented requirements help guide her behavior. As the agent continues practicing, she will—in most cases—come to perceive the opportunities for action that she initially represented in thought. Once this happens, perception of the world as soliciting the appropriate actions can take over from thought in guiding action.

In this way, the knowledge that Annas identifies as essential to a skill becomes *embedded* in the agent's perception of the situation. There is thus a sense in which it can be said to guide the agent's exercise of the skill, but not

through the agent's consciously entertaining the knowledge in thought at the time she acts. Her knowledge guides her activity by shaping the perceptual situation that controls the exercise of her skill. Annas's claim that the thoughts involved "efface" themselves can be understood along these lines. The agent's knowledge will be "recoverable" insofar as there is no reason why she should forget what she knows, even when she no longer needs to consciously entertain it in thought in order to exercise her skill. She will thus be able to explain what she is doing if asked.

The final characteristic of skilled behavior that needs to be explained is the fact that it is apt to induce flow-experiences. It is not possible to address this issue in full here, so I will focus on one aspect of flow-experience that is significant in the present context, namely, the fact that it involves "intense and focused concentration on what one is doing in the present moment" (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi 2002, 90). In other words, attention is required for flow. Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi take this to explain why the exercise of skills is apt to induce flow. "*Staying in flow* requires that attention be held by this limited stimulus field [i.e., what one is currently doing]" (ibid., 92). Paying attention, for the average untrained human,<sup>7</sup> requires the agent to focus, but it also requires the agent's object of attention to be sufficiently interesting to maintain this focus. Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi link this to the agent's perception of the challenges posed by the activity; if it is not sufficiently challenging, the agent's attention will drift. The challenges must stretch the agent, without being too difficult, since this typically leads to frustration rather than to fluid engagement in flow. Skills tend to satisfy this criterion because they are flexible and can be developed, thus presenting the agent with new challenges as her skill progresses.

The Merleau-Pontyan framework can accommodate these points, but it also allows us to say more about this. The agent is attentive in many cases of skill exercise, not just because the situation offers interesting features that capture her attention, but also because the skill cannot be exercised properly without the agent paying attention. In such cases, attention plays a crucial role in bringing about or enabling the agent's behavior. Elsewhere (Romdenh-Romluc 2014), I develop the basic Merleau-Pontyan framework to analyze the role that attention plays. On Merleau-Ponty's account, opportunities for action are made salient by various different factors. These are often competing—my desire to walk my dog makes dog-walking opportunities stand out, whereas my plan to finish this paper makes writing opportunities salient. Action is guided by the most salient affordances, but this does not mean that others completely stop *pulling* the agent to act. To act effectively, one needs some way to reduce the *pull* of interfering factors, so that one can get on with what one is trying to do. Attention plays this role. We can think of attentiveness as single-mindedness. To pay attention to what one is doing is to *center oneself in one's activity*, increasing one's attunement to those possibilities for action that are relevant to it, so that they stand out for one more strongly. Attentiveness decreases one's attunement to those

competing possibilities. In this way, paying attention to what one is doing helps to keep one's activity on track.

When a skilled agent exercises her skill, her activity is at least partly guided by her perception of the world as requiring certain actions; she perceives what to do. For Merleau-Ponty—as we saw above—the ability to perceive opportunities to exercise a skill is developed through practice. The more one engages in an activity, the more vividly opportunities to do so will show up for one. We saw earlier in our discussion of habits that repetition can result in the ability to perform habitual actions without any input from, or effort on the part of, the conscious agent, i.e., absentmindedly. Perception of the corresponding affordances can likewise become automatic, so that they are registered by processes within the agent and guide her behavior, without the agent herself being conscious of them. Indeed, this seems to be so when the agent acts absentmindedly. Perception of relevant action-opportunities becomes automatic through repetition. As we have seen, skills are flexible and can be exercised in different ways in a range of different situations. Thus, whereas practicing a skill develops one's ability to perceive how to exercise it, generally speaking, one does not practice it in sufficiently similar circumstances for the perception of skill-relevant opportunities to become automatic. The agent will need to *consciously* perceive in order to exercise her skill effectively. She will need to put her conscious awareness into her perception of the scene, as it were; in other words, she will need to pay attention to what she is doing. Paying attention will enable her to discern the relevant affordances so that they can guide her activity.

### 3. RETURN TO THE DIALECTIC: SOME TENTATIVE SUGGESTIONS

The discussion so far has shown that Merleau-Ponty provides the resources to develop an account of agency that satisfies his aim of avoiding both empiricism and intellectualism. In contemporary terms, this means that the Merleau-Pontyan account is a personal-level analysis of agency, rather than a theory about the mechanisms that underlie action, and one that avoids analyzing action as brute bodily movement guided by thought. I now want to tentatively indicate how the account developed here fulfills Merleau-Ponty's second aim of revealing the inadequacy of the conceptual framework that underlies both empiricism and intellectualism. I will argue that it does this insofar as it raises problems with the personal-subpersonal distinction, as it applies to at least some of the phenomena associated with human agency, and shows that we need a more nuanced way of conceptualizing action than the traditional division between actions and happenings.

Consider again the difference that Annas identifies between absent-mindedness and flow-experience. She takes this difference in phenomenology to map onto the distinction between habits and skills. However, this

is incorrect. Some capacities that should be clearly classed as skills can be exercised absentmindedly. A skilled pianist, for example, deep in conversation, standing next to a piano, might unthinkingly play a little tune with one hand. Whereas it does not seem that the pianist can be completely unaware of doing this in the same way that it seems an agent may be completely unaware of locking her front door as she leaves the house (in the latter case, the agent may have no memory of locking the door, but the pianist will surely remember playing the piano), the pianist's playing can be detached from her intentions in the same sort of way as my unintended tea-sugaring. She may know that there is an exam happening in the room next to the piano, intend to not disturb the candidates, and be annoyed with herself when she plays the tune. Conversely, habits can be exercised in flow. What matters is that the agent finds sufficient interest in the activity for it to sustain her attention, and, whereas the nature of the activity is likely to determine how interesting it is for the agent to some degree, finding something interesting is a subjective matter. It follows that some agents can be sufficiently interested in routine activities that others find humdrum—including habitual behaviors—for these activities to induce flow.

Sports games, and other *flow activities* provide goal and feedback structures that make flow more likely. However, a given individual can find flow in almost any activity—working a cash register, ironing clothes, driving a car. Similarly, under certain conditions and depending on an individual's history with the activity, almost any pursuit—a museum visit, a round of golf, a game of chess—can bore or create anxiety [experiences that disrupt or block flow]. *It is the subjective challenges and subjective skills, not objective ones, that influence the quality of a person's experience* (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi 2002, 91, their italics).

Moreover, interest in something can, to a certain extent, be cultivated. (Indeed, a portion of Csikszentmihalyi's research focuses on how to do this to harness the properties of flow-experience to enhance engagement in learning activities.) It is plausible to suppose that the same agent might exercise a skill or habit absentmindedly on one occasion and in flow on another, depending on how she is feeling at the time. Since the difference between absentmindedness and flow does not map onto the distinction between habits and skills, it does not show that habits belong to the subpersonal realm whereas skills are personal-level phenomena.

What, then, does this difference tell us? Here is one suggestion. Human agents possess various different capacities that play a role in their behavior and that encompass what are called "habits" and "skills." Those capacities can be exercised in ways that are more or less integrated with what we tend to think of as the agent *qua* agent, where integration is understood along the lines suggested above. The means by which integration is achieved (at least

to some degree) is attention because to attend to what one is doing is to be aware of it. Attention brings the activity under some degree of conscious control and so allows it to be exercised in a way that is consonant with the agent's conscious mental states. There is a question concerning the extent to which integration is possible for any given capacity—for some, it may be possible to achieve only partial integration, for others it may be impossible to achieve any integration at all. Obsessive-compulsive behavior, for example, seems to share some characteristics with habit. It consists in actions that are repeatedly performed in particular situations, such as checking whether the gas is turned off several times before leaving the house. It is plausible to suppose that the agent's behavior in such a case is called forth by her perception of her surroundings as inviting her to perform such actions. However, whereas the agent can pay attention to such obsessive-compulsive behaviors, doing so does not bring them under full conscious control, and they are not always fully consonant with the agent's conscious desires, intentions, and so on. There may be other capacities whose exercise is *necessarily* integrated with the agent *qua* agent. Certain sorts of skills, for example, may be such that they can be exercised only if the agent is paying attention and has conscious control over her activity. In such a case, the skill will be exercised only in a way that is consonant with the agent's conscious mental states. Perhaps brain surgery is one such skill.

These brief comments are far from conclusive and merely indicate matters for further research. But if something like this view is correct, then it follows that the personal-subpersonal distinction may not apply in any straightforward way to some of the capacities associated with human agency. Moreover, it implies a more nuanced account of action, since, intuitively, those behaviors in which there is a high degree of integration look more like what are traditionally thought of as actions—behavior over which the agent has control and for which she can be held accountable—and those where there is no or very little integration look more like mere happenings. But since integration admits of degrees, there will be a spectrum of behavior that cannot be readily classified according to the traditional dichotomy between actions and happenings. The Merleau-Pontyan account I have developed here thus shows that traditional ways in which we think about action require revision.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Merleau-Ponty intends his account of agency to both tread a middle path between empiricism and intellectualism and show how the dialectic between these views is misguided, such that we require a new framework for thinking about human action. In this paper, I have shown how this dialectic can be recast in contemporary terms so that Merleau-Ponty's goal is to provide a personal-level analysis of agency (rather than a subpersonal account of



the mechanisms that underlie it), which does not end up explaining action as brute bodily movement guided by thought. I have also used the resources Merleau-Ponty gives us to develop an account that satisfies these desiderata. On this view, actions are initiated and guided by the agent's apprehension of her environment, which incorporates both perceptions and thoughts. I then indicated how this account brings our traditional ways of thinking about action into question. It is not clear that the personal-subpersonal distinction applies in any straightforward way to a range of capacities involved in human action, and this implies the need for a more nuanced account of human agency than that found in the current literature, which neatly divides human behavior into actions and happenings.

## NOTES

1. Empiricist and intellectualist accounts of action are both committed to further claims that serve to define these positions, which I have omitted as they are not relevant to our purposes here. But for a fuller account, see Romdenh-Romluc (2010).
2. Note that, for Merleau-Ponty, theories can have empiricist or intellectualist leanings without being full-blown empiricism or intellectualism. There are thus some theories that display elements of both positions, for example, the view that action is guided by thought, but where this is taken to consist in causal processes within the brain.
3. I argue for this claim in Romdenh-Romluc (2014). Space prevents me from rehearsing the argument here.
4. Thanks to the editors of this volume for suggesting this line of thought.
5. The interpretation of Annas I offer here, which takes her to hold that skilled activities are bodily movements guided by conscious thought, is based primarily on the claims she makes about skills and articulacy. However, it is possible to read her account as much closer to Merleau-Ponty's (although to do so requires supplementing her account with explanations of the notions she leaves unexplained, such as what it is for thoughts to "efface themselves" in skilled activity). I take it that this is not particularly important in the context of this paper, since what is at stake is the role of the position in the dialectic, not whether it is ultimately attributable to Annas.
6. The agent may also learn by copying someone else. Thought need not be involved in this process.
7. It is well known that one's capacity to pay attention can be honed. Certain meditational techniques are designed to do just this.

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## 6 The Minds of Others

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Here are two things that we get from a phenomenological approach to questions about intersubjectivity and social cognition. First, minds, our own and those of others, are not purely mental in the traditional sense that would consider the mental as imperceptible or hidden away behind bodily behavior. Minds are embodied, and that means that at least some aspects of mental phenomena have a bodily being. This has important implications for how we think of social cognition and of experiences such as empathy and emotion. Second, just as my body is different from your body, and the access that I have to my body, both experientially and agentively, is different from the access that I have to your body, so also (and I'll argue, just because of that bodily difference) there is a difference in the access that I have to my mind and the access I have to your mind. This second idea also has important implications for understanding others and for the notion of empathy. Neither of these ideas is foreign to contemporary debates in philosophy of mind and cognitive science. But to some philosophers these two ideas appear to be in a negative tension and can lead to a number of different theoretical perspectives on questions of intersubjectivity.

For example, if, on the one hand, one focuses on the second idea, that access to other minds is different from access to one's own mind, that difference is sometimes thought to turn on the idea that I have privileged introspective access to my own mind but not to other minds. Indeed, this is what motivates the traditional problem of other minds. This way of conceiving of the difference seems to undermine the first idea, since the presence or absence of introspective access suggests that the difference depends on the mind being imperceptible or hidden from everyone other than the experiencing subject, and the latter's access is thought to be privileged precisely because the subject has covert access to his own private mental states. What follows from this way of thinking is that our access to other minds is entirely indirect and dependent on processes of theoretical inference or simulation.

If, on the other hand, one focuses on the first idea, that minds are embodied, this may suggest that there is no problem of other minds since we can directly perceive bodies and bodily actions and expressions. This in turn may seem to undermine any notion that there is a difference in access, since

I can perceive both my own body and the bodies of others. What follows from this way of thinking is either a simple, strict behaviorism, or the idea that we understand minds (others, as well as our own) by taking the intentional stance (Dennett 1989), which on some accounts simply discounts the notion that there is any kind of inner experience or, if there is, that we can have good knowledge of it.

Phenomenology, I'll argue, by keeping both of these insights in a positive and productive tension, can offer a different and more nuanced analysis of how we know other minds than those on offer in standard philosophy of mind. Yet, although there may be some consensus on the side of phenomenology that theory of mind, simulation theory, behaviorism, and the kind of functionalism that goes along with the intentional stance are problematic theories, this does not mean that there is a completely positive consensus in phenomenology about the nature of minds and knowledge of other minds. In effect, there is a complex story to tell on all sides of such issues.

## 1. ACCESS AND DIRECT PERCEPTION

The problem of access, and the very idea that minds are accessible or not, involves an unusual reflective stance. That is, as I am immersed in actions and mental activities—as I am doing whatever I am doing, whether that involves some kind of bodily engagement with the world or some kind of thinking—I am not concerned about access. The question doesn't come up. Even when I engage in a metacognitive reflection on the strategy I'm using to solve a problem, I don't first have to solve the problem of access. The problem of access to my own mind comes up only in certain theoretical (philosophical or psychological) reflections in which I explicitly ask myself how I might know my own mind. It's a peculiar and special type of reflection of the sort engaged in by Hume when he goes looking for the self and fails to find it, or by Freud when he reflects on whether any of us truly know ourselves, or when Husserl conducts his phenomenological analyses of *noesis* and time-consciousness. Most instances of reflection are not like these. Rather, we usually engage in a kind of situated reflection about our actions and our situations; we deliberate about what to do; or we explain our motives for acting the way we do (Gallagher and Marcel 1999), and in such cases we never run into the issue of access. Even if we explore or deliberate about what we believe or desire, we do not first ask about how we should access our thoughts or feelings. Rather, engaging in situated reflective cognition in this regard is similar to acting. In walking to open a door, or in reaching out to get a drink, we do not first look for our feet or for the ground, or for our hands, as if we could misplace them. So, also, we do not first have to look for our mind in order to think.

"Yes," someone will say, "but it's completely different in regard to the other's mind." We seemingly do not have direct access to other minds. This

has been called the “unobservability principle” (UP)—“the idea that minds are composed of exclusively intracranial phenomena, perceptually inaccessible and thus unobservable to everyone but their owner” (Krueger 2012). This is certainly the standard and dominant view in the philosophy of mind, psychology, and cognitive social neuroscience. Indeed, this is how the problem is usually defined. Precisely because we do not have a direct access to other minds, we require some indirect route based on inference or simulation. Here are some classic statements of this view.

Because the mental states of others (and indeed ourselves) are completely hidden from the senses, they can only ever be inferred. (Leslie 2004, 164)

[N]o human has ever seen a thought, a belief, or an intention. (Tooby & Cosmides, in Baron-Cohen 1995, xvii)

Mental states, and the minds that possess them, are necessarily unobservable constructs that must be inferred by observers rather than perceived directly. (Johnson 2000, 22)

Indeed, the first two statements apply UP to our own minds as well as to the minds of others, and this is not an uncommon claim made by the “theory theory” (TT) version of theory of mind (ToM) (e.g., Carruthers 2009). The problem of access applies in all cases, including access to ourselves. With respect to others, the TT solution is to appeal to the skill of making theoretical inferences in a process called mindreading, which “involves inferences based on unobservables (mental states, such as belief) . . .” (Karmiloff-Smith 1992, 138). That is, when we perceive another person’s behavior, we appeal to folk psychology as our commonsense theory about how mental states inform behavior, and, on this basis, we form inferences about what others must believe or desire. In contrast to this inferential account, according to the simulation theory (ST) version of ToM, we are capable of mindreading precisely because we do have access to our own minds, and we can use our own mental states to simulate those that belong to others. Alvin Goldman offers a succinct statement of the simulation approach.

First, the attributor creates in herself pretend states intended to match those of the target. In other words, the attributor attempts to put herself in the target’s ‘mental shoes’. The second step is to feed these initial pretend states [e.g., beliefs] into some mechanism of the attributor’s own psychology . . . and allow that mechanism to operate on the pretend states so as to generate one or more new states [e.g., decisions]. Third, the attributor assigns the output state to the target . . . [e.g., we infer or project the decision to the other’s mind]. (Goldman 2005, 80–81)

Goldman (2006) offers an introspectionist account of simulation, but like other simulationists, he allows for the possibility that the simulation process

can be subpersonal and automatic, requiring no conscious access to one's own mind.

In contrast to both TT and ST, phenomenologists have consistently argued that mindreading, whether based on theoretical inference or simulation, is unnecessary in most of our everyday interactions with others, because we have direct perceptual access to the other's intentions and emotions, and in most cases this is sufficient.<sup>1</sup> Max Scheler is often quoted in this regard.

For we certainly believe ourselves to be directly acquainted with another person's joy in his laughter, with his sorrow and pain in his tears, with his shame in his blushing, with his entreaty in his outstretched hands. . . . And with the tenor of this thoughts in the sound of his words. If anyone tells me that this is not 'perception'. . . I would beg him to turn aside from such questionable theories and address himself to the phenomenological facts. (Scheler 1954, 260–61)

We find similar statements in Merleau-Ponty.

I do not see anger . . . as a psychic fact hidden behind the gesture. . . . The gesture does not make me think of anger, it is anger itself. . . . I perceive the grief or the anger of the other in his conduct, in the face or his hands, without recourse to any 'inner experience.' (Merleau-Ponty 1945/2002, 214, 415)

Anger, shame, hate, and love are not psychic facts hidden at the bottom of another's consciousness: they are types of behavior or styles of conduct which are visible from the outside. They exist on this face or in those gestures, not hidden behind them. (Merleau-Ponty 1948/1964b, 52–53)

This is the case for intentions as well as for emotions. Intentions are not hidden mental states; they include what philosophers of mind call M-intentions—bodily or motor intentions that are reflected in the kinematics of movement and action—and P-intentions (present or proximal intentions-in-action) (Searle 1983, Pacherie 2006, 2008). Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002), following Husserl (1952/1989), refers to this as a bodily or motor intentionality that can be perceived in the other's actions. These claims are not made a priori; there is good scientific evidence to support them. If I pick up a cup to drink from it, the shape of my grasp is different than if I pick it up to throw it (Jeannerod 1997). My movement is shaped according to my intention, and the intentional aspects of bodily movements are not extrinsic to those movements—they are intrinsic to and reflected in the dynamic kinematics of movement (see Ansuini et al. 2006, 2008, Marteniuk et al. 1987, Sartori et al. 2011). Moreover, as Cristina Becchio et al. (2012) have shown experimentally, even in the absence of contextual information, these intentions can be perceived in bodily movement. Indeed, this is a capacity that begins to develop early in infancy. Seven- to nine-month-old infants, for example, can

perceive certain ambiguous acts like offering and withdrawing an object as reflecting playful intentions—with different goals and outcomes than when the same intentions are interpreted literally (Legerstee 2005, Reddy 2008). And there is further evidence for the perception of intentions (as well as emotions) to be found in studies of bodily kinematics and the dynamics of social attention and interaction in adults (Atkinson et al. 2007, Lindblom 2007).

A number of issues are still in debate about the notion of direct perception of intentions and emotions. What precisely is the nature of this kind of social perception? Is it epistemic or non-epistemic (Dretske 1969)? Is perception not already informed by beliefs, and in some sense inferential (Lavelle 2012)? What must emotions and intentions be if they can be perceived? Surely there are also aspects of emotions and intentions that are not perceptible. I won't try to answer all of these questions here, but I will consider one basic question about the nature of social perception and point to one particular response that employs Husserl's analysis of perception.

Joel Smith (2010) combines a functionalist account of mental properties with a Husserlian insight about how perception generally works. As Husserl explains, in the case of perceiving a physical object we see more than is visually present. Different sides or profiles of physical objects are occluded, yet they are somehow co-given (or co-presented or appresented) in perception as part of the internal horizon of the object.

Of necessity a physical thing can be given only 'one-sidedly' . . . A physical thing is necessarily given in mere 'modes of appearance' in which necessarily a core of 'what is actually presented' is apprehended as being surrounded by a horizon of 'co-givenness.' (Husserl 1913/1983 §44)

The claim is that we actually see the object as a whole, even if we do not literally see each of its sides or its occluded interior. This is not equivalent to seeing one side plus inferring or believing that there are other sides. As Smith notes, the phenomenology of object perception is belief independent. Even if I know that I am seeing constructed façades, it can still appear as a voluminous object. "If the phenomenology can remain in the absence of belief or disposition to judge that the object has the relevant co-presented features, then co-presentation cannot be explained in terms of belief or a disposition to judge" (Smith 2010, 736). Husserl accounts for co-givenness in perception in terms of the anticipatory structure of perception itself. The temporal structure of perception includes an anticipatory appresentation of what we would see if we moved around the object. This idea has been given an enactive formulation by Alva Noë (2004)—occluded aspects of objects are included in our enactive perception because perception is based on sensory-motor contingencies—perception includes "if-then" information about our movement possibilities. As Husserl puts it:

I recognise that a hidden intentional "if-then" relation is at work here: the exhibitings must occur in a certain systematic order; it is in this way

that they are indicated in advance, in expectation, in the course of a harmonious perception. (Husserl 1954/1970, §47)<sup>2</sup>

Smith follows Husserl in applying this insight to the case of social perception. Rather than occluded sides, we might think that emotions and intentions have occluded aspects—aspects that are not presented and that are usually considered unobservable. Smith argues that such aspects are in fact co-presented in a way similar to the co-presentation of occluded object sides. Thus, Smith suggests, “another’s misery is visually present even though only their frown is visually presented. This view would count as a perceptual account of our access to others’ mental states, but would also respect the deep seated intuition that others’ mental states are in some sense hidden from view” (Smith 2010, 739). He considers an objection, however, that comes from Husserl himself. My motoric possibilities can bring hidden sides of an object into view; but hidden aspects of emotions cannot be brought into view like that. Thus, “experiencing someone else cannot be a matter of just this kind of appresentation” (Husserl 1931/1960, §50). Fortunately, Husserl answers his own objection. What I anticipate is not that changing my position will make hidden aspects of mental states present, but that future behavior will bring verification of such mental states. To the extent that my perception anticipates “changing but incessantly harmonious behaviour” on the other’s part, my perception co-presents such behavior.

Regarding experience of someone else, it is clear that its fulfillingly verifying continuation can ensue only by means of new appresentations that proceed in a synthetically harmonious fashion, and only by virtue of the manner in which these presentations owe their existence-value to their motivational connexion with the changing presentations proper. (Husserl 1931/1960, §52).

Smith takes this solution to involve the idea that in perceiving emotions and intentions we not only perceive the visible aspects of such mental states, but we perceive their functional properties which may not be, strictly speaking, visible.

As Joel Krueger (2012) has pointed out, however, Smith’s Husserlian solution is not an exact fit with claims about direct perception. Even if on Smith’s account it is not a matter of inference or simulation, but is somehow perceptual, there seems to be an indirectness involved in our ability to grasp functional or dispositional properties. Mental states that are functional or dispositional are temporally extended (they are not given “in one go,” so to speak) and may not be given in any perceptual mode. Smith suggests that we may be able to “latch onto” such properties in a kind of “if-then” anticipation. For example, I see that the other person is angry, not just in terms of his facial expression, but in terms of anticipating that, given a certain change of circumstance, he will act in a way consistent with anger,

e.g., acting in a way that I could recognize, given ongoing context, as acting with spite. On this view, Krueger contends, such properties “are amodally co-present—essentially so (Smith 2010, 743) and thus remain a half-step removed from direct perceptual reach. . . . Transposed onto the discussion of seeing other minds, the presence/co-presence distinction appears to tacitly affirm UP” (Krueger 2012, 154).

One possible solution to this is to admit that we do not perceive the whole of an emotion or intention, but that we do directly perceive sufficient aspects of such mental-embodied states for purposes of understanding. In this regard, we can think of mental states such as emotions and intentions as patterns that include some aspects that are visible as various bodily phenomena—facial expressions, postures, movements, gestures, vocal intonations, etc. (Izard 1972, Izard et al. 2000, Newen et al. 2015). Such bodily phenomena are not mere expressions of some inner state, but are in part constitutive of a mental state that may involve more, non-visible aspects. On this view two things are important. First, that by perceiving the bodily phenomena, we perceive the emotion or the intention itself, even if incompletely. Second, the aspects that we do perceive are sufficient for purposes of, for example, interacting with the other person, or understanding them, without further inference. This would support a direct perception view, while leaving open the possibility that in some cases we can wonder or question about other non-visible aspects, or that in some cases we can get things wrong and can become aware of that precisely by becoming aware of subsequent and changing *in*harmonious behavior. In such cases, we may be motivated to employ alternative means of intersubjective understanding, which may or may not include theoretical inference, simulation, or some form of narrative practice (Fiebich 2012, Gallagher and Hutto 2008).

If in fact the mind is embodied, then we should expect to be able to see some aspects of the mental in the bodily. There is more to this than direct perception of bodily emotions and intentions. The fuller picture is given by the phenomenologically inspired approach to social cognition known as interaction theory, which holds that most of our everyday encounters with others are embodied and situated interactions that do not require mindreading, theoretical inference, or simulation routines (Gallagher 2005). Rather, we understand the actions, responses, intentions, and emotions of others, in their embodied comportments—their postures and movements, facial expressions, eye direction, gestures and vocal intonation, as well as their speech—all of these happening in the rich pragmatic and socially interactive contexts of everyday life. This means that as interacting agents we are more than just perceivers or observers; we are “out there,” with others, in-the-world, rather than closed up in the solitary confinement of our own private minds.

One objection to this phenomenological view comes from internalist conceptions of the mind, inspired by predictive coding models of brain processing. Thus, for instance, Jacob Hohwy argues that it is essential that the mind be private and not accessible by others. As he puts it, “consciousness



is private so that it can be social” (Hohwy 2013, 254). His idea is that just as the individual brain, on the predictive coding model, uses multiple modularly separated sources of sensory evidence to construct a prediction about the world, and improves its inferences accordingly, so, also, interacting minds require multiple and independent sources of evidence to construct the best interpretation of the world. If all knowledge about the world derived from one source, our communal inferences would not be optimal. Thus, “if we wore our conscious experiences on our sleeves—if they were public and not private—then they could unduly influence other individuals’ reports and we would not then benefit from integrating our [competing] reports with theirs” (ibid., 253). Even if we grant that such multiple sources of evidence work to our advantage in some circumstances, it’s not clear that the idea that there are multiple sources requires that each source be a private mind inaccessible to others. To have multiple sources it would be sufficient to have multiple perspectives—defined not only in terms of unique embodied egocentric spatial frames of reference at any point in time, but also unique histories of experience, different current affective states, and so on. The fact that I, as an embodied agent, see the world from a perspective somewhat different from yours would be sufficient to provide the multiple sources of evidence that Hohwy seeks, without the need to picture the mind as “invisible and hidden from others” (Locke 1690; cited in Hohwy 2013, 249).

Let me note that in discussing different approaches to social cognition we have been skirting a problem that remains more or less implicit—less so in accounts that define the problem in terms of UP, and more so in accounts that attempt to discount UP. I’ll call it the problem of transcendence. Not only do we need to explain how we gain access to other minds, or how access is not the problem; we also have to explain how other minds, in some regard and to some degree, transcend our abilities to understand them. Indeed, part of experiencing others is an experience of this transcendence. As Gangopadhyay and Miyahara (2015) put it, “other minds are characterized by an ‘otherness’ partly because they are always transcendent of what we experience.” This problem seemingly comes as a trade-off in eliminating the access problem. If one claims that access to the other is not a problem because we can directly perceive their intentions and emotions, then the seeming lack of transcendence becomes the problem. I’ll argue that this problem is addressed in phenomenological approaches to empathy, but remains a problem for simulationist approaches.

## 2. EMPATHY AS SIMULATION

If our intentions and emotions are *in* our actions and bodily comportments, even if not “on our sleeve,” then one might think that the notion of empathy would not be problematic. Debates about empathy, however, mirror the debates about mindreading, and there are theories of empathy from both

theory of mind and phenomenological perspectives, some of which regard empathy as a (or *the*) form of everyday mindreading, and others that regard empathy as a special form of understanding. I'll focus here on what I take to be the two main contending theoretical approaches, the first based on simulation theory (in this section) and the second on phenomenology (in the next section).

Some simulation theorists equate the notion of simulation with empathy (e.g., Gallese 2001, Goldman 2006, Stueber 2006). Both simulation and empathy share the central metaphor of putting oneself in the shoes of the other. Goldman, for example, on the one hand, calls ST “empathy theory,” and states that “interpersonal mental simulation [is] also called empathizing” (Goldman 2006, 17, 205). Furthermore, he claims that “empathy is a key to mindreading . . . [and is] the most common form of mindreading” (Goldman 2011, 31). On the other hand, he at least considers that empathy may be distinguished from mindreading. “What is the relationship between mentalizing and other forms of social cognition? For example, how is it related to empathy . . . ?” (Goldman 2006, 21). His answer is that they are equivalent once we subtract certain things that other theorists might want to include in empathy: “mindreading is an extended form of empathy (where this term’s emotive and caring connotation is bracketed)” (*ibid.*, 4). Other forms of empathy may include emotive aspects.

Similar to Goldman, Karsten Stueber equates empathy with simulation and identifies it as “epistemically essential” to our understanding of other agents (Stueber 2006, 2008). Both Goldman and Stueber distinguish between low-level (or basic) and high-level (or re-enactive) empathy. Basic empathy is a perceptual phenomenon that “allows us to directly recognize what another person is doing or feeling” when observing her facial expressions or behavior (Stueber 2006, 147). Basic empathy, however, is not sufficient to “explain and predict a person’s behavior in complex social situations” or to provide “a full grasp of all mental concepts that we attribute to the typical adult” (*ibid.*). Accordingly, Stueber proposes that re-enactive empathy involves more sophisticated mindreading abilities. This requires a higher-order simulation of thoughts or mental states taken as reasons for action.

Vittorio Gallese offers the most developed simulationist account of low-level empathy based on the neuroscience of mirror neurons (MNs). Indeed, the discovery of MNs in the 1990s has motivated much of the more recent debates about empathy. MNs, located in the premotor cortex and parietal areas, are activated in two conditions: (1) when the agent engages in intentional actions of a specific sort (e.g., actions that involve reaching and grasping) and (2) when the subject observes someone else engaging in the same kind of action. Since there is a matching of agentive action and observed action in the mirror system, Gallese defines activation of MNs as a simulation: my motor system simulates the action that I see you perform. “I submit that the neural matching mechanism constituted by mirror

neurons . . . is crucial to establish an empathic link between different individuals” (Gallese 2001, 44). He extends this model to expressive aspects of movement that give us access to the emotional states of others. In this regard, Gallese seemingly equates empathy with what we might call standard social cognition or mindreading. That is, Gallese doesn’t differentiate empathy from our everyday encounters with others. He refers to his general model as the “shared manifold hypothesis” and distinguishes three levels:

- The *phenomenological level* is the one responsible for the sense of similarity . . . that we experience anytime we confront ourselves with other human beings. It could be defined also as the *empathic level*. . . .
- The *functional level* can be characterized in terms of simulation routines, *as if* processes enabling models of others to be created.
- The *subpersonal level* is instantiated as the result of the activity of a series of mirror matching neural circuits. (Gallese 2001, 45)

Since the mirror system is activated automatically, whenever we observe another person engage in intentional action, empathy is a basic, common, and everyday occurrence.

Another group of theorists who pursue a simulationist account of empathy think that empathy is neither a form of mindreading nor an automatic process (Jacob 2011, Vignemont and Jacob 2012, Vignemont and Singer 2006). Rather, they regard empathy as exclusively a higher-level phenomenon. They offer the following collectively *sufficient* conditions for empathy.

1. *The affectivity condition*: both target and empathizer experience some affective state. This distinguishes empathy from standard mindreading.
2. *The inter-personal similarity condition*: there is no empathy unless the target’s and the empathizer’s affective states are isomorphic (i.e., both experience pain or both experience fear).
3. *The vicarious state condition*: the empathic state involves an “as if” or vicarious affective state, generated by the empathizer’s imaginative portrayal of another person’s affective state.
4. *The ascription condition*: there is no empathetic understanding unless the empathizer knowingly ascribes the affective state to the target.
5. *The caring condition*: the empathizer must be led to care about the target’s affective life because of context. (Vignemont and Singer 2006, Jacob 2011)

The second condition, which Jacob identifies as “arguably the major assumption of the simulation-based approach to empathy” (Jacob 2011, 521), distinguishes empathy from sympathy. The former involves being in the same or similar affective state as the other; the latter involves being in a different affective state (e.g., I feel *sorry* that you are in *pain*). Vignemont and Jacob contend that the capacity for creating vicarious experiences (the third

condition) is based on what Goldman calls “e-imagination,” which involves an off-line, high-level (i.e., explicit, conscious) simulation (Vignemont and Jacob 2012). The fourth condition distinguishes empathy from emotional contagion, which typically happens unbeknownst to the subject. Jacob explains the fifth condition by suggesting that empathy is *other-directed* and depends on a consideration of context; it is not the *default* response to my simple awareness of your affective state. Rather, empathy depends on a top-down modulation and requires that the empathizing subject cares or is concerned about the other.

One can certainly question several of these conditions. Consider, for example, the *affectivity condition*, the idea that there is no empathy unless both the target and empathizer experience some affective state. Setting aside the fact that in some basic (and perhaps trivial) sense everyone is always in some affective state, it’s not clear that in every case of empathy both target and empathizer have to be in affective states in any strong sense, or that we cannot empathize with another’s non-affective state of making a difficult decision, or with their non-affective attitude, or even with the intellectual difficulty they might be having in solving a difficult mathematical problem. Yet it also seems plausible to say that empathy involves more than what Hogan calls “the intellectual or imaginative apprehension of another’s condition or state of mind” (Hogan 1969, 308). Whether or not the other person is in some (relevant and non-trivial) affective state, one might think that the empathizer is necessarily in the affective state of empathy itself. Isn’t empathy, regardless of whatever other affective state it may involve, itself an affective state? That is, one can understand empathy not as necessarily taking up a secondary affective state—e.g., a sadness or outrage I feel along with the other—but as being its own irreducible affective state—the state of feeling empathy.<sup>3</sup> In the case where I feel empathy (as itself an irreducible affective state) for the intellectual difficulty that someone is having in solving a mathematics problem, the affectivity condition is not met. If empathy is its own affect, this also undermines any strict (isomorphic) interpretation of the *inter-personal similarity* condition since the empathic affect found in the empathizer is not an affective state found in the other person (the target of empathy).

In regard to the *vicarious state condition* (that the empathic state involves an “as if” or simulated affective state), in many cases the empathizer’s affective state (the empathy itself plus any other affective state that may accompany it) may in fact be a real rather than a pretend or vicarious state. My sadness and outrage about the injustice done to you may be a heartfelt sadness and outrage. It seems quite possible for me to forego simulation or the exercise of my e-imagination and to simply recognize the particular situation you are in and to feel genuine sadness and outrage at the injustice done to you.

The *caring* condition suggests that empathy is other-directed; it involves the comprehension of the other in the other’s circumstances. Even if we do

not *care* for the other person in a strong sense, empathy involves at least taking an interest in the other's experience. In addition, however, one needs to maintain a distance between oneself and the other. Even if I feel sadness and outrage with you about the injustice that you experience, I know that I am not the one who has suffered the injustice.

Despite differences concerning whether empathy is a low-level or high-level phenomenon, or whether it is equivalent to mindreading, or something quite different from mindreading, all of these theorists (Goldman, Stueber, Gallese, Jacob, Vignemont, Singer) agree that empathy in every case involves simulation.

### 3. A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF EMPATHY

In contrast, phenomenologists offer a non-simulationist account of empathy. A low-level form of empathy has been a mainstay of classic phenomenology and can be found in the works of Husserl, Stein, and Scheler. Most recently it has been developed by Dan Zahavi (2011 and 2012). Historically, phenomenologists contrasted their view of empathy with the argument by inference from analogy, a forerunner of simulation theory. According to this argument, which is classically expressed by John Stuart Mill (1867), I have direct access to my own mind, but I see only the observable bodily behavior of the other person. There is an analogy between the way I experience my own minded body and what I observe in the actions of the other's body. On the basis of that analogy I infer that the other's body reflects the presence of another mind. If, for example, I see someone else grimace, and I know that I grimace when I'm in pain, I can infer that the other person is in pain. This doesn't give me access to the other's mind, but it allows me to predict what they may be experiencing and what their future behavior may be.

Phenomenologists criticized this argument on several points. For example, Max Scheler maintained that conscious inferential processes were cognitively too complex to account for the kind of empathy that can be found in infants (Scheler 1923/1954, 232–4). Furthermore, the analogy between my bodily behavior and the other's bodily behavior breaks down because my bodily behavior is given to me in a very different (non-observational) way (e.g., by proprioception and in egocentric perspective) than the bodily behavior of the other. Scheler suggests, in addition, that on the basis of inference by analogy the only thing I really know is my own mind, which I project into the body of the other. This criticism applies equally to simulation theories, since to understand the other person they require that one uses the model of one's own mind or motor system. That is, they require the mindreader or empathizer to understand the other by means of neuronal or mental states in one's own system that match or are the same or similar to the neuronal or mental states of the other (e.g., Gallese 2014; Goldman 2006; as well as *the inter-personal similarity condition* discussed above). In

this regard, the transcendence of the other is greatly reduced, if not eliminated. Similar critical arguments are brought against simulation theory by phenomenologists today and are supplemented by arguments that address the idea that simulation can be subpersonal, or equivalent to activation of the mirror system (see Gallagher 2007, 2008b, Gallagher and Zahavi 2012, Zahavi 2008).

We've already seen Scheler's more positive proposal based on direct perception; we can directly perceive the emotions and intentions in the animate meaning of the bodily expressions and behaviors of others. The explanation of how we perceive the other's actions and expressions as minded is, for the phenomenologist, a better explanation of empathy. The fact that I do not experience the other in the same way that she experiences herself is part of the meaning of empathy, since empathy requires a differentiation between self and other and a certain transcendence of the other. If we had the same access to the other as we have to ourselves, the other would be undifferentiated from self—which is again a problem with the requirement of similarity or matching in simulation theory. Empathy requires the transcendence of the other—a difference from oneself, an elusiveness of the other, which is something that I experience.

And when I do have an authentic experience of another subject, I am exactly experiencing that the other eludes me. Thus, the givenness of the other is of a most peculiar kind. . . . The otherness of the other is exactly manifest in his elusiveness and inaccessibility. To demand more, to claim that I would only have a real experience of the other if I experienced her feelings or thoughts in the same way as she herself does, is nonsensical. It would imply that I would only experience an other if I experienced her in the same way that I experience myself; i.e., it would lead to an abolition of the difference between self and other, to a negation of the alterity of the other, of that which makes the other other. (Zahavi 2001, 153)

For the phenomenologists, empathy involves a direct access to the other, without the need of a mediating inference or simulation; and although it is direct, it is nonetheless incomplete and structurally different from the direct access that I have to my own mind. Empathy is a specialized mode of intentionality—a perceptual experience that allows us to experience and understand the mental states of others, while at the same time experiencing their transcendence.

While for Scheler empathy seems to be close to an automatic, direct perception of the other's intentionality in her bodily comportment, Zahavi (2001) is careful to note that for other phenomenologists, such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, empathy is secondary to a more primary form of intersubjectivity. Husserl and Merleau-Ponty refer to this more primary form as transcendental intersubjectivity (Husserl 1931/1960; Merleau-Ponty

1942/1967); Heidegger (1927/1962) calls it *Mitsein* (being-with) and conceives of it in pragmatic terms. For Heidegger, being-in-the-world involves pragmatic relations to various projects in which we already experience an implicit reference to others. Before any question of other minds comes up, we are already in pragmatic relations with others. In this case, the question of other minds arises only in response to some problematic situation where our pre-understanding of others fails and we are motivated to ask about what they must be feeling or thinking. In this regard, empathy, rather than being the primary way to account for our relations with others, is something secondary or derivative. It's a mistake to understand empathy as the primary problem concerning others, according to Heidegger, since the problem of empathy is cast in terms of one isolated individual attempting to grasp the "closed off" mind of the other (1927, §26), and this ignores the already established implicit relations that we have with others.

Husserl and Merleau-Ponty take this one step further. For them, intersubjectivity is a necessary condition for the experience of the objectivity of the world. Our primary relation with others is not an encounter with them either as other minds or other bodies, but *a tergo*, as already influencing our ability to encounter anything at all. I can encounter the world, which includes others, only because the world is already there for others. My perceptual experience of the world, for example, is not only an experience of worldly objects, but an experience of them as already co-experienced by others, in what Husserl calls an existential co-validity (Husserl, Ms. C 17 36a; cited in Zahavi 2001). Before anything like a problem of other minds arises, the alterity of others' intentionality is already implicit in my experience. Empathy is built upon, and discloses, this primary kind of intersubjectivity.

Perhaps the most radical point against taking empathy to be primary has been made by Sartre. All accounts of social cognition and empathy mentioned so far start with the question of how I experience or know the other person and seemingly overlook a very basic aspect of intersubjectivity—the fact that the other experiences me. Sartre focuses on the other's gaze as she focuses on me. The other perceives me, and this is something of which I have such an immediate sense that I cannot help but recognize the other as a subject—as someone who directs their intentional regard towards me and takes me as an object. The other is not first an object for my perception, or for empathy; rather, I am first an object for the other. This being-for-others is more primordial than what Heidegger identifies as the basic existential structure of being-with.<sup>4</sup> The other is revealed to me through my awareness of myself as being an object for the other (Sartre 1943).

Sartre is in some regard pointing to the problem of transcendence, for in experiencing the other's gaze I experience, according to Sartre, the other's freedom—and that's something that I cannot fully comprehend because it involves the idea that she sees possibilities that are not identical to my possibilities. Levinas (1961/1969) puts this in terms of the irreducibility of the face of the other—the face of the other is not something one can totally



objectify since it stares (or has the potential to stare) back (see Gallagher 2014b).

For the phenomenologists, then, intersubjectivity is not reducible to empathy (or to social cognition in general). Yet they also provide the resources to explicate a concept of low-level empathy. If empathy somehow must include the transcendence of the other (or at the very least, if it implies an extra-empathic transcendence), it is also constituted by a more positive (even if incomplete) grasp of the other. To explain this, both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty conceive of the body as a locus where there is both a givenness and a transcendence, since the body is both an object (that I can perceive) and a subject (that perceives me and is not fully comprehended by my perception).

It is exactly the unique subject–object status of the body, the remarkable interplay between ipseity and alterity characterizing body-awareness that provides me with the means of recognizing other embodied subjects (Zahavi 2001, 161; referencing Husserl).

Following Husserl's emphasis on the importance of embodiment, Merleau-Ponty provides a way to address one of the problems that Scheler raised against the argument by inference from analogy, namely, the idea that there is a difference between the way that we experience our own bodies and the way we experience the other's body. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002, 1960/1964a) points to the intermodal connection between sense modalities. That is, my proprioceptive sense of my own body directly communicates with my visual sense of your body (see Gallagher 2005). Indeed, mirror neurons may be a possible neuroscientific explanation of how this is possible. This does not entail taking MN activation to be a form of simulation, however. Rather, on this phenomenological approach, MN activation is simply part of the sensory-motor processes that underpin enactive social perception (Gallagher 2007, 2008b). Precisely this type of motor or emotive resonance characterizes the intentionality of an empathic perception of the other.

One problem with this phenomenological conception of low-level empathy, however, is the same one found in the low-level simulationist account. It seems to make empathy automatic, at least on the most basic level, where it is a passive and involuntary process of associative bonding based on the kind of resonance that seems to be built into social perception (Husserl 1973; Zahavi 2012). Husserl, as well as Stein (1917/1989), however, suggest that a higher-level intentionality develops on this initial basis as one attempts to understand why someone is feeling the way they are, for example. Zahavi points to a different problem.

One implication (and limitation) of the phenomenological proposal is that it by highlighting and emphasizing the intuitive character of empathy also restricts it to face-to-face based forms of interpersonal



encounter. On many other accounts, and this is also reflected in colloquial speech, it makes perfect sense to say that we can feel empathy, not only towards individuals not present, or whole groups of people, but even towards fictive literary figures. (Zahavi 2014, 139)

He suggests that this colloquial use of the term could be treated as derivative. One could make a stronger claim and say that this kind of higher-level empathy is based upon the low-level, face-to-face processes described by the phenomenologists. This motivates the question: what more needs to be added, or how must low-level empathy be transformed to arrive at the possibility of this high-level (perhaps more complex) form of empathy?

#### 4. NARRATIVE PRACTICES

One response is that the more subtle and sophisticated aspects of social understanding, including high-level empathy, are based on narrative practices (Gallagher 2012a, 2014a, Gallagher and Hutto 2008, Hutto 2008). Simulation theorists sometimes regard narrative practices as merely providing support for higher-level simulations. Stueber (2008), for example, suggests that the importance of narrative is simply to provide “hints and clues” to enhance the empathetic reenactment process. I’ve argued that reliance on narrative resources actually allows for a more enriched but non-simulationist empathic understanding (Gallagher 2012a).

Cultural or personal narratives tell us about people in specific situations, what they do, how they interact with others, and they sometimes indicate the motives or reasons people have for doing what they do (Hutto 2008). Accordingly, they allow us to gain interpretive insights into the actions of others. They give us more than just contents that would feed theoretical inferences or simulations, however. They provide a form or structure that we can use in understanding others. We learn from narrative how to frame an understanding of others. We start to recognize their engagement in action, not simply in terms of the immediate and occurrent context, but in terms of longer-term projects (plots) that add meaning to what they are doing in the present circumstance. Narratives help to shape our sense of possibilities and our expectations in regard to the other’s behavior.

As Vignemont and Jacob suggest, empathy is *other-directed*. If we take this other-directedness in a strong sense, as suggested by Sartre and Levinas, for example, then it is not the case that empathy is oriented to the other in a way that allows me to reduce the other to my own experience (as in simulation); rather, it means that I am open to the experience and the situated life of the other, the events that happen within the particular contexts that define the other’s life. Narrative, which, in contrast to theory, can provide particulars about persons, events, and contexts, allows me to understand, not in terms of my own narrow experience, but in terms that

can be drawn from a diversity of situations that transcend my own situation, but that also inform my understanding. Narratives provide us with what can be called, following terminology suggested by Bruner and Kalmar (1998), a *massive hermeneutical background* (Gallagher 2011). An education in many narratives of many sorts instills norms and shapes our understanding of what we, and others, are doing. It provides knowledge of what actions are acceptable and in what circumstances, what sort of events are important and noteworthy, and what kind of explanations constitute the giving of good reasons.

All of this is important for our capacity for any kind of empathy that is not automatic. If I have an immediate low-level empathic reaction to seeing another person's sadness, I certainly need to know *why* they are sad in order to enter into a full empathic understanding of their plight. Understanding a person in the context of their situation—having a sense of what their story is—is essential to forming an empathic attitude toward them. The way that story is framed can either elicit a more developed empathy, or could turn off the initial automatic inclination. An initial empathic reaction (e.g., to someone's cry for help) can be undermined once I understand the fuller context (e.g., the someone in question is a mass murderer). Recent studies of altruistic behavior, motivated by empathy, bear out the importance of narrative. Empathic reactions are stronger when we understand the personal situation of an individual than if we have abstract, detached, or merely statistical information about the plight of others (Slovic 2007, Small et al. 2007).

That narrative competency is necessary for empathic understanding doesn't mean that empathic understanding requires an occurrent or explicit story telling; rather it requires the ability to recognize others in detailed pragmatic and social contexts that may be other than (transcendent to) my own, and to understand the other's actions and affective states in that context, in a narrative way. Our own actions and the actions of others have intelligibility and begin to make sense when we can place them in a narrative framework (see MacIntyre 1981).

On phenomenological views, and in contrast to standard theory of mind and simulationist views, our understandings of others and their situations, and hence the possibility of empathizing with them, are not based on attempts to get into their heads in a mentalizing fashion, since we already have access to their embodied actions and the rich (and often shared) worldly contexts within which they act—contexts that can be translated into narratives that operate to widen or make more specific the meaning/significance of actions and expressive movements.

A narrative understanding of the other, however, doesn't necessarily lead to an empathic understanding. The idea that empathy involves high-level processes that are not automatic means that there can also be an understanding of others that does not involve empathy. This brings us back to the discussion of social cognition in general, where narrative practices also have

a role to play. In contexts where we may gain a sense of the other's emotions and/or intentions by means of direct perception, one may still need to go further for an understanding of their reasons for acting or for understanding why they believe what they believe—without necessarily taking an empathic perspective. The narrative practice hypothesis (Hutto 2008) offers a way to think of how we can attain these more subtle and sophisticated understandings without recourse to mindreading. On this view, consistent with phenomenological approaches that reject the kind of default mindreading proposed by TT or ST, narratives allow us to understand other persons as motivated widely in terms of their situations in a lifeworld richly informed by personal, historical, and cultural dimensions, rather than narrowly in terms of their mental states. Narrative understanding goes beyond folk psychological explanations that are cast in terms of beliefs and desires and allows us to consider all kinds of effects in those situations where our interactions with others require us to comprehend their motives and reasons for acting, that is, to understand the complex embodied minds of others who engage in actions and interactions in the world.

## NOTES

1. Phenomenologists have developed a number of arguments against the various versions of ToM or mindreading accounts of social cognition (see, e.g., Gallagher 2001, 2005, 2012b, Gallagher and Zahavi 2012, Ratcliffe 2006, 2007) and in favor of a direct perception view (Gallagher 2008a).
2. Whether this is the best way to think of perception of the co-present is another issue. See Gallagher and Zahavi (2012) for further discussion.
3. Accordingly, the idea of empathy as an affect is different from what Stueber (2008) calls “affective empathy”—the vicarious sharing of an affect consistent with Vignemont and Jacob's affectivity condition. High-order empathy, in this regard, may be a kind of intersubjective affect similar to the feeling of solidarity. Solidarity, however, unlike empathy, may involve the expectation of reciprocity; if I feel solidarity with you, then I would expect you to feel solidarity with me. Also, solidarity may be transitive—if I feel solidarity with you, and you feel solidarity with a third person, then, as long as the solidarity is about the same type of project, I should feel solidarity with the third person also. Empathy involves neither reciprocity nor transitivity.
4. Sartre (1943) rightly criticizes Heidegger on this point, indicating that the pragmatic reference to others that Heidegger describes is already a derived reference based on a more prior concrete and embodied (face-to-face) encounter with others. See Gallagher and Jacobson (2012) for a similar critique.

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Section III

# Self-Awareness and Knowledge





# 7 Interoception and Self-Awareness

## An Exploration in Interoceptive Phenomenology

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This essay explores the possibility of a form of *interoceptive phenomenology*. Phenomenology, as I understand it here, is the investigation of the structures and make-up of conscious experiences. ‘Interoception’ stands for certain conscious experiences that emerge in concert with states that can be accurately described in terms more or less internal to the body. Purely interoceptive experiences (e.g., thirst, drowsiness, various pains and pleasures) are intimately connected to, but also distinct from, experiences of things external to the body and experiences of the body’s own positions and movements. While no organism is independent of its environment, interoception bears on states more directly dependent upon the body’s current condition than on its environment, at least for a given episode of the experience. The aim of this essay is to investigate the distinctiveness of interoceptive experiences generally and, in particular, how—in what sense—certain recurrent modes of it afford a distinctive form of self-awareness. The investigation is phenomenological, yet with a nod towards the flurry of neuroscientific research in the past decade or so on the topic of interoception. Accordingly, in the first section of the paper, I make some general observations about the phenomenological distinctiveness of interoception by way of flagging neuroscientific findings and conjectures on the topic.

Interoception is frequently direct and typically less mediated (on a conscious level) than inferences, observations of objects in our environment, signs, representations (pictures), and—in some cases—even emotions. My working, albeit hardly novel, hypothesis is that various instances of interoception both co-constitute and reveal the so-called “material me” (Damasio 2012, 8, 10, 22, Feinberg 2009, 151, Sherrington 1906, 256, 324). That is to say, interoception, at least in some cases, just is a form of self-awareness in a certain fundamental respect, namely, the respect in which I habitually identify or can be identified with experienced states of my body. This last disjunction is important; interoceptive self-awareness is a person’s awareness of her body as such, even in cases where the “interoceiver” may not—or perhaps not yet—have grasped fully or explicitly that this part of who she is coincides with her experience of her body. This minimal self-awareness

can take the form of a bare awareness of thirst or a sharp pain that exhibits, nonetheless, the complexity of being typically if not invariably affective.

Interoception makes up a basic form of *bodily* self-awareness, where self and body are, as a matter of habit and fact, indistinguishable. As such, they stand in contrast to other forms of self-awareness that depend more straightforwardly upon perception, thoughtful reflection, deliberation and decision-making, autobiographical memory, interaction with others and our environs, and so on. While these forms of self-awareness themselves coalesce for the most part, interoceptive self-awareness appears to be a *sine qua non* for many further senses of selfhood and self-awareness. The notion that interoceptive awareness is equivalent to a rudimentary self-awareness does not entail an adequate awareness of the self or even that there is an identical self of which we can be adequately or inadequately aware. Indeed, part of the distinctiveness of interoceptive self-awareness lies in the fact that it generally lacks conditions necessary for self-perception, e.g., a real difference between the self and the act of perceiving it. So, too, while an iteration of instances of similar modes of interoception, coupled with memory, yields an incipient or embryonic sort of self-consciousness, it falls short of explicit self-knowledge, the recognition of the identity of the self (that is thought or signified) with the bodily self that is given in perception—or interoception.

In the second, third, and fourth parts of this paper I contrast interoceptive self-awareness with certain reflexive experiences, review some of Husserl's salient treatments of interoceptive phenomena (to be sure, not labeled by him as such), and respond to potential objections. Concluding remarks briefly place interoceptive self-awareness within the context of contemporary debate over the proper characterization of self-consciousness.

## 1. INTEROCEPTIVE SELF-AWARENESS

Human beings are organisms and, like any organism, they are—of necessity and for a time—fundamentally stable unities of processes and activities that make up and are proper to the kind of organism they are. While some of these processes and activities primarily are automatic responses to events external to the body (e.g., dilation in response to light, blinking at an object thrown one's way), others are responses to events more internal to the organism itself (e.g., burping, dilation in response to the presumption of a task's difficulty (Kahneman 2011, 33)).

We can be conscious of some of these responses or, better, these responses sometimes are conscious; in such cases, consciousness appears typically to supervene on the automatic responses. Conscious and unconscious responses alike signal a perturbation or instability of some sort in the organism. For the moment, we may shelve the question of whether the conscious response is different from a (pleasant or painful) consciousness of the instability. Regardless of whether the conscious response also involves a consciousness

of the instability, that instability in turn triggers and sometimes motivates the appropriate interactions with the environment needed to restore the balance necessary for the organism's maintenance as a whole.

Hunger, for example, is engendered by a neural state that signals ("represents," if you will) the physiological state of the body, alerting it to an imbalance and motivating behavior to restore a balance. More specifically, the central nervous system (CNS) monitors the amount of glucose in the blood, such that hypoglycemia gives rise to hunger, triggering mechanisms to relieve it, including the relevant conscious, motivational desires. As with interoception generally, the experience of hunger serves homeostasis, the hierarchically organized neurobiological process of maintaining an optimal balance in the body's physiological condition (Cannon 1963, 24). An interoception like hunger can signal a physiological state in an efficacious way because an organized process of self-maintenance is already in place (Craig 2002, 2008, 272–74, 278). Something similar holds for thirst, as the CNS monitors osmolarity, the ratio of solutes (e.g., salt or sugar) in the solvent (e.g., water). High osmolarity, i.e., a preponderance of the former, leads to thirst (along with dry mouth, decreased water elimination, etc.) and a drive to drink, until a proper balance of salt and water is restored. Some researchers speak, in this connection, of "action programmes," to designate the set of innate physiological functions that aim at maintaining or restoring a balance (Damasio & Carvalho, 145).

While the formulation "action programmes" appears to be relatively novel, what it designates is reminiscent of Aristotle's talk of *hou heneka* causation centered in the *psyche* (Aristotle, *de anima*, II, 4, 415b15–21; Miller 2005). Our brains and bodies are always projecting certain possibilities of interaction with the environment (specific expectations and "predictive coding") for the sake of their self-maintenance, and these possibilities include countermeasures (some internal, some external), should the environment not comply in a suitable fashion.<sup>1</sup> As several researchers suggest, there is a likely evolutionary story to tell regarding the supervenience of these conscious states, e.g., the particular efficiency that they lend to the organism's process of maintaining itself in an optimal way, given its circumstances and environs (Craig 2008, 273, 283; Damasio and Carvalho 2013, 143f). At the same time, there is homeostatically directed behavior, in us as in other animals, that is not accompanied by *any* awareness (e.g., maintenance of body fluid composition, regulation of tissue oxygenation).<sup>2</sup> Thus, homeostatically directed behavior may, but need not be accompanied by interoceptive awareness.

The term 'interoception' was originally introduced by Charles Sherrington to designate visceral sensation, in contrast to senses of touch, vision, hearing, smell, taste, limb position, temperature, and pain.<sup>3</sup> Based in part upon functional anatomical findings made by Craig and others, the term is currently used in a broader sense to denote the sensory capacity of registering the ongoing condition of processes of the entire body (Craig 2008, 273;

Dunn et al. 2010, 1835). Contemporary authors nonetheless characterize that capacity in quite different ways. In addition to speaking of interoception as a “sense” of the body’s physiological condition, Craig himself speaks of “homeostatic (interoceptive) ‘feelings,’” which he also dubs “homeostatic emotions,” distinct from affective motivations.<sup>4</sup> By contrast, Seth and others understand interoception as “the perception of the physiological condition of the body, a process associated with the autonomic nervous system and with the generation of subjective feeling states” (Seth et al. 2012, 1).

Since the terms ‘sense’ and ‘perception’ traditionally do ample work in the area of exteroception (glossed below), prudence dictates reserving them for the latter. A sensation of color or touch, for example, requiring specific bodily interactions with objects in the environment, reveals something about those objects. An experience of dizziness or thirst, by contrast, reveals something about my body itself or, better, myself as this particular body. So, too, it would be odd for someone to say “I perceived my hunger” instead of simply “I was hungry.” Interoception is also typically affective; hence characterizations of it as a feeling or emotion. Yet an interoception is a feeling only if it is a form of awareness. For this reason, I understand interoception as a form of awareness, albeit an awareness affective to different degrees.

As noted, interoception takes place in response to stimuli specifically (albeit not exclusively) internal to the body, stimuli that are or are produced by changes within and deviations from a certain homeostatic range. These changes are detected by neural interfaces (in the spine, brainstem, thalamus, and insular cortex), and they prompt “neural execution sites,” coordinating a collection of corrective actions. Interoceptive experiences appear to be the product of “neural mappings” of the entire body within the CNS, beginning at lower levels of the neuraxis (Damasio and Carvalho 2013, 144).<sup>5</sup> The homeostatic mechanism at work in interoception thus requires (a) a competent stimulus and response to it (involving neural interfaces capable of detecting the stimulus), and (b) “neural execution sites” capable of instigating actions (including corrective actions) and generating the feelings.<sup>6</sup> In line with this distinction between the response to the stimulus and the actions and feelings generated, affectivity appears to involve the conjoint activation of two parts of the limbic system, the anterior insula and the anterior cingulate cortices, the former corresponding to interoception and the latter to kinesthetic efforts and other responses stemming from those “execution sites” (that enact the “action programmes” mentioned earlier).

In normal circumstances, being too hot or too cold, being hungry or thirsty, is identical, if not simply to an awareness of an instability peculiar to our respective bodies, then at least to an awareness that coincides with that instability. To appreciate this point, consider how odd it usually would be for someone to ask others if she is cold or hungry.<sup>7</sup> To be cold or hungry, at least in normal cases, is to feel cold or hungry, and to feel cold or feel hungry is a form of immediate, typically infeasible self-awareness, an awareness of myself as alive and embodied, as a living and lived body. If interoceptive

awareness of states of my body, recurring over time, coincides with those states, and this awareness, no less than those bodily states, is inherently part of who I am, interoception just is a ground-level form of self-awareness. That is to say, from the fact that (a) certain bodily states coincide with the awareness of them and (b) those states make up who I am (my self) at some level, it follows that interoception, as an awareness of certain states of my body, is a form of self-awareness. In just this sense, a stomachache or fatigue is an awareness of my body or, equivalently, the sort of bodily awareness that is part of my identity. Not incidentally, I say “I’m thirsty” or “I’m tired” without the slightest hesitation, without discriminating who I am from the body that thirsts or is fatigued (though we probably say “it hurts” more often than “I hurt”). Such forms of bodily self-awareness are at least as inherent to my selfhood as perception and proprioception (other ways that I am aware of my body and, quite indistinguishably, of myself as the in-habiting of it). Moreover, given the rudimentary character of interoceptive awareness of myself as living and embodied, it is certainly plausible to think that whatever other forms my self-awareness takes, it normally supposes, not necessarily the concurrence of this sort of interoceptive awareness, but at least a (personal) history of it and a possibility of its recurrence.

This last claim needs to be qualified, to be sure. While a passing episode of being cold or being hungry as such is an instance of interoceptive awareness, only the coupling of this awareness with the recollection of what it is like to be in such a state warrants the kind of incipient self-consciousness (itself a sort of passing, tacit recognition) that is grounded in or, better, constituted by interoception. That recollection presupposes at least a passive sort of memory; hence the reference to a personal history of interoceptive experiences, a history that brings with it the possibility of its recurrence and recognition of the recurrence as a type of interoception (e.g., “there’s that pain again”). It is the recognition of this recurrence, rooted in one’s personal history and instantiated by the relevant interoception, that makes up a basic form of self-awareness. The possibility of interoception (as a form of self-awareness that coincides with an awareness of the state of one’s body) thus serves as a condition for any further determination of one’s self or one’s lived body and for any subsequent differentiation of oneself from one’s lived body or, for that matter, from bodies considered objectively, one’s own or those external to one’s own.<sup>8</sup>

Interoceptive self-awareness is quite distinctive, to be sure. Self-awareness in general supposes (a) the existence of a self, someone who possesses certain identifying properties, and (b) the awareness or identification of those properties as pertaining to oneself as the possessor of those properties. For example, I may be aware of being a citizen, being old, or being a Bostonian. But the property of which I am aware in these cases of self-awareness is distinct from that awareness itself. By contrast, in the case of interoceptive self-awareness in a person of good health, the relevant, identifying property of the self and the awareness do not come apart.<sup>9</sup> In other words, if I am

reasonably healthy, I cannot be hungry without feeling hungry; the property that I possess, i.e., who I am, and the corresponding awareness completely coincide.<sup>10</sup> Other modes of interoception, e.g., experiences of heat or cold, various pleasures and pains, display this same distinguishing feature.<sup>11</sup>

Earlier it was noted that the homeostatic mechanism involved in interoception typically involves two parts of the limbic system, to which response and feelings correspond respectively. The distinction between the neurological locus of response and that of feelings suggests the possibility of their differentiation on a conscious level, in other words, the possibility of an introspective awareness *distinct from*, perhaps even *prior to*, affective awareness. Can we be interoceptively aware without experiencing any hedonic element (pleasurableness or painfulness) of the awareness and/or a motivation springing from that element?<sup>12</sup>

If a non-affective, interoceptive awareness were possible, it would seem to be highly irregular, like experiencing thirst without its unpleasantness or a desire to quench it. Consider cases of peripheral vertigo, a lightheadedness tied to an imbalance in the inner ear. The experience can paralyze the afflicted individual. Rather than experiencing, as in typical cases of thirst, what she should do to remedy the situation, a person with severe vertigo is often so overwhelmed with dizziness that she cannot even feel helpless. Still, while such an interoceptive experience can lack or, better, impede the experience of a felt motivation, a normal subject plainly experiences it as unpleasant. That is to say, an interoceptive awareness of this sort is normally indistinguishable from a kind of affective awareness. It may not be felt as a desire, i.e., it may lack motivating affectivity (an explicit motivation to maintain the body's state or move it into some other, ameliorating position<sup>13</sup>), but it remains indistinguishable from some element of hedonic affectivity. Such indistinguishability is in keeping with the suggestion, mentioned above, that interoceptive awareness-and-feeling supervenes on homeostatic mechanisms, because of the efficiency, from an evolutionary point of view, that it lends the organism.

The phenomenological reflections in the last paragraph are supported to a certain extent by neuroscientific investigation of correlations between heartbeat detection, a long-used test for interoception, and emotional responses. In these and other studies, researchers correlate interoceptive sensitivity (sensitivity to interoceptive information) with emotional states (Barrett et al., 2004, Bechara and Naqvi 2004, 103, Critchley et al. 2004, 190–3). So, too, Craig argues that recent research supports the notion “that cortical re-representations in right anterior insula of the interoceptive image of the body's physiological condition provides a basis for the subjective awareness of *all* emotional feelings.”<sup>14</sup> Again, talk of correlation and a basis indicates a distinction (something is correlated, not with itself, but with something different from it; something is a basis, not for itself, but for something else). Yet it is a distinction without a phenomenological difference. At the phenomenological level, the experience of pain and its painfulness—

even that of an accelerated heartbeat and exhilaration—is not a conjunction of experiences (and certainly not the experience of that conjunction).<sup>15</sup> Instead, interoceptive awareness and hedonically affective awareness (or, alternatively, in interoception, awareness and feelings) normally coincide.

This last observation is aptly captured by the literally expressive idiom “I had a lump in my throat” or the commonplace “I had the butterflies.” Moreover, as these idioms suggest, interoceptive feelings are feelings about myself, embodied feelings with which I identify. Whoever and whatever else I am, I am not merely someone who has these feelings, but someone for whom these interoceptive feelings are baseline. Being the sort of organism who has such feelings, e.g., the sort of organism that can be at once thirsty and motivated by that thirst, is inherent to who I am.<sup>16</sup> In other words, interoceptive experience, normally a kind of hedonically and motivationally affective awareness, both constitutes and reveals to me my material self, who I am at the most rudimentary level of self-awareness.

Interoception (I) is one of several systems of bodily awareness, along with exteroception (E) and proprioception and kinesthesia (PK). ‘Exteroception’ refers to awareness of the environment and things within the environment via visual, aural, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory modalities. ‘Proprioception’ and ‘kinesthesia’ refer to awareness of the body’s positions and movements, respectively; that is to say, they are the forms of awareness accompanying me as I position myself or move. These systems obviously work together in remarkably effective and closely knit ways, as when my thirst (I) motivates me to make a beeline (PK) to the cold beer I see (indeed, the only thing catching my eye) on the table (E).<sup>17</sup> (Similarly, the experience of swallowing clearly combines PK and I). To account for this integration, Feinberg introduces “the integrative system” interposed between “the interoself system” corresponding to (I) and “the exterosensorimotor system” corresponding to (E) and (PK) (Feinberg 2009, 148–58). Once again, the need to posit integration echoes Aristotle’s reasons for positing the unifying, self-stabilizing character of a *psyche* in living things.

Feinberg’s reference to an integrative system also corresponds to the normal experience of these different forms of bodily awareness in concert or even inseparable from one another. In ways barely perceptible, what starts out as exteroception can merge into an interoception when, for example, the taste of wine in my mouth, after swallowing it, becomes part of the interocepted state of my digestive system organs.<sup>18</sup> Nor can it be forgotten that the homeostatically driven integration is diachronic as well as synchronic, reaching backwards as well as forwards at once. That is to say, there is a developmental and developing story—a personal history, if you will—that needs to be taken into account in identifying these forms of self-awareness separately or in tandem. In this respect, the separate treatment of interoception is highly artificial, both from phenomenological and from neuroscientific points of view (though, in the case of pain, the situation is not unlike that of the medical professional faced with barely a slice of a patient’s



experience). Nonetheless, there are three reasons for attending simply to interoception. First, episodes of interoception can surface in ways so dominant (think of debilitating pain) that proprioception and exteroception are literally an afterthought, if we enact or attend to them at all. Second, in contrast to the other forms of awareness, interoception is a distinctive form of bodily self-awareness, different and in some cases isolable from both my sense of my body's place or movements and my awareness of what comes into contact with my sensory faculties. Third, interoception is a likely necessary condition (in addition to exteroception and proprioception) for the differentiation of oneself from other entities in the world.<sup>19</sup>

## 2. INTEROCEPTIVE AND REFLEXIVE EXPERIENCE

Reflexives are ubiquitous. After losing my composure in a heated discussion, someone may ask me: "did you hear yourself?" We talk of seeing ourselves in a mirror, removing ourselves from a game, teaching ourselves bridge, hurting ourselves in a workout, speaking to ourselves, and helping ourselves to more pie. We also speak of fooling ourselves, incriminating ourselves, and even being ourselves. All but the latter are uses of transitive verbs that are fully intelligible when, in the place of the direct object, some non-reflexive expression is substituted for the reflexive pronoun (e.g., hearing, seeing, removing someone else). The '-self' expressions are anaphors, to be sure, depending for their meaning on the (actual or presumed) subjects of the respective verb. Nevertheless, the use of these expressions in reflexives signals an objectification of sorts, distinct from the act signified by the verb. The example of the mirror image of ourselves makes this point quite clearly, since there is no mistaking the image that we see, even when we say that we see ourselves in the mirror, for our act of seeing the image.

The curiousness of reflexives corresponding to instances of exteroception is that the object designated by the 'self' in those cases (hearing myself, seeing myself, smelling myself, touching myself) is something available to others. They refer to sounds, mien, body surface, and odors that others can hear, see, touch, and smell as well as I can. Interoception is, by contrast, only directly available to the person from whose body those interoceptive phenomena arise (hence the use of "faces pain rating scales" and the like).

Some instances of interoception find expression in verbs (e.g., "I thirst," "I hunger," "I hurt"), while others are typically signified by adjectives (e.g., "I am hot, elated," "I feel dizzy"). Yet the relevant verbs are intransitive, while the relative absence of reflexives among expressions designating interoception is conspicuous.<sup>20</sup> The examples cited, all in the first-person singular, may seem tendentious, since we obviously impute interoception to others ("they are hungry," "she is dizzy"). Yet when we do so, we infer from some symptom or behavior, as when, for example, we infer that someone is light-headed from the fact that she gives every appearance of not being

steady on her feet. More importantly, when we attribute interoception to someone, i.e., when we describe that person using words signifying interoception, we impute to her an experience that is available to her indexically, in virtue of her indexically embodied experience and, correspondingly, her ability—and hers alone—to say truthfully “I am thirsty.”

The foregoing bit of linguistic phenomenology suggests that interoception is not reflexive or at least not reflexive in a way that is captured by reflexive expressions. A key difference between seeing myself or touching myself and being thirsty is the indefeasible, or at least less defeasible, character of the self-awareness in the latter case.<sup>21</sup> This character of interoception is certainly insufficient to establish the identity or likeness of the self that I see or touch, but it is hard to see how we arrive at any such identity or likeness without the sort of self-awareness that interoception and its remembered iteration provide.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. INTEROCEPTIVE PHENOMENOLOGY

From a phenomenological point of view, characterizations of ‘interoception’ are, as noted earlier, all over the place. Yet even if we avoid loosely labeling interoception one time as a ‘sensation,’ another time as a ‘perception’ or ‘feeling,’ these different characterizations in the literature invite questions about the status of interoceptive awareness and, thereby, about the nature of interoceptive phenomenology. Does interoceptive awareness have the structural composition of intentional consciousness (so that the phenomenological investigation is closer to a phenomenology of perception, with distinct noematic, noetic, and sensory components)? Or is it more like a sensation or the hyletic data that Husserl regarded as non-intentional components of perception (thus involving something more akin to what he deemed “hyletic phenomenology”)? Or is it something *sui generis* (so that interoceptive phenomenology cannot be fitted into Husserl’s classical framework)?

Throughout his writings, Husserl iterates the view that certain pleasures, pains, irritations, and the like (together with the inherent sensual aspects of “drives”) belong to the same class of hyletic data as colors and sounds, making up a sensual layer within experience, but a layer “that has nothing of intentionality in itself.”<sup>23</sup> Hyletic data nonetheless figure in intentional experience, as ways in which the object of the experience (the intentional object) displays itself. While not the same as sensations, hyletic data can be understood as the way that sensations figure in an intentional experience, such as the perception of a green leaf. I do not first have a sensation of greenness and then box it somehow together with the perception of a leaf. Rather, I perceive the leaf as green, i.e., via a visual sensation. While sensations of color, sound, and touch are dependent upon the sorts of things with which the body interacts, they are obviously also dependent upon the respective organs and the CNS. In this respect, instances of interoception

like pain or thirst are more like these hyletic data (i.e., sensations insofar as they are operative in perception) than the experiences of what lies beyond our bodies. Similarly, my swollen ankle presents itself to me by means of its painfulness no less than by means of the tactile feel of the tape around it or my attempts to move it. Such considerations speak in favor of classifying interoceptions as hyletic data.

Yet there are reasons to resist lumping interoception *tout court* together with hyletic data. Hyletic data are not directly perceived at all (Hua III/1, 80–81; MacIntyre 1989, 166) and, as components of sensory perceptual experiences, they are different from the properties of what is perceived (e.g., colors or shapes) (Hua III/1, 86).<sup>24</sup> By contrast, we can be acutely aware of the pain or thirst making up an interoception. Moreover, there is no real difference between the property of the ‘awareness’ and the property of the ‘object’ in interoceptive self-awareness.<sup>25</sup>

Given the patent perceptibility of some interoceptive phenomena, it is hardly surprising that Husserl does not construe them exclusively as hyletic data. Instead, he countenances the possibility of understanding them as part of an immanent perception. In the Appendix to the Sixth Logical Investigation, Husserl argues that Brentano’s distinction between inner and outer perceptions does not coincide with the epistemic distinction between evident and non-evident perceptions. To make this point, Husserl brings up a toothache, arguing that it is no less transcendent and no more evident than the perception of a wind-shaken tree. The toothache pain is non-evident “since it is perceived in a bodily localized manner [*leiblich lokalisiert wahrgenommen*]” (Hua XIX, 761–62). In this account, pain is not merely an object of an intentional experience (and, to that extent, transcending it), but one that, in contrast to the experience itself, is localized. As such, it is not merely a (hyletic) part of the way an object is intended, e.g., as painful.

This way of considering pain as an object of an experience resurfaces, albeit with a notable change in terminology, in the Second Section of *Ideas I*. There Husserl singles out “immanently related, intentional experiences” (also dubbed “immanent perception”) *where objects and acts belong to the same stream of consciousness*, in contrast to “transcendently oriented” acts, where they do not. Husserl acknowledges that, in the case of “immanent perception,” perception and what is perceived form essentially an unmediated unity, the unity of a single, concrete *cogitatio*, “produced purely by experiences.” The perceiving contains its object in itself here in such a way that it is to be severed from the object only abstractly, only as something essentially dependent. Not all immanent perceptions have this distinguishing character, Husserl adds, as is obvious from the case of memory. Memory is an immanent perception in which what is remembered is not really contained in the act of remembering.<sup>26</sup>

The difference between an immanent and transcendent perception is obviously stark. What is perceived as transcendent is independent of the act of perceiving it. By contrast, the object of an immanent perception is

dependent upon the perception, “really contained in it,” though Husserl is quick to add parenthetically that “containment” is merely a simile here.<sup>27</sup> Husserl introduces the distinction in the course of explaining how conscious acts can become intentional objects, as when, for example, I reflect on an act of judging. Presumably (though Husserl does not clarify this point), the act of judging occupies a different place in the stream of consciousness from the immanent perception of it, a place that enables it to become the object of such a perception. Insofar as it becomes an object of an immanent perception, it is then dependent upon the latter, so that if we continue so judging (i.e., contemporaneously with the immanent perception), the latter is an act of judging that is numerically different, albeit similar to the act that is now the object of an immanent perception.

Something analogous presumably holds if we take pain or thirst to be the object of an immanent perception.<sup>28</sup> Insofar as these sorts of interoception are objects of immanent perception, they are contained in the corresponding acts of perceiving them. If this analysis is correct, then an immanent perception of pain, for example, supposes a difference between the respective act and object of the perception. The pain qua object of an immanent perception is “contained in” the act of perceiving it. Yet the pain can only become so dependent because it already occupies a different segment of the same stream of consciousness. Hence, the consciousness of pain cannot be equated with an immanent perception of pain since that immanent perception *presupposes* an already constituted consciousness of pain. In other words, if there is to be an immanent perception of such an interoception (which seems perfectly plausible), then it supposes the independent constitution of its object, a constitution that coincides, not with a further perception, but with a certain self-awareness.

The difference required by an immanent perception does not correspond to patent instances of pain or thirst, where no difference between anything like an act and its object holds. A regress, moreover, is ruled out by the very nature of these instances of interoception. Husserl is by no means blind to this last point. Echoing as much in lectures in the mid-1920s, he writes that “in the case of ‘immanent’ kinds of objects, ‘being conscious of them in the original’ and ‘being,’ ‘*percipi*’ and ‘*esse*’ completely coincide [i.e., they collapse into one another: *zusammenfallen*]” (Hua XI, 17f). Notably here, in regard to “immanent objects,” where we are conscious of them “in the original,” Husserl speaks not of containment, but of complete coinciding. As I suggested earlier, in the case of these “objects,” what we are aware of and our awareness are only logically distinct—“being in pain” and “feeling pain” signify the same phenomenon. (Below I return to this crucial passage and its reference to a complete coincidence between *percipi* and *esse*.)

Interpreting interoceptive phenomena exclusively as hyletic data or as immanent perceptions is, as has been shown, problematic. Not surprisingly, Husserl is not content to leave the interpretation with these two alternatives. A third alternative can be found in his treatment of pain as a “feeling-sensation”

(*Gefühlsempfindung*). Taking this term over from Stumpf, he uses it to indicate a kind of middle ground lying between purely non-intentional (hyletic) and intentional spheres. In §15 of the Fifth Logical Investigation's Second Chapter (entitled "Consciousness as intentional experience"), Husserl concedes that, while some feelings are intentional, some are not. The former include the pleasingness of a melody, as the object of our enjoyment. "So, too, nothing counts as desiring without something desired," or as approving without something that wins our approval (Hua XIX/1, 404).

In contrast to these feelings, however, there are non-intentional feelings, i.e., "feeling-sensations" such as pleasure and pain that typically "fuse" together with sensations pertaining to a particular sensory field (like the pleasure of a rose's scent).<sup>29</sup> Although these feeling-sensations can be related to our bodies or to objects outside us in an intentional experience, "no one would think of designating the sensations themselves as such experiences" (Hua XIX/1, 406). Nevertheless, while these feeling-sensations are not themselves acts, acts of apprehending them are, as he puts it, "constituted with them." Regrettably, Husserl does not elaborate in more detail what this last expression means; indeed, the entire discussion is compendious to a fault.<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, while still generally classifying pain as a *sensation* with other hyletic data (like smoothness or color), he countenances an experience of pain as a *feeling-sensation* that is non-intentional but conscious, namely, where apprehending, attending to the pain "is constituted with it." It is neither directed at nor founded upon something else, as is the feeling of pleasure at the sight of a beautiful object. Husserl concludes these ruminations by conceding that talk of 'feeling' is equivocal yet potentially innocuous, as long as we are on the alert to sort out, presumably case by case, whether a non-intentional feeling or an intentional act, i.e., a *Gefühlsempfindung* or *Gefühlsakt*, respectively, is meant.

In *Ideas II* Husserl returns to the topic of feeling-sensations, in the course of distinguishing between a primal sensibility (*Ursinnlichkeit*), encompassing the data of sensation, and a secondary sensibility, encompassing affections as well as reactions. This secondary sensibility is a sphere of passivity and, indeed, "a primal sphere of intentionality, an inauthentic intentionality, since there is no talk of an authentic 'intention of,' for which the ego is required; yet a 'presentation of,' an apperception is there" (Hua IV, 335). He includes pain, pleasure, and drives among the affections and reactions making up this sphere. As "feeling-sensations," they are interwoven with other sensations, but also tend to reproduce or expect certain sensations, including presumably iterations of themselves or their cessation. These tendencies make up the core of their "inauthentic intentionality," since they intend something beyond themselves. Contrasting them with explicit acts on the part of the ego, e.g., acts of grasping or judging, these affections (such as the urge to smoke) make up an "active passivity" in contrast to activity that proceeds from the ego, "the free acts, the authentic

activities of the ego, freely taking a position over against affections” (Hua IV, 337f).

While desires, like pains, can be non-intentional and intentional, the intentional experience of pain differs from intentional experiences of desire by virtue of being founded upon non-objectifying experiences (namely, non-objectifying experiences of pain). Thus, Husserl differentiates a simple, pre-intentional from a complex, intentional experience of pain—a difference akin to the difference, flagged above, between an original experience and the immanent perception of it.<sup>31</sup>

Based upon the foregoing review, Husserl enunciates at least three possible ways of understanding an interoceptive experience (taking his pronouncements regarding the experience of pain as paradigmatic in that regard). It can be *either*

- (a) a hyletic datum,
- (b) the intentional object of an immanent perception, *or*
- (c) a pre-intentional consciousness, a feeling-sensation yielding ego-less affections or reactions, inauthentically intentional.

The reason for the exclusive disjunction of (a), (b), and (c) is patent. Insofar as it is a really obtaining, inherent part of the activity of perceiving, a hyletic datum—i.e., (a)—cannot be the object of a perception—i.e., (b). In contrast to (b), the consciousness designated under (c) is not an object, but it is also not an authentically intentional experience.

There is, however, a fourth form of interoception, suggested by the remark from Husserl that has already been cited, but—to my knowledge—not further elaborated by him. I have in mind the crucial already mentioned passage from the mid-1920s about “immanent’ kinds of objects.” He makes two relevant points about these objects: first, we are conscious of them but not through “apperception,” and, second, the consciousness of them and their being completely coincide (Hua XI, 17).

This remark provides a fourth possible way of understanding an instance of interoception, namely, as

- (d) a simple, non-intentional consciousness, in which the classifications of act and object do not apply or, alternatively, in which the act is the object and the object is the act.

While interoception, under various descriptions, can take the form of (a) through (d), it is form (d) that comes closest to capturing the distinctiveness of interoception elaborated in the first part of this paper. In other words, there are resources in Husserl’s work for understanding that distinctiveness, even if it remains a secondary consideration for him.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4. OBJECTIONS, QUALIFICATIONS, AND DEFERRED ISSUES

In this section, I bring up several objections and offer responses to them. The responses include further qualifications of the paper's working hypothesis and acknowledgment of certain issues that demand further investigation.

Objection<sub>1</sub> (from intentionality):

“Consciousness of pain should be distinguished from pain. After all, while we might characterize a pain as ‘stinging’ or ‘sharp,’ we would not characterize the consciousness of pain in those ways, just as we would not characterize the consciousness of a triangle as triangular.”

Response<sub>1</sub>: The objection presupposes that consciousness, by virtue of being intentional “all the way down,” must be distinguished from the object of which it is conscious. That is certainly true in the case of an intentional experience, including the immanent perception of pain or thirst. However, it is not so in the case of the experience that finds that experience—the pain or thirst itself. To be sure, some pains (in contrast to the diffuseness of thirst) coincide with experience of a part of the body, but the experience of pain as localized is not the same as consciousness of the place.

Objection<sub>2</sub> (from the difference between awareness and self-awareness):

“Awareness cannot be equated with self-awareness since self-awareness presupposes a difference between awareness and the self as the object of awareness. Just as awareness differs plainly from the object of awareness in cases of awareness of something other than the self, so it differs from the object of awareness when the object is the self. This objection can be further supported by the sorts of considerations that underlie higher-order theories of consciousness. It seems phenomenologically evident that I can be aware of the table in front of me, that I can perceive it, without having any awareness of *my* perceiving, of the fact that it is I (in some sense or other) who perceives it.”

Response<sub>2</sub>: But it is not evident at all when it comes to interoception, to my awareness of being cold, since this awareness is only logically distinct from my being cold. I understand ‘logical distinctness’ in the old fashioned, Suarezian sense, a sense that contrasts with the real distinction of body and soul utilized by Descartes. The table in front of me is really distinct from me, in the sense that neither the table nor I need the other in order to be. However, the same cannot be said for my being cold and my feeling cold.

Objection<sub>3</sub> (from the difference between experience and body):

“Interoception is not, in and of itself, an experience of the body. I may be able to infer something about my body from an experience of dizziness or pain, but the experience itself does not disclose the body as



such. Moreover, even if interoception were a way of experiencing my body directly, i.e., an immediate awareness of my body, the interoception itself is an experience and not a body.”

Response<sub>3</sub>: This objection has the merit of being straightforwardly phenomenological, since it concerns the contents of the experience in question. Nonetheless, as stated, the objection appears to confuse two distinct senses of ‘body’: the objective, publicly available body and the body as living and lived. While it is true that interoception is not an experience of the body in the former sense, it is an experience of the body in the latter sense. To be sure, this thesis leaves us with the question of reconciling the two senses of ‘body,’ beyond merely pairing phenomenological considerations with some neurological findings, as I have done in this paper. Moreover, as noted earlier, while interoceptive awareness is an awareness of the lived body, the interoceptor herself need not be immediately aware that the two awarenesses coincide or, better, that the two descriptions refer to the same thing. It may be the case that I have to come to learn the aptness of both descriptions.<sup>33</sup>

Objection<sub>4</sub> (from the difference between self and body):

“Even if the thesis that interoception is an immediate awareness of my body could be sustained, it could not be legitimately invoked to support the stronger claim that, in interoception, self-awareness and bodily awareness are identical. The self-identity presupposed by self-awareness exceeds any bodily awareness. Hence, the phenomenological evidence does not support the notion that interoceptive self-awareness is identical to bodily awareness.”

Response<sub>4</sub>: The problem with this objection lies in its restricted conceptions of self-identity and self-awareness. To be sure, the concept of self-identity includes an assemblage of relatively stable properties (‘properties’ in a broad sense, e.g., characteristics, states, activities, relations, dispositions), each of which contributes to defining who someone is. Who someone is depends in part upon her biological make-up and geography, upon what she does, upon who her parents, friends, and associates (generation, community) are and were, as well as upon her proclivities for this or that. But it depends no less on interoceptive experiences, the pre-eminent experiences of our lived bodies. Herein lies one problem with the objection: it peremptorily rules out the possibility that there could be a ‘self-identity’ disclosed in and as interoception—and thus not exceeding it.

The objection is also helpful in specifying the sense of ‘interoceptive self-awareness.’ I take ‘self-awareness’ generally to be an individual’s identification of one of the defining properties of self-identity characterized in the last paragraph. In other words, being aware of ourselves is tantamount to identifying some property that is part of our identity. Someone may be mistaken about this or that aspect of her identity, but only in virtue of not



being mistaken about some other aspects. Hence, self-awareness, as I understand it, presupposes that some properties define us, that they form at least a part of our identity. Interoception is a form of self-awareness, distinguished by the fact that it is that awareness of ourselves that is one of our defining properties. There are, in every case, other defining properties, so that the self disclosed in the interoception and thus identifiable with the lived body is only a part of our identity. Yet, among those properties, interoception holds the distinction of being the property that at once discloses itself to us as part of who we are.<sup>34</sup>

Objection<sub>5</sub> (from pre-reflective character of interoception):

“Interoception is a pre-reflective experience. As such, our access to it is too tenuous to support the claims made in this paper. Our only access to pre-reflective experience is reflection, and reflection is always ridden with pre-conceptions, i.e., it is always theory-ridden in ways that fail to leave the pre-reflective experience exactly as it is. For example, to characterize the experience of thirst as an experience of an imbalance in the organism is a theory-driven but phenomenologically unsound characterization.”

Response<sub>5</sub>: I agree that some typical, indeed, paradigmatic cases of interoception are pre-reflective. However, the claim that conscious access to interoception is too tenuous to support the claims made in this paper supposes access of some sort. Moreover, if we were to accept the objection's supposition that the only access is a subsequent reflection, it would entail advancing one set of theory-ridden descriptions with others, without providing a criterion for discriminating between them in terms of their trenchancy. (There are tried-and-true methods in this regard, e.g., searching for patterns in the course of comparing and contrasting different first personal accounts in terms of neuroimaging.) Above all, the objection overlooks the fact that interoception is itself a form of conscious access, albeit access to itself, since it is a form of bodily self-awareness. The sort of rudimentary self-awareness provided by interoception is, in Husserlian terms, a non-intentional experience of a condition of one's lived body.

Still, there are several virtues to this objection. It calls attention to the irremediable fact that the first-person account or description (the self-reporting) of interoception, by virtue of taking place on a plane of reflection, is fraught. It is fraught on multiple levels: the availability of the “right” words, the broad spectrum of what counts as “right,” the individual's capacity to self-report and to convey a private experience publicly, others' capacity to interpret the self-reporting. The objection also reminds us that a first-person description can take place on several levels. It is certainly possible for a medical professional to describe her own interoceptive experiences in a technical medical vocabulary, one that replaces a lay description. In sum, this objection, by calling attention to the “fraught” character described above, affirms the hermeneutical dimension of any interoceptive phenomenology,

both at the level of individual, first-person descriptions of interoception and at the level of their interpretation. There is no formula, metric, or “magic bullet” that would put this issue to rest. Instead, the proper response to the objection is simply the need for persistent vigilance and re-examination to check for unwarranted preconceptions and for distinguishing those that are warranted from those that are not—without supposing that there is some presupposition-less Archimedean standpoint.

Objection<sub>6</sub> (from diversity and complexity):

“The treatment of interoception is too general, failing to take into account the diversity and complexity of interoceptive phenomena, especially their diverse temporal and spatial make-ups.”

Response<sub>6</sub>: This objection is in large measure justified. The term ‘interoception,’ even in the context of neurological research, is likely too rough-grained to do justice to the different phenomena that it subsumes. To meet the objection even halfway, it is necessary to undertake a proper taxonomy (possible hierarchies, divisions, and classifications) of interoceptive phenomena, including the inevitable hybrids (e.g., dyspnea) and “hard cases” (e.g., masochism), and to establish any family resemblances among them. It would also be necessary to establish a range of normal cases of interoception and the principles governing the determination of normality.

Still, this paper’s aim is exploratory. For that reason, I have exploited only a few paradigmatic, albeit thinly described experiences of interoception. The attempt to draw on Husserl’s phenomenology also limited the number of examples, given the secondary importance of these phenomena in relation to his preeminently epistemic objectives. So, too, while I think that the four ways of characterizing interoception, based loosely upon Husserl’s analyses, have much to say for themselves, no general inferences about interoception can be drawn from them.<sup>35</sup> Different sorts of interoceptions clearly have different durations and intensities, and phenomenological investigation of the make-up of the experiences (e.g., intentional or non-intentional) must take these qualitative differences into account. For example, the strength of a pain or a thirst can ebb and flow. If sufficiently dull, the interoceptive experience can slip into the background as we concentrate on something else, thus calling for analysis of a difference in interoception like the difference that Husserl makes between actualized and unactualized (potential, marginal) fields of perception (Hua III/1, 71–73, 81, 190).

Since, over time, interoceptive self-awareness supposes awareness of its likeness with previous instances, some minimal level of memory—a kind of implicit, automatic memory—is necessary for the experience. The sort of memory involved encompasses aspects of episodic and emotional forms of memory, though in ways that do not neatly fall under the currently customary descriptions of these forms of memory. Thus, the memory involved in interoception need not be declarative (the umbrella for episodic and

semantic forms of memory), but it is also not the same as non-declarative, procedural memory or the emotional memory usually grouped with the latter (Dickerson and Eichenbaum 2010, 86–87). Nor can it be described as episodic if the latter is correlated with an auto-noetic form of consciousness (Tulving 1985, 2–3, 2005).

The fact that some interoceptions coincide with experiences of placement presents analogous ramifications. Thus, some interoceptions, e.g., heart palpitations, are localized; others are diffuse or global, e.g., being thirsty or dizzy. Such localization can take the form of intentionality (“the pain is on my side”), in which I am conscious of the pain as a pain-in-my-side. In such a case, the experience of pain might well take the form of an immanent perception, i.e., (b) above. Yet there are also cases of interoception that do not indicate a place or any other feature beyond themselves. Some cases of extreme pain or ecstasy are paradigmatic here, but it also seems possible for there to be ordinary cases of interoception, an immediate awareness of oneself and nothing else. In sum, there are diverse forms of interoception with diverse spatial/localized, as well as diverse temporal/remembered, dimensions. Further investigation of them is certainly warranted, but moves beyond this paper’s restricted aim of establishing that forms of interoceptive experience can be—and very likely are—a distinctive form of self-awareness.

That distinctiveness may seem to provide some support for one-order or same-order theories of self-consciousness (in contrast to higher-order theories). However, talk of an “order” in this regard seems misplaced, since the self and the interoceptive, bodily self-awareness are not simply on the same order, but in fact not really distinct from one another at all. Hence, not only do the two meanings (“self” and “interoception”) collapse, the logical distinction between them is a distinction based more upon the motives for distinguishing them than on any inherent differences in their meanings. (In Suarezian terms, the distinction is a *distinctio rationis ratiocinantis* rather than a *distinctio rationis ratiocinatae*.) The differences that spring from different motives or reasons for considering the embodied, interoceptive self apart from interoception or vice versa have no basis in the phenomenon itself. At the same time, there are unmistakable phenomenal differences between primarily interoceptive self-awareness and other forms of self-awareness. Sorting out these differences and relating them to one another is a challenging task, to be sure, perhaps not least because it strongly suggests that, when it comes to self-awareness and self-identity, one size does not fit all. What is called for, given the distinctiveness of interoceptive self-awareness, is a multi-level approach to self-awareness, an approach that leaves open questions regarding the possibility of integration across these levels.

## NOTES

1. Raichle and Gusnard 2005, 168: “We propose that the majority of the brain’s large energy budget is devoted to the development and maintenance of . . . [a]

probabilistic model of anticipated events. Taking this position converts the view of the brain as a system primarily responding to changing contingencies to one operating on its own, *intrinsically*, with sensory information interacting with rather than determining the operation of the system. . .” See also Seth 2013, 1 and Clark 2013. I would like to thank Andreas Elpidorou, Walter Hopp, Carolyn Jennings, Andrea Staiti, and Jeff Yoshimi for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

2. Indeed, according to Craig, the lack of certain forebrain homeostatic afferent pathways in sub-primates suggests that they cannot experience interoceptive feelings as we do (Craig 2008, 274).
3. In 1906, Sherrington refers to three fields of reception: extero-ceptive, proprio-ceptive, and intero-ceptive (Sherrington 1906, 114, 130–2, 317–20). In the 1948 edition of the same work, Sherrington “codified the sense into teloreceptive (vision and hearing), proprioceptive (limb position), exteroceptive (touch), chemoreceptive (smell and taste), and interoceptive (visceral) modalities, and he categorize temperature and pain as aspects of touch” (Craig 2002, 655).
4. Craig 2008, 274. There may be some confusion here (on his part or mine), since Craig also speaks of the combination of feelings and motivation as a homeostatic emotion (Craig 2008, 274). See, too, Craig 2002, 656: “A key feature that distinguishes pain, temperature and other bodily feelings from touch is their inherent association with emotion. . . .”
5. The neuraxis is the axial, unpaired part of the central nervous system: spinal cord, rhombencephalon, mesencephalon, and diencephalon, in contrast to the paired cerebral hemisphere, or telencephalon.
6. Damasio and Carvalho 2013, 145; Critchley et al. (2004), 189: “Neuroanatomical insights suggest that information concerning the internal state of the body is conveyed through a dedicated lamina-1 spinothalamocortical pathway that converges with vagal afferents, to ‘interoceptive centers’ in insular and orbitofrontal cortices. Functional neuroimaging suggests a central role for anterior insula cortex (and somatosensory cortex) in mediating subjective feeling states. Anterior insula activity is consistently activated in studies that elicit changes in autonomic arousal.” Ibid.: “[C]onvergent approaches suggest that right anterior insula cortex is critical in mediating awareness of interoceptive information contributing to emotional feeling states.
7. None of what is said here is meant to deny the possibility of circumstances in which an interoception is quite defeasible. A would-be lover may be unsure of the extent of her passion; an entire aesthetic tradition has tried to explain the allure of tragedy by appeal to “mixed feelings.” So not every instance of interoception is an unequivocal disclosure of our bodies. My thanks to Andreas Elpidorou for pressing this point.
8. Again, I am grateful to Andreas Elpidorou and Carolyn Jennings for pressing me on these matters.
9. For this reason, talk of properties and the possessor of the properties can be a hindrance, if it suggests that interoceptive awareness is a property not intrinsic to the selfhood in play, i.e., as if “having pains (in my chest)” were akin to “having shoes (in my closet).”
10. Thus, too, *sitio, ergo sum* enjoys a certain prerogative over *cogito, ergo sum*. It is possible for someone to need food but to suffer a loss of appetite due, for example, to a bacterial or viral infection. But if someone is in good health, being hungry and feeling hungry coincide.
11. The distinctiveness of interoceptive self-awareness, glossed in this paragraph, obviously does not rule out the possibility of a subsequent reflection on an interoceptive experience. Yet the reflection is not to be confused with the interoception itself. I am accordingly inclined to view some paradigmatic

experiences, e.g., hunger, pain, dizziness, as essentially (eidetically) interoceptive, i.e., as experiences that cannot occur in a non-interoceptive way. How this view relates to questions of eating disorders or masochism remains uncharted territory for me. I am grateful to Andrea Staiti for pressing me on this point.

12. There are two dimensions of affectivity in consideration here: hedonic affectivity, i.e., what is felt as pleasurable or painful (or, better, what is felt on a scale of pleasurableness and painfulness, allowing for indifference) and motivating affectivity, i.e., what is felt as urgent, motivating persistence or change, respectively.
13. As this last remark suggests, the affective character of interoception often fuses with kinesthesia. Upon feeling pain in my foot, my immediate instinct is to move, i.e., to reposition it, to readjust the way that I am putting weight on it, or to take the weight off it altogether—all in an attempt to rid myself of the pain or at least alleviate it.
14. Garfinkel and Critchley 2013, 231; Seth et al. 2012. According to Craig, various findings support “the view that the cortical re-representations in right anterior insula of the interoceptive image of the body’s physiological condition provides a basis for the subjective awareness of all emotional feelings. . . . The metarepresentations of the state of the body in right anterior insula seem to differentiate inner from outer conditions (self from nonself) and to provide a subjective mental image of the material self as a feeling (sentient) entity that is utilized during all emotional states. In other words, it seems to provide the anatomical basis for emotional awareness” (Craig 2008, 280).
15. Similar considerations apply to talk of interoception’s “association” with emotion; see Craig 2002, 656: “A key feature that distinguishes pain, temperature and other bodily feelings from touch is their inherent association with emotion. . . . These feelings all have not only a sensory, but also an affective, motivational aspect.”
16. Damasio and Carvalho distinguish such feelings, experiences related to interoception, from emotions, experience related to exteroception (Damasio and Carvalho, 2013). If the distinction holds in terms of neural pathways and processes, it seems to be on shakier grounds phenomenologically and developmentally, since we experience and, indeed, learn to experience affective states in ways tied to both forms of awareness. Then, too, there are the affective states that accompany kinesthetic experiences, e.g., a so-called “adrenaline rush” or a runner’s high, presumably induced by endocannabinoids. See, however, Stumpf’s differentiation of feelings (localized sensations with an affective component) from emotions (devoid of localization); Stumpf 1917, 7.
17. This example of the connection between exteroception and beliefs, on the one hand, and interoception and proprioception, on the other, raises questions about how intimately interoception is related to exteroception. Similarly, the smooth interplay between exteroception and proprioception in habitual practices (e.g., tying one’s shoes, opening a door), dependent as that interplay is on a specific environment, may raise questions about the isolability of interoception from exteroception and proprioception (given my earlier emphasis on the role of habit in interoception). The answers to these sorts of questions can be determined only through empirical investigation of the specific types of interoception. What I have been suggesting, however, is the soundness of the working hypothesis that interoception is an experience often distinguishable to a certain degree (“more or less”) from experiences of exteroception and proprioception, as well as their integration with one another and with interoception. I am grateful to Andreas Elpidorou for pressing me on this delicate point.

18. Thanks to Jeff Yoshimi for this example and for the question that it entails about when some experiences *become* interoceptive.
19. Rochat 2003, 722: “From birth, infants differentiate between . . . stimulation originating from their own body or an external self.” Curiously, however, Rochat largely ignores interoception in favor of proprioception and reflexive exteroception (hearing one’s voice, touching oneself) to establish “self-world differentiation at birth” as the first of “five levels of self-awareness as they unfold in life.” See, too, Tajadura-Jiménez and Tsakiris (2014) for empirical support of the view that “interoceptive sensitivity modulates self-other boundaries.”
20. I say ‘relatively absent’ since it seems presumptuous to rule out contexts where a reflexive expression (e.g., ‘enjoying oneself’) might stand for an interoceptive experience. Other languages, moreover, make use of transitives, e.g., *j’ai faim*, *ich habe Durst*.
21. If there is a case to be made for qualia or for the “what it is like” character of experience, interoception would seem to provide a particularly apt starting point.
22. My discussion does not discriminate between two clearly distinct sorts of reflexive experiences: inherently embodied reflexive experiences (hearing oneself, touching oneself, smelling oneself) and bodily neutral reflexive experiences (remembering ourselves remembering, dreaming ourselves dreaming, thinking of ourselves thinking, and the like). The former suppose some sort of “rough and ready” identification with our bodies, though lacking the immediacy of interoceptive self-awareness. But I can also remember or imagine myself and, indeed, my body in quite other positions than the one it presently occupies, acting differently from how it presently acts.
23. Hua III/1, 74–75, 192. As late as 1925 Husserl continues to classify pain, along with colors and sounds, as hyletic data (Hua IX, 166f). On the debate between Husserl’s teachers, Stumpf and Brentano (the former arguing that pain is a feeling-sensation (*Gefühlsempfindung*), the latter that it is an emotion), see Brentano 1907, 122; Geniusias 2014, 3–9; Stumpf 1907, 1917.
24. Herein lies a reason for not collapsing hyletic data together with sensations. In contrast to hyletic data, sensations can be experienced. We can experience them as minimally (passively) synthesized sensory saliences (*sinnliche Abgehobenheiten*) via reflection and deliberate “impoverishment” (*Abbau*) of fully constituted experiences. Thus, as Andrea Staiti puts it, a hyletic datum is a limiting concept for Husserl, pointing to an irreducible level of facticity within consciousness that phenomenological analysis must acknowledge but can never (within the confines of phenomenology) explain.
25. While this account may be true of the interoceptive character of acute pain, it does not seem to hold for chronic pain, where the expectation of the pain entails a certain objectification of it. So, too, a physician may ask where “it” hurts, a use of the impersonal that amounts to an objectification of the pain and the body. These issues bear on the distinguishability of unreflected interoceptive experiences and reflections on them, flagged in footnote 11 above. I am grateful to Andrea Staiti for calling attention to the issue of chronic pain in this connection.
26. All quotations in this paragraph are from Hua III/1, 77–79.
27. Hua III/1, 79. Hence, the objects of immanent perceptions are not like entoptic phenomena, so-called “floaters” that a skilled ophthalmologist can also see; see *ibid.*, 87.
28. Herein lies the notable change in terminology, since Husserl speaks of the mental phenomena being perceived “transcendently” in the *Logical Investigations*; see Hua XIX, 761–62; by contrast, in *Ideas I* the perception of the mental state is immanent as opposed to transcendent.

29. *Geniusas* 2014, 8: "And so, Stumpf insists that feeling-sensations are not to be thought of as feelings of sensations, or feelings directed at sensations; rather, they are *sensations* through and through, *feeling-sensations*."
30. However, a passage in *Ideas I*—Hua III/1, 75–76—may shed light on the matter, since Husserl there distinguishes apprehension, "attending to something," and even "a simple consciousness of a subject matter" from "taking a position towards it." So, too, he makes a corresponding distinction between an apprehended object and an intentional object.
31. Hua XIX/1, 406, 410; *Geniusas* 2014, 12–13.
32. Particularly instructive in this connection is Husserl's treatment of hunger as an animal instinct of self-preservation, transformed by the human will and action, directed to life as a whole (Hua XV, 405; Hua XXVII, 25; Staiti 2010, 201–05). This orientation does not do justice to the rudimentary self-awareness that takes shape in interoception.
33. Here developmental considerations seem apt. To the extent that infants and young children come to learn of this coincidence, the two descriptions of the awareness may be equivalent, but the awareness under one description is likely prior to the other.
34. When it comes to this distinctive identity of self-identity and self-awareness, the cases of interoception may even enjoy a kind of privileged status. If I am hungry or cold, then I am aware of myself in a way that is typically more reliable than exteroception. To be sure, there are examples of interoception that are highly fallible (consider, for example, the various sorts of sympathy or referred pain).
35. So, too, while Chapters Two to Four of Husserl's *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis* (Hua XI) no doubt provide considerable potential for the analysis of interoception, they do so only analogously since perception remains the fundamental orientation of those analyses.

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## 8 Knowing One's Own Desires

*Jonathan Webber*

How do you know what you want? Discussions of self-knowledge in contemporary anglophone philosophy tend to focus primarily on how one knows one's own beliefs. This is one feature of a more general emphasis on the epistemic aspect of the mind. Our status as knowers is subject to far more philosophical scrutiny in this tradition than our status as doers. There is significant attention paid to our knowledge of our own intentions, primarily due to the influence of Elizabeth Anscombe's richly insightful book *Intention*. But this approach to practical agency shares with the emphasis on beliefs a focus on the reasoning aspect of the mind. There is very little discussion of knowledge of one's own desires, even though desire would seem to be closer than intention to the core of what it is to be a creature that seeks to bring about change in the world. This was, by contrast, the focus of a strong tradition of European philosophy whose primary exponents published their greatest works in this area in the first half of the twentieth century.

Richard Moran has drawn on the work of one of these philosophers, Jean-Paul Sartre, in the development of his sophisticated and influential theory of self-knowledge. This theory holds that our epistemic authority to report our own mental states rests on our agential authority to form those mental states. Despite this emphasis on agency in describing the process underlying first-person authority, however, Moran's theory shares with the anglophone tradition that he primarily engages with a strong emphasis on beliefs and intentions as the objects of self-knowledge. Although he intends his theory to apply equally to desire, he provides very little discussion focused on this application of it. This is unfortunate, as we will see, for if we begin the inquiry focusing on the desires at the core of agency as contents of self-knowledge, then there emerges a rather different picture of first-person authority. This alternative account, moreover, is one that is closer to the overall position that Sartre develops in the very same works that Moran discusses.

To see this, we will begin by clarifying Moran's account of first-person authority over belief as consisting in the deliberative authority to form one's own beliefs. We will then consider two ways in which this might be thought

to apply to the case of desire, finding that one cannot form desires by deliberating only over whether something is objectively good, but that one can do so by considering whether it is subjectively attractive. This deliberation, however, rests on already having epistemic access to one's existing desires. We will then turn to Sartre's theory that desires feature in experience by influencing the way the world appears to one. The ability to shift attention from the world itself to the way it seems, which is Sartre's form of phenomenological reflection, thus grounds direct epistemic access to one's desires. We will then see why this form of self-knowledge is the fundamental form of first-person authority over both desires and intentions. Finally, we will see that Moran has overlooked this aspect of self-knowledge in part through focusing on one strand of Sartre's thought at the expense of another that is in tension with it.

## 1. MORAN ON THE TRANSPARENCY OF BELIEF

Moran argues that there are two distinct routes to knowledge of one's own beliefs. One route is theoretical reflection, which is inference on the basis of observation of one's speech and other behavior. This form of self-knowledge is not inherently first-personal, since the very same evidence is available to other observers. Indeed, some of this evidence, such as facial expressions, might be better available to others. The other route is what Moran sometimes calls 'practical reflection' or 'deliberative reflection' (e.g., 2001, 59). If asked whether I believe that  $p$ , then in many cases I can answer by directing my attention to whether  $p$  is true. This 'transparency' of belief, according to Moran, grounds the inherently first-personal route to self-knowledge. For one can answer questions about one's own beliefs in this way, but not questions about other people's beliefs. What is more, this route to self-knowledge is integral to rational agency itself, since it rests on one's ability to form one's own beliefs. Where this form of self-knowledge fails, one can discern one's beliefs only through theoretical reflection. If a belief is insensitive to one's rational judgment in this way, then one is alienated from it. It is not fully one's own if it is independent of one's endorsement through such a failure of rationality.

In his book *Authority and Estrangement*, where the theory is developed most fully, Moran often explicates this idea of transparency as the question of whether one believes that  $p$  being answerable by addressing the question of whether one is to believe that  $p$ , or has good reason to believe that  $p$ . Thus, for example, "a person is credited with first-person authority when we take the question of what he *does* believe to be settled by his decision as to what he *is to* believe" (2001, 134). Moran's idea here is that if one deliberates about what one is to believe, one must be assuming that this will decide one's belief (2001, 94–5). For this reason, Moran sometimes describes the question of whether one believes that  $p$  as being transparent,

from one's own perspective, to the question of whether  $p$  is true (2001, 74–7, 85). This raises the question of how we should understand the relation between considering whether  $p$  is true and considering whether one should believe that  $p$ . Which should one directly consider in order to exercise first-person authority over one's beliefs?

There are good reasons to reject the idea that the question of what one believes is directly transparent to the question of what one should believe. For one might judge that one has good reason to believe that  $p$  without thereby believing that  $p$ . For example, one's reasons might be "good enough to permit belief in  $p$ , without requiring belief in  $p$ , and thereby also permitting suspension of belief in  $p$ " (Way 2007, 228). If one exercises first-person authority by considering what one has good reason to believe, then in this case one would have the authority to claim to believe that  $p$  even if one had suspended belief whether  $p$ . Moran could not classify this as a failure of first-person authority due to a failure of the rationality that grounds that authority, since this suspension of belief is rationally permitted. Moreover, the question of whether one has good reason to believe that  $p$  itself has a reflective aspect. If the question of what one believes is transparent to the question of what one has reason to believe, then we need an account of how one finds out what one's reasons for belief are. This cannot be a matter of observational self-knowledge, for, if it were, then the relevant information would be publicly available and so would not ground a form of first-person authority. What is required is a further form of self-knowledge. If there is such a form of self-knowledge, it might undermine the motivation for Moran's account of non-observational self-knowledge by fulfilling the role for which he proposes that account (O'Brien 2003, 379).

Moran's theory is therefore best interpreted as holding that the question of whether one believes that  $p$  is directly transparent to the question of whether  $p$  is true, with his emphasis on having reasons to believe that  $p$  indicating the practical procedure that one needs to adopt for rationally deciding whether  $p$  is true (O'Brien 2003, 379). To put the point another way, the question about what one believes is only indirectly transparent to the question about what one has reason to believe, where one should consider one's own reasons only in the service of the prior question of what the truth is. Moran seems to endorse this reading that accords the truth of  $p$  priority over reasons for believing  $p$  when he writes, in a paper discussing his book, that transparency means that "a person answers the question whether he *believes* that  $p$  in the same way he would address himself to the question whether  $p$  itself" (2004, 457; see also 2004, 468, 2012, 235).

It follows from this that we should not accept Moran's claim that the transparency "of first-person belief reports" has its "source in the primacy of a deliberative rather than a theoretical stance towards one's own state of mind" (2001, 64). It rather has its source in deliberation about the world, which does not require any sort of stance towards one's own state of mind. It is likewise misleading to describe this process as "deliberative reflection,"

since it does not essentially include oneself or one's mind in its content. It is true that one can announce the result of the deliberation either by "*p* is true" or by "I believe that *p*," because the judgment that *p* makes it the case, at that time at least, that the judger believes that *p*. It is also true that this avowal of one's own belief is a reflective formulation of the affirmation of its embedded proposition. But this reflectivity belongs to the report, not to the deliberative process that resulted in it. Only one of the two routes to knowing one's own beliefs that Moran discusses, therefore, is a form of reflection. This is the "theoretical reflection" that relies on evidence that is available to other observers as well as to oneself.

## 2. DESIRE AND DESIRABILITY

What leads Moran to slip between the question of the truth of *p* and the question of whether to believe that *p*? Perhaps it results from his aim of formulating a unified account of transparency across mental states of different kinds. If asked whether I intend that *p*, for example whether I intend that I go to the cinema this evening, then I cannot answer this by considering whether *p* is true, for to do that would be to make a prediction rather than to form an intention. Thus, it is more plausible to say that the question whether I intend that *p* is transparent to the question whether to intend that *p*, rather than to the question whether *p* is true (Way 2007, 225). Questions about my beliefs and my intentions differ, therefore, in the questions to which they are transparent for me. But their properties of transparency are nevertheless unified at a higher level of generality. For in both cases, if these claims are correct, one can answer the question about one's mental state through the deliberation that forms that mental state.

What about desire? If questions about what one wants are also transparent, then what is the nature of the deliberation whose conclusion can at once form and announce one's desire? It may be objected that desires are not generally formed in this way. But the theory does not require that they are. Neither does it require that beliefs or intentions are generally formed by deliberation. It requires only that one can answer a question about these mental states through deliberation whose conclusion forms the mental state that it announces. It might still be objected, however, that we have first-person authority to report desires that we feel but that cannot be formed or reshaped by deliberation. Moran's strategy for dealing with this objection is to distinguish between mere bodily desires and judgment-sensitive rational desires (2001, 114–18). He does not provide an account of how we know our bodily desires, but since he sees these as impinging on the rational mind from without we can assume that he considers our awareness of them to be a form of sensation or perception (2001, 114–15).

There are good reasons not to accept Moran's distinction between two kinds of desire (Webber forthcoming-a, §§ 3–4). For present purposes, however, we can formulate our question solely in terms of those desires that

Moran considers to be sensitive to deliberative judgment. What is the subject primarily aiming to discern through the deliberation to which these desires are purportedly sensitive? It cannot be the truth of the content of the desire. My desire that  $p$  cannot be formed by deliberation about whether  $p$  is true. It must rather be formed through deliberation about whether  $p$  is desirable, as Moran acknowledges (2001, 57, 60). So if I am asked whether I want to go to the cinema this evening, if this theory is correct, I cannot answer by considering whether I do go to the cinema this evening, but I can answer by considering whether my going to the cinema this evening is desirable. The judgment produced by this deliberation would both form and announce my desire.

How should we understand the notion of desirability in play here? It could be read objectively to mean that the deliberation is concerned with whether  $p$  is or would be good. This would parallel the idea that one's belief about  $p$  can be formed and announced through deliberation about whether  $p$  is true. In both cases, the deliberation would make no essential reference to the subject's own mental states. It would rather be wholly concerned with some aspect of the world beyond that mind. For this reason, deliberation about whether some possible state of affairs is or would be good is not a form of reflection. One's deliberative conclusion could be announced in the form of the avowal "I want that  $p$ ," but this reflectivity would be a feature of the avowal rather than the deliberation. Moreover, this might be thought to embody a normative feature of desire that parallels a normative feature of belief. It might be argued that one ought to desire what is good just as one ought to believe what is true, so these forms of transparency reflect a normative demand of rationality.

Alternatively, however, we could understand the deliberation to concern desirability in the subjective sense. That is, it might be deliberation about whether  $p$  is attractive rather than about whether  $p$  is good. I would determine whether I desire something by deciding whether I have good reason to desire it. The transparency of the question of one's own desire would parallel that of the question of one's own intention. This practical deliberation, moreover, would be a form of reflection, since it would need to take into account one's existing motivational states. In order to decide whether to intend that  $p$ , one would need to consider how  $p$  would fit with one's other desires and intentions. Likewise, to consider whether  $p$  is attractive to one requires considering its relation to one's existing desires. Should we understand the purported transparency of desire to parallel that of intention in this way? Or should we understand it in the way that parallels the transparency of belief?

### 3. THE DESIRABLE AS THE GOOD

Moran's theory of first-person authority requires that deliberation culminate in a judgment that forms the relevant mental state. It does not require that

deliberation always or necessarily has this effect. But it does require that this should be the normal result of deliberative judgment, with other cases being failures of rational functioning. For otherwise one would not in general be warranted in answering a question about one's mental state by forming a judgment about the object of that mental state. Deliberation about *p* could warrant the avowal "I desire that *p*," for example, only if judgments arrived at through that kind of deliberation generally had the effect of forming one's desires. For this reason, it seems that first-person authority over whether I desire that *p* cannot be grounded in deliberation over whether *p* is good. The judgment that *p* is good does not in general result in the desire that *p*, the judgment that *p* is not good does not in general result in the absence of desire that *p*, and the judgment that *p* is bad does not in general result in the desire that not-*p*.

The most obvious examples of this rational insensitivity of desire to judgments of goodness are ones that are bound up with bodily needs, whether these are like hunger and thirst in being intrinsic to the functioning of the human body or whether they are like the smoker's desire for a cigarette in being an acquired appetite. But this insensitivity is a feature of desires more generally. One might decide that it would be good to start cycling to work instead of driving, but still want to drive. One might judge that spending the day rewatching old movies would not be a good use of one's time, but want to do it anyway. One might decide that speaking one's mind to one's boss on this occasion would be a bad move, but still want to do so. Philosophers have puzzled over exactly how one can end up doing something other than what one judges to be good. But the point here does not concern akratic action. The point is just that it is quite common to continue to have a desire that runs contrary to one's judgment, whether or not one then acts on that desire.

Can these cases be understood in terms of the distinction between desiring the object and desiring an aspect of the object? It certainly can happen, for example, that I judge that cycling is preferable to driving when all things are considered, but nevertheless still want the easier physical activity of driving. But this distinction does not capture every way in which desires that are not rooted in bodily needs might persist despite contrary judgments. For it may not simply be a desire for an aspect of driving that survives my judgment that cycling is better. It may instead be the desire to drive. That is, the desire for the object, with all of its aspects, survives the contrary judgment about that object in light of all of its aspects. This may perhaps be explained by the relative weights I place on the various aspects of the object in deliberation differing from the relative strengths of my desires for those aspects. But whatever the explanation, it seems that the object of the judgment does match the object of the desire.

In discussing his book, Moran provides an example in which the judgment and the contrary desire concern the same aspect of the object, rather than merely the same object. His example is judging some activity to be



unworthy of desire due to its disgusting character. Not only is it true that a desire for the activity can survive this judgment, but, moreover, “surely some activity’s disgusting character can be just what appeals to me and makes the pursuit of it alluring, even rewarding, even if it conflicts with other values of mine” (2004, 472). This is not a case in which one judges the activity to be good despite finding it disgusting, but rather a case of wanting something for those aspects of it that one judges to be bad. Moran does not classify this as a case of rational malfunction. If he did, then he would need to claim that first-person authority over desire fails in this case, that one can only learn of the desire through observation, and that one would thus be alienated from the desire. Rather, he agrees that these implications are not right. It is, he writes, “a desire for that thing *because* it is both trivial and disgusting, something I desire under that very aspect; and yet I still acknowledge it as my own” (2004, 472).

How is it possible to have first-person authority in such a case, on Moran’s account? He does not give a clear answer to this. He does agree that “what is said about belief will only carry over” to this kind of case with “substantial modifications” and that “any connection between desire and being found worth desiring has to be interpreted very broadly to be psychologically realistic at all” (2004, 471). But he does not say any more about what these modifications or this breadth would consist in. What these examples show is that we should not consider normal psychological functioning to bring desires immediately into line with judgments of goodness. Perhaps creatures with a different form of rationality, perhaps even creatures with a more perfect form of rationality, would be responsive to the good in this way, but our form of rationality is not like this. So, if the question of whether I desire that *p* is answerable through deliberation about the desirability of *p*, then that desirability must be attractiveness to me rather than objective goodness.

#### 4. THE DESIRABLE AS THE ATTRACTIVE

Moran’s example of a desire being sensitive to rational deliberation is one in which the deliberative judgment concerns the attractiveness of the object. “When someone wants to change jobs,” he argues, this desire “depends for its justification on various beliefs (about oneself, about one’s present job and prospects elsewhere)” and it is a normal expectation that changes in these beliefs that render the desire unjustified will result in no longer having the desire (2001, 115). What are the beliefs on which the desire rationally and psychologically ought to depend? Moran says only that judgment-sensitive desires depend on “beliefs about what makes these various things desirable” (2001, 115)—that is, not only factual beliefs about the object of desire, but also beliefs about the desirability of the aspects of that object picked out by these factual beliefs. We have already seen that this desirability cannot



be understood as objective goodness, since it is implausible to suggest that desire is normally dependent on judgments of goodness. We should rather see the judgment as dependent on the beliefs about how attractive or unattractive each aspect under consideration is.

Since the attractiveness of the object as a whole is a matter of the attractiveness of each of its aspects, deliberation over whether something is desirable in this sense concerns not only the object itself but also one's own existing mental states. It is properly described as a reflective process, because the reasoning concerns oneself, or at least one's own desires, as well as the object under consideration. The desire to change jobs is dependent not only on beliefs about the nature of one's current job and the nature of other jobs one might have instead, but also about how much one wants or does not want a job with these or those aspects. Thus, one can answer a question about whether one desires that  $p$  by considering the various aspects of  $p$  in relation to one's desires and thereby forming a judgment about the overall attractiveness of  $p$  itself.

If this is right, a question about one's own desire with regard to some object is transparent to a question about the overall attractiveness of that object, which one is to answer through deliberation that considers the various aspects of that object in relation to one's desires. This would not reflect a strong normative demand, if indeed there is one, that one's desires ought to track the good just as one's beliefs ought to track the truth. But it would nevertheless reflect a weaker normative demand that one ought not to desire some object overall if achieving that object would frustrate one's desires more than it would satisfy them. Such a demand is not so strong that it requires consistency of desires. Yet it is strong enough to ground the expectation that one's desire be sensitive to changes in information one has about the object of that desire.

Obviously, this deliberation about the object requires one to have knowledge of one's own desires. One cannot consider whether an aspect of the object meets one's desires unless one knows what the relevant desires are. If this is how we are to understand deliberative knowledge of one's own desires, then this is not a fundamental form of self-knowledge, for it rests on prior knowledge of one's own desires. Moran's account of self-knowledge allows for only one possible source of this prior knowledge, which is observation. But there are two good reasons to reject the idea that deliberative first-person authority over one's desires rests on observational knowledge of one's desires. One reason is that this would seem to undermine the claim that the transparency of desire to attractiveness grounds a distinctively first-personal form of self-knowledge. If the deliberation simply involves making calculations on the basis of information about my desires that is in principle available to any observer, then, in principle, anyone can deliberate in this way about whether that object is attractive to me.

The second reason is that the ambiguity of the observational evidence would undermine any normative demand not to desire outcomes that would have a negative net effect on the overall satisfaction of one's desires. This is well illustrated by a vignette in Sartre's novel, *The Age of Reason*, in which

Daniel wants to prove that he is not the sentimental person that other people take him to be. His relationship with his cats is central to the evidence on which this view of him is based. So he forms the desire to drown his cats in the river Seine. When he gets to the water's edge, he finds that he cannot bring himself to do it. He had not taken account of his strong desire to continue caring for his cats. Yet he had taken account of the observational evidence, which he interpreted in a way that did not indicate this strong desire (Sartre 1945/1986, 81–91). Observational evidence is generally, perhaps necessarily, open to more than one interpretation. So how could there be a normative demand to take one's desires into account if one could not reliably identify them?

## 5. THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF DESIRE

If desires are to be taken into account in rational decision making at all, then they must feature in experience in some way. For they could not motivate rational behavior unless the subject were sufficiently aware of them to take them into account in the reasoning behind that behavior. This is not to say that desires do not motivate behavior in other ways. In some cases, for example, they might subtly direct reasoning to the desired conclusion through influencing the rational process itself rather than through being or shaping the considerations taken into account. But this would seem to be paradigmatic of irrational decision-making. The normal role of desire in rational agency must be to contribute to deliberation in a way that does not undermine the rationality of that process. In order to play this role, desires must feature in the deliberator's experience in some way.

Moran does not consider in any detail just how desires feature in experience and thus feed into rational deliberation. He does describe "brute" desires, such as "those associated with hunger or sheer fatigue" as "experienced by the person as feelings that simply come over him" and as things that "must simply be responded to" much like "any other empirical phenomena" (2001, 114–5). This idea that some desires are experienced as sensations might well be correct of extreme cases of these bodily desires, though, as we will see, the same desires in less extreme form are experienced in another way. But this cannot account for the way desires generally feature in experience. Moran rightly distances his view from the idea that all desires, including, for example, the desire to change jobs, "simply assail us with their force" (2001, 116). His only other model of our relationship with our desires, however, is the deliberative model that we have seen to require some prior awareness of desire. So we are left with the question of how desires generally feature in experience.

Sartre took this question to be central to understanding human motivation. We do not generally experience our desires as inner drives or forces, he argues, but rather as the directive structure of the world we experience. The desire to get to work on time, for example, is experienced in the sound

of the alarm clock being experienced as a demand to get out of bed, rather than as a mere annoyance (Sartre 1943/2003, 62–3). Daniel is confronted with his own desire to continue caring for his cats when he finds that he cannot bring himself to throw them into the river. The desire not to deal with slimy things is manifested not as sensation of disgust in their presence, but as those things themselves seeming to have the property of being disgusting (*ibid.*, 630–2). Similarly, thirst can be experienced in the glass of water looking inviting, hunger in the plate of food seeming attractive, and tiredness in the difficulty of simple tasks. This account is intuitively plausible. We do not experience the world as an arena of physical properties to which our desires are subjective reactions. We experience it as already being appealing, exciting, forbidding, repulsive, and so on. But objects in the world can have these properties only in relation to our existing motivations.

On this view, unreflective rational guidance of action is a matter of responding to this field of reasons for action, which in turn has been shaped by our desires (*ibid.*, 472–3). This grounds an account of how we can become reflectively aware of our desires. If we wish to turn attention to the question of what we desire, we need only shift our focus from the world of objects we experience to the experience of that world. Since the experience is nothing but the presentation of the world as having a particular directive structure, this shift of attention does not provide access to some inner mental states that represent the world. Rather, it brings into focus the directive structure that the world is experienced as having. Daniel can turn his attention away from his cats and focus instead on the appeal that they have for him. I can shift my attention from the alarm clock sound itself to the insistent demand it appears to make. This shift brings one's desires to light.

Cats and alarms are concrete perceivable objects, but the same point can be made about our desires in relation to more abstract things. In order to decide whether I want to change jobs, I must not only identify the various aspects of my current job and those of other jobs I might realistically have, but also identify how these aspects relate to my desires. I can do so by thinking about those aspects and considering how they strike me. When I think about my current commute, does it seem arduous? Does the prospect of spending the day with my colleagues seem inviting? The same can be said of Moran's other example. I know that it is the trivial and disgusting nature of the activity that attracts me because I find that particular triviality and disgustingness appealing when I think about it. Since our desires shape the way their objects appear to us, then, we can access those desires by considering those appearances.

## 6. PHENOMENOLOGICAL REFLECTION AND FIRST-PERSON AUTHORITY

Directing attention to one's experience in this way is not well described as 'introspection.' It does not involve looking inside anywhere. Rather, one's

attention continues to be directed towards the world. But this attention is no longer focused on the object itself, but rather on the way it seems to be. When I run after the tram, for example, my attention is focused on the tram itself, but I can also shift attention to the appearance of the tram as something-to-be-caught. In doing so, I do not direct my attention inwards: it remains directed outwards, towards the tram, but shifts its focus from the tram itself to how the tram seems. This is what Sartre describes as “pure reflection,” and, since it is a form of bracketing the reality of the object to focus on its appearance, bracketing the being to focus on the phenomenon, it is also rightly described as a form of the phenomenological reduction (see Webber forthcoming-b, § 4). But this is not a technical philosophical procedure, and neither is there anything mysterious about it. It is rather an ordinary part of everyday life.

This self-awareness is a form of transparency. The idea here is not that experience itself is transparent to the world, presenting nothing other than its objects. Indeed, the transparency involved in self-awareness rests on that not being true. Sartre describes consciousness as “translucent” (*translucide*), not transparent (Sartre 1943/2003, 67, 72, 78, 101, 119, 357, 409). The difference between these terms in French is the same as in English: whereas one can see objects plainly through a transparent object, like an ordinary window, a translucent object distorts the way those objects seem. Our motives distort the appearance of things. It is this translucency of our experience of the world that allows for the logical transparency, in Moran’s sense of the word, of questions about one’s own desires to questions about how the world appears to one. To answer the question about whether one desires that *p*, one needs to direct attention to the prospect of *p*, either as a whole or in its various aspects, and report on how that prospect seems to one.

Moreover, this phenomenological reflection meets the criteria that Moran lays down for an acceptable theory of first-person authority (2001, 32–5). First, it is inherently first-personal. The way the world seems to you is something that is directly epistemically accessible only to you. I might infer it from your behavior, as indeed can you, but this is an indirect access to the information. Or I could ask you how things seem to you, but this rests on your already having access to that information. Only you can be directly aware of how things seem to you. Second, it is clear why we have this access only to some aspects of ourselves and not others. Since phenomenological reflection is attention to the way the world seems in experience, it can provide access only to states of ourselves that are manifested in that seeming. This can include some physical states such as hunger, thirst, and tiredness, as well as mental states such as desires, but would generally exclude the details of our health. Moreover, in focusing on desire rather than belief and intention as its central case, this is an account of epistemic access to what is arguably the core of mindedness, the core of being an agent who seeks to change things.

Most importantly, this account shows first-person authority to be integral to rational agency rather than something additional to it. Moran’s account of

first-person authority over belief rests on the ability to make up one's own mind through deliberation. Moran points out that this puts rational agency at the center of the account (2001, 150–1). But this is only because this first-person authority supervenes on rational agency. That is, the ability to express the deliberative judgment as an avowal of belief does not itself seem essential to the ability to form beliefs through deliberative judgment or to the ability to express beliefs in words and actions. The phenomenological account of first-person authority over desire, by contrast, has the implication that this epistemic authority is essential to rational agency. For one cannot rationally shape one's desires without regard to one's other desires. Deliberation about the desirability of some outcome rationally ought to take into account one's existing desires.

Should we consider this self-knowledge to be another kind of first-person authority alongside the deliberative kind that Moran describes? Once an account of first-person authority is available that covers cases that Moran's cannot cover, the question arises whether it can be extended to displace Moran's (O'Brien 2003, 379). Deliberative first-person authority over desire rests on this phenomenological reflection on one's existing desires and so inherits its status as authoritative from it. A similar point can be made about knowledge of one's own intentions. When he formed the intention to drown his cats, Sartre's character Daniel should have reflected on his desires concerning those cats. One's intentions are not authoritative unless formed with due regard to one's existing desires. But we have already seen that the question of what one believes differs in being directly transparent to the truth, rather than transparent to what one has reason to believe. It might turn out, on further consideration, that deliberation about the truth rests on something parallel to phenomenological reflection on desire. For now, however, we should conclude only that rational agency in the practical sphere rests on phenomenological reflection.

## 7. TWO STRANDS OF SARTRE'S THOUGHT

Moran develops his account of first-person authority in part through his analysis of Sartre's example of the akratic gambler (Moran 2001, 78–83, Sartre 1943/2003, 56–7). This gambler has resolved not to gamble again, but that does not help him to resist the charms of the casino in front of him. Moran argues that this is because the theoretical perspective that I can take towards my own intention, or resolution, as grounding a prediction of my behavior depends on my own deliberative relation to the content of the same intention or resolution. "I must recognise," writes Moran, "that the resolution only exists as a fact on which anyone can base a prediction insofar as I continue to endorse it" (2001, 82). When the gambler feels his commitment to not gambling is not strong enough, the reason that turning to his resolution for support will not help him is that the resolution itself is only as strong as his current commitment to not gambling.

This is a subtle and illuminating account of Sartre's example. Moran uses it to develop the idea that intentions are sensitive to deliberative judgment in the way that grounds his theory of first-person authority. He extends the case by drawing on Sartre's thoughts about ascribing beliefs to oneself (Sartre 1943/2003, 92–3). Why would I treat my belief itself, such as my belief that Pierre is my friend, as evidence for the truth of that belief? I would do so only if I am no longer confident about whether the content of that belief is true and I cannot find sufficient reasons for it elsewhere. But this motivating state itself means that the belief cannot provide good evidence, since the fact that someone—whether myself or anyone else—unconfidently believes that Pierre is my friend does not provide me with good reason to believe that Pierre is my friend (2001, 83). However, this parallel reasoning concerning intentions and beliefs does not consider whether the same can be said about desire or what difference a consideration of desire would make to the case of intention.

Sartre's discussion of his example similarly overlooks desire. Why is the gambler tempted when faced with a casino? Because he has a persisting desire to gamble. This grounds an important disanalogy between intentions and beliefs. When forming intentions, one ought to take into account not only one's existing intentions but also one's desires. Deliberation resulting in belief, on the other hand, needs to be sensitive only to one's other beliefs, not to one's mental states of any other kind. For this reason, it can seem odd that Sartre describes the akratic gambler as discovering his radical freedom through his awareness that his prior intention cannot help him to resist temptation. The gambler has resolved to resist his desire and then finds that the desire persists while the strength of his resolution does not, just as Daniel is confronted with his recalcitrant desire to care for his cats. This is why Sartre's example can look rather more like an illustration of the limitations of freedom. It looks as though the lesson to be learned is that the gambler should have taken his desires into account more carefully when making his decision, with the implication that he is no longer free to choose to give up gambling.

This oddness is due to the structure of *Being and Nothingness*, which is not a series of arguments for discrete conclusions but rather the progressive elaboration of an overall philosophy none of whose aspects are fully articulated until the elaboration is complete. Sartre goes on to argue that one's desires are themselves dependent on one's deliberative judgment. Desires are grounded in the projects that I pursue, or more precisely in the values at their core, he argues, and persist only while I endorse those values and so remain committed to those projects (Sartre 1943/2003, 459; Webber 2009, chapters 3–5). Sartre sometimes seems to hold that we can shape our desires through deliberative judgment about the desirability of their objects, even though this would bring with it an alteration in the projects in which they are grounded (Sartre 1943/2003, 486, 497–8). But in other passages, he seems to hold that we have only indirect control over our desires through

deliberation over our projects, values, or their objects, which is why we can need the help of an existential psychoanalyst to uncover the project in which a desire is grounded (ibid., 495, 591). Either way, the gambler is not constrained by his desire to gamble, even though he has failed to consider just how strong that desire is and thus just how difficult it will be for him to abandon the old project of gambling.

Ultimately, this vacillation is due to the tension between two strands of thought in *Being and Nothingness*. One strand elaborates the idea that my mental states have no inertia of their own, but persist only with my endorsement. The other develops the idea that the reasons for action that I find in the world reflect the projects I have already undertaken. Moran focuses almost exclusively on the first of these (see e.g., 2001, 140). This distorts his picture of the formation of intention by ignoring the apparent inertia of desire, a distortion that occludes the differences between the theoretical attitude of belief and the practical attitudes of desire and intention. This is what has led Moran to an account of first-person authority in general that cannot be fundamental in the case of the practical attitudes. The idea that first-person authority over desires and intentions is rooted in phenomenological reflection, on the other hand, is consistent with each strand of Sartre's thought. But it does not require Sartre's particular elaborations of either strand, and Sartre's vacillation concerning deliberative control of desire suggests that the two strands might not be mutually consistent. Whether that suggestion is correct and what difference it makes to first-person authority, however, are questions for another time.<sup>1</sup>

## NOTE

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# 9 Phenomenal Conservatism and the Principle of All Principles

*Walter Hopp*

According to the Principle of Phenomenal Conservatism (PPC), “If it seems to *S* as if *P*, then *S* thereby has at least prima facie justification for believing that *P*” (Huemer 2001, 99). This principle, along with its variations, has received a great deal of attention recently, and justly so. If it is true, and if seemings are as prevalent a feature of our psychological landscape as the principle’s defenders take them to be, then virtually all of us have a massive number of epistemically basic or noninferential (“thereby”) beliefs, many of which are true and undefeated.

In what follows, I will compare and contrast the Principle of Phenomenal Conservatism with Husserl’s well-known Principle of All Principles, according to which originary intuition is a source of basic justification. Although the two principles are superficially similar, I will argue that Husserl’s views on knowledge and justification are quite different from those of most contemporary phenomenal conservatives and attempt to show that Husserl’s account is superior in a number of ways. I will examine several cases of belief formation on the basis of seemings and argue that, in those cases in which the principles give divergent verdicts regarding the justificatory status of an agent’s belief, Husserl’s account gives the correct answer. I will also argue that because Husserl’s Principle rests on a detailed specification of the composition and structure of noninferential knowledge, it renders intelligible why certain intentional contents seem true while others do not. I will argue that the same cannot be said of phenomenal conservatism.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. THE PRINCIPLES OF ALL PRINCIPLES

According to Husserl’s Principle of All Principles [PP]:

[E]ach intuition affording [something] in an originary way is a legitimate source of knowledge . . . whatever presents itself to us in “Intuition” in an originary way (so to speak, in its actuality in person) is to be taken simply as what it affords itself as, but only within the limitations in which it affords itself there. (Husserl 1913/2014, §24, 43)

The general thrust of Husserl's position is made clear earlier in the text, where Husserl praises empiricism for its "radicalism in the practice of knowing" (1913/2014, §19, 34). Empiricism's radicalism consists in denying all epistemic authority to "powers of tradition, superstition, and raw and refined prejudices of every sort" (ibid.). The positive side of this radicalism consists in the conviction that

Judging rationally or scientifically about matters . . . means orienting oneself to the things themselves, or, more precisely, it means returning from talk and opinions to the things themselves, questioning them as they are themselves given, and setting aside all prejudices alien to them (Husserl 1913/2014, §19, 34–5).

Rational inquiry, no matter how far beyond what is given it extends, must at some point draw its conclusions from a privileged sort of contact with the objects upon which it bears.

So what do such privileged acts look like? Let's take an example of a typical sort of intentional experience. Suppose that I think that my office door is open. Here we have, first, the experience itself, the intentional act. Its *object* is the state of affairs of my door's being open (Husserl 1900–01/1970, Investigation 5, §17, 579; Smith and McIntyre 1982, 6–9). The act's *content* is the proposition <my door is open>.

Finally, we turn to the act's intentional *quality*. Husserl characterizes an act's quality as "the general act-character, which stamps an act as merely presentative, judgemental, emotional, desiderative, etc." (Husserl 1900–01/1970, Investigation 5, §20, 586) or "the modes of believing, entertaining, wishing, doubting etc." (Husserl 1900–01/1970, Investigation 6, §27, 743) I can hope, or fear, that my door is open. In this example, let us suppose that I withhold belief with respect to the proposition <my door is open>.

Obviously the mere fact that I carry out an act with the intentional content <my door is open> and a given quality does not entail that I know that my door is open or that I am the least bit justified in believing that it is. What would count as the preferred or preeminent way of coming to know whether my door is open? Well, if I really cared about finding out whether my door is open, and if I had the ability to do so, I would *go and check* whether it is open. I would look at it. Perhaps I would give it a tug or a push and see if it swings on its hinges. Suppose I do that. I march right off to my office. Before I even get there, I can see the door jutting into the hallway. Arriving at my office, I can peer right through the doorway and into the room beyond, the door offering no resistance to either my vision or my movement. Assuming my door is in fact open, I now know that it is.

This is a pretty typical sort of occurrence. It is also phenomenologically remarkable. It is a case of fulfillment. In it, we find an object to be as it was thought to be (Willard 1995, 138). When I discover the door to be open, it

“is intuited as being precisely the determinate so-and-so that it was at first merely thought or meant to be” (Husserl 1900–01/1970, Investigation 6, §8, 694). Here are a few of notable features of such acts.

*Epistemic Force:* When I perceive and think the door to be open, I thereby have *some* degree of epistemic justification for believing that my door is open. This is clear from the fact that I have more than I did when I merely entertained the proposition that it is open. Let me push further: I am not just a *tad* more justified in believing that the door is open. I am dramatically more justified in believing that it is open. It would be a worrying sign—a symptom, really—if I were to call my colleague Dan over and ask him, “In your opinion, is this door open?” (Hopp 2013, 345).

*Originary Intuition:* Intuition is a type of act in which an object is not meant merely symbolically or emptily, but is *presented* to us. Not all intuitive acts posit their objects. Imaginative acts have no pretensions to characterize reality at all; they are non-positing.<sup>2</sup> And not all positing intuitive acts present their objects in person or in the flesh. If I close my eyes and visualize my door as being open, and posit it as being open, I have a positing intuitive experience, but nothing like a perception. What makes perception distinctive is that it is the species of intuition in which factually existing objects and states of affairs are not only intuited and posited as existing, but presented “in an originary way” (Husserl 1913/2014, §4, 13) or “in the flesh” (Husserl 1966/2001, 140). In what follows, I will be exclusively concerned with acts of fulfillment whose intuitive components are originary.

*Degrees of Adequacy:* Originary intuition can be more or less adequate or complete. The highest grade of completeness is *immanent* or *self-posing* perception. In the case of such experiences, “the identity of the object and the identity of the perception are one and the same; I mean different perceptions have different objects” (Husserl 1973/1997, §10, 22). The sorts of objects that can be given in this manner include some occurrent experiences and simple universals. In the case of “external” or “transcendent” objects, their originary mode of givenness is essentially one-sided or inadequate.<sup>3</sup> The door I see not only has further parts and features that are presently not given, but it is *given as* having more sides and features than are presently given (see Smith 2008, 324).

This is an extremely important point to bear in mind when it comes to interpreting the Principle of All Principles. It does not claim that we are to take only what is given in an *adequate* way as it gives itself—as though we are only entitled to believe in profiles or appearances when seeing physical objects and states of affairs. Rather, we are to take what is given “in an *originary* way” as it gives itself, and many physical objects can, according to Husserl, be given originally in perception (see Husserl 1913/2014, §1). Were I to withhold belief that the door is open in favor of something more cautious—merely that it appears that the door is open, say—I would be violating the Principle, not abiding by it.

*Two Acts, Same Object:* Fulfillment involves intuition but is not identical with it; in addition to perceiving something to be a certain way, one must think of it as being that way. Fulfillment, that is, involves at least two intentional experiences: a thought or conceptual act and an intuitive act.<sup>4</sup> I began with an act in which an object is intended emptily, an act in which its object was not given or presented in any way. I then *perceived* the very same thing that the thought was about. The object was now no longer *merely* thought of, but presented to me. Both of these acts must be directed upon the same object.<sup>5</sup> Perceiving someone telling me that my door is open will not *fulfill* the thought that it is open. The order of progression here is irrelevant. More often, experience proceeds from perceiving to thinking, rather than thinking to perceiving, but in all cases fulfillment must at some point involve simultaneously thinking about and intuiting the intended object—it must, that is, involve recognition (Husserl 1900–01/1970, Investigation 6, §8, 695).

That fulfillment involves two acts is clear from the fact that they can be independently varied (see Husserl 1900–01/1970, Investigation 6, §4). My perceptual experience can change while my thought that the door is open remains constant, and my perceptual experience of the door can persist while I fulfill a number of different thoughts about the door or turn my thoughts to other matters.

*Different Contents:* The fulfilling act performs a function that the conceptual act alone does not. How do the acts differ? Do they differ in their content, quality, or something else? Husserl is quite clear that they need not differ in their *quality*. According to his account of the “doxic modalities” in *Ideas*, the original or “unmodalized” quality or “thetic character” is that of “certainty of belief.” The objects of acts with this quality have the “character of simply being” (Husserl 1913/2014, §104, 207). This quality can pass over to other modifications—to doubt, say (Husserl 1913/2014, §103, 206). These thetic characters can belong to both empty and intuitive acts. I can be quite certain that my door is open, even if I do not presently perceive it. And the thetic character of unmodified perceptual experience is also that of “naïve perceptual belief” (Husserl 1966/2001, 78). The difference between empty and intuitive acts, then, is not one of quality, since acts of either type can intend their objects as “simply being” in the mode of the “certainty of belief.”

So how do the acts differ then? On one account, the fulfilling act possesses an additional moment of intuitive fullness but the same intentional content (matter) as the fulfilled act (see Husserl 1900–01/1970, Investigation 6, §§25, 28). On another, which I prefer, they have a fundamentally different kind of intentional content.<sup>6</sup> The important point here is that the two acts differ insofar as one *presents* us with the object itself, and that it does so in virtue of having a different total content (whether intentional or non-intentional) from that of the conceptual or cognitive act.

*Degrees of Evidence:* The degree of adequacy of an *intuition* to its object affects, in a readily intelligible way, the “adequacy” of acts of fulfillment or

“rational positings” of which they are parts (see Husserl 1913/2014, §138, 276). When I see the door from an unfavorable angle in dim light from some distance, for instance, my grounds for believing that the door is open are shaky. If I turn up the lights, walk across the hall, and view the door and doorway from various angles, I have increasingly stronger evidence that it is indeed open.

I never, however, have *adequate* evidence.<sup>7</sup> My evidence for any propositions about the door—including propositions about its identity (“my door”) or even existence—is always in principle defeasible by other evidence. Adequate evidence is “intrinsically incapable of being ‘strengthened’ or ‘weakened,’” (Husserl 1913/2014, §138, 276), while the evidence I possess can be. According to Husserl, this is grounded in the very nature of the objects themselves, and to demand a greater degree of evidence for propositions about empirical objects is as absurd as demanding that they be perceptually presented adequately (Husserl 1973/1997, §39, 114–15; Husserl 1929/1969, §60, 161).

There are further interesting features of fulfillment that could be discussed. For instance, it is essential that the intuitive and the conceptual act enter into an appropriate synthesis with one another, and it is possible that they not do so (Husserl 1900–01/1970, Investigation 6, §7, 690–1). I might, for instance, hear a B-flat and think about a B-flat without recognizing what I hear as a B-flat. Still, I think we have a sufficiently clear conception of how fulfillment works. Fulfillment is “[t]he actual union of the conceptualizing act with the object, on the basis of a corresponding intuition of that object together with a recognition of the identity of the object of the concept and of the perception” (Willard 1995, 152).

Now we turn back to the Principle of All Principles. The first formulation of the Principle reads: “each intuition affording [something] in an originary way is a legitimate source of knowledge” (Husserl 1913/2014, §24, 43). I will not focus on this formulation. One reason is that it appears to be false. Since some intuitions are nonveridical, not all intuitions are a legitimate source of *knowledge*, at least not of their full objects. (Perhaps, though, one could acquire knowledge of *something* in any intuitive act. For instance, one can arguably become acquainted with properties and learn about various relations among them even in hallucination (see Johnston 2006, Husserl 1913/2014, §7).)

The second formulation will be my focus. It reads: “whatever presents itself to us in ‘Intuition’ in an originary way (so to speak, in its actuality in person) is to be taken simply as what it affords itself as, but only within the limitations in which it affords itself there” (Husserl 1913/2014, §24, 43). I take this to be a claim about what we are rationally justified in believing. It may be tempting to render the second formulation more precisely as follows:

If an object *a* is presented as being F in an originary intuition to S, S is thereby *prima facie* rationally justified in believing that *a* is F.

Following Pryor (2000, 534), I understand a belief or judgment to be *prima facie* justified when its content is defeasible by other evidence, but which enjoys all things considered justification in the absence of such evidence.

If the foregoing claims about perception and fulfillment are correct, this claim is false. I can perceive a B-flat, and perceive it veridically, but in hearing one I am not thereby justified in believing that it is a B-flat. I am conscious of it intuitively without conceptualizing it, in most cases. I generally don't think about the notes I hear when I listen to music, but I nevertheless hear them. And even if I do conceptualize it, I do not recognize it. The required synthesis between the acts does not take place because I lack perfect pitch. Similarly, I can perceive a patch to be burgundy without being justified in believing that it is so. That is, I can perceive the patch, and I can perceive its burgundy color, and perceive that color to belong to the patch—as opposed to belonging to something else or nothing at all. But I cannot *recognize* the patch as burgundy. Given my very limited command of color concepts, I would be *guessing* if I judged it to be burgundy as opposed to some related shade of red. If presented with a maroon patch, I would be able to perceptually discriminate between their colors without trouble—they would look to be different colors. But if I managed to correctly classify the burgundy patch as burgundy rather than maroon, that would be a matter of luck rather than fulfillment. In this case, the patch would appear to be burgundy, and my experience is the type that could fulfill a thought that it is burgundy, but I would not be justified in believing it to be burgundy.

I do not take this to be an argument against Husserl's considered view, but an argument against one possible interpretation of the Principle. Husserl's considered view, in light of his extensive discussions of knowledge and fulfillment, seems to be this:

PP: If S's thought (or meaning intention) that P is fulfilled by an ordinary intuition, then S is thereby *prima facie* rationally justified in believing that P.<sup>8</sup>

I take this interpretation to be closer to Husserl's intentions. Husserl's remark that what is intuited “is to be taken” as it affords itself is, I believe, directed towards those capable of “taking”—that is, thinking and judging about—what is given *as* it is given. The important point is that it is *fulfillment*, not mere intuition, that justifies.

## 2. PHENOMENAL CONSERVATISM

According to the Principle of Phenomenal Conservatism,

PC1: If it seems to S as if P, then S thereby has at least *prima facie* justification for believing that P (Huemer 2001, 99).

A more recent formulation of the view is as follows:

PC2: If it seems to S that p, then, in the absence of defeaters, S thereby has at least some degree of justification for believing that p (Huemer 2007, 30).

Regarding defeaters, Huemer writes: “to have a defeater for P is to have either direct grounds for doubting P (a rebutting defeater) or grounds for doubting the reliability of the appearances supporting P (an undercutting defeater)” (Huemer 2013b, 747). The differences between these two versions of the principle are substantial, but the arguments that follow apply to both.

Before evaluating PC, we need to get a bit clearer on the nature of seemings.<sup>9</sup> The first feature of seemings that virtually everyone seems to endorse is that they have propositional content.<sup>10</sup> Seemings are a type of propositional attitude. According to Huemer, they are a *genus* of propositional attitude.

I take statements of the form “it seems to S that P” or “it appears to S that P” to describe a kind of propositional attitude, different from belief, of which sensory experience, apparent memory, intuition, and apparent introspective awareness are species. This type of mental state may be termed an “appearance” (Huemer 2007, 30).

Of course, the propositional content of a seeming need not specify anything *about* the seeming itself. If it seems to me that my door is open, the content of the seeming is not “It seems to me that my door is open” but, rather, “My door is open.” That is the proposition that I am justified in believing on the basis of its seeming to me to be open.

A second widely held view, already mentioned in the Huemer quotation above, is that seemings are distinct from beliefs (Tolhurst 1998, 293). Its seeming to one that P is neither sufficient nor necessary for one to believe that P. It seems to me that the two central circles differ in size when I observe the Ebbinghaus illusion, but I do not thereby believe that they do. And I believe plenty of propositions that do not seem true to me at all. The proposition “quarks have charm,” for instance, is one that I believe, but neither it nor its negation seems to me true. Nor are seemings inclinations to believe. Many things besides seemings can incline us to believe (Huemer 2013a, Tolhurst 1998). Furthermore, as Huemer explains, it might seem to me that P even when I have no inclination to believe it (Huemer 2007, 31). Finally, Huemer argues that seemings are what explain our inclinations to believe (*ibid.*).

Third, seemings can vary in intensity.<sup>11</sup> As Huemer writes, using the term “appearance,” “There is a type of mental state, which I call an ‘appearance’, that we avow when we say such things as ‘It seems to me that p’, ‘It appears that p’, or ‘p is obvious’” (Huemer 2005, 99).



Despite this list of features, I am not entirely confident that I know what seemings are. Seemings are not distinguished from other sorts of mental states by their intentional content. The reason is clear: seemings can have precisely the same content as beliefs, which in turn can have the same contents as doubts, both of which are distinct from seemings.

Perhaps seemings are united by their intentional quality or attitude-type, as Huemer's claim that they are a type of propositional attitude suggests. But there are some difficulties with this proposal as well. Unlike fears, hopes, and desires, seemings are a type of act in which something is posited as being a certain way. If, therefore, they were distinguished by their intentional quality, they would be distinguished by their *doxic* or *positing* quality. This, however, is not the case. Seemings cannot be distinguished from other intentional states in virtue of positing their objects as existing, or even doing so in the mode of certainty. Plenty of beliefs do that too (Tooley 2013, 310), as do straightforward perceptual experiences. It does not *seem* to me that there are more reals than naturals or that light travels at *c*, but I believe both and believe them unreservedly.

Perhaps, then, seemings are acts in which the object is not merely emptily intended, but intuitively present or given or even given in person. Using the terms "appears" and "seems" interchangeably, as Huemer does, invites such a view, since there is a use of "appears" that implies that the thing that appears is present in the flesh. But this is not the sense of "appears" or "seems" that Huemer, for one, has in mind. First, Huemer classifies memories as seemings, but memories can either be intuitive—re-livings of past experience, for instance—or empty, and in no case are they presentations of their objects in person.

Secondly, Huemer argues that he is not under any obligation to provide a philosophical analysis of the concept of seemings or the meaning of the term "seems" because his readers, who know how the term is used, will have no trouble understanding him (Huemer 2013a, 328). So now we know that we are not dealing with some newfangled philosophical term of art. And we certainly aren't dealing with a type of act that is confined to cases in which an object is present in the flesh. For within the "vast range of cases" (Huemer 2013a, 330) in which it seems or appears to *S* that *P*, there is a vast range of cases in which the state of affairs that *P* represents is in no way perceived or otherwise presented to *S*. If I come home and see my children's shoes at the door, it would be perfectly natural for me to say "It appears/seems that my children are home." Other propositions that seem true to me include: that the sun is larger than Earth; that I have a spleen; and that the Principle of Phenomenal Conservatism is false. None of these, however, has as its full intentional object something that I have ever perceived or otherwise intuited. These seemings or appearances are signitive, not intuitive or intuitively fulfilled. It should be clear, incidentally, from these examples that perceptual experiences, memories, intuitions, and introspection are not the sole species of seemings.<sup>12</sup>



What seems to set seemings apart lies along some other dimension of their phenomenological character (see Tucker 2013, 5). This phenomenological character is best captured by Tolhurst's phrase "felt veridicality" (Tolhurst 1998, 298). Seemings have "the feel of truth, the feel of a state whose content reveals how things really are" (Tolhurst 1998, 298–9). They possess a distinctive "forcefulness" (Huemer 2001, 77) or "assertiveness" (Tucker 2010, 530). Pryor holds that experiences give us immediate justification in virtue of their "peculiar 'phenomenal force'." "Our experience," he continues, "represents propositions in such a way that it 'feels as if' we could tell that those propositions are true—and that we're perceiving them to be true—just by virtue of having them so represented . . . I think this "feeling" is part of what distinguishes the attitude of experiencing that *p* from other propositional attitudes" (Pryor 2000, 547, n. 37). Tooley, who rejects phenomenal conservatism, writes, "It is natural to conclude . . . that Huemer's concept of seemings is such that seemings are assertive mental representations, and this is in fact the case (Huemer, personal communication)" (Tooley 2013, 309).

Despite some rather significant differences in the details, I think we can detect a consensus here. One point on which all parties appear to agree is that seemings are conscious intentional states that, like beliefs and desires, have propositional content and which, like beliefs, have a positing quality, but which are distinguished from all other states by a distinctive feeling of something's being true: *forcefulness* or *assertiveness*. If these points are right, then being a conscious, intentional state with propositional content and a distinctive sort of forcefulness is a sufficient condition for being a seeming. If PC is correct, then experiencing such a state is, in the absence of defeaters, sufficient for one to be propositionally justified in believing its content. (Tolhurst also speaks, more clearly than anyone else, of seemings as *revelatory* of the truth. I discuss his view further in §4).

Finally it is clear that the phenomenal conservative wants to say more than that seemings are merely sufficient for justification. The forcefulness of seemings is what *explains why* beliefs are justified. Seemings do not, according to phenomenal conservatism, merely tag along for the ride with other factors that do all of the epistemic work (see Audi 2013). Rather, they are themselves performing that work—it is in virtue of its seeming to *S* that *P* that *S* is justified in believing that *P*.

### 3. SOME CASES

How does this account compare with the Principle of All Principles and the phenomenological account of fulfillment and perception that underlies it? There are several notable similarities between the views that I will simply mention.

First, both are principles of noninferential justification. Second, each specifies a sufficient condition for noninferential justification, and knowing

or believing the respective principles themselves is not among those conditions. Third, both are broadly internalist principles, at least on one of the many understandings of internalism. In particular, one's justification (though perhaps not one's knowledge) supervenes on one's mental states and perhaps on one's conscious or potentially conscious mental states. Finally, both make justification easy to come by. Seemings and acts of fulfillment occur with astonishing frequency, and they occur not only to epistemologists but to virtually every person. I take all of these to be virtues.

Nevertheless, the views are really quite different. We can begin to appreciate how different they are by considering a few cases. Afterward, I will try to diagnose why phenomenal conservatism goes wrong and Husserl's theory gets matters right.<sup>13</sup>

### *Case 1: Me*

Suppose that I consider whether my door is open. It does not seem to me that it is. I then go check whether it is open and undergo an experience of fulfillment, as described above. Upon doing so, it seems to me that the door is open.

Husserl and the phenomenal conservative give identical verdicts in this case: before seeing the door I have no justification for believing that it is open, and after seeing it I have strong, albeit defeasible, justification for believing it is open. But they give very different explanations. For the phenomenal conservative, the act of fulfillment involves a stronger or more intense or forceful feeling of truth than does merely entertaining the proposition that the door is open. It has more assertiveness. And that is what explains its greater epistemic force.

Husserl provides a completely different answer: what explains the epistemic superiority of fulfillment over emptily thinking is that, owing to their different contents and structure, in one case I am confronted with the truth-maker for the propositional content of my thought, while in the other all I've got is the thought.

### *Case 2: Seemless*

Now consider Conee's case of Seemless (Conee 2013, 66), who has been convinced by some very weak arguments that external world skepticism is true. When she emptily considers whether the door is open, it does not seem to her that it is. Subsequently this thought is fulfilled on the basis of perception. Still it does not seem to Seemless that the door is open.

Since she has no belief that the door is open, the question of whether her belief is doxastically justified does not arise. But is the proposition that the door is open equally propositionally justified for her in both cases? Surely not. In fact, Husserl's theory predicts that the level of propositional justification when Seemless has a fulfilled intention towards the door's being open

is exactly what it would be for us: extremely high. Her failure to respond to that evidence with a seeming, and in turn a belief, is indicative of a problem.

### *Case 3: Seemful*

Upon considering whether my door is open, it seems to Seemful that it is. It seems quite strongly to be open, in fact. Suppose that Seemful then goes to my office and finds the door to be open. The strength of Seemful's initial seeming does not increase; he was already very confident that the door is open.

Does Seemful's justification for believing that the door is open also remain constant in this case? Very obviously not. After finding it to be open, Seemful is more justified than before. And—to push further—he is not a tad more justified. He is massively more justified. But he is not more justified in virtue of the level of assertiveness of his seeming, which remained constant.

Consider also whether Seemful was more justified when emptily entertaining the proposition that my door is open than I was. If assertiveness is what justifies, then my justification ought to have been very different from Seemful's. But that, it seems to me, is exactly the wrong answer. Merely thinking of something does not, by itself, give one any evidence whatsoever for a proposition. That Seemful's entertaining of the proposition is attended by a feeling of truth is an indication that something is amiss with Seemful.

### *Case 4: Wishy-Washy*

Consider another case. Wishy-Washy considers whether the door is open, and it seems quite strongly to him that it is not. He then undergoes an experience of fulfillment: the door, it turns out, is open. Furthermore, it seems to Wishy-Washy to be open. But then he is reminded of his previous seeming that it was not open, which asserts itself with renewed energy, and his present, perceptually based seeming diminishes in strength. The strength of each conflicting seeming waxes and wanes as Wishy-Washy abandons and returns to his senses. Does Wishy-Washy gain and lose justification for believing that the door is open in this scenario? Again, pretty clearly not. At the very least, this is not what it is like to acquire and lose *evidence* for anything. But the phenomenal conservative should regard this as a process of gaining and losing justification for the belief that the door is open.

On Husserl's view, the degree of justification that each of these individuals has for believing that the door is open is identical at each point in time. When emptily entertaining the proposition that the door is open, each person has exactly no evidence that it is open, and no justification whatsoever for believing that it is open. When the empty intention is fulfilled on the basis of an appropriate perceptual experience, each party has extremely good justification for believing that the door is open, based on the consciousness of

extremely good evidence that it is open. Husserl, then, could not agree more with Conee's claim that "the state of affairs of a proposition seeming to us to be true, if there is such a state of affairs, is not evidence on its own for the proposition" (Conee 2013, 53).

The phenomenal conservative, by contrast, appears committed to the view that each of these individuals has very different degrees of justification for believing the proposition that the door is open, determined by the presence or absence and strength of forcefulness that accompanies the content of the act. Furthermore, the phenomenal conservative appears committed to the claim that some of these individuals have good justification for believing propositions for which they have not one iota of evidence. I submit that Husserl's account delivers the correct answer.

#### 4. SEEMINGS AND RATIONALITY

The phenomenal conservative can dig in at this point and simply accept the consequence that, in these scenarios, these individuals each are justified in adopting what we take to be preposterous attitudes vis-à-vis the propositions in question.

A vastly more promising reply is to dispute the possibility of anyone being in the sorts of mental states that Seemless, Seemful, and Wishy-Washy find themselves in. Huemer has already challenged Conee's Seemless, declaring that "Surely, various things would still seem to the subject to be happening in the external world."<sup>14</sup> Elsewhere, he writes:

[I]ntuitions, perceptual experiences, memories, and states of self-awareness are all mental states of a kind that naturally incline one to believe something (namely, the content of that very mental state, or, the thing that appears to one to be the case). (Huemer 2013c)

Huemer would likely agree that merely thinking of things emptily does *not* naturally incline one to believe something in the absence of other evidence—it is not a natural source of seemings.

Plainly there is something deeply unnatural about Seemless, Seemful, and Wishy-Washy. But what is it that is so unnatural about them? Is it that, as things stand, they are statistical outliers? That their behavior violates some contingent psychological laws? Surely not just that. What makes them unnatural, maybe even impossible, creatures is the sheer magnitude of their imperviousness to reasons and evidence. There is a plain mismatch between their seemings, on the one hand, and what they are conscious of and the manner in which they are conscious of it, on the other. Their seemings don't match their evidence.

If there is a reason to think that Seemless et al. are impossible, this is the best one. It is not, however, clear whether that could be the phenomenal

conservative's reason. If rationality were a matter of believing in accordance with one's most robust seemings, these subjects would all be eminently rational or, at the very least, not manifestly irrational. And if one's seemings are one's evidence or the consciousness of it, then there could not be a gap between one's seemings and one's evidence. But in these cases there quite obviously is.

This brings us to what I regard as the central flaw, from a phenomenological perspective, of phenomenal conservatism. The phenomenal conservative can readily explain why seemings naturally incline us to believe propositions. But what the phenomenal conservative seems unable to explain is why certain *contents* "naturally" seem true and others do not, much less why they would *necessarily* seem true to anyone rational. For the phenomenal conservative, there are many propositions P such that some types of states with the content P are seemings, while others are not. But there doesn't seem to be any intelligible relation between P and its seeming true except the fact that, in certain cases, P just *does* seem true. But why should the content P sometimes seem true and sometimes not? Why, for instance, should it seem that I am in pain when, and only when, I am conscious of being in pain?

It is no answer to this question to point out that some mental states with P as their content are *perceptions* or *sensations* or *intuitions*, since such acts are partly defined by the phenomenal conservative as seemings. That would be like explaining why some animals eat meat by pointing out that some are carnivores. It is not even an answer to say that "seeming to be in pain may well be partially constitutive of the phenomenology of experiencing pain" (Skene 2013, 551, n. 10). Is that a brute fact? Or is there some intelligible reason *why*? Every answer of this sort just pushes the issue back: given a perceptual or intuitive or memorial experience's other properties—its content(s), its presentational character, its quality, its qualitative feel, or whatever—why should it also be a *perception* or a *sensation* or *experience of pain* or whatever other state one wants to define as a seeming? Why should it, given these other features, be *forceful* too?

As far as I can tell, the phenomenal conservative has no answer. According to the view, the content of an act alone does nothing to reveal the truth to us. As Skene puts it, we can only epistemically evaluate propositions if we can "discriminate between propositions with respect to truth and falsity" (Skene 2013, 543). He continues:

Since the content of a proposition cannot, by itself, permit us to make this discrimination, the only way such judgments could occur is if there is something in addition to the content that provides us with an indication of the content's accuracy, and thereby gives us epistemic guidance (that is, instructions or at least indications about what we should believe). (Skene 2013, 543–4)

If we wish to explain why the content of a given mental state seems true, we must appeal to something besides its content—a feeling of forcefulness

or assertiveness. The problem, however, is that while this explains why we would be inclined to believe it, it doesn't explain why forcefulness ever accompanies or fails to accompany a given content in the first place.

The metaphors that some phenomenal conservatives use shed very little light on the matter. Tucker, for instance, makes a genuine attempt to get beyond the vague talk of feelings of truth when he writes: "The phenomenology of a seeming makes it feel as though the seeming is 'recommending' its propositional content as true or 'assuring' us of the content's truth" (2010, 530). If, however, we take this metaphor at all seriously, we must ask just how my seeming has special access to the content (or object!) so as to "assure" me of anything. We are also owed an account of just how I am supposed to know anything about my seeming itself. Why doesn't my seeming need assurance from another seeming? And why don't I need another seeming to tell me what the original seeming "recommends"? Here is Husserl's presentation of just those objections:

Epistemologists of the empiricist persuasion . . . would have us believe that the entire distinction between evident and non-evident judgments consists in a certain feeling by which the former make themselves known. But how can feeling contribute to the intelligibility of anything here? What can it accomplish? Is it, perchance, to call out to us: 'Stop! Here is the truth!?' And why should we believe this feeling? Must this belief also be supplied with an index of feeling? And why does the judgment '2 times 2 is 5' never have this index of feeling, and why can't it have it?<sup>15</sup>

Not only is such a feeling insufficient to explain why some propositions are evident, it is not necessary. Comparing a "vivid intuition of red" with an "empty symbolic intention" of red, Husserl writes: "One need only consider the phenomena to realize they are entirely different" (Husserl 1973/1999, 44–5). The same, obviously, is true of a fulfilled intention and an empty intention. He continues: "if the difference exists in the phenomena themselves, do we still need something like a feeling to distinguish them?" (ibid., 45) Elsewhere he writes: "If we compare the forms of these non-evident and evident judgments, we see how ridiculous the view is which sees *Evidenz* as a merely appended index, a feeling attaching to otherwise identical experiences of judging" (1996, Hua XXX, 326).

One advocate of the epistemic role of seemings who does much better is Tolhurst.<sup>16</sup> As we have seen, on his view, seemings have "the feel of truth, the feel of a state whose content reveals how things really are" (Tolhurst 1998, 298–9). Moreover, Tolhurst seems, quite rightly, to place the epistemic weight on the *revelatory nature* of seemings. Seemings, he writes, "have the feel of being grounded in and revelatory of their objects" (Tolhurst 1998, 299). There are several worries, however, about this account. The first, to repeat a previous point, is that seemings are not all grounded in and revelatory of their objects, nor are all of them phenomenologically

indistinguishable from experiences that are. Some are quite manifestly *empty*.

A second worry is the status of the “feel” that characterizes seemings on Tolhurst’s view. If it is a feeling of forcefulness that accompanies revelatory acts, then this account is at least partly susceptible to the arguments above. Such a feeling is neither necessary (Seemless) nor sufficient (Seemful) for epistemic justification, nor does its presence or absence explain why a belief is justified or not. If it is a feeling whose presence or absence, when united with a given content, is supposed to explain why an act is revelatory, then the account is as badly off as Huemer’s.

Now perhaps, on Tolhurst’s view, the feeling in question is not an accompanying feeling of confidence or forcefulness, but is in fact identical with the distinctive phenomenon of having something *given* as opposed to *merely* meant. In that case, the problem with Tolhurst’s position is not that it is false but that it is incomplete. There is a great deal to be said about the structure and content of such acts, but Tolhurst says virtually nothing. He writes: “The notion of felt veridicality resists analysis. But we all are acquainted with it; reflection on suitable examples should be sufficient to call it to mind” (Tolhurst 1998, 299). But as we have seen, such acts do not resist analysis at all. They are acts of fulfillment, and Husserl describes them in considerable detail.

Let us return to the relationship between forcefulness and the content of an act. I have argued that most versions of phenomenal conservatism simply cannot make that relationship intelligible. I believe that Husserl’s account can. If we compare two experiences, one which “naturally” generates seemings and another which does not, we will always find that they differ in their content or positing character or, when complex, in the relations among their contents. Fulfillment, as we’ve already seen, is not a matter of having a proposition in one’s head with some forcefulness tacked on, but is different in both content and structure from any other type of act. There is an act that presents what the other represents, and the two are unified in such a way that the object is given as it is meant. The reason-giving force of this act flows, in an *intelligible* way, from its contents and the relation between them. A “natural” subject is, for epistemological purposes at least, a rational subject, one who is appropriately responsive to reasons and evidence. That such a subject undergoes an experience of fulfillment—that the object is given in the manner in which it is meant—*explains why* the fulfilled proposition P seems true to her.

Husserl’s account also explains why forcefulness would not naturally attach itself to an act with the bare, unfulfilled content P. When S merely thinks that P, the object is merely intended and not given. It itself does not show up, and it is impossible to check whether the content is true by measuring it against “the things themselves.” The emptiness of the intention is a positive phenomenological feature of the act. The *absence* of the object, and the corresponding lack of any *real* relation to it, is an experienced lack

or shortcoming (see Willard 1984, 227, Bernet 2003). This *explains why* P will not seem true to a rational person when it is merely entertained in the absence of any other supporting considerations.

One might point out that seemings may, of course, be sufficient conditions for justification among the rational, or even among those with a certain minimal level of rationality. That may be true. They are not, however, *explanatory* conditions or “basic ground[s] of rationality.”<sup>17</sup> They are neither one’s evidence nor the consciousness of it. They are, rather, rational responses to one’s evidence and the consciousness of it. But they can also be irrational responses to one’s lack of evidence or the lack of any consciousness of it, and their absence may be an irrational response to one’s evidence and the consciousness of it. That seemings are sufficient for justification among the rational is explained by the fact that the rational respond to evidence with seemings, not by the fact that seemings are, just as such, sources of justification.

## 5. SELF-DEFEAT?

No discussion of phenomenal conservatism would be complete without a discussion of the self-defeat argument offered on its behalf by Huemer. Here is Huemer’s statement of the argument:

- (1) All beliefs (that are plausible candidates for being justified) are based on appearances.
  - (2) A belief is doxastically justified only if what it is based on is a source of propositional justification.
- Therefore,
- (C) For any beliefs to be doxastically justified, appearances must be the source of propositional justification (Huemer 2013a, 341).

What makes this a self-defeat argument is that if you deny that appearances or seemings do justify, you must do so on the basis of premises that you believe, and which you, in communication, intend your audience to believe. Those beliefs will either be justified or not. If not, there is no reason for anyone, including you, to heed the argument. And if they are justified, then they are based on appearances, on seemings. But then if appearances don’t justify, then the premises of any argument against PC would be unjustified.

This seems like a promising argument against someone who claims that *no* seemings provide justification. But why couldn’t we adopt a restricted version of phenomenal conservatism and treat Husserl’s theory as such a view? Is it self-defeating to argue, on the basis of how things seem, that not *all* seemings provide justification, as PC alleges? Why couldn’t one argue that not *all* seemings justify on the basis of seemings that do (by the opponent’s lights) justify? As promising as that approach might appear, I think it



is mistaken. Rather, we should reject Huemer's contention that all justified beliefs are based on seemings.

Compare phenomenal conservatism with a position I will call "testimonial conservatism," according to which hearing assertive speech acts is a *prima facie* source of justification. Here is its version of the self-defeat argument:

- (3) All testimonial beliefs are based on hearing the contents of assertive speech acts.
- (4) A belief is doxastically justified only if what it is based on is a source of propositional justification. Therefore,
- (C2) If hearing the contents of assertive speech acts were not a source of justification, then none of our testimonial beliefs would be justified.

Now suppose that we argue against testimonial conservatism and communicate that argument to others. Would we thereby undermine our own position by expressing it in speech acts? Or would we not at least undermine our own position each time we provided testimony about anything—the weather, what we ate for lunch, and so on? Of course not. Arguing against the view that assertive speech acts provide justification does not commit us to the view that *no* speech acts justify, but only that *some* do not. We should, it seems plausible to suppose, adopt restricted testimonial conservatism.

But can we really adopt such a view? To support restricted testimonial conservatism, we would point out some epistemically relevant differences among speech acts. Some speech acts are made by informed and unbiased parties, while some are made by lunatics and demagogues. Some constitute gossip, some unadorned descriptions of observed events. But in doing so, we would show that assertive speech acts do not justify merely in virtue of being assertive speech acts, but (at least in part) in virtue of other features of theirs—their content, their sources, their etiology, or whatever. In this case, in fact, their being assertive speech acts really doesn't explain anything at all about their epistemic properties. While some of our justified beliefs are based on hearing things that just happen to be the content of speech acts, they are not based on them in virtue of their being the contents of speech acts, but in virtue of completely different features. And that, really, is to give up testimonial conservatism altogether, at least as an explanation of what makes certain beliefs justified, rather than a way of adopting a restricted version of it. Being the content of an assertive speech act is no more epistemically relevant than being expressed by means of a sentence written in a certain font or uttered at a certain volume.

The situation, I suggest, is very similar in the case of restricted phenomenal conservatism. If we were to reject PC on the basis of propositions that seem true to us without self-defeat, we would, as Huemer points out (2007), incur the obligation of showing that there are epistemically relevant differences among seemings. Huemer thinks that the challenge cannot be met.

On his view, “all appearances [are] equally valid sources of justification” (Huemer 2007, 32).

Contrary to Huemer, I think that the task can be met, and that we have indeed met it.<sup>18</sup> Some seemings are based on the consciousness of evidence. Other seemings are not. But this doesn’t constitute a restricted version of phenomenal conservatism and so doesn’t constitute a limited victory for that position. In distinguishing seemings along these lines, we effectively deny that seemings, as such, justify. Rather, what is doing all of the explanatory work in showing why a belief is epistemically justified is the fact that it is based on the consciousness of evidence. Justified beliefs are not based on seemings. Rather, they are based on acts in which we become conscious of evidence. Such acts may give rise to seemings. They may even happen to be seemings. But even if they are, the features in virtue of which they justify are not the features in virtue of which they are seemings (Audi 2013, Conee 2013).

Conee points out that even if there is a use of “seems” on which it can only seem that P to S when S has evidence for P,

PC would be acceptable, though potentially misleading. These ‘seemings’ would always entail possessing prima facie justifying evidence for the proposition. The evidence would not be any whole state of affairs of p’s seeming to S to be true. It would be the mental event that occasions the inclination.” (Conee 2013, 57)

I am not confident there is such a use of “seems,” but I agree with Conee’s point. Its seeming to S that P is not what explains the fact that S is non-inferentially justified in believing that P. Rather, what explains that is S’s being conscious of a distinctive kind of evidence in a distinctive sort of way—the kind of evidence and way specified by the account of fulfillment, for instance.

Let me point out one virtue of this way of understanding the matter, and that is that we can reject Huemer’s unnerving claim that “the function of arguments is to change the way things seem to one’s audience” (Huemer 2005, 101). I think this coheres with phenomenal conservatism: if phenomenal conservatism were true, then producing seemings would be the function of arguments. That, however, sounds like the primary function of propaganda. If producing seemings really were my principal end right now, then I would adopt more expeditious means of achieving it if they were available. Perhaps I would resort to propaganda. Or, to take it further, suppose Big Pharma comes out with a new drug—Seematrex!<sup>19</sup> Any assertion uttered within the first 60 seconds of its inhalation will strongly seem true, and considerations against it would strongly seem false. If all I wanted was to change your seemings, I would give you a dose of Seematrex, loudly and promptly declare my view, and get on with other business. And you, far from complaining, ought to regard this as a way of acquiring evidence

for my position. But that would be a clear circumvention of your reason. What I want—at least what I hope I want—isn't to produce seemings in you as such. What I want, rather, is to present you with evidence and reasons. I would, of course, *also* like my position to seem true to you, but only on the condition that your seemings are responsive to reasons.

## 6. CONCLUSION

I have argued that Husserl's Principle of All Principles, along with the account of fulfillment underlying it, provides a more promising account of noninferential epistemic justification than does phenomenal conservatism. For one thing, it gets the cases right. For another, by providing a rather detailed and phenomenologically accurate account of the parts and pieces that compose acts of noninferential justification and the manner in which they relate to one another and to their object, it provides an intelligible explanation of why a propositional content would or would not be accompanied by a seeming. There is, I am sure, much more that could be said in defense of phenomenal conservatism. And, of course, I have not even touched upon the many challenges that confront Husserl's own theory. I am open to being persuaded that my assessments of these positions are mistaken. But please—hold the Seematrix.

## NOTES

1. I would like to thank participants at the 37th Annual Wittgenstein Symposium in Kirchberg and the participants at the 2014 Summer School in Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind in Copenhagen for feedback on an earlier version of this paper. Thanks also to Daniel Dahlstrom and Harald Wiltsche for their helpful comments and feedback, and to David Kasmier for his extensive insights on these and related issues. I am especially indebted to Philipp Berghofer for his insights and critical remarks. I learned a great deal reading his work and discussing these issues with him.

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2. Phantasy, writes Husserl, “is set in opposition to perceiving and to the intuitive positing of past and future as true; in short, to all acts that posit something individual and concrete as existing” (Husserl 1980/2005, 4).
3. See Husserl 1966/2001, 58: “Inadequate modes of givenness belong essentially to the spatial structure of things; any other way of givenness is simply absurd.” Also see Husserl 1913/2014, §42–44 and §138.
4. See Husserl 1900–01/1970, Investigation 6, Introduction, 668.

5. "In all cases an intention comes into coincidence with the act which offers it fullness, i.e. the object which is meant in it is the same as the object meant in the fulfilling act" (Husserl 1900–01/1970, Investigation 6, §14b, 715). Also see Willard 1984, 225.
6. I have argued for this in Hopp 2008, 2011. Also see Mulligan (1995).
7. Husserl often uses "evidence" (*Evidenz*) to designate the givenness of an object, and sometimes to designate a feature of judgments. See Husserl 1980/2005, 305: "I often used 'evidence' in a sense equivalent to the givenness of something itself. But surely we must distinguish: evidence as insight that belongs to judgment, to the judgment that something is there itself that exists and that is given again as that—and, on the other hand, the being-given itself." "Evidenz," then, is used to designate both fulfillment and intuition.
8. See Wiltsche (forthcoming) for a good discussion of the Principle. His formulation reads: "If object *P* is exhibited to a subject *S* in intuitive givenness, then *S* has at least prima facie justification for believing that *P* exists and that *P* has those properties which are exhibited intuitively" (8). Wiltsche makes it clear (n. 12) that what is required is not just intuition, but fulfillment—a "congruence between the signitive and the intuitive intention."
9. I follow Tucker (2013, 5) on the first two of these platitudes regarding seemings. I return to Tucker's third platitude—that seemings have a "distinctive phenomenal character"—below.
10. Huemer 2005, 99, Tolhurst 1998, 293; Tucker 2010, 530.
11. Tucker 2010, 530. Huemer (2007, 36,) writes that "carelessly formed beliefs are typically ill-justified, even if they strongly seem to the subject to be true." Also see his 2005, 105.
12. Skene (2013, 540) leaves it open that there are others.
13. For other alleged counterexamples, see Markie 2005. See Tucker 2010 and Berghofer 2014 for responses.
14. Huemer 2013a, 336. He also writes: "Even the most committed skeptics do not deny that there seem to be external objects around us" (2013a, 335). Skene (2013, 551), responding to John DePoe's (2011) example of someone who feels pain but does not experience a seeming that he is in pain, writes: "it's unclear exactly what an instance of direct acquaintance without a seeming would be like." In the footnote to that remark, he even questions its coherence.
15. Husserl 1973/1999, 44. Also see Husserl 1913/2014, §145, Husserl 1900–01/1970, Prolegomena, §51; and Husserl 1900–01/1970, Investigation 6, §39. For an unsurpassable treatment of Husserl's assessment of the feeling-theory of evidence, see Heffernan 1997. Husserl does not, incidentally, think that empiricists are the only guilty parties here. As Heffernan makes clear, Descartes is among the principal targets of Husserl's criticism. See also Husserl 1913/2014, §21, where it is the "idealistic side" which is accused of conflating "seeing" with a "*feeling of evidence*" (ibid., 39). For a critique of this theory as applied to a priori knowledge and justification, see Kasmier 2003, especially §2.5.1. In addition to articulating Husserl's objection that feelings alone have no evidential weight, Kasmier argues that all such theories are guilty of psychologism. Another philosopher suspicious of appeals to such feelings is Aaron Preston (forthcoming).
16. Thanks to a referee for pointing this out.
17. Audi 2013, 194. Also see Conee 2013.
18. For a good discussion of Huemer's position, and a response to his argument that we cannot discriminate among seemings, see DePaul 2009.
19. Littlejohn (2011, 36) entertains the possibility of seemings being generated in this way.

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Section IV

# Perception and Dreams





# 10 Hearing, Seeing, and Music in the Middle

*Dan Lloyd*

Of all the forms of human inquiry, the one that covers most thoroughly that entity we call “the world” is phenomenology. Its target is the entirety of the-world-as-it-seems-to-us, including all sensory appearances, along with the accompanying apprehensions, reflections, and organizing structures within individual experience. The end is a rich description of this apparent world, comprising both the concrete details and abstract frameworks that sift through consciousness during every waking moment (and many sleeping ones). Thus, to divide phenomenology according to sensory modality is already to impose a distinction that is not nearly so sharp in ordinary experience. Some objects and events are visible and not audible, and some are the converse, but much of the world presents itself as potentially visible *and* audible (and tactile and possibly sensuous in other ways as well). We neither see sights nor hear sounds, but rather we see and hear objects and events that present visible and audible features. Only in special conditions will we attend to the materials of purely visual or auditory sensation divorced from the constant reconstruction of their sources.

Nonetheless we can distinguish between features that we experience through one sense or another, and characterize the aspects of the world that each sense can discern. It is especially illuminating to pull hearing free from vision, because to reflect on hearing helps us see how myopic phenomenology (and neurophenomenology) can be in its assumptions from the point of view of vision. Vision even dominates the metaphors of consciousness—three visual metaphors appear in the previous sentence, for example. To understand the contrast and its implications, this chapter will engage in an expanded phenomenology, one stubbornly grounded in the physical world. To contemporary theorists, perception is embedded, embodied, and enactive (Clark 2008, Noë 2004, Varela, Thompson, and Rosch 1991). The three E’s will organize this chapter, though with considerable overlap and crosstalk. Embedding directs our attention to the real environment, the ecology of energies available to the senses of sight and hearing. Embodiment is prominent in the contrasts between the sense organs involved. Action organizes everything else, but the mix with hearing greatly modifies the meaning of action in perception. The transit from environment to sense organ to brain

is one of cascading constraints, each level shaping the meaning of the next. Cascading constraints are strikingly predictive of the contents of awareness, so the discussion here will merge into the concept of cascading conscious contents. Finally, one uniquely human intervention in the sonic environment is music. A coda to the paper harmonizes the trio of hearing, seeing, and music in the middle.

## 1. THE WORLD

We begin with a close look and a close listen to the phenomenal worlds of light and sound. A cup of coffee can get us started. Consider it, first, as an object for visual exploration (in the style of Husserl's 1907 lectures (1973/1997); see also Ihde 2012). From a stationary point of view, the invariants available include the cup's unity as a shape, the covering of the shape with colored patches, its segregation as a figure against a ground, its invisible but apprehended back side, the horizon at the visible edge of the object, the apparent distance from our point of view, the spatiality of the environment, and more. With even the slightest bodily motion, a further bundle of dynamical invariants emerge, as the visible properties shift. Their shifting is elaborately coordinated, preserving the integrity of the cup and, at the same time, implicating bodily kinesthetic awareness. For example, as you lean to the left, the facing side of the cup rotates, occluding a slightly different bit of the desk behind. But it remains a stationary perceptual object because the visual alterations are the physical converse of my bodily movements (including saccades). As you move, some visible properties break loose from the object. For example, as you circle the mug, the reflected highlights shift at half the speed of the rotation, and thereby emerge as a sheen, rather than as part of the intrinsic coloring of the object. Those highlights implicate a source of illumination, and as the sparkle on the cup slides along its surface, so also do many other highlights in the field of view. Implicit in the scene, but depending on the visual constitution of the cup, along with the everyday encyclopedia of background knowledge, are many affordances, as defined by J.J. Gibson (Gibson 1979):

The affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill. . . . [An affordance] refers to both the environment and the animal in a way that no existing term does. It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment. (ibid., 127)

With its affordances, the cup is "ready-to-hand" (Heidegger 1927/2008, §15), available as a vessel for coffee, or as a paperweight, or as a projectile, or even as an example in this essay. Woven through your visual exploration is the constancy and stability of the visual environment. Objects in this environment are continuously available for ongoing inspection. As a result, the

interaction described above can be reenacted, reconfirmed, or varied over time. Although many aspects of the object go beyond the visible features, they depend directly on visual information. We sample and resample them with little reflection.

Now close your eyes and embark on a similar examination of the cup by hearing alone. Strikingly, what is so apparent to the eye is nonexistent to the ear. To audition, none of the properties listed above appear or, if so, only in the vaguest and most rudimentary form. (For example, from hearing you might be aware that you are surrounded by an enclosing space.) Listening with determined attention will not change this essential disconnection. If something—a spoon, for example—strikes the cup, then some of its objective properties appear, but for only the briefest interval. From the ping, you can gather the approximate location of the object and some general features of the resonant surrounding space. From background knowledge, you might conclude that metal is striking ceramic, but not much more. It passes too quickly to probe or examine. You may also hear background noises and attend to them if you choose. But like the audible mug, these intermittent energies emerge sporadically from a field of silence or other sounds. For all these sound sources, the only ongoing inspection available is through the immediate recall of the ephemeral stimulus.

This brief sketch suggests that vision paradigmatically affords a world of objects, while audition affords a world of events. This conspicuous difference between the two landscapes is not due to the differences between sensory systems, but to the landscapes themselves. It happens that our planet is bathed in continuous light energy, allowing objects to be examined and re-examined over time. Sounds in our world are far more sporadic, more like a stroboscopic flash, and thus the information packed in a sound must be extracted from a brief stimulus or a succession of brief stimuli. It also happens that light travels in straight lines, which are sharply occluded by opaque edges, while sound can bounce and bend around corners. These ecological conditions are general but nonetheless contingent. It would be possible for the information landscapes to be reversed:

The auditory world is like the visual world would be if all objects were very, very transparent and glowed in sputters and starts by their own light, as well as reflecting the light of their neighbors. This would be a hard world for the visual system to deal with. (Bregman 1990, 37)

In the other direction, in special circumstances the landscape of sound acquires ecological features of the visual world. In his memoir *Touching the Rock: An Experience of Blindness*, John Hull describes a scene “illuminated” by rain:

This evening, at about nine o'clock, I was getting ready to leave the house. I opened the front door, and rain was falling. I stood for a few

minutes, lost in the beauty of it. Rain has a way of bringing out the contours of everything; it throws a coloured blanket over previously invisible things; instead of an intermittent and thus fragmented world, the steadily falling rain creates continuity of acoustic experience. . . . I think that this experience of opening the door on a rainy garden must be similar to that which a sighted person feels when opening the curtains and seeing the world outside. Usually, when I open my front door, there are various broken sounds spread across a nothingness. . . . The rain presents the fullness of an entire situation all at once, not merely remembered, not in anticipation, but actually and now. The rain gives a sense of perspective and of the actual relationships of one part of the world to another. (Hull 1992, 22–24)

Although these initial explorations are phenomenological, this first stage of analysis displays none of the inaccessible interiority that is often assumed to be the hallmark of phenomenology. Instead, we have begun with consideration of the information landscapes available to vision and audition, an ‘ecological phenomenology.’ There is as yet no mind-body problem in this scenario; instead, the configurations of energy discussed so far are real, entirely unproblematic for science or philosophy. In short, the distinctions between vision and audition described so far are objective differences; ‘real phenomenology’ is not an oxymoron. But ‘subjectivity’ is not thereby excluded. A real subjectivity emerges in two ways. First, the two informational landscapes are subsets of the total array of energies available in the scene. For example, the very same coffee cup and desk comprise an ultraviolet landscape (the scene for some birds), a hypersonic landscape (for bats and rats), a microwave landscape, a neutrino landscape, etc. Obviously the visual landscape is picked out by the sensitivities of human vision, and likewise for audition. In this selection, we have considered the capacities of observers, the subjects doing the observing. But this subjectivity merely selects ecological properties that can cause changes at the sense organs in question. The properties themselves carry on in their mundane reality.

The second appearance of subjectivity is embedded in a point of view. To extract and construct the features of the coffee cup, a point of view is assumed. The bundle of light rays and the ripples of compressed air unpack into the worlds of objects and events only when they are compared at a position in space. These points of view can only be occupied by one observer at a time. Still, this is an unproblematic subjectivity: the point of view is a simple location, and it is a consequence of physics that each location can accommodate just one observer at any time. Gibson analyzes this ‘subjectivity’ as follows:

If it is assumed that no two observers can be at the same place at the same time, then no two observers ever have the same surroundings. Hence, the environment of each observer is “private,” that is, unique.

This seems to be a philosophical puzzle, but it is a false puzzle. (Gibson 1979, 43)

Over time, observers occupy multiple points of view and can build a model of a shared environment:

The available paths of locomotion in a medium constitute the set of all possible points of observation. In the course of time, each animal moves through the same paths of its habitat as do other animals of its kind. Although it is true that no two individuals can be at the same place at the same time, any individual can stand in all places, and all individuals can stand in the same place at different times. Insofar as the habitat has a persisting substantial layout, therefore, all its inhabitants have an equal opportunity to explore it. In this sense the environment surrounds all observers in the same way that it surrounds a single observer. (*ibid.*, 43)

Gibson flips the logical order of ‘objective’ and ‘subjective.’ In the traditional picture, a stable, public, objective world causes a unique private subjectivity, but in the Gibsonian scheme, the objective is a construction from all the possible and actual subjective views of observers moving about and interacting with their environment. Subjectivity is the real physical ground of objectivity. The real phenomenology of animals is neither exclusively subjective nor objective—these terms no longer have exclusive denotations.<sup>1</sup>

The ecological focus embeds perception in the world of the embodied perceiver. The two distance senses operate in very different environments; this embedding greatly determines what sensory experience could be like, regardless of the nature of the sense organ. But the environment imposes its heaviest constraints in the forms of active perception usefully engaged when one sense or the other is in play. Visual cognition aims at the construction of meaningful images and their interpretation as arrangements of objects in space; throughout this process, the steady stream of light information is assumed. This allows the mobile exploration of objects and scenes. Differing viewpoints yield elaborations of the scene. A return to previous viewpoints reconfirms continuity. Both actions work in the stable environment of continuous illumination. In short, to explore with the eyes is to move.

Audition builds a phenomenal world as well, but in the normal auditory environment a steady information stream is the exception, found in machine hums, the whistling, pattering weather, and deliberate tones (more on this later). The auditory world demands the clever deconstruction of brief surges of complex sound energies via a process that is very fast, yet extremely versatile in its ability to accumulate information, group sound energies, segregate them in separate streams, and apply subtle causal models of sound sources. All of this happens after the pressure wave of sound energy has passed. Physical movement is too late for circumspection of the auditory event. Audition is almost always an afterthought.

Ecological and ‘enactive’ psychologists stress the physical movement of perceivers in environments, which is surely essential but also shaped by the long shadow of vision (e.g., Noë 2004, O’Regan 2001). In celebrating the sensorimotor, these theorists oppose a classical cognitive science story of fast hierarchical processing of occurrent information by a stationary observer (e.g., Marr 1982). Both conceptions fit themselves to vision. As discussed above, physical movement effectively adumbrates a perceptual world in which ambient information is mostly continuous and stable—the world of light. This steady and widely illuminated scene is assumed in the classical snapshot as well. The sensory processing hierarchy lights up when the stimulus is present, and as long as the stimulus is present. Again, this occurrent continuity is a property of illuminated scenes. Active hearing modifies both conceptions. Audition brings forward a different kind of ‘movement,’ namely, the reflective engagement of immediate memory and continuous interpretation, both processes folded together. This is internal and draws on narrower bursts of sensation, but is deliberate and exploratory—just as much an action as bodily movement. Classical vision is the passive reception of an ongoing, occurrent, and simultaneous set of interpretations. Audition lacks that lingering luxury, and so auditory computations are always retrospective and unconstrained by the occurrent stimulus. These computations cut loose from the stimulus and its compulsions. They’re more discretionary, deliberate, and contingent, more like action. One might think of perceptual exploration for hearing as movement internalized. It is active rather than passive, as the enactivists propose, but internal, a modification of a cognitivist scheme.

In short, to pre-reflective vision, the standing question is, “What *is* that?” To audition, the eternal question is, “What *was* that?” Audition invokes temporality as a comprehensive human perceptual capacity. In phenomenology, the *locus classicus* of this emphasis is, of course, Husserl (Husserl 1928/1964). The familiar Husserlian model unpacks every moment of consciousness into a temporal act with three aspects. Retention is the immediate recall of the just-happened. Protention is the ongoing anticipation of the about-to-happen. ‘Primal impression’ names the immediate percepts of the instantaneous Now. All perception is temporal (and all objects temporally extended), but the sputtering ecology of sound makes the necessity of temporality conspicuous. Hearing must look back to sound that no longer exists (retention) and forward to sounds anticipated (protention). It’s not surprising that Husserl’s prime example of a temporal object is auditory, a melody (Husserl 1928/1964). A melody is only a unity across time, and, to be perceived as a temporal unity, its temporal parts must be bound together in a single conscious percept while time passes. In constituting the *Marseillaise* as a single experienced entity, Husserlian retention and protention are inescapable. The immensity of the phenomenological task of characterizing temporality is apparent in Husserl’s repeated and never satisfactory excursions into temporality, and the multiple adumbrations of temporal

phenomenology across the phenomenological tradition (Mensch 2014). All intentional objects are temporal, coffee cups included, yet the valorization of the visual has enabled temporality to be overlooked. Hearing reminds us of the temporal structure of consciousness overall. As Don Ihde emphasizes (2007, 102): “*Sound reveals time.*” (See also Mensch 2014, Clarke 2011).

## 2. WORLD MEETS BRAIN

So far, this reconstruction of phenomenology has traded exclusively in arrays of energy available in typical terrestrial environments. Let us now lift the curtain a little and consider the leading edge of the sensory systems themselves. That frontline is the array of transducers within the sense organs. In their most general function, they collapse distinctions between the senses, since whatever form stimulus energy takes, it is transformed into the lingua franca of axonal signals. But at this point, distinctions emerge due to the systems themselves. The two ‘distance senses’ are fundamentally different in an invariant phenomenal property that is so pervasive that it may escape notice. Physiologically, both senses are sensitive to a mix of energy at different frequencies, which to one sense appears as color, and to the other as pitch. But when multiple frequencies emanate from a single source (of light or sound), the two senses deliver very different sensations. Two or more frequencies of light will blend into an intermediate perceived color, while multiple frequencies of sound will maintain their differences, resulting in a heard harmony of multiple pitches. If hearing worked like seeing, a complex sound of 262 and 392 Hz (C4 and G4) should be heard as a single tone at 327 Hz (if intensities are matched); entire symphonies would sound like a single wavering tone. If sight worked like hearing, the full spectrum of apparent colors arising from mixtures of the three primary frequencies used in color printing or video screens would disintegrate. The orange in the magazine ad would look like an overlay of pure yellow and pure red, and not at all like the pure spectral orange of the fruit in the market.

The blending of colors is the price we pay for sharp visual acuity, since the four coarsely tuned receptors can be densely packed in the retina, exploiting the sharp geometry of rays of light in order to get color and brightness information at thousands of locations at once. Sound does not propagate in straight lines only. Accordingly, whatever spatial acuity we achieve in the sound world rests on subtle differences in timing and intensity at our two ears. By virtue of the resonant shape of the cochlea, receptors in the basilar membrane are functionally tuned to a continuum of distinct frequencies. To hearing, precise frequency analysis is assigned to approximate locations, while to sight, approximate (mean) frequencies are assigned to precise locations. Swapping these two schemes of proximal sensation would undermine the acuity of perceptual events (the specialty of hearing) and destroy the acuity of objects (the stuff of sight).



Ecological phenomenology has now been augmented with ‘transducer phenomenology,’ and another aspect of our subjective world has been embodied. Eyes are optimized to collect light information from scenes in which such information is relatively continuous and stable. Ears are optimized to collect as much sound information as possible during the brief duration of the sound itself. In the ascent from the world to the transduced sensory signal, we observe an example of ‘cascading constraints.’ Ecological conditions and sensory processes combine to limit the information available for perception. These are objective facts. The environment really is a mix of energies at various frequencies, and the sense organs are mere reporters of what exists in their purview. But the slice of reality disclosed is radically shaped by what sense receptors do, and where and how they do it.

A visiting Martian could observe the environmental energies and their transduction as a complex of physical causes and effects. We humans add something crucial—we *experience* the world the Martian describes. The differences between the two sensory processes, even at this first layer, precisely map the fundamental distinctions in the phenomenology of seeing versus hearing. Cascading constraints collapse into hybrid entities; these entities are at the same time the contents of consciousness. Once again, the process is subjective and objective at once. The environment affords a world of illuminated objects and sonic events. The radical differences between the two sense organs reinforce the object/event distinction. The distinction, however, cannot be assigned to any level or stage of processing. Rather, it is emergent through the interaction of both world and transducers. Cascading constraints constitute a single subjective/objective world.

Similar observations follow from the next stage of visual processing, as the receptors for colors and brightness feed into ‘opponent process’ cells. In this process, the signals of brightness and the long, short, and medium wavelength sensitivities of the cones are remixed along three opponent axes: blue/yellow, red/green, and light/dark (white/black) (Hurvich 1981). Paul Churchland has pointed out the comprehensive match between the three-dimensional space of opponent cell outputs and the parallel space of phenomenal colors (Churchland 2005). Thus, once again, a ‘primitive’ neural distinction is precisely preserved in ‘high-level’ conscious awareness. Churchland goes one better, however, using opponent processing and cell fatigue to predict possible new positions in opponent processing space and then devising a method for pushing the visual system into those positions. Phenomenally, this creates novel ‘chimerical colors’ that can defy description, but are perfectly apparent in conscious experience. Opponent cells do modify the ‘raw’ outputs of the receptors, however, by compensating for differences in ambient illumination and thereby stabilizing constant colors in perception. In this process, some absolute color information (the color of the light falling on the retina) is lost. Importantly, the loss is permanent, that is, no amount of introspective reflection can recover the direct experience of

this information, which can only be reconstructed by artificial measures or viewing conditions.

The cascade continues. In the visual cortex, simple, complex, and hyper-complex cells detect bars at particular orientations, moving bars or lines, and the ends of edges ('edge stops') (Hubel and Wiesel 2005). Action potentials from each type of detector encode this information, a physical correlation between a stimulus in the environment and waves of ions crossing axon membranes. Those micro feats of detection constrain the detection of motion, shapes, color, etc. and eventually lead to recognition of houses, faces, tools, and Halle Berry (Quiroga, Reddy et al. 2005). But such high level recognitions do not efface their modest underpinnings. I see a house and at the same time I see the shape and color of the roof, comprising four edges at their specific orientations. I see the house in a configuration of parts and the parts in an arrangement suitable for a house. Top-down signals modulate these features. At one moment, I'm especially attentive to color, at another to texture, and so forth. These amplifications have their phenomenal manifestations as well.<sup>2,3</sup>

Hearing has its phenomenal cascade, too. Just now, my writing is interrupted as I perceive that the cat has pushed the bag of cat food off the counter in the kitchen. That's what I heard, the content of consciousness in the moment. But this lofty realization does not erase the basic sonic features that support the interpretation of the event. The sound of the impact of two pounds of crunchy nuggets was brief, inharmonic, ragged, and with a specific loudness and direction. The collected consciousness of the event is the collaboration of a cascade of sophisticated neural processes. Ultimately, I'll act on the highest-level conceptual content, but its humble components are copresent in awareness nonetheless.

In all these examples, cascading constraints appear as cascading aspects of consciousness. The cascade condenses in consciousness into single episodes of awareness, with all the richness of lived experience. The process remains subjective and objective at once. We sense the real world, but always from a point of view. We live among facts refracted through ambience and sentience.

### 3. THE ROAD AHEAD

To an optimist, it might seem like human neurophenomenology is almost complete. After all, several big phenomenological distinctions emerge as ecological-neural differences. However, there remains ample space for skepticism. The skeptic's hunch is some variation on: All this is not enough. At this point, philosophical reflexes engage, and the skeptical hunch gets translated into '*In principle*, all this is not enough,' i.e., no further elaboration will close the (remaining) explanatory gap. The optimistic materialist will be

tempted to enter this debate on first principles. But she need not. Both optimists and skeptics can agree that the science is unfinished. It may be worth a side trip to show just how much remains to be done.

The ‘standard picture’ of the sensory cascade from transducers to embodied meaning emphasizes similarities between sight and hearing. This is the cascade from receptors to thalamus (vision targets the lateral geniculate nucleus, while hearing passes through the medial).<sup>4</sup> Both kinds of input then land in their primary sensory cortices. There and elsewhere the brain displays one of the great fascinations of cognitive neuroscience, namely, mapping. The primary visual cortex processes a highly modified and enriched visual (retinal) map. The auditory cortex, meanwhile, deploys a tonotopic mapping, an enriched projection of the basilar membrane. This seems to suggest that the two senses are strongly analogous. Meanwhile, the discussion above has drawn several contrasts between the senses. We have noted obvious differences in the behavior of ambient energies, in the structure and sequence of environmental features to be detected, in the function and arrangement of receptor sheets, in the information available for neural processing, in the computations required to make sense of the sensory stream, and in the experienced phenomenologies of the two sensory worlds. The deep phenomenological differences and the broad physiological similarities don’t connect.

The *prima facie* conclusion is skeptical: the standard model fails to explain the conspicuous contrast between the senses. This explanatory shortfall is also apparent in the sheer numbers of neurons employed at the waystations of sensory processing. Figure 10.1 plots estimates of the number of axon fibers or neurons at early stages of the two sensory paths. The y-axis is logarithmic by necessity, as each step from the periphery involves orders of magnitude *increases* in involved neural resources.

For example, for both senses the neurons in the primary sensory cortices are approximately one hundred times more numerous than in the Geniculate. That leap in computing power undermines our confidence that topographical mapping explains very much of the processing of the primary cortices, since a one-to-one mapping from thalamus to cortex would require just 1% of the cortical resources. This glass is 99% empty. From the primary sensory cortices to the cortex, overall, the story is similar, with another hundred-fold jump in sheer numbers. At each stage, what are the other 99% *doing*? There are partial answers, involving the computation of higher-order properties of the topological/tonotopic maps, but the blunt takeaway is that a great deal still remains mysterious. In light of this rapid neuronal expansion, the dissimilarities between the senses have plenty of currently unknown resources for their support. That is, at each stage, there may be topographical mapping, but also so much more, and in that remainder the computational processes might be radically different.

Indeed, the computational distinctions between the senses, on top of their ecological differences, are arguably beyond the resolving power of existing

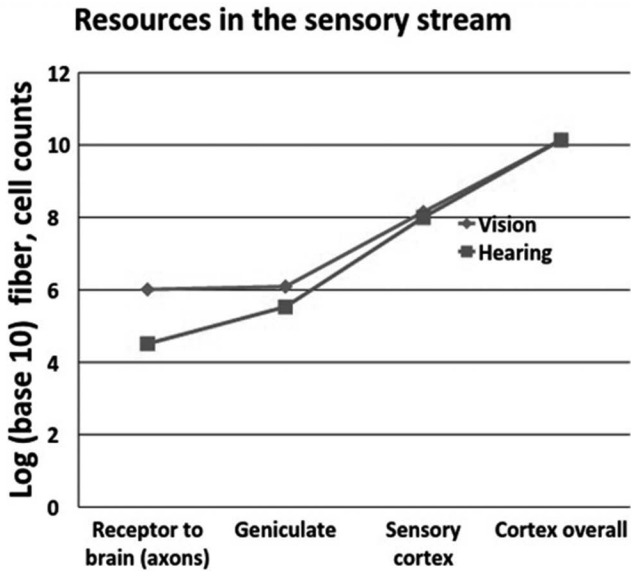


Figure 10.1 Neural resources in the sensory stream, at different stages in sensory processing. Showing log (base 10) counts of receptor to brain axons in the optic and cochlear nerves, neuron counts in Lateral geniculate nucleus (vision) and Medial geniculate nucleus (hearing), neuron counts in Primary visual cortex (Area 17) and Primary auditory cortex (Area 41), and neuron counts in the cortex overall. (Balazsi et al. 1984, Blinkov and Glezer 1968, Leuba and Kraftsik 1994, Spendlin and Schrott 1989).

neuroscience technology. For example, fMRI might isolate intermediate stages that are combined in figure 10.1 (as ‘cortex overall’). Imagine that we have a cortical map of areas of activation, vision vs. hearing. The discussion above implies that this degree of localization will not specify the distinctive processing that lends the senses their distinct phenomenologies. Similar points apply to EEG, MEG, and single-cell recording. Only at the circuit level might the distinctions be explained. Moreover, if the distinctions cascade, we will need the full input-to-output circuit to explain them. This is the ambition of several current projects, but Figure 10.1 also suggests how immensely daunting this project will be.<sup>5</sup>

Nonetheless, the glass is at least 1% full. Contrasting the two senses as embedded physical systems makes each pop out more clearly. As discussed above, the starting point is ecological, and then transducer-based. With both hearing and seeing, the physical distinctions are reflected in the phenomenology. Returning to blends and harmonies, we might be struck that we *can* explain why colors blend and sounds harmonize, a *phenomenological* distinction. Indeed, the explanation follows straightforwardly from

the anatomy and physiology of the receptors themselves. Whatever else the 99% are doing, this proximal receptor-level distinction endures throughout the cascade of consciousness. So far, all of the fundamental phenomenal differences between seeing and hearing follow from neural distinctions.

The phenomenal distinctions between the senses are huge. If we knew nothing of the ecology of terrestrial light and sound, and nothing of early sensory processing, we might regard these differences as reflecting an ineffable, private, nonphysical, unique essence for each sense. This befuddlement evaporates as the straightforward facts of environmental energies and their transduction are disclosed. As these correlations between brain and experience pile up, slowly the burden of proof swings from the materialist to the anti-materialist. Each incremental increase in the understanding of human physical and physiological systems is at the same time a bit of phenomenology waiting to be translated from the objective language of action potentials to the subjective language of sights and sounds. This is *translation* from one description to another, where both denote one same underlying reality. There is no magic threshold where the spikes cease and consciousness begins. The roadblock here is complexity, not metaphysics. “Back to the things themselves,” advised Husserl (Husserl 1900–01/2001, 168). Although Husserl had his doubts about the empirical sciences, we can nonetheless take the slogan very literally. Start with the world, and the mind will emerge in its natural role. The science so far may be miniscule compared to the mystery remaining. But the research in play is normal science (Kuhn 1962/2012), under the umbrella of versatile paradigms of materialism/biology/neuroscience. No stubborn anomaly perplexes the authors or readers of *Nature Neuroscience*. The message from phenomenology to science is simply this: Full speed ahead.

#### 4. CODA: MUSIC IN THE MIDDLE

This analysis of two sensory modalities clearly presupposes that sensory systems are tools that animals deploy to actively probe their environments. The probing takes different forms for different senses, and, to specific senses, particular features of the environment are detectable. Evolution has operated for eons in an information-rich environment similar to that described in section I, and all the senses now seem to be optimized for that environment. Nonetheless, as animals probe the environment, they change it. Humans are particularly prone to this, creating “transformative technologies,” artifacts with a pervasive impact on human life and society (Patel 2008, 400). These technologies leverage broad new affordances and ultimately change the way people think. Writing is an example. A new arrival from Mars would characterize our environment as saturated with words. Text underwrites most of the functions of civilized life, and literacy modifies the cognitive capacities of humans (Ong 1991). Nonetheless, writing arose

too recently to shape the human genome, so its form and function must interleave with existing human physiology, including the various capacities of the sensory systems. The phenotype is the steady platform supporting the transformative technology.

Another technology that permeates our world is music. Every culture makes music, and the earliest musical instrument found so far is a flute made 43,000 years ago (Higham et al. 2012). Presumably singing has been practiced even longer. These features suggest that music is a transformative technology, like writing or fire. But unlike writing, fire, crop domestication, etc., it is possible to imagine civilization without music. Such a world might be boring, but food, clothing, and shelter don't strictly require a sing-along. So what is music *for*? Why is it ubiquitous in world cultures? There are many proposed replies. Here, we begin with the phenomenology, building on the contrastive worlds of seeing and hearing.

Music varies across cultures; one person might find another's music to be incomprehensible. But even on first hearing, a sequence of sounds will be heard as music (or not). 'Music' names a broad but recognizable entity; sound sequences lasting from seconds to hours can be heard as single musical productions. Because music stands out among sounds, producing or hearing music creates distinct experiences through distinct sensory processes. Thus music can be revealing of the capabilities and constraints of hearing and sensation overall.

As with hearing in general, the phenomenology of music begins with the ecology of musical sound, an anatomy of the artifacts of this potentially transformative technology. As discussed in section 1, hearing parses undifferentiated pressure waves into separate sound events. Some sounds are isolated, single bursts from a source (like the clink of spoon on cup), while other sounds can be organized into distinct streams (like speech, separated from the background hum of traffic). Ordinary audition begins with the 'primitive' sensory operations of grouping and stream segregation, in order to distinguish and locate sound sources in a complex auditory environment (Bregman 1990). Normally, hearing is dedicated to getting the source details right: what happened, where, and what's next. Music subverts these processes of grouping and segmentation. Separate musical sounds combine both 'vertically' (synchronically) and 'horizontally' (diachronically). Vertically, multiple distinct sound events form new composite unities, their combination heard as consonant or dissonant chords and harmonies (Sethares 2005). Over time, these composite events are assigned to one or more melodies, separate but related auditory streams. Ultimately, a number of streams are integrated in a complex whole, with a specific beginning and ending. Unlike non-musical streams, segregation is not based on identifying a single source. Rather, composite, distributed, asynchronous, and heterogeneous sources bind together in unified objects of perception.

Musicians and composers deliberately undermine the accurate segregation of sound sources. From sea chanties to symphonies, musical productions

are auditory streams that are conspicuously *unnatural*. Music is an artifact through-and-through and flaunts its artificiality. Bregman and Woszczyk write:

Music is *auditory fiction* in which the sounds of voices or instruments are combined to produce sounds that never appear in nature. The goal of music is often to temporarily lose the timbre and continuity of individual sound sources in favor of what can be called “ensemble blend qualities.” (Bregman and Woszczyk 2004, 34)<sup>6</sup>

All of this is sonic deception. But where music is the percept, no one seems to mind. Makers aren’t seeking to specify events at specific locations, nor are listeners concerned to reconstruct those events. In this respect, musical audition is detached from ordinary, ‘natural’ hearing. (See also Clarke 2011, 22)

Moreover, the individual components of musical productions are not found in the natural world. Different cultures have developed different ‘musical systems,’ heuristic constraints that shape the making and hearing of music.<sup>7</sup> At the root of nearly all of them are *stable tones*, persistent sounds at steady pitches within pieces (Powell 2010). These tones are almost always drawn from a limited tone lexicon—a *scale*, which will be different for different compositions/performances. In Western music, these are the major, minor, and modal scales. Some Asian traditions use pentatonic scales, while others use scales with different intervals but typically five to seven distinct tones. The exact pitches vary, but the intervals between pitches are stable. All of these world musics replicate pitch classes across octaves, doubling (or halving) the frequencies of the selected scale. Tones in use in a particular performance/composition are also constrained by heuristics of *harmony*. The heuristics include both horizontal constraints (governing melodies and their variations) and vertical constraints (governing simultaneous tones, i.e., chords). Finally, tones and their combinations appear in temporally periodic sequences, or *rhythm*. The time intervals between music events in a given rhythm are relatively stable (Patel 2008).<sup>8</sup>

The building blocks of musical systems constrain musical properties from moment to moment, but productions are further limited by another feature unique to music, namely, self-similarity over time. Self-similarity is built into the heuristics. At every scale, music creates recognizable sound patterns that extend in time. As mentioned above, individual musical sounds endure longer than most natural sounds. Other properties of productions, like timbre, key, and meter, endure longer still. But self-similarity reaches further than the sway of the basic heuristic constraints: musical phrases repeat throughout almost all productions. Ollen and Huron (Huron 2006, 228) examined a cross section of world music melodies and discovered that on average 94% of musical units of two seconds or longer will repeat at least once within any piece of music (see also Lloyd 2011). The collective effect of the



constraints of musical systems is to create a soundscape that is predictable over time. These properties conspire to link musical sounds into coherent sound streams, continuous and shifting but bound in a single phenomenal entity. The interest in music lies in the interplay of novelty and expectation (Huron 2006), but musical surprise is only possible against a background of expectations, which are shaped by the stability of many of the musical properties we've surveyed.

As a stream of sounds, a musical stimulus is repetitive. But as an experience, repetition involves recognition of repeated material at every time scale. Musical experience involves multiple encounters with the same sound (or sequence), re-identified. This continuous return to the same pattern of sounds, at every time scale, shapes musical experience into forms distinct from non-musical, event-centered hearing. However, this patterning of sensation is not utterly novel. Instead, it is the pattern typical of *seeing*. Revisit that now-empty cup of coffee and recall the distinctive features of visual phenomenology that so sharply separated the world of sound from that of light. The continuous light energy bathing a typical visual landscape created a stable scene. Every lit corner of the landscape streams information in all directions, and the eye can sample the stream either briefly or at length. Each sampling yields a relatively steady mix of light frequencies, analogous to the stable tones comprising any musical production. Visual exploration affords resampling of any part of the illuminated scene, or repeating any sequence of glances. Music, with its relentless self-similarity, affords a similar multi-scale repetition.

The world of visible objects exhibits stability overall, affording visual themes and variations—the general phenomenological structure of music as well. In addition, harmony describes at least two features of the visual world and its exploration. Spatial relations are stable in the visual field, analogous with synchronic/vertical harmony. Music also models the interaction of organism and environment. Husserl describes the interaction of action and perception, describing the ‘laws’ by which the proprioceptive awareness of movement counters the shift of sensory information from a stable source. For example, as my eyes pivot right, the retinal image slips to the right as well. But we don't perceive a scene sliding to the left, because the afferent awareness of the shifting gaze is the exact counterpoint of the shifting scene. Husserl names this counterpoint of afferent and efferent a “harmony of sense.” (Husserl 1973/1997, sections 29, 42, and similarly sections 30, 33, and 54; see also O'Regan et al. 2004). Music makes the metaphor literal.

In short, vision constitutes objects that are spatially extended, in a spatial environment. Music mimics this, creating sound objects that extend in time. These sound objects borrow ecological properties from the information landscape of vision. Music embodies the actions of visual perception, but in a musical landscape with musical objects. Music thus enacts visual thinking. It creates stable sound objects, and in its repetitions and variations mimics the patterns of exploration of a stable, illuminated visual world.



So far this essay has avoided speculating about the ‘meaning of music.’ But real phenomenology bears on this question. Most conceptual and theoretical discussions of music use language as a foil, and particularly speech. Both speech and music are sonic artifacts, and both exhibit a combinatorial, generative syntax (Lerdahl and Jackendoff 1983), but the resemblance ends there. In brief, speech relies mostly on timbre, not pitch, for distinguishing meaningful sounds. Even in tone languages, speech tones are not drawn from scales with fixed intervals. (Tone languages use relative intervals; the exact pitches and intervals of meaningful sounds can change within and between utterances Patel 2008, 44–45). Temporal properties matter for spoken language but these are not regular; and harmony has no role at all (*ibid.*, 141ff).<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the deepest difference is semantic: music simply cannot denote concrete referents. In that regard you cannot *say* anything with music (apart from lyrics). Some philosophers respond to this aporia by seeking new referents that accommodate the vagueness of musical reference. As a result, the philosophy of music reconstrues musical representation as some combination of the abstract, the purely emotive, and/or inarticulate bodily movement (Kivy 2002). In contrast, the present analysis locates music in a phenomenological space *between* hearing and seeing. Thus, music augments a landscape of contingent, punctate events. It creates something different in the landscape of sound.

For thousands of years our human ancestors faced an urgent world that left little time for philosophizing. The immediacy of experience in that pre-technological era offered little need or opportunity (or words) for abstract reflection. Nonetheless, we can imagine the first songs resonating around the daily business of survival. If these songs had the features still audible in world music today, their singers would have augmented their sensory world with a simulacrum of enacted perception itself, creating a model of action in a stable world out of the most unstable of materials, sound. Their music, and ours, creates a phenomenal space in which sound mimics the objective world of sight. Aldous Huxley has written that “After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music” (Huxley 1931, 17). A great deal of human experience evades verbal description—expressing that nebulous dimension of the lived world has been repeatedly assigned to music. These various philosophies of musical expression are not necessarily exclusive. Emotional expression and abstract representations of the dynamics of sentient life are arguably all part of the function of music. This discussion has added one more possibility: music rings the changes of active exploration of a stable environment. It embodies in its own flow the relationship of sensory events in a flow of many simultaneous layers. Music may have arisen and been shaped by an implicit, enactive, awareness of the dynamics of sensory experience itself, as it occurs in a mobile, inquisitive animal in a relatively stable environment. In that way music can be a reflection—perhaps the first and oldest echo—of the human

situation in the world. Before and beyond speech, it may be pre-reflective reflection, the wordless sound of philosophy itself.

## NOTES

1. Gibson again: “An important fact about the affordances of the environment is that they are in a sense objective, real, and physical, unlike values and meanings, which are often supposed to be subjective, phenomenal and mental. But, actually, an affordance is neither an objective property nor a subjective property, or it is both if you like. . . . It is equally a fact of the environment and a fact of behavior. . . . An affordance points both ways, to the environment and to the observer” (1979, 129).
2. So, action potentials appear *as* edges, motion, and so forth. One trap of these debates is to reify mental states as distinct entities and then ask how a neural spike could cause a thought, making one event (with two descriptions) into two events. This is like asking how the evening star causes the morning star. This is a hard question, but only because it is nonsensical.
3. In normal environments the cycle of bottom-up and top-down is unimpeded, and so information propagates phenomenally as in the examples here. Special experimental conditions (without ecological parallel) can block the flow. When that happens information is lost (i.e., fails to propagate) and thus ceases as part of experience as well.
4. This elides waystations prior to the geniculate. Signals along the auditory nerve diverge at the cochlear nucleus and project in parallel pathways to the superior olive, lateral lemniscus, and inferior colliculus—and then to the thalamus. The medial geniculate arguably handles a signal that is already enriched in ways the visual signal is not. For an overview, see Kandel et al. (2013).
5. The projects include: The Human Brain Project, <https://www.humanbrainproject.eu/>; The Connectome Project, <http://www.humanconnectomeproject.org/>; ‘Blue Brain,’ <http://bluebrain.epfl.ch/>; and The BRAIN Initiative, <http://www.nih.gov/science/brain/>
6. The converse also occurs when a melodic line jumps rapidly between high and low notes, creating the illusion of two or more melodic lines from a single source—otherwise known as implied polyphony or melodic segregation, frequent in Baroque music (Bregman 1990, 464).
7. As an art form, Western art music has undergone the sprawl of modernism, but the *avant garde* creations of Schoenberg, Stockhausen, Cage, et al. are understood in reference to schemas of musical production familiar to audiences. These works are specific rejections of aspects of musical traditions.
8. In most of these features, human musical productions are unlike quasi-musical signaling by other animals. In general, the songs of nonhuman animals are stereotyped in many respects: who sings, when, and for what (adaptive purpose). Bird and whale song display limited variation in sequence, apparently lacking the versatile combinatorial syntax of human music (Patel 2008, 355, 356).
9. A striking demonstration of the difference between music and speech is Diana Deutsch’s ‘speech to song’ illusion. As a segment of a sentence is repeated in a recorded loop, slowly the perception of words fades, replaced by a vivid melody of speech tones, a song. When the looped phrase is reinserted in its original context, one hears a sentence with a burst of song embedded in it (Deutsch et al. 2011). Steve Reich’s *Different Trains* is a beautiful example.

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# 11 Eyes Wide Shut: Sartre's Phenomenology of Dreaming

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A good part of our life is passed in plugging up holes, in filling empty places, in realizing and symbolically establishing a plentitude.

J.P. Sartre

And no dream, he said with a slight sigh, is entirely a dream.

Arthur Schnitzler, *Traumnovelle*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As Michel Foucault observed in the introduction to his French translation of Ludwig Binswanger's *Dream and Existence*, Husserl's *Logical Investigations* "are curiously contemporaneous with the hermeneutic of the *Interpretation of Dreams*," as each represents a novel "attempt by man to capture his meanings and to recapture himself in his significance" (Foucault 1954/1984–5, 34). Despite this coincidence of dates (1899 and 1900) and parallel launch of arguably two of the most intellectually fruitful movements of the twentieth century, whereas Freud's breakthrough work centers on an analysis of dreams as the "royal road" to the unconscious, Husserl's breakthrough work centers on an analysis of intentionality as the royal road to consciousness. Even if the problem of the unconscious is not bereft of phenomenological resources, ever since Husserl's inauguration of a phenomenological method of descriptive analysis, the orientation of phenomenology has nearly become synonymous with a single-minded interest in consciousness as a lived, that is, wakeful experience. This emphasis on wakeful consciousness in its various forms—perception, cognition, imagination, etc.—has translated into a relative neglect of the phenomenon of dreaming, and yet, as explored in this essay with a principal emphasis on Sartre, even in this ostensible poverty, there is much richness.

Whereas the interpretation of dreams remained a central preoccupation for Freud's clinical praxis and theoretical inquiry, the phenomenon of dreams represents, by contrast, an occasional issue within phenomenology.

Husserl himself rarely makes reference to dreaming in his writings and most often invokes dreams as an example within a broader context of investigation. Such references occur in his analysis of the imagination and with lesser frequency in his reflections on sleep.<sup>1</sup> With the former, the example of dreaming functions differently within the overarching intention of mapping various forms of what Husserl calls *Vergegenwärtigungen*: ‘presentifying’ acts of consciousness in which an irreal object is manifest for consciousness (in contrast to perceptual presentations (*Gegenwärtigungen*) in which a real object is manifest). This broad class of intuitive acts covers fiction, reverie, imagining, remembrance, and dreams—but even here we cannot truly speak of any sustained analysis of dreaming per se. Instead, Husserl distinguishes between associated phenomena—dreamless sleep, nocturnal dreams, projective fantasizing (*Hineinphantasierung*), and reverie (*Wachträumen*)—for the purpose of contrasting different kinds of ‘presentifying’ acts. Husserl exhibits a keen interest in examples of dreaming while remembering an event from the past or recalling the past while lost in reverie since such examples indicate a nesting of different forms of imaginary-consciousness. But, as Husserl notes at the end of a suggestive reflection on such examples: “This example requires however closer analysis” (Husserl 1980/2005, 207).

Shortly after 1930, Jean Héring (a student from Husserl’s years at Göttingen) wrote to Husserl concerning one of his own dreams. As Héring recounts, he dreamt that he was walking with a group of friends, when they realized that they were dreaming and proceeded to convince each other that they were. The discussion going nowhere, Héring declared that he was tired and would wake up—as he uttered this statement, he suddenly awoke to find himself alone in his bed.<sup>2</sup> In a brief response, although Husserl eschewed the implicit critique underlying Héring’s dream regarding the solipsism of Husserl’s transcendental idealism, he critically signals a failure to distinguish in Héring’s account between the “dreaming ego” and the “dreamt ego” (Husserl 1980/2005, 119). Whereas Husserl contends that the dreaming ego dreams, i.e., imagines in sleep, the dreamt-ego is awake *within* the dream. Although asleep while dreaming, the ego of the dream is nonetheless aware of its content, events, and narrative: I “see” my best friend whom I haven’t seen for years, etc. As Eugen Fink, in the same manner, argues: “While the dreaming ego sleeps, the ego of the dreamt world is always and essentially an awake ego who lives and experiences its real world” (Fink 1966, 63).

Husserl’s distinction between “dreaming ego” and “dreamt ego” reflects a structural feature of the imaginary’s ‘splitting of consciousness’ (*Bewusstseinspaltung*). When I imagine seeing a unicorn, it is *as if* I were seeing a unicorn. The object (the imaginary unicorn) as well as my quasi-perception, or “seeing,” are marked by the character of the “as if”—both are imaginary. To the extent that I am aware that I am imagining a unicorn (aware, in other words, that I am not perceiving a unicorn or under the illusion that a unicorn is actually in the room), my awareness that I am “seeing” a unicorn is itself not imagined. Only the “seeing” of the unicorn is irreal, not my

awareness that I am “seeing” a unicorn; each is in touch with the other since I understand myself to be just imagining. Yet, while dreaming, the dreaming ego is asleep, and thus not aware of itself as dreaming, as authoring its (own) dream. The splitting of consciousness in the dream imaginary is bereft of a pervasive—that is unifying wakeful—awareness. Husserl’s contention that the dreamt-ego is awake within the dream implies, however, that it likewise *perceives*, and yet if the dreamt-ego is a “quasi-ego” in the sense of imagined (i.e., I am not Superman in real life even as I dream myself to be so), in what sense can an irreal dreamt-ego really perceive? While dreaming, do I “see” a unicorn or do I see a unicorn?

This phenomenological distinction between the dreaming-ego and the dreamt-ego was further explored by Husserl’s student Theodor Conrad, who defined dreaming as “a lived experience of being displaced” (*Versetzseins-erlebnisse*) that has obscured its own character of displacement. As Conrad states: “The dream is: an experience of displacement disguised as a non-displaced experience” [*Der Traum ist: ein als Nichtversetzseins-Erlebnis getarntes Versetzseins-Erlebnis*] (Conrad 1968, 71). In dreaming, consciousness is “captivated” (*Verfangensein*) and “lost” (*Verlorenensein*) in its own imaginings in the absence of any “concern with oneself” (*Selbstbesorgtheit*) that otherwise characterizes wakeful consciousness (Conrad 1968, 59). More generally, Conrad understands the dream as an absolute displacement into a dream-world from the reality of wakeful life. Within this dream-world, dream-objects (the content of our dreams) as well as our own dreamt-about subjective acts (speaking, hearing, etc.) and emotions (joy, fear, etc.) are experienced as “actual” (*wirklich*) (Conrad 1968, 65). Yet, because the dream is a displaced experience of the imaginary, it is at the same time a ‘presentification’ strangely experienced *in medias res* as an actual perceptual experience. Conrad freely accepts the paradox of this ‘double characterization’ of the dream as both perception and imagining, and this tension between two opposing ways of conceptualizing the dream experience reflected more broadly a lack of consensus among Husserl’s students (and also within Husserl’s own reflections). As Dorian Cairns reports from a conversation with Eugen Fink: “After we left Husserl, Fink was speaking of dreams, which he understands as *Vergegenwärtigungen* re-presentations rather than as *Wahrnehmungen* perceptions, as I am inclined to do” (Cairns 1976, 37).

This inconclusive debate within Husserl’s circle of students exhibits a constellation of questions that motivate and shape a phenomenological approach to dreams: (1) Is the dream a perceptual experience or an imagined experience? (2) What is the relationship between the “dreaming ego” and the “dreamt ego,” or, in other words, *who* is asleep during the dream, *who* is the dream’s audience? (3) What kind of belief characterizes the dream, or is the dream (expressed in Husserlian language) a “neutralization” of any positing of experience? (4) Does the dream entail a radical—albeit, temporary—loss of the world, or is the apparent “*Weltlosigkeit*” of the



dream, as Eugen Fink argues, “die Welthabe im Modus der extremen Versunkenheit” (Fink 1966, 64)?

Among phenomenological discussions of dreaming beyond Husserl’s circle, undoubtedly the most significant—and hence the focus of this essay—is provided by Sartre in *The Imaginary*. Even beyond the phenomenological movement, Sartre’s compact treatment of dreams remains peerless for its phenomenological insight *and* philosophical suggestiveness. Although Sartre does not give evidence of any familiarity with the internal debate among Husserl’s circle on dreams, and although Sartre did not have access to Husserl’s then unpublished trove of research manuscripts on the imagination, his discussion of dreaming engages directly the four cardinal questions identified above; it is the nearest one finds to a *somewhat* systematic, though by no means exhaustive, phenomenological inquiry into dreams *as such*.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. THE DREAM AS ‘SPLIT-CONSCIOUSNESS’

Ever since Descartes’ celebrated invocation of dreaming in the First Meditation, the experience of dreaming has motivated skeptical concerns regarding the veracity of perceptual experience, the existence of the external world, and the specter of solipsism. As Descartes formulates: “How often, asleep at night, am I convinced of just such familiar events—that I am here in my dressing gown, sitting by the fire—when in fact I am lying undressed in bed! Yet at the moment my eyes are certainly wide awake when I look at this piece of paper [. . .] As I think about this more carefully, I see plainly that there are never any sure signs by means of which being awake can be distinguished from being asleep. The result is that I begin to feel dazed, and this very feeling only reinforces the notion that I may be asleep.”<sup>4</sup> Descartes’ appeal to the indiscernibility of perceiving and dreaming reflects a common view that dreams are *given* as perceptual experiences. As Conrad argued (noted above), both the dream-content and our subjective conducts within the dream are experienced as ‘*wirklich*.’ Husserl equally considered the dream-ego to be awake and perceiving, albeit *within* the dream-imaginary. For, indeed, what seems to distinguish dreaming as an experience is that it appears to be *both* a perception and an imagining (i.e., Conrad’s “double characterization”). As Collin McGinn expresses this ambiguity: “at first sight they [*dreams*] do seem like a kind of emergent hybrid of percept and image, neither fully one nor the other: they have all the force of perception, yet they are shot through with imaginative fantasy” (McGinn 2004, 75).

Within the argument of *The Imaginary*, dreaming stands as the perfect realization of the imaginary as “constituting, isolating, and annihilating” (Sartre 1940/2004, 181): dreaming consciousness is entirely imprisoned within itself in the absence of any wakeful directedness (and hence accountability) towards the real. And yet, Sartre first introduces his discussion of dreams by recognizing that dreams might present a significant obstacle to



his account of the imaginary: is the dream not given as (indistinguishable from) a real perceptual experience? When I imagine Pierre in my mind's eye, I know that Pierre is not actually standing in this room, whereas when I dream of Pierre, this contrasting awareness of Pierre's real absence is lacking. The vertible paradox of the dream is that it attains such a perfect realization of the imaginary as to render its imaginary perfection imaginary, indiscernible from what it ostensibly should not be: a perceptual experience.

The culmination of Sartre's phenomenology of the imaginary with its perfect realization in the dream poses, in fact, a broader challenge. Whereas Sartre argues that the imaginary is characterized by an "essential poverty" vis-à-vis the richness and novelty of perceptual experience, since an imagining consciousness can only imagine what it already knows, the dream would appear to be an inverse case in which the imaginary object *leads* consciousness, such that our awareness of the dream object seems to emanate from *it*. Leaving aside the praxis of dream incubation, the dream commonly has the form of surprise: we do not know what is about to happen, we dream about unexpected things, we act immorally, etc. Additionally, whereas Sartre understands the imaginary as a spontaneous consciousness (even as he countenances the possibility of involuntary memories and images), the attitude of the dreamer seems once again the opposite: we succumb to our dream experience in a state of passivity and experience our dream-images as "fate"—precisely because our sense of self as the audience of the dream is disconnected from the authoring function of our own (sleeping) consciousness. Perhaps most threateningly for Sartre's framework, our awareness of having dreamt is often marked by the suspicion that our dreams harbor a "deeper," if obscure, meaning, that dreams reveal *something* about ourselves and our world, that, in short, there is a hidden truth to our dreams. Yet, on Sartre's general account of the imaginary, the imaginary is essentially impoverished—and hence, by extension, the dream—since it is bereft of any genuinely revelatory force with regard to reality, including my own. This is not to claim that dreams are meaningless noise, for Sartre does not reject the notion that a dream (much as with the imaginary) has *meaning*, yet its veritable significance is to obscure any genuine encounter with the truth of the world.

Sartre's argumentation against dreams as perceptual experiences turns on a deft analysis of the constitutional difference between self-awareness and reflection within both perception and dreams. On Sartre's understanding, consciousness as such, whether perceptual or imagining, is aware of itself, or self-aware, in a pre-reflective manner. Running to catch the bus, the object of my consciousness is the bus, not my own act of running or perceiving. Although it is the bus towards which I am directed, I am at the same time aware of myself as running after the bus, late for work, etc. This intrinsic self-awareness is neither a reflective form of consciousness nor a kind of inner perception—both of which conflate (and indeed presuppose) consciousness-(of)-self with a knowledge of self. This consciousness of

mineness (which does not *accompany* my acts of consciousness, but *just is* my consciousness, its manner of being) can become rendered into an object for myself, as when I reflect on why I am running or when I recognize myself as seen by others. In the case of perceptual experience, the passage from pre-reflective self-awareness to reflective self-awareness does not annihilate the continuous flow of perceptual experiences: I continue to perceive the bus as it departs from the station while I bemoan my weak legs and lack of time management skills.

In the case of dreams, reflective self-awareness capsizes the dream experience entirely. As Sartre writes, “every appearance of the reflective consciousness corresponds to a momentary awakening, although the weight of the consciousness that dreams is often such that it annihilates the reflective consciousness at once [. . .]” (Sartre 1940/2004, 161). Implicit here is a conception of dreaming as a “metastable” form of consciousness that can pass in and out of itself. The phenomena of lucid dreaming and “false awakenings” represent different permutations of the dream-experience as “metastable”—as liable to various “disintegrations” and “reintegrations” of its basic synthetic form of consciousness. This annihilating force of reflection for dreaming suggests a further distinction between the pre-reflective self-awareness of *the dream* (i.e., the dreamt ego) and reflective self-awareness of a wakeful, or awakening, consciousness: each excludes (“annihilates”) the other. Any reflection on my dream renders my sleeping consciousness an object for a now wakeful self: in becoming a transcendence for myself, I necessarily break the spell of the dream and collapse its self-enclosed immanence. That reflection is an awakening to oneself as situated in the world further underpins Sartre’s univocal rejection that there could be any meaningful deliberation, reflecting, and decision-making within the dream. This does not mean that we cannot *dream* that we are making decisions or that we cannot intervene in the drama of our dream. There is, however, no binding force in decisions made in dreams; by the same token, there is no *prima facie* moral responsibility and culpability for immoral acts played out while dreaming. A dream forecloses the possibility of protest that would not immediately annihilate the dream, as opposed to change it from within. There is, in other words, no possibility of *engagement* in the dream, but whether engagement in the world can be *motivated* by a dream (for example, Swann’s dream at the end of *Un amour de Swann* that prompts him to break his relationship with Odette) or whether we are responsible for actions in the world performed while sleeping (for example, Cesare, the somnambulist in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*) are intriguing questions from a Sartrean perspective that must here be left open.

Self-awareness is intrinsic to both perceptual and imaginary experiences. What they share in common is that self-awareness is awake and spontaneous. In the case of perceptual experience, although I am aware of myself as perceiving this table, I do not consider myself as having created this table. In the case of the imaginary, the situation is different: I am aware of

myself as the one who imagines this irreal object (i.e., Pierre's face) in the sense of producing it. Consciousness *gives to itself* the objects of the imaginary and "plays" at the satisfaction of possessing (in an irreal, yet intuitive form) what in reality it does not actually possess or encounter. Sartre here subscribes to Husserl's argument that consciousness of the imaginary is a "doubled-consciousness" or "split-consciousness" in which we have, on the one hand, an irrealized consciousness—the semblance of seeing—and, on the other, the real awareness that I am "seeing," or imaging. The imaginary as a "doubled-consciousness" is anchored in a consciousness of the *difference and hence distance* between perceptual experience (the room I am observing in which Pierre is absent) and the imaginary (imagining Pierre's face before me): to be aware of myself as imagining is also to be aware of myself as not perceiving Pierre. What it is to be awake to the world is to be open to the possibility of concurrent—and different—kinds of directedness towards objects and corresponding forms of consciousness. The dream experience is, by contrast, marked by a "single-mindedness" that is "modally exhaustive." Dream experiences foreclose the space for concurrent imagery, "mind-wandering," and, most importantly, *distraction* (McGinn 2004, 78 ff)—the very openness that defines wakefulness.

In order to sharpen the issue of how nocturnal dreaming differs from wakeful imaginings, and of how such a difference captures the difference between being asleep and being awake, one may ask why in waking life I cannot experience a comparable degree of terror when I imagine (while awake) Freddy Krueger chasing me as when I have a nightmare of Freddy Krueger chasing me? Why is there nothing comparable to nightmares within wakeful life? It is crucial for the force of this example that extreme paranoia, acute anxiety, and psychotic delusions (one thinks of the famous literary memoirs of Dr. Daniel Paul Schreber) are here set to the side, for which an appropriately modified phenomenological analysis would be required. When I imagine Freddy Krueger chasing me (while awake), I am aware of myself as imaging, i.e., my imaginative "seeing" of Freddy Krueger's chainsaw is situated within a wakefulness to the *difference* between merely imagining and actually perceiving. In imagining Freddy Krueger, I am implicitly aware of not actually perceiving him. In a nightmare, this constitutive difference of wakefulness is lacking: I am afraid of my own dream because I am not aware (i.e., awake) of myself as dreaming, as the self who is dreaming, even though I am aware within my dream: I am terrified by Freddy Krueger, I "see" his grinding chainsaw, etc.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. THE DREAM AS PURE BELIEF

The constitutional difference between perception and dreaming is further explored by Sartre through an assimilation with a difference between knowledge and belief. Perceptual experience is fundamentally characterized as the

way the world is revealed to us. It is only in perceptual experience that objects are genuinely *encountered* in the sense that they are given in various forms of evidence. On Sartre's reckoning, the perception of a chair presents me with the chair itself "in flesh and blood." It is not presented to me "adequately" or "completely" since a perceptual object can never become fully manifest to me in any given perceptual experience: I can only perceive the chair from a certain angle, see it under determinate lighting, at a certain time, etc. This inadequate manner of manifestation is necessary and constitutive of perceptual experience as such. Yet, regardless of the perceptual object's inadequate manner of givenness, Sartre claims that perceptual experience is not principally a matter of *belief*. To perceive a chair is not to *believe* that the chair is there in front of me; it just is to perceive the chair, to sit on it, etc. Belief enters the perceptual scene only if the presence of the object becomes modalized, i.e., the presence of the object is rendered doubtful, made questionable, etc. This is not to deny that beliefs texture and inform our perceptual experience: Sartre's point is *not* that perception is a form of knowing that excludes belief, but rather that belief in the service of perceptions can only be persuasive (true or false) in terms of appeals to evidence, that is, to ways in which the world does (or does not) reveal itself as being thus and so. We can *learn* from perceptual experience in the sense that we can have *insight* through perception into how (perceptual) things truly are.

The intentionality of perceptual experience is dynamic and inscribed within a nexus of horizons ('intentional implications') in the world. Intentionality is dynamically structured through a constant interplay (and tension) of empty and fulfilling intentions: we aim to see more clearly, find confirmation for our perceptions through evidence, etc. Every perceptual encounter with an object provides an occasion for either the fulfillment or disappointment of our framing empty intentions, or what we take an object to be. Our perceptual encounters are furthermore inscribed within a nexus of horizons delineating lines of possible implications with other objects in the world, causal relations, etc. These "outer" horizons (in contrast to the "inner" horizons of the object itself) situate perceptual experience within an environment of possibilities: that the vase might be crushed by the approaching car, that if I turn my head, my perspective on this painting will shift, etc. The dream, however, is an experience bereft of any perceptual presence of objects, and hence, evidence; it is purely belief. Dream experience is flattened-out, as it were, lacking the distinguishing depth and texture of perceptual experience in its openness to the world: we do not search to see better in dreams, listen more closely, or fret that we've not seen something correctly.<sup>6</sup> Our tendency to interpret dream-experiences *as if* they were indistinguishable from perceptual experiences stems from our tacit assimilation of our remembrance of dreams into the scope of wakeful consciousness and its thoroughly defining perceptual orientation (much as we tend to mistakenly interpret the imaginary as a reified consciousness of an image through the former's assimilation with perceptual experience).

In the case of the attitude of pure belief, Sartre stresses that “the dream [is] a perfect realization of a closed consciousness. That is to say an imaginary that one absolutely cannot leave and on which it is impossible to take any external point of view” (Sartre 1940/2004, 165). In dreaming, consciousness has fully “imprisoned” itself in its own imagining attitude: “it has lost the function of the real.” The dream is a temporary form of psychosis—a psychosis from which I can awake.<sup>7</sup> Yet, what characterizes the dream experience is not just its delusional character of pure, self-induced belief. The dream is equally a supreme form of narcissism and fascination with oneself that does not know itself to be captivated by its beliefs. It lacks any sense of ‘mineness’ (any *wakeful* distance between pre-reflective and reflective consciousness), even though the dream is purely mine alone. In the dream, consciousness has immunized itself from any evidence by flattening itself into pure belief. As Sartre explains: “This is the kind of fascination without positing existence that I call belief. Consciousness is not only conscious of itself as enchained, but is also conscious that there is nothing it can do against itself” (1940/2004, 168). Everything is equally credulous, and, in this sense, the dream provides a paradigmatic form for the understanding of naïveté in wakeful life, of a life that has immunized itself from the persuasiveness of any evidence.

The philosophical suggestiveness of Sartre’s phenomenological characterization of the dream becomes visible only in his magnum opus *Being and Nothingness* and its magisterial treatment of *bad faith*. As a form of self-deception that defines our being-in-the-world and waking lives, Sartre observes that “one *puts oneself* in bad faith as one goes to sleep and one is in bad faith as one dreams” (1943/1992, 113). As with dreams, bad-faith is a mode of consciousness that has immunized itself to the persuasiveness of any evidence; it has defined its existence by a desire *not to know* (and hence confront) its own being in the world in order all the more fervently to *believe* what it wants to be true. Sartre’s characterization of bad faith as a dream that I live provides in this manner a fruitful model for the understanding of collective ideology as “false consciousness” and the forms of individual self-deception that structure our existence. As Sigfried Kracauer famously argued, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* can be seen as representing a German nation during the tumultuous Weimar Republic sleepwalking towards fascism, entering, as David Bowie puts it, in another context, “Himmler’s sacred realm of dream-reality.” There is only a *hint* of this broader political and cultural significance of Sartre’s analysis of dreams in *The Imaginary*, when Sartre remarks: “So long as consciousness persists in this attitude [pure belief of dreaming], it can neither be given nor even conceive any motivation to change, the passage to perception can be made only by *revolution*” (1940/2004, 169; my emphasis). Sartre touches here on undoubtedly the deepest philosophical fascination with dreaming, as originally formulated in Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, namely, that what it means to know thyself is to awaken from the dogmatic slumber of those

beliefs, images, convictions, and countless other ways in which we imprison ourselves so as to protect ourselves from any genuine encounter with the Real. Even when our eyes seem wide open, our eyes can, unbeknownst to us, remain wide shut.

#### 4. THE DREAM AS NARRATIVE

Sartre's phenomenological understanding of the dream critically hinges on grasping the dream as an idiosyncratic form of belief. In contrast to perception, what distinguishes the dream is its immunization from evidence; nothing can speak for or against the meaning, let alone the truth of the dream. To further understand what distinguishes dream belief, Sartre proposes the thesis that many dreams (including his own, as he remarks) are given as a "story that I am reading or being told" (1940/2004, 166). As Sartre suggests: "The sole fact that the dream is given as a *story* should permit us to understand the kind of belief that we can attribute to it" (*ibid.*, 168).

Whereas hypnagogic dream images are fragmentary and isolated, dreams are structured as narratives. Sartre's insight is not that we recount and thus configure our dreams as narratives afterwards from the vantage point of awakening. He proposes a stronger claim that (the vast majority) of dreams are constituted and hence experienced directly *as narratives*. What distinguishes dream experience from perceptual experience is thus not merely the former's attitude of pure belief. As importantly, it is the intrinsic narrative form of the dream: we apprehend our dreams as narratives much as we apprehend narratives on the theatrical stage, while reading a book, or in the cinema. But, whereas reading a novel, attending a theatrical performance, and seeing a film depend on an underlying perceptual act that (in the case of the novel, for example) reads a set of signs (words on the page) on the basis of which an imaginary world is conjured (in Sartre's technical language: the words or signs serve as material analogons for the irrealizing consciousness of the imaginary), in the case of dreams, dreaming consciousness intuits *directly* its dream narrative; it is absorbed and fascinated by the narrative *without distance*. Dreams are thus not signs or symbols; they become signs or symbols afterwards through an objectification (and hence interpretation) from the perspective of a wakeful, reflective consciousness (much in the same manner that the imaginary becomes objectified into an image through reflection).<sup>8</sup> While I might construct a narrative on the basis of my perceptual experiences (when I recount to my friend what happened to me at the office, etc.), my perceptual experience of the world *as such* is not constituted with an intrinsic narrative structure. Indeed, what distinguishes my experience of the world is an openness to multiple (and mostly conflicting) narratives, as exemplified in Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, where conflicting narratives are recounted about a single event without ever forming a unified image of the sequence of what occurred, the motivations of the protagonists, etc.

Though there might be different (and conflicting) *interpretations* of a dream, the dream itself is given as a single narrative.

Sartre's argument that (most) dreams are experienced as stories presents, however, an interesting complication to the argument of *The Imaginary*. In his own description of *how* dreams are given as stories, Sartre at times speaks of the dream story as either *read* by the dreamer or told to the dreamer; at other times, he speaks of the dream story as lived. Yet, in an earlier section of *The Imaginary*, in the context of distinguishing between perception and the imaginary, Sartre emphatically argued that one can never truly *read* in the imaginary (although reading is itself an act of the imaginary). As he writes: "If I give myself in image the page of a book, I am in the attitude of the reader, I *look at* the printer lines. But I do not *read*. And, at bottom, I am not even looking because I already *know* what is written" (Sartre 1940/2004, 10).<sup>9</sup> Sartre's purpose here is to contrast imagining that I see Pierre (or a book page) with actually perceiving Pierre (or actually reading from a book). Whereas in the first instance, if I imagine a page from a book, although I can very well make out the letters and words (I can visualize them), I am not in any genuine sense *reading*. I am at best recalling, but as Sartre qualifies, I am not in fact looking at all, because Sartre severs any connection between perception and imagining—I "see" what I already know, or better, I visualize what I know. Reading, just like perceptual experience, is an attitude in which I am not at the center of my intention towards the object or, in other words, in which I can be surprised, etc. What is not possible in the (wakeful) imaginary becomes constitutive of the possibility of dreaming: that I *read* (or am told) a story in such an absolute manner, without any distance, that I *become it, or perform it myself*. Sartre's comparison of the dream with reading quietly slides into an implicit comparison with theatre—an absolute theatre of one, as it were, in which a consciousness is audience, author, and actor.<sup>10</sup>

This emphasis on the narrative structure of dreams introduces yet another complexity. In contrast to perceptual experience, the imaginary is an intuition of absence, or "quasi-observation," in terms of which an irreal object is presented to consciousness as a "nothingness," i.e., as fictional (*not-existing*), as not presently in this room (*not-here*), as no longer alive (*not-existing* anymore). The imaginary object is given to consciousness in an intuition (I visualize Pierre's face, I "see" Albertine's gold and blue Fortuny dress, etc.) on the basis of my *knowledge*. According to Sartre, consciousness can imagine only what it already knows: it includes nothing other than what I am conscious of. The imaginary is thus situated in a direct relationship with knowledge (indeed, Sartre understands the imaginary as 'degraded knowledge,' i.e., knowledge degraded to an (irreal) intuition of an object). In this regard, dream-narratives could thus be considered in one of either two ways: is it the dream that structures cognition into a narrative or is it the narrative structure of cognition that becomes manifest through the dream? If the dream *dramatizes* a certain form of thought, as Freud argued



in his own manner, and as is implicit in Sartre's own account, is it a narrative already *thought* (and, hence, thinking is itself a narrative) or a narrative produced by the imaginary for the sake of expressing thought in an intuitive manner (as 'degraded')? Sartre does not address these issues; but, these issues point to what Wilhelm Schapp (Husserl's former student) identified as the flexible transition between dream-narratives and lived-narratives (Schapp 1953, 152) and, more significantly, to the difficult problem of the unconscious and the relationship between dreams and my being-in-the-world—to which we shall return.

We are immersed in our fictional dream narratives, but not only as its privileged audience. We often enter into the dream narratives as a protagonist; a dream *occurs to us* as 'adventures of the dreamer.' The distinction between dreaming-ego and dreamt-ego thus becomes more complex since the dreamt-ego can have the position (or attitude) of audience as well as the position of protagonist—as appearing *in* the dream. If I dream of being Superman and see myself flying around, fighting Lex Luthor, and avoiding Kryptonite, I am not only the audience of the dream, I am also its principal protagonist. Yet, does the dreamer become the protagonist of her own dream? Sartre argues that, strictly speaking, the dreamer—by which he understands: my real, i.e., wakeful consciousness or self—cannot appear in the dream; if this were true, I would have to be aware of myself *in the dream* as the real self that I am. On Sartre's thinking, however, "a consciousness cannot 'be-in' in an imaginary world, unless it is itself an imaginary consciousness" (Sartre 2004, 170). When I am dreaming of being Superman, the "I" who appears in the dream, whom I am dreaming, is not the appearance of the real self (its real situation in the world). There is only an apprehension of myself as what I am *not*: as who I want to be, desire to be, wish to be, might be, etc. The dream is an imaginary manner of taking possession of *myself* in the shadow of not being able to be, or be content with, who I am.

The dream is consequently organized around a doubled or split consciousness: "everything is seen from a superior point of view, which is that of the sleeper representing a world, and at the same time from a relative and limited point of view, which is that of the imaginary-me plunged into the world" (Sartre 1940/2004, 172).<sup>11</sup> I can experience the dream from the stance of its audience but I can likewise and concurrently experience the dream as its protagonist. This identification with a dramatic character in a dream can be explicit or implicit; it need not (only) be cognitive, but may also be affective. With the reading of fiction, the identification with a protagonist in a novel is also common, yet never absolute: I am both myself and the fictional character (unless I succumb to the delusion of being a fictional character). In the case of dreams, this distance (which Sartre tacitly understands as the aesthetic attitude proper) becomes effaced due to the overall flattening character of dream beliefs. Although when I read *Madame Bovary*, I might feel her desire or destitution through aesthetic empathy, in the case of dreams,



I feel myself *directly* to be the protagonist who is attacked, sexually aroused, etc. And yet, *I* am not this unreal dreamt-protagonist even though I “am.” As Sartre honestly struggles with this subtle nuance:

I do not feel myself to be *him* [a dream protagonist] in the intimacy of my consciousness, as I can in the wakeful state feel myself to be the same as yesterday, etc. No, I *feel* myself to be him, outside, in him: it is an unreal affective quality that I grasp on him [. . .] He is therefore, in a sense, *transcendent and external* since I still see him running and, in another sense, *transcendent without distance since I am irreally present in him*. (Sartre 1940/2004, 171–172; my italics)

Remarkable here is Sartre’s entertainment of an ego that is *not* a transcendence for consciousness. In feeling myself *to be* the protagonist of the dream, I am, in one sense, an objectifying ego for a gaze (my own) while, in another sense, the very consciousness of being seen *over there*, as it were, within the dream from a gaze not my own, emanating from nowhere.

## 5. THE NAVEL OF THE DREAM

Sartre’s guiding comparison of dreaming with reading and his fictional immersion account of the dream progressively reach a perfect pitch of attunement towards what Freud wonderfully called “the navel of the dream”—the “spot where it reaches down into the unknown”—with his *ambivalence* concerning the question of whether the dream (as Conrad argued) is a fictional immersion into a (displaced) dream-world (and, hence, “worldless”) or whether (as Fink argued) the dream is itself a mode of having the world (Freud 1900/1999, 341). Sartre oscillates between characterizing the dream as a “world” or a “dream-world” and cautioning (himself) that, strictly speaking, an imaginary world is a contradiction; the dream is only an “atmosphere,” not a world (Sartre 1940/2004, 154). But, even this compromise with himself by advancing the expression “atmosphere” is immediately violated as Sartre reverts to speaking of dream-worlds. The issue is not just whether, as Sartre argues, unreal dream objects cannot be individuated, lack causal efficacy with other objects, and are constituted in the intuitive positing of “nothingness.” At issue is more profoundly the intersection of *two* problems: whether Sartre’s account of dreams is committed to a notion of the unconscious *and* whether the dream reveals anything about the dreamer’s being-in-the-world. These two problems intersect at the navel of *any* analysis of the dream, for it is the point that arguably fascinates us the most: *who authors* the dream and who, or what, *speaks* to us in a dream?

As the perfect realization of the imaginary, the dream marks the most extreme distance and transcendence of a consciousness disjointed from the

world. For Sartre, the existential performance of the imaginary consists in a double function: consciousness must “be able to posit the world in its synthetic totality and, *at the same time*, it must be able to posit the imagined object as out of reach in relation to that synthetic whole, which is to say posit the world as a nothingness in relation to the image” (1940/2004, 184). The world is posited as “nothingness” in the imaginary, or “nihilated,” to the extent that the imaginary conjures an irreal object against the backdrop of a world refused or denied. In placing itself in the attitude of imagining, consciousness renders present an object so as to possess it, as motivated by some form of refusal of the real, its difficulties, ambiguities, etc. On the one hand, in imagining Pierre’s face before me, I implicitly recognize that Pierre is not actually standing in front of me. On the other hand, in imagining Pierre’s face, I come to possess him, his presence, in an imaginary, yet satisfying way. As Sartre remarks, “If I desire to see a friend, I make that friend appear irreal. It is a way of *playing* at satisfaction” (1940/2004, 126). The imagination is inseparable from desire: both are orientations of consciousness towards the presence of an absence. Sartre’s claim is not that when I imagine Pierre I must already *know* that I desire to see Pierre. Rather, my desire to see Pierre becomes expressed indirectly insofar as I imagine Pierre. It is only through an act of reflection upon my imagining (Why am I imagining Pierre? Do I miss him? Is he angry with me?) that I might come to discover myself as desiring to see Pierre, as missing Pierre, as wanting to say something to him; and as a function of my refusal to accept that he is not here, my worry that he thinks ill of me because of a poorly-chosen remark I said to him last time we met, etc.

Yet, even as the imaginary institutes a rupture with the world, a consciousness that imagines or dreams still remains situated in the world. As Sartre explains: “the concrete situation of consciousness in the world must at each moment serve as the singular motivation for the constitution of the irreal. Thus the irreal—which is always double nothingness: nothingness of itself in relation to the world, nothingness of the world in relation to it—must always be constituted on the ground of the world that it denies” (1940/2004, 186). It is clear that Sartre here considers the “singular motivation” for the dream to be anchored in the world: the dream, as with the imaginary, is a flight *from* the world that always *returns* to the world (hence the difference between the psychotic condition and dreaming), and thus always has the world as the implicit horizon for its nocturnal adventures. In *Where the Wild Things Are*, Max departs from this world (through his room transformed into wilderness) on a boat to another, distant land of wild things, only to be called back and to return to the world of domesticated, wakeful existence: his supper is still hot. However much the world recedes from the dream-narrative, the dreamer always finds his way back to the world because the world can never be fully lost; it can only be forgotten, denied, refused, or held at a distance while looking away towards other distant shores. Implicit in Sartre’s thinking is the obscurity of the world

denied or refused through the imaginary: I am not reflectively aware of the world that I am resisting, failing to accept, or refusing in the play of my imaginary consciousness. The concrete situation of my consciousness in the world is obscured, in this sense, “unconscious,” in the consciousness of the imaginary.

Sartre, however, remained throughout his thinking a fervent critic of the Freudian unconscious or, at least, a certain interpretation of the Freudian theory that “cuts the psychic whole into two” agencies, the ego, or consciousness that I am, and the unconscious, or Id, that I am not (Sartre 1943/1992, 94). The truth known only to the unconscious remains hidden from me, my consciousness; the censor establishes a line of miscommunication between both so as to have it both ways: the unconscious drive is fulfilled and hence expressed, yet I am shielded from this fulfillment through the disguised dream-content that *safeguards* me from awakening to my true, unconscious nature. The dream, as Freud notes, is the guardian of sleep. As Sartre comments in *The Imaginary* (the single reference to Freud in this work): “if consciousness can never grasp its own worries, its own desires except in the form of symbols, it is not, as Freud believed, because of a repression that obliges it to disguise them: it is because it is incapable of grasping what is real in the form of reality” (1940/2004, 168). At first glance, it would seem that Sartre clearly avoids a similar kind of division between the authoring function (the intelligent agent who designs the dream narrative: the censor in cahoots with the unconscious) and the audience function of dreaming consciousness, who might also enter into the dream, but who is always lost among a forest of signs. The “splitting” of consciousness in Sartre’s account of dreams does not replicate a division between *two* distinct forms of (un)-consciousness (or between two distinct ontological entities: the brain and the mind); it marks instead a division internal to a single consciousness that never coincides with itself, that, in other words, is incapable of grasping its own real situation *in the world*. Sartre’s account of dreams nonetheless runs the risk of remaining beholden to *another* kind of dualism between the imaginary dream-consciousness and consciousness of the real. Even if Sartre argues that in the dream, “I have projected all my knowledge, all my preoccupations, all my memories,” it still stands that “I have projected all of this, but in the imaginary mode, on the image that I presently constitute” (Sartre 1940/2004, 182). To imagine is to apprehend the real in the mode of irreal-ity; the real as related to in an imaginary manner. As such, the imaginary, as the positing of nothingness, or absence, places itself beyond the reach of the real world. Even if the singular motivation for the imaginary, and hence for the dream, is the world, the imaginary perspective—and thus what I see and am in seeing thus and so—is *external* to the world: it negates the world in order to conjure its own form of “seeing.” As with the voyeur in *Being and Nothingness* who spies through the keyhole, the dream is a form of voyeurism that beholds a spectacle behind closed doors—in this case, the self-enclosed theater of dreaming-consciousness.

This radical separation between the self-enclosed dream and an open perceptual world was challenged directly by Merleau-Ponty (as well as by Foucault). Each attempted to undermine Sartre's basic distinction between the imaginary and perception by arguing that the dream can neither be understood as a species of the imaginary nor as a species of perception. As Merleau-Ponty notes: "The distinction between perceptual and imagining consciousness is clear as far as a sensible object or a living body is concerned. But neither the dream nor the waking world is made up of that" (2003/2010, 147). What first throws into doubt Sartre's unforgiving opposition between the dream imaginary and perceptual experience is the continued presence of the dream within wakefulness; our dreams remain impressive, and not only in the form of remembrance, even after awakening. This, so to speak, forward thrust of the dream *into* waking life does not only allow for the dream to enlarge a hermeneutical space of self-understanding—as common coin among dream manuals and treatises in Classical Antiquity. If we consider as well the backdraft, as it were, of the dream, the way in which a dream brings to expression a narrative situation within wakefulness, we are led to Merleau-Ponty's suggestion of an "oneirism of wakefulness" composed of "perceptual 'beliefs', the flux and reflux which bears our acts and our absences, our speech and our silence." As Merleau-Ponty brings this notion to a head: "[This] unspeaking speech [is] the formation of my relations with others and their relations among themselves. Where does it operate? Who utters it? Who dreams? Dreams to be considered here as a modalization of life; thus, who lives?" (ibid., 152).

A *clue* for further unraveling—that is, pursuing—these questions gravitating around the navel of the dream can be found by inflecting Sartre's principal insight that the dream is a narrative that expresses a form of thought, or knowledge. As Schapp argues in his unfortunately neglected *In Geschichten verstrickt* (already evoked earlier), dream narratives are in flexible transition with narratives in which we are entangled and in the temporal medium of which our lives unfold in wakefulness. As he writes: "So kann die Traumgeschichte untrennbar mit einer wirklichen Geschichte oder, wie wir besser sagen, mit einer Geschichte, in die wir im Wachen verstrickt sind, verbunden sein, so dass erst beide zusammen die ganze Geschichte ausmachen" (Schapp 1985, 152). As with Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking (hauntingly filmed in Kurosawa's adaptation), anguished dreams of the murders of King Duncan, Banquo, and Lady MacDuff, the unusual appearance of this scene's narration in prose, and not verse (as noted by the Shakespeare scholar A. C. Bradley), gives added weight to Schapp's reading that "die Lady auf die Art in ihre Geschichte verstrickt ist, dass Traum und Wachen eins werden" (Schapp 1985, 153). Much as our lives are "entangled" in narratives, or stories, so too are the narratives of our dreams entangled in our waking lives.

As explored in Arthur Schnitzler's *Traumnovelle*, dreams become entangled with the narratives that we articulate to ourselves and to each other

during our wakeful hours. *Traumnovelle* begins with an opening portrait of an apparently normal bourgeois family framed through a clear distinction (in a manner recalling Sartre's basic premise in *The Imaginary*) between fictional immersion in a story (the child's fairy tale evoked at the beginning of the novel) and an extended conversation between Fridolin and Albertina—a conversation already underway prior to bedtime for the child. Returning to their conversation, each narrates their respective experiences at a masquerade ball attended the night before, and in probing each other's reactions to the apparent sexual attraction and missed opportunities each felt that evening with other guests (the scene is marvelously filmed in Kubrick's adaptation), the novella opens onto a sequence of confessions, confrontations, and revelations exposing an underlying ambivalence and sexual tension in their marriage. Beginning with narratives of their summer holiday in Denmark the year before, in her first story, Albertina recounts how she by chance exchanged gazes with a mysterious young officer and felt immediately sexually aroused, spending the rest of that day "lost in dreams" and tempted by the possibility of adventure. Fridolin confesses a similar story as the novella narrates a contrasting set of Albertina's dreams and Fridolin's nocturnal adventures that progressively blur any clear distinction between dream and reality, as indicated with Schnitzler's deliberately ambiguous—yet seductive—expression: *die traumhafte Realität*.

Merleau-Ponty's "oneirism of wakefulness" is here vividly on display. Albertina's dreams are incubated, as it were, in sensuous (in the sense of both perceptual and desire, i.e., sexual) encounters during her wakeful life (one finds comparable descriptions in Proust) crystallized around punctuating moments of ambivalence. This sedimentation of an oneiric consciousness within wakefulness is the unconscious—not as a separate agency within consciousness, nor as the product of any mechanism of repression, but as the crystallization of *possibilities* from the insoluble ambivalence that texture our wakefulness: do I truly love my wife? Am I sexually attracted by this other woman? From this sedimentation of ambivalence emerges the "lyrical core of humanity"—the unconscious and its dream adventures (Merleau-Ponty 2003/2010, 156).

If we recall Sartre's double-function of imagining consciousness, the motivation underlying dreams is some kind of refusal or denial of the world, but one might inflect this insight into a general claim that it is an ambivalence within my being-in-the-world that already provokes the flight of the dream imaginary. The world is perforated with *holes*, or *entanglements*: the unknown, risk, resistance to my projects, desires of others, etc. As Sartre describes in an extremely suggestive manner in *Being and Nothingness*, the presence of the Other is akin to a "drain-hole" *towards which* the world slips away, organized around *her* projects, intentions, and desires, and hence in perpetual tension with my own. The imaginary, seen from this ontology of entangling holes that defines Sartre's thinking, attempts to fill holes produced by the Real itself: I miss my beloved and wish to hold her

again and so imagine her in my arms; I place a religious icon close to my heart, etc.<sup>12</sup>

At the end of *Traumnovelle*, after Fridolin has finally returned home from a second night of nocturnal adventures, and after another of Albertina's revelatory dreams, and after an extended night of Fridolin recounting "everything," as dawn now breaks, Fridolin asks: "What shall we do now, Albertina?" She replies: "I think that we ought to be grateful that we have come unharmed from all of our adventures, whether they were real or only a dream." Silently, they lie close to each other in sleep, dreamlessly together (*So lagen sie beide schweigende, beide wohl auch ein wenig schlummernd und einander traumlos nah*). To possess a life that would be *traumlos nah*—towards oneself, towards others, towards the world—would be a world of silence and peace, a world experienced with eyes wide open, unencumbered by either light or darkness.

## NOTES

1. For a sampling of Husserl's examples of dreaming in his writings on the imagination, see Texts Nr. 2, 13, 20 as well as Appendices IX and XIX in Husserliana XXIII, *Phantasie, Bildbewusstsein, Erinnerung 1898–1925* (Husserl 1980). For an analysis of dreamless sleep in Husserl, see (de Warren 2010); for a more extended Husserlian account of dreaming, see (de Warren 2012).
2. Thomas Metzinger fashions a comparable dream-example in which "dream scientists and dream philosophers are discussing the nature of consciousness" and attempting to convince each other "No, you are all figures in my dream" (Metzinger 2009, 146). Do all academic philosophers dream alike?
3. A broader historical contextualization of Sartre's account of dreams would have to take into consideration the substantial body of dream-literature and dream-psychology in France towards the end of the twentieth century, as well as Bergson's *Le rêve*. Whether Bachelard's extensive and diverse writings on poetic images, dreams, and reverie should be considered within the phenomenological horizon is here left open.
4. This type of philosophical invocation of the dream extends back to Plato's *Theatetus*, 158 b.
5. A further comparison could be made with the experience of watching horror films. But here the image is not produced by my consciousness in the way that dream-images are. The point is not that we cannot be terrified other than in nightmares—we can indeed be terrified by films, by the real Freddy Krueger, etc. The point is that we cannot terrify ourselves to the same degree in the wakeful imaginary.
6. This also means that we are not able to engage our bodies in order to see better, approach an object, etc., which reflects the paralysis of motor systems characteristic of REM sleep (with the exceptional case of REM sleep behavior disorder).
7. These features of the dream accentuated in Sartre's phenomenological account in *The Imaginary* exhibit a striking similarity with the contemporary neuroscientific conception put forward by J. Allan Hobson. As Hobson argues in his influential work *The Dreaming Brain*: "Dreaming is properly considered a delusional state because most subjects have virtually no insight regarding

the true nature of the state in which they have these unusual sensory experiences. [. . .] Contributing to this state of credulity in dreaming is the fact that one lacks the reflective self-awareness that helps us to test reality during the waking state. Instead, the dreamer is of but one mind, and that mind is wholly absorbed by the dream process” (Hobson 1988, 5; my emphasis). For a further comparison of Sartre and Hobson, see Ellis (1994).

8. While for Freud: “The content of the dream is given as it were in the form of hieroglyphs whose signs are to be translated one by one into the language of the dream-thoughts. We would obviously be misled if we were to read these signs according to their pictorial value and not according to their referentiality as signs” (Freud 1900/1999, 211). For Sartre, dream images are neither pictures nor signs.
9. In *The Words*, Sartre recounts how, at an earlier age, he would hide himself in his uncle’s library and pretend to read. Lost in reverie, looking at the words on the page, not being able to read, but nonetheless in the (imaginary) attitude of the reader.
10. The theatrical space, for Sartre, is also an imaginary space. It is an empty space perpetually filled by the imaginary.
11. Dreams are also organized, for Sartre, as a ‘hodological space’ or an environment of the dream-world with ‘vectors’ and ‘tensions’ of phantasized movements (I am flying, etc.) in relation to an imaginary body.
12. In Sartre’s final period of intellectual productivity, centered on the writing of his massive work on Flaubert, Sartre explained: “I do not believe in the unconscious in the form in which psychoanalysis presents it to us. In my present book on Flaubert, I have replaced my earlier notion of consciousness (although I still use the word a lot) with what I call *le vécu*—lived experience. I will try to describe in a moment what I mean by this term, which is neither the precautions of the preconscious, nor the unconscious, nor consciousness, but the terrain in which the individual is perpetually overflowed by himself and his riches and consciousness plays the trick of determining itself by forgetfulness” (Sartre 1969/1974, 39). And he continues with two intriguing comments: “the highest form of comprehension of lived experience can forge its own language—which will always be inadequate, and yet which will often have the metaphorical structure of the dream itself.” “Comprehension of a dream occurs when a man can express it in a language which is itself dreamt. Lacan says that the unconscious is structured like a language. I would say that the language which expresses it has the structure of a dream” (Sartre 1969/1974, 41).

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Section V

# Affectivity



# 12 Defending a Heideggerian Account of Mood

*Lauren Freeman*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Whether one treads deeply into the contemporary empirical literature on mood or simply scratches the surface, one thing immediately becomes clear: what moods are and the role they play in our day-to-day lives are questions that have yet to be settled. Based on an assessment of the literature, one can delineate at least five problems that plague psychological, empirically based accounts of mood.<sup>1</sup>

- (1) There is no consensus regarding what moods are, how they should be defined, or how or whether they differ from emotions, feelings, or dispositions (See Fox 2008, 16).
- (2) Insofar as there is no standard definition of mood and there is no widely established demarcation between mood and emotion, it is unclear whether most studies that claim to be examining mood are doing so at all.
- (3) The working concept of mood both in the first generation of empirical work (from the late 1970s and 1980s) and in more recent studies is basic, unsophisticated, and crude. Moods tend to be demarcated as either positive or negative (i.e., happy/sad, good/bad), which precludes the possibility of engaging with their deeper complexity and broader variety.
- (4) Most experiments that claim to study moods assume that they can be atomized—viz., taken out of the context of the subject's life—and simply induced in a lab. This assumption fails to account for and engage with the possibility that moods are more complex modes of existing than short-lived positively or negatively valenced states that can be induced or caused in an artificial environment.
- (5) Few mood studies are concerned with the personal level of what it feels like to be in a mood or what being in a mood reveals to the one who is in it.

Elsewhere, I argue that a Heideggerian account of mood (*Stimmung*<sup>2</sup>) makes good on most of these problems (Freeman 2014). But what that argument

fails to do is to hold up a mirror to Heidegger's own account of mood and to examine its own internal problems. It is my goal to do this here. Specifically, I undertake a critical analysis, development, and defense of Heidegger's account of mood with the larger aim of showing why Heidegger's account is one that is worth holding onto, especially outside the context of his fundamental ontology in which it was advanced. Notwithstanding some of its shortcomings, Heidegger's account of mood still gets at something quite right with regard to what moods are and how we experience them in the world. As opposed to understanding moods as states that occur inside human subjects, as do most psychological accounts of mood,<sup>3</sup> Heidegger's key insight is that one of the fundamental ways in which we find ourselves (*sich befinden sich*) attuned to the world is through mood. According to Heidegger, human beings are always in one mood or another; moods are one of the basic and irremovable lenses through which we relate to ourselves, others, and our surroundings; and insofar as this is the case, they are the condition for the possibility of any aspect of the world mattering to us. These insights are especially valuable for the ways in which they can broaden the elementary concept of mood employed in psychology. Furthermore, if taken up by psychologists, these insights can help guide empirical work, thereby enabling us to gain a better, deeper, and more accurate understanding of the phenomenology of moods.

Because several articles that lay out detailed expository accounts of what Heidegger means by attunement (*Befindlichkeit*) and mood have recently been published,<sup>5</sup> in Section I, I provide a short summary of his account. In Section II, I raise four problems that befall Heidegger's account of attunement through mood, followed by some suggestions, in Section III, as to how they can be resolved. I conclude by highlighting the importance of a Heideggerian account of being attuned through mood within the context of some of the shortcomings in the empirical work on mood mentioned above.

## 2. HEIDEGGER'S ACCOUNT OF MOOD<sup>6</sup>

Working within and also redefining and reshaping the phenomenological tradition, Heidegger developed an original, idiosyncratic, highly valuable account of being attuned through mood. Contrary to the way that psychology understands moods as internal, subjective, mental states that can be inferred from a subject's behavior, activity level, posture, facial expressions, and tone of voice, for Heidegger, moods are more fundamental. They are a condition for the possibility of mental states, emotions, feelings, dispositions, beliefs, and desires. Moods do not result from or arise out of our current situation or context, nor are they caused by it. Moreover, moods are not just inside our heads. "A mood is not related to the psychical . . . and is not itself an *inner condition* which reaches forth in an enigmatical way and puts its mark on things and persons . . . It comes neither from 'outside' nor

from ‘inside’, but arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such being” (Heidegger 1927, 136/1962, 176; also Heidegger 1979, 255/1992, 352). That is, being attuned through mood is part of our ontological architecture. It is one of the most basic lenses through which we experience the world and ourselves, along with the other existentials: understanding [*Verstehen*], discourse [*Rede*], and fallenness [*Verfallenheit*]. It is also a fundamental way in which the world is disclosed to and affects us.

Because being attuned through mood is part of Dasein’s basic ontological architecture (and constitutes the conditions for existing in the world), Heidegger claims that human beings are always attuned through mood and never exist in moodless states. Insofar as this is the case, being attuned through mood constitutes how we find ourselves in the world: “A mood makes manifest ‘how one is, and how one is faring.’ In this ‘how one is,’ having a mood brings being to its ‘there’” (Heidegger 1927, 134/1962, 173). Insofar as being attuned through mood is part of our basic ontological architecture and insofar as it is not only a condition for the possibility of beliefs, desires, etc., but also influences our beliefs and desires, being attuned through mood has important, underlying revelatory dimensions in that it affects how things, people, and events in the world appear to us. Finally and importantly, because of its underlying role in Dasein’s existence in the world, being attuned through mood cannot be severed or isolated from the context—the world, environment, and our particular situation in it—in which it manifests itself. In sum, our attunement through mood constitutes how we find ourselves existing in the world and is a most basic and irremovable lens through which the world is disclosed to, affects, and can matter to us.

### 3. FOUR PROBLEMS WITH HEIDEGGER’S ACCOUNT OF MOOD

Notwithstanding Heidegger’s important insights into being attuned through mood, there are at least four problems with his account: the problem of sloppiness, the problem of cognitive architecture, the problem of scope and priority, and the problem of the body. I spend the most amount of time on the first of these problems.

#### 3.1 The Problem of Sloppiness

First, Heidegger’s account of mood is sloppy, a problem that manifests itself in three related ways. (i) He does not sufficiently, clearly, or consistently distinguish between (and often conflates) fundamental attunement (*Grundbefindlichkeit*), attunement, mood, and what (in a folk psychological way) we consider to be emotion. Moreover, in the texts under consideration, he neglects to consider feelings. (ii) He is inconsistent with regard to his treatment of the ontic and the ontological dimensions of mood. That is, at first mood is considered to be both an ontic state and an ontological condition

for the possibility of ontic states (Heidegger 1927, 135/1962, 173–4), but then he privileges the ontological dimension of mood and dismisses its ontic dimensions (*ibid.*, 136/174–175, 189/234). (iii) Relatedly, even in explicitly privileging the ontological dimension of mood, he still uses an ontic description of what sounds like an emotion (*viz.*, fear) in his account of what a mood is (where moods are modes of attunement). Heidegger’s description of anxiety (*Angst*)—an underlying, pervasive ontological-existential way of being in the world whose object is not any entity in the world—seems to be a key example of what he means by mood, but he calls anxiety not a mood but rather a fundamental attunement. Moreover, his description of fear as a mode of attunement does not seem to correspond to his account of mood at all; rather, it seems to be more like an emotion in that it is described as an episodic, occurrent, intentional state with an intentional object (although Heidegger does not use these terms). Thus, Heidegger is sloppy about precisely what a mood is, how he describes and differentiates moods from one another, and about how moods manifest themselves in the world.<sup>7</sup> Let me elaborate further upon this problem.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger’s discussion of these matters centers around fear and anxiety, where the former is a mode of attunement (*ein Modus der Befindlichkeit*) and the latter is a fundamental attunement. However, according to Heidegger’s own account, it is not clear that fear would count either as attunement or as mood. Heidegger is explicit that “ontologically, mood is a primordial kind of being for Dasein, in which Dasein is disclosed to itself prior to all cognition and volition and beyond their range of disclosure” (*ibid.*, 136/175). Being attuned through mood, Heidegger explains, is quite different from a psychological condition caused by the ordinary apprehending of entities, objects, or states of affairs (where psychological conditions refer to affects and feelings). Thus, in his discussion of fear as a mode of attunement, Heidegger seems to be making a distinction between what he means by mood and an ordinary understanding of emotions, where emotions are occurrent, intentional states—states that are caused by and are *about* something. Whereas emotions are typically assumed to be intentional states (*i.e.*, states that have an intentional object or that are about something with antecedent causes and that have associated feelings), moods, on Heidegger’s account, are ontologically disclosive: they are pervasive and all encompassing and they do not necessarily have definite causes or objects. The problem is that emotions do not explicitly enter into this discussion. Within the scope of his project, Heidegger gives at least two reasons why emotions cannot be ontologically disclosive in the way that moods can. First, on his account, emotions are usually understood physiologically; they only signal a person’s reaction to something in the world but do not and cannot disclose that person’s connection to the world on an ontological level (Heidegger 1987, 106–7/2001, 82). Second, emotions tend to be momentary states that are caused and therefore are not disclosive of one’s underlying, pervasive being-in-the-world.

The problem, however, is that Heidegger's description of fear as a mode of attunement (that is, as a mood) corresponds to a traditional understanding of emotion (as described above) and not to his own account of being attuned through mood as fundamentally disclosive. As Heidegger notes in *Being and Time* §30, there are three points of view from which fear may be considered, which, taken together, illuminate the phenomenon of being attuned through mood. They are: (1) that in the face of which we fear (*das Wovor der Furcht*) or the fearsome (*das Furchtbare*); (2) fearing as such (*das Fürchten*); and (3) that about which we fear (*das Worum der Furcht*). The fearsome is something we encounter in the world, which may have as its kind of being either readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenen*), presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenen*), or Dasein-with (*Mitdasein*). That is, on Heidegger's account, the fearsome is the (intentional) object of the state of fear, for instance, a snake, a bear, or another person who is encountered as threatening. Fearing as such is the state we are in when we encounter an object or person that/who presents itself *as* fearful or threatening. In other words, it is what we ordinarily call (the emotional state of) fear. That which fear is about is the very being who is afraid, namely, Dasein, the "subject" of fear.

The problem then is this: far from illuminating a pervasive, underlying way of being in the world—that is, far from describing being attuned through a *mood*, as Heidegger intends—what his description of fear in fact describes is an occurrent, intentional state, namely an emotion. Even later in the text when Heidegger tries to distinguish fear from anxiety, he confirms that fear is more emotion-like than mood-like. He writes that being attuned through fear "has shown that in each case that in the face of which we fear is a detrimental entity within-the-world which comes from some definite region but is close by and is bringing itself close, and yet might stay away" (Heidegger 1927, 185/1962, 230).<sup>8</sup> Here again we see that fear (an intentional state) is the reaction to some entity or person (intentional object), experienced by Dasein (a "subject"). Thus, the way that Heidegger unpacks his own terminology does not correspond to what he wants these terms to signify.

Given the way that he sets things up and develops them, Heidegger's project of conceiving attunement through mood as a fundamental mode of being-in-the-world requires him to distinguish between at least two different, yet ultimately related, phenomena: on the one hand, an emotion with which he's not explicitly concerned and, on the other hand, being attuned through mood. His project requires him to make this distinction because of the claim that, while the latter is world-disclosive, the former is not. Yet he does not maintain this distinction. This sloppiness persists when he goes on to mention modifications of being attuned through fear—alarm (*Erschrecken*), dread (*Grauen*), terror (*Entsetzen*), timidity (*Schüchternheit*), shyness (*Scheu*), misgiving (*Bangigkeit*), becoming startled (*Stutzigwerden*) (ibid., 142/181–82). Again, none of these states correspond to his own account, wherein attunement through mood is fundamentally disclosive in an existential-ontological sense. Many of these states seem to be reactions to



intentional objects or states of affairs in the world and seem to correspond to a more traditional conception of emotion. We can thus restate the problem of sloppiness differently: Heidegger conflates three separate categories: emotions as intentional states (e.g., alarm, dread, terror, becoming startled), the background attunement through mood that makes these states possible (e.g., anxiety or concern), and character traits or dispositions (e.g., timidity, shyness), which he does not discuss.

Although what Heidegger seems to mean by being attuned through mood is not apparent in his account of fear as a mode of attunement; it becomes clearer in his account of anxiety, a fundamental attunement. In contrast to fear, that in the face of which one has anxiety is being-in-the-world *as such*, not a specific entity in the world (or intentional object). In anxiety, Heidegger explains, entities become irrelevant:

[T]hat in the face of which one is anxious is completely indefinite. . . nothing which is ready-to-hand or present-at-hand within the world functions as that in the face of which anxiety is anxious. Here the totality of involvements of the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand discovered within-the-world, is, as such, of no consequence; it collapses into itself; the world has the character of completely lacking in significance. In anxiety, one does not encounter this or that thing which, as something threatening, must have an involvement (1927, 186/1962, 231).

Thus, unlike in the case of fear, where what was threatening was a specific object, person, or state of affairs in the world, what threatens in the case of anxiety is nothing in particular: neither a specific intentional object nor a state of affairs. Moreover, when one is anxious, one is often unaware of that in the face of which one is anxious. And yet being-anxious, Heidegger maintains, discloses primordially and directly the world *as world*. It pervades one's being and becomes the lens through which the world appears and matters to (or affects) us.

Although we understand what Heidegger means by fundamental attunement, we still aren't clear on what he means by mood; more specifically, his account of fear as a mode of attunement still doesn't make sense. The question is this: why call fear a mood at all when it seems to correspond more accurately to an emotion (a distinction that Heidegger fails to make in the present context)? Heidegger's account is not only inconsistent given our ordinary understanding and experience of what fear is and how it works, but it is also inconsistent given his own claim that moods are fundamentally disclosive and not necessarily caused by an intentional object, person, or state of affairs.

### 3.2 The Problem of Cognitive Architecture

The second problem concerns the subpersonal level of explanation, namely, that Heidegger fails to consider the neurophysiology or neurochemistry of

mood. One could object that if we are to fully understand what moods are and how they function, then a compelling account of mood—in addition to including an existential-ontological component—must also include an explanation of processes on the subpersonal level. It should be stated that Heidegger himself was explicitly *not* concerned with this level of explanation, so this objection is external to his project as he conceived of it. Nevertheless, I raise this as a problem because, given that my larger aim is to make a Heideggerian-inspired account of mood applicable within a more scientific context, scientists would most likely take this to be a concern.

### 3.3 Problem of Scope and Priority

The third problem is two-fold and regards the scope and priority of Heidegger's account. (i) The weaker problem is that his account of mood is *too limited* in that it considers only a few moods at length, namely, fear (itself something that might be questionable to call a 'mood'), anxiety, and boredom (a mood that is primarily treated in the 1929–39 lectures, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*). (ii) The more serious problem regards Heidegger's claim that some moods are more *fundamental* than others, where his paradigmatic example of a fundamental mood (in *Being and Time*) is anxiety. One might question whether phenomenologically this is a valid, accurate, or even necessary claim to make both within, but especially beyond, his fundamental ontology.

### 3.4 The Problem of the Body

Fourth, Heidegger's account neglects to consider the body.<sup>9</sup> He fails to provide a physiological account or a bodily phenomenology of mood, and he does not elaborate sufficiently on how it feels to be in a mood or to experience an emotion, not to mention how moods and emotions are expressed. It is undeniable that being attuned through mood involves not only distinctive involuntary physiological bodily changes like muscular reactions, hormonal changes, and changes to the autonomic nervous system, but also embodied, felt, lived changes in the ways that one finds oneself in and experiences the world. Failing to account for the embodied feelings and experiences of attunements overlooks an essential part of what they are and how they manifest themselves. Moreover, the assumption that our existential situation can be separated and understood independently from our lived bodies is incorrect.

## 4. RESPONSES TO THE PROBLEMS

In responding to these four problems, I focus on the first three and offer only a very preliminary response to the fourth, since a full discussion of that problem well exceeds the scope of this paper. My main aim is to defend a

version of Heidegger's account of attunement through mood and to suggest some areas where certain emendations to it are necessary.

#### 4.1 The Problem of Sloppiness

Before responding to this problem, I should be clear that when dealing with emotions, I do not believe that philosophical tidiness (or, conceptual precision) is the most important virtue toward which we should strive, especially if our goal is to provide an account of emotion and mood that actually maps onto the phenomena as we experience them. From our own experiences of emotions, moods, and feelings, we know that they tend not to be "conceptually well behaved" (Campbell 1997, 4).<sup>10</sup> That is, they tend to blur together in ways that make precise, conceptual distinctions difficult, if not impossible, to make while still keeping the phenomena in clear view. I agree with Susan Campbell, who maintains that many emotions and feelings "do not fit easily into the relatively tidy categories provided by the standard emotions, and it is the complexities and subtleties of people's emotional lives that should orient our approach toward emotion theory . . . Often our feelings are too nuanced, complex, or inchoate to be easily categorized" (Campbell 1997, 3). On this basis, what I've raised as the *problem* of sloppiness is not as detrimental to Heidegger's account as one might initially surmise. In general, not making the kind of precise distinctions that much of the contemporary literature on mood and emotion makes does not betray a shortcoming or failure on Heidegger's part; rather, it allows him to get at something quite right about the messiness of human emotions in general, how we experience them in particular, and the difficulty of giving a precise, tidy, theoretical account of them.

Although I do not consider it to be devastating to Heidegger's account that he does not make conceptual distinctions between attunement, mood, and emotion with the kind of precision that we might expect in other areas, it is a problem that he conflates and/or uses certain of his own key terms inconsistently and, at times, unconvincingly. In order to respond to the so-called problem of sloppiness, I proceed as follows. Remaining faithful to Heidegger's broad account of attunement through mood as disclosing to us a fundamental way of being in the world, how we find ourselves (*sich befinden sich*), and how we are faring in the world, I reconstruct his account, making clear the relation between attunement, mood, and emotion in such a way that irons out most of the inconsistencies discussed above. My aim is to show that Heidegger's account can be rendered consistent without doing serious injustice to the spirit of his project and that he can therefore be defended against the charge of sloppiness.

Recall the main thrust of the sloppiness problem: that Heidegger does not sufficiently, clearly, or consistently distinguish between (and often conflates) attunement, mood, and what we would call emotion. One might say that, had Heidegger made a clearer distinction between mood and emotion

and had he discussed emotion explicitly, he would not have run into this problem in the first place. Given that he did not, however, the question becomes how to understand the difference between these structures, modes, and manifestations of the structures in such a way that can help Heidegger out of this rut. The following reconstruction is the one that I propose in order to do this.

Attunements are ontological structures; they are the conditions for the possibility of moods.<sup>11</sup> Moods disclose the world as background contexts against which occurrent and intentionally specific emotions occur.<sup>12</sup> But moods aren't just background contexts or conditions for the possibility of emotions; they are also the conditions for the possibility of other intentionally directed states as well (see Elpidorou 2013; Ratcliffe 2008, 2013; Slaby 2010). This simple reconstruction of Heidegger's position is supported by his claim that being in a mood is necessary in order for worldly entities and others to matter to us. Without moods disclosing the world and others to us in valenced ways, the world and others wouldn't and couldn't matter to us. If attunement is the condition for the possibility of moods, and moods are the condition for the possibility of the world and others mattering to us, then moods are necessary for emotions, since emotions can occur only within the context of a meaningful world. Thus, if we understand mood as the condition for the possibility of emotion, we can make better sense of Heidegger's account of fear as follows.

Anxiety is a grounding attunement: the ontological structure or the condition for the possibility of the mood of fearfulness (*Furchtsamkeit*). Incidentally, in §30 Heidegger mentions parenthetically the mood of fearfulness as a possibility of attunement (1927, 141/1962, 180). "This 'fearfulness' [*Fürchtsamkeit*]," he proclaims, "is not to be understood in an ontical sense as some factual 'individualized' disposition [*Veranlagung*], but as an existential possibility of the essential attunement of Dasein in general. . . ." (1927, 142/1962 182; see also *ibid.*, 138/178; 142/181). We can develop and clarify Heidegger's position further than he does by specifying that this mood of fearfulness manifests itself ontically—that is, in response to intentional objects, others, or states of affairs—as the emotion of fear. In other words, within the context of the specific emotion of fear, anxiety is the background context in and through which the world is disclosed to us through the mood of fearfulness, and the mood of fearfulness provides the context in which the specific emotion of fear can arise. Of course, the mood of fearfulness and the emotion of fear are not the only ways in which anxiety can manifest itself; rather, I am simply sticking with the example that Heidegger provides and that we discussed above. My reconstruction—in providing and explaining the missing link of the mood of fearfulness as a link from the ontological to the ontic register, where Heidegger fails to do so clearly or adequately—is in keeping with and makes sense of Heidegger's claim that anxiety "makes fear possible" (1927, 186/1962, 230).

With this missing piece securely in place, we can now see how the grounding attunement/structure of anxiety manifests itself in the mood of fearfulness, which in turn is the condition for the possibility for the emotion of fear to arise. My reconstruction defends Heidegger against the charge of sloppiness and inconsistency. If my reconstruction is right, then Heidegger is not in fact being inconsistent; rather, he simply neglects to explain sufficiently how being attuned through mood manifests itself more specifically through certain emotions.<sup>13</sup>

## 4.2 The Problem of Cognitive Architecture

Although Heidegger is not interested in the cognitive architecture of mood, his lack of interest does not undermine his project. Let me explain. Notwithstanding the fact that the technology used to examine the neurochemistry and neurophysiology of moods was not available during his lifetime (and is still in its infancy), Heidegger nevertheless rejects the worth of subpersonal level accounts of mood for illuminating the relationship between mood and world and for opening up the disclosive dimension of mood. He writes:

[T]he brain process is never sufficient for understanding a mood; it is not sufficient even in the most literal sense because it can never reach into the mood itself . . . We have no possibility at all of knowing how the brain is bodying forth in thinking. What we see in an electroencephalogram has nothing to do with the bodying forth of the brain but rather [has to do] with the fact that the body can also be thought of as a corporeal thing—and this as a chemical-physical object. I can only say *that* the brain is also involved in bodying forth but not *how*. (Heidegger 1987, 244–5/2001, 196–7)<sup>14</sup>

Heidegger thus acknowledges that certain brain states correspond to moods or, to stray from his preferred language, that conscious states have both phenomenological *and* neurophysiological correlates. His point, however, is that seeing or knowing the brain activity or state that corresponds to a mood does not tell us anything about *what it is like* to be in or to experience that mood. Nor does it or can it illuminate or explain the ontological-existential dimension of being in that mood: namely, *how* moods are disclosive of the world or how they co-determine the background context in which the world, others, and the self are experienced.

Unlike those interested in moods at the subpersonal level, Heidegger is interested in a personal, phenomenological (ontological-existential) level of explanation. He does not oppose science altogether (see Heidegger 1987/2001, 7–8, 20–21); rather, he is skeptical that science can tell us how moods are both disclosive of and fundamental to our experience of and in the world. On this point, Heidegger is right. If we find out, for example, that moods correspond to chemical changes in the brain, knowing that does

not necessarily make any difference to me when I am in that mood. For example, let's say that I am depressed and the world seems hopeless, disorienting, and not worth facing. Existing as such, for someone to tell me that "it's just chemical" will not make much of a difference to my personal affective situation. So, from a phenomenological, first-personal perspective, I am on board with Heidegger in that knowing the neurochemistry of my brain states does not shed much light on my own experience of the world as mooded. That is not to say, however, that subpersonal explanations of mood have no place at all in the study or consideration of moods and their ontology. To continue with the example above, although knowing that "it's just chemical" might not do much for my own first-personal experience of the world, the fact that the chemical side of my mooded existence might respond to certain medications to effectuate a change on certain aspects of my experience of the world could make a difference to my own mooded experience. Subpersonal accounts of mood, therefore, can be important and helpful for more holistic and functional understandings of moods and also for treating mood disorders. If we are to fully understand what a mood is both personally and subpersonally, then we must say something about what goes on at the subpersonal level. Most important to underscore, however, is that such subpersonal accounts are important *in addition to* and not to the exclusion of personal-level, phenomenological accounts.<sup>15</sup> Given the scope of Heidegger's project—and that he is explicit about the kind of account of mood in which he is interested—it is not fair to criticize his account for neglecting to deal with an area that clearly falls outside its purview.

Problems notwithstanding, the virtue of Heidegger's account is that it attempts to bring out the ontological-existential dimension of being attuned through mood, which sets the context for explaining the lived experience of mood. Nothing in such an account precludes it from being compatible with subpersonal accounts. I would like to suggest that Heidegger provides us with a foundation upon which this kind of more holistic, multi-level account could be built.

### 4.3 The Problem of Scope and Priority

The first part of the objection—that Heidegger's account is too limited—is by no means devastating. Although the literature on Heidegger's account of mood focuses on anxiety (and boredom), since these are the moods on which Heidegger himself spends the most time, in *Being and Time*, he also mentions, elation, joy, enthusiasm, satiety, sadness, melancholy, desperation, and hopefulness, even if he doesn't elaborate upon them (Heidegger 1927, 135, 344–5/1962, 174, 395). In Heidegger's defense, *Being and Time* does not claim to provide an exhaustive taxonomy of all moods, but rather purports to provide a transcendental account of attunement through mood. Thus, the scope and implications of his account need not be limited to the few moods that he discusses. Heidegger provides a template of

what attunement through mood is and how it works, which could certainly include a wide array of other moods as well (grief and alienation are two examples). In sum, his limited scope does not undermine his account, since the account can easily be extended to include other moods that he does not discuss.

The second part of this objection, which takes issue with Heidegger's contention that anxiety is the most fundamental, world-disclosive mood, is stronger and therefore more problematic. In response, I would like to claim that Heidegger's account can and should be broadened beyond the specific project of fundamental ontology such that moods other than anxiety can do the same kind of world-disclosive, fundamental, ontological heavy lifting.

According to Heidegger in *Being and Time*, anxiety is a fundamental attunement (*Grundbefindlichkeit*) that discloses to us a more "authentic" kind of existence. My claim is that it is too narrow to hold that only anxiety can play this role. Heidegger's point concerning anxiety is that it individuates us and brings to light our finitude by bringing us face-to-face with the ultimate possibility of our own factual existence: being-towards-death. But we might ask, for example, why the extreme and enduring grief over the death of a loved one cannot or does not also do the same disclosive work. Surely such an overpowering sense of loss of another can also disclose the world to us in a profoundly different way, often leading us to reflect upon our own finitude. One could even say that the surprise, alarm, shock, and dread of being faced with the mere possibility, let alone the reality, that a loved one has a fatal disease could also open up the world to us in a similarly raw and fundamental way. So, there indeed seems to be a problem with the way that Heidegger prioritizes one attunement over all others. I would like to suggest, however, that if we supplement his account with our own phenomenological analysis, we can see that other attunements can be equally fundamental, thereby rendering questionable the claim that only certain attunements can be fundamental. Thus, in broadening his account, we can respond to the objection at hand, while at the same time remaining loyal to the underlying spirit of Heidegger's position.

My claim is that there are other fundamental attunements through mood that Heidegger does not mention, yet that can nevertheless be equally disclosive of the world and of ourselves in enduring, permanent ways. The one I will consider is trauma.<sup>16</sup> Let me give two examples. The first is from Susan Brison's autobiographical description, recounted in her book *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self*, of being brutally assaulted, raped, dragged into a ditch in the French countryside, and taken for dead. In Heideggerian terms, we could say that, after this traumatic experience, Brison's fundamental attunement to the world changed. She writes: "Unlike survivors of wars or earthquakes, who inhabit a common shattered world, rape victims face the cataclysmic destruction of their world alone, surrounded by people who find it hard to understand what's so distressing" (Brison 2002, 15). She continues: "People ask me if I'm recovered now, and



I reply that it depends on what that means. If they mean ‘am I back to where I was before the attack?’ I have to say, no, and I never will be. . . . Survivors of trauma frequently remark that *they are not the same people* they were before they were traumatized” (ibid., 21, 38, my emphasis).

A second example is from Jean Améry—a WWII resistance fighter, Holocaust survivor, and victim of torture, who, before committing suicide, described his experience as follows: “Whoever was tortured, stays tortured. Torture is ineradicably burned into him, even when no clinically objective traces can be detected. . . . It is still not over. Twenty-two years later I am still dangling over the ground by dislocated arms, panting, and accusing myself” (Améry 1980, 34, 36).

Both testimonies allow us to understand trauma as a fundamental attunement to the world. After the traumatic events they experienced, Brison’s and Améry’s respective attunements to the world deeply and irreversibly changed. Their *trauma* is now the lens through which their worlds become present to and make sense to them. Trauma remains in the background of their thoughts, beliefs, desires, feelings, and actions. In a profound way, it colors their day-to-day embodied existence and, in this sense, provides an altogether different revelatory dimension to their lives. Heidegger does not discuss trauma in *Being and Time*, but from what I have said, we can see how it too could be considered a fundamental attunement in that it completely and permanently alters the way that we experience ourselves, the world, and those around us. Moreover, for both Brison and Améry, trauma—like anxiety—also brings them face-to-face with their own finitude (and in order to see the profundity of this claim, we must read their complete testimonies). Thus, my elaboration of Heidegger’s account shows that it need not be as limited as he claimed and that other modes of attunement can also do the same kind of basic ontological work.

This brief phenomenological engagement with the notion of trauma as another kind of attunement responds to the two-fold objection that Heidegger’s project is too narrow and problematically prioritizes one mood as being most fundamental. I have expanded his account to be more inclusive of other possible fundamental moods. With this elaboration of Heidegger’s account of attunement, we can see how other modes of attunement, specifically, trauma, can do the same ontological work of fundamentally and permanently altering the way we experience ourselves, the world, and those around us in ontologically relevant ways. Such a phenomenologically informed Heideggerian account of trauma as a fundamental attunement contributes to our understanding of what trauma is and of its profound consequences in that we can see how trauma fundamentally changes who we are, the very structure of our being. By showing how trauma can also be considered a fundamental mood, I have opened up the possibility of expanding Heidegger’s account beyond the strictures of his fundamental ontology, although, admittedly, this was only a very basic elaboration and more work still needs to be done. I have also laid down some of the basic



framework for being able to argue that psychology ought to take seriously a more Heideggerian-informed phenomenology of mood.

#### 4.4 The Problem of the Body

Regarding the charge of neglecting the body, Heidegger is guilty. Moreover, such neglect undermines the phenomenological dimension of his project (broadly construed) in that one of *Being and Time*'s central premises is that Dasein exists as being-in-the-world. The suppressed premise is that in existing in-the-world, Dasein is embodied. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger acknowledges, parenthetically, that "this 'bodily nature' hides a whole problematic of its own, though we shall not treat it here" (Heidegger 1927, 108/1962, 143). It goes without saying that simply making such a statement does not compensate for his failure to address the issue of embodiment. Although he contrasts moods as "existential modes" with "degrees of feeling-tones," he does not say much more about the body or the feeling or expression of moods, aside from fact that these are not disclosive in the ontological sense, which itself is a questionable claim (Heidegger 1927, 139, 142/1962, 178, 181). Such an oversight would have to be corrected and an embodied, phenomenological dimension of the lived experience of mood would have to be further developed if his account is to be sufficient.

Although I will not defend Heidegger in the face of this charge, it might still be helpful to consider briefly some of the reasons why he does not consider the embodied and physiological dimensions of mood. At the very least, this will help us understand why he contends (albeit mistakenly) that an ontological approach (within the context of fundamental ontology) does not require such an account. Regarding his neglect of the embodied dimension of Dasein's existence, a substantial portion of the *Zollikon Seminars* acknowledges, discusses, and attempts to make good on this problematic omission from his magnum opus and other texts and lecture courses from the 1920s. Indeed, Heidegger makes clear that neither then nor presently is he interested in the body located in physical space (*Körper*); rather, what concerns him is the lived body (*Leib*). He emphasizes the importance of preserving the bodily phenomenon of lived experience (*Leibphänomen*) and its integrity as something unique and irreducible (especially to causal mechanisms) (Heidegger 1987, 30–31, 254–55, 258, 275–76, 293–96/2001, 25, 204, 207, 220, 232–34). However, his treatment of the body throughout the *Zollikon Seminars* still remains quite superficial, lacking the philosophical depth, breadth, and sophistication that we would expect given the gravity of the problem and the centrality that embodiment plays in our existence in the world.<sup>17</sup> To be fair, the *Zollikon Seminars* is comprised of lectures given over a ten-year period (1959–69) to physicians and psychiatrists who perhaps lacked the necessary philosophical background and apparatuses to build the kind of architectonic argument that we would expect in order to make good on this problem in a compelling way. Nevertheless, Heidegger

still falls terribly short of achieving any kind of embodied complement to his fundamental ontology in general and to his account of mood in particular.

Heidegger's reason for not providing a physiology of mood relates to his critique of psychology and of the sciences in general, namely, that both rely on questionable metaphysical assumptions about the nature of human subjectivity. Traditional psychology, Heidegger claims, treats human beings as if their mode of existence were equivalent to a present-at-hand object (1987, 97–104/2001, 75–80). Because psychology tends to focus on the physiological dimension of mood—in particular, its causes—it fails to consider, and therefore cannot engage with, either the ontological structure or the first-personal *experience* of mood. For Heidegger, mood cannot be given scientifically; rather, science already presupposes it (even if science fails to acknowledge this point). “Psychology,” according to Heidegger, “in principle does not enter into the dimension of the structure of Dasein as such, since this problematic is in principle closed to it.”<sup>18</sup> He continues that psychology “becomes blind to what it must presuppose and to what it wants to explain in its own purely genetic way” (1987, 97/2001, 75). His point is not only that psychology is overly concerned with the physiological dimension of mood to the exclusion of considering the kind of beings who experience mood, but also that it is not interested in examining what is most fundamental to mood, namely its disclosive structure of human existence.

Straying from the language of phenomenology, we could say that, for Heidegger, psychology's approach to and study of mood has an operationalist commitment, where operationalism is based on the thesis that we do not know the meaning of a concept unless we have a method of measuring it.<sup>19</sup> Heidegger is critical this kind of commitment.

How do we measure sadness? Evidently, one cannot measure it at all! Why not? If one approached sadness with a method of measuring, the very approach would already be contrary to the meaning of sadness. Thus, one would preclude sadness as sadness beforehand. Here, even the claim to measure is already a violation of the phenomenon as a phenomenon (Heidegger 1987, 106/2001, 82).

Heidegger's point is that when we focus so narrowly on the quantitative dimension of mood and emotion (as much of psychology still does), we fail to engage their ontological-existential, disclosive, revelatory dimensions. As a result, we do not and cannot engage with the qualitative experience of the phenomena. Such methods either ignore or assume to already know the ontology of mood and emotion and instead focus on a derivative account obtained from the measurement. This is a problem because it does not get at what many would consider to be a more (or at least equally) fundamental dimension of mood (and emotion), namely, the experience of them.

I do not want to wholeheartedly endorse Heidegger's sweeping critique of an entire discipline—especially since psychology has come a long way

since Heidegger launched these critiques, and many of Heidegger's critiques are themselves too quick and superficial and are launched from the arm-chair. However, when one considers how mood is understood within social psychology today, one can see the extent to which parts of Heidegger's criticisms still have force (Freeman 2014, Sect. III). In the end, however, it must be underscored that Heidegger's reasons for ignoring the body do not exonerate him of the original charge. Any robust multi-level account of mood would require both an embodied phenomenological and a physiological account of the lived experiences of mood. An expanded treatment of these lived experiences is by no means incongruent with, and could indeed be developed out of, Heidegger's account. However, for me to develop such an account here goes beyond the scope of this paper.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have shown how Heidegger's account of mood can be defended against at least three of the four problems that befall it. Let me conclude by discussing why such an account is one that is worth holding on to (even if it requires further development). I will do so by considering its virtues vis-à-vis the five problems faced by empirically based accounts of mood that I outlined in the introduction. I set out the problems as follows: (1) There is no consensus regarding what moods are, how they should be defined, or how or whether they differ from emotions, feelings, or dispositions; (2) Insofar as there is no standard definition of mood and there is no widely established demarcation between mood and emotion, it is unclear whether most studies that claim to be examining mood are doing so at all; (3) The working concept of mood both in the first generation of empirical work and in more recent studies is basic, unsophisticated, and crude; (4) Most experiments that claim to study moods fail to account for and engage with the possibility that moods are more complex modes of existing than short-lived positively or negatively valenced states that can be induced or caused in an artificial environment; and (5) Most mood studies are not concerned with the personal level of what it feels like to be in a mood or what being in a mood reveals to the one who is in it.

First, and in response to problems (1) and (3), and with some development, I have shown that the apparent sloppiness of Heidegger's account is not a problem. Once cleared up, his account in fact helps to illuminate the fact that emotions and moods as they are experienced in the world *are* messy. His account presents a more phenomenologically accurate one than many of the more tidy analytic accounts that, although conceptually precise, in the end fail to map on to the phenomena.

Second, Heidegger's account of being attuned through mood goes beyond describing a mere psychological state. What is worth holding on to and, indeed, developing further, is the idea that moods are ontological-existential

markers that have a disclosive, revelatory dimension. Much more needs to be said about how this broader understanding of mood could be adequately and accurately studied,<sup>20</sup> but Heidegger's account of mood gives us a point of entry to a more accurate account of how moods manifest themselves in the world.

Third, if a Heideggerian account of mood were to become operative in empirical work on mood, then the problem of atomization of moods could be overcome. Studies would have to be redesigned in such a way as to account for the fact that moods cannot necessarily be severed or atomized from one's context and situation within the world, artificially induced, and studied in one-off sessions; rather, more longitudinal studies would have to be designed that could account for the long-lastingness and pervasiveness of moods and the fact that moods are not responses to the world but, rather, are disclosive of the world (and are the condition for the possibility of emotions, desires, etc.). Insofar as moods constitute who we are at any given moment, they cannot be studied in isolation from a person as a whole.

Finally, because a most basic part of a Heideggerian account of mood is the fact that moods are revelatory of how one is faring in the world, it makes good on the problem of failing to account for the first-personal dimension of what it is like to be in a mood. Indeed, much more needs to be said on each one of the problems that I have discussed, but I hope to have defended Heidegger's account against some of the more serious charges that can be leveled against it and to have demonstrated that his account is worth holding on to in that it shows promise vis-à-vis some of the problems surrounding the empirical literature on mood.<sup>21</sup>

## NOTES

1. For a more detailed account and assessment of these five problems, see Freeman (2014). For a more exhaustive account of problems in the mood literature, see Fox (2008, especially chs. 2–3).
2. Following Macquarrie and Robinson 1962, Guignon 1984, Dreyfus 1991, and Polt 1999, I translate *Stimmung* as “mood.” *Stimmung*, a German noun, refers to the tuning of musical instruments and to one's mood or humor (Heidegger 1927, 134/1962, 172 n.3). It's important to note, however, that the colloquial understanding of “mood” doesn't entirely capture Heidegger's more robust meaning of *Stimmung*. For Heidegger, *Stimmung* goes beyond referring to an affective state, as we'll see. Another possibility is to translate *Stimmung* as “attunement,” which is more etymologically precise, but which loses the folk psychological connotations of our ordinary understanding and use of “mood.” As I discuss in note 4, I've chosen to translate *Befindlichkeit* as “attunement.” This works because, for Heidegger, *Stimmung* and *Befindlichkeit* are two different aspects of the same phenomenon. The former is the mode through which the latter is experienced. Since *Befindlichkeit* always manifests itself through or as *Stimmung*, I hope that by using “attunement” to translate the former, the meaning of “attunement” will also filter through to our understanding of mood.

3. For some standard discussions of the definitions of mood and emotion, see for example, Davidson 1994, Frijda 1994. For discussions that problematize the standard definitions of mood and emotion and provide alternative understandings, see Damasio 1999, Ekman 1992, Forgas 1995, Griffiths 1997, Izard 2007, Lazarus 1991, Prinz 2004.
4. In translating *Befindlichkeit*, I won't use Macquarrie and Robinson's "state-of-mind," since *Befindlichkeit* is not a state and does not refer only to a mind. I also won't use Kiesel's "disposition" since it suggests more of an ontic state and fails to convey *Befindlichkeit's* ontological depth. Wrathall translates *Befindlichkeit* as "disposedness" (2001); Dahlstrom translates it as "disposition." I agree with Haugeland, who notes that "disposition" risks implying subjectivity and also conflicts with an established philosophical usage of the term (2013). Despite its awkwardness, Haugeland uses "findingness" or "so-foundness" (Haugeland 2013, 18 n.1; see also *ibid.* 34 n.26 for a discussion of his reasons for choosing this awkward translation). Askay and Mayr, in the *Zollikon Seminars*, translate *Befindlichkeit* as "ontological disposition," which ignores its corresponding ontic dimension. Dreyfus, Blattner, and Crowell all use "affectedness" or "affectivity," which captures the notion that, existing in the world, we are already affected by and feel things and that things matter to us. However, "affectivity" sounds too much like Kant's "receptivity" and thus imports the very subject/object distinction that Heidegger attempts to overturn. Guignon uses "situatedness," which lacks the important sense of *finden*: that *Dasein* always already "finds itself" in the world. Because none of these options is sufficient, I use Stambaugh's translation, "attunement." Unlike all of the others, attunement captures the ontological depth that Heidegger intends without excluding the ontic manifestation of our experience.
5. See Elpidorou and Freeman forthcoming, Slaby 2015, Freeman 2014, Ratcliffe 2013, 2008, Elpidorou 2013, Hatzimoysis 2012. Also see Crowell 2013, 8–15.
6. In outlining Heidegger's account of being attuned through mood, I draw primarily on *Being and Time*. All references will refer first to the English and then to the German pagination. A full account of all of Heidegger's discussions of mood from the 1920s–1950s would exceed the scope of this paper. From my exposition, it becomes clear that I'm extracting Heidegger's thoughts on mood from their context within his project of fundamental ontology. Although some might have misgivings about this methodological move, in order to argue that his account of mood can be applied beyond its role in his fundamental ontology, we must liberate it from its specific, technical role within his project.
7. This sloppiness isn't unique to Heidegger. It also plagues other accounts that discuss Heidegger's treatment of mood; for example, see Mulhall 1996; Ratcliffe 2002, 2008; Staehler 2007. It is also pervasive in the psychology literature, where little agreement exists regarding the ontology of mood.
8. Moreover, in "What is Metaphysics?" Heidegger admits to such sloppiness (although perhaps not as strongly as I'm stating things) (Heidegger 1976/1993, 100–101).
9. Critiques of Heidegger regarding his neglect of the body are long-standing in the literature, spanning from Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, to Dreyfus 1991, Krell 1992, and Haar 1990/1993. From a feminist perspective, see Chanter 2001 and Rodemeyer 1998. Cerbone 2000 provides a helpful discussion of the problem of the body in early Heidegger, and Aho 2009 attempts to defend Heidegger from this charge.
10. Among those who express skepticism regarding attributing necessary and sufficient conditions to emotion are Rorty 1980, Griffiths 1997, Elster 1999; Goldie 2000. In contrast to the so-called sloppy accounts of mood and

emotion, many of the more systematic, cognitive scientific accounts of emotions that do make such neat and tidy distinctions end up with very precise accounts, but ones that fail to map on in any recognizable way to the experiences of the very states they set out to explain (in that they are concerned with the subpersonal and not the personal level of explanation). See Griffiths 1997, Prinz 2004, Sizer 2000.

11. We can say that attunements and moods actually refer to the same phenomenon but from two different sides: the former refers the ontological structure (or condition for the possibility) and the latter to the ontic mode or manifestation of that structure.
12. Blattner understands moods in terms of atmospheres (2007, 77). This image is very helpful for understanding what Heidegger is getting at since it casts into relief the idea that moods are background disclosive contexts in or through which worldly entities, others, and states of affairs appear and not inner subjective states, as they traditionally are understood. Understanding moods as atmospheres allows us to more clearly see how Dasein always already exists in them, how they are lenses through which the world and others appear, and in these senses, how they both belong to and constitute the being-there of Dasein as revelatory.
13. On such an interpretation, it would also be possible to say that emotions can be ontologically disclosive as well, since emotions are a manifestation of moods.
14. For an argument that Heidegger's account of mood can be fruitfully considered alongside contemporary neuropsychological accounts of mood—especially Damasio's—see Ratcliffe 2002.
15. Thank you one of the anonymous reviewers for pushing me to clarify this point.
16. See Stolorow 2011 for an account of trauma and mourning from a Heideggerian perspective.
17. A full treatment of this issue goes beyond the scope of this paper.
18. Heidegger 1979, 256/1992, 354 and 1987/2001. Heidegger's point is not that psychology ought to be abandoned. Rather, his claim, especially in the *Zollikon Seminars*, is that an ontological-existential, phenomenological approach gets at something more basic to human existence than psychology does. See, for example, Heidegger 1987, 106/2001, 81.
19. Operationalism is considered to be a theory of meaning that states that “we mean by any concept nothing more than a set of operations; the concept is synonymous with the corresponding set of operations” (Bridgman 1927, 5).
20. I begin to do so in Freeman 2014.
21. I would like to thank the editors of this collection for their immense work and, in particular, for their very helpful and constructive comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

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# 13 The Significance of Boredom

## A Sartrean Reading

*Andreas Elpidorou*

Sometimes good things come from boredom. Like Gene . . . and Tina.

Bob Belcher from *Bob's Burgers* (Season 3, Episode 22)

Boredom is the root of all evil. It is very curious that boredom, which itself has such a calm and sedate nature, can have such a capacity to initiate motion. The effect that boredom brings about is absolutely magical, but this effect is one not of attraction but of repulsion.

Kierkegaard 1843/1987, 285

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Boredom matters. It matters not only because boredom has been associated with a plethora of psychological, physical, or even social harms (Abramson and Stinson 1997, Ahmed 1990, Blaszczynski et al. 1990, Eastwood et al. 2012, Fahlman et al. 2013, Mercer and Eastwood 2010, Sommers and Vodanovich 2000); or because it affects a large percentage of the human population (Eastwood et al. 2012, Toohey 2011); or because our world is thought (by some at least) to have become increasingly more boring (Healy 1984; cf. Spacks 1995). It also matters because the very experience of boredom reveals a manner in which we find ourselves as embodied agents with worldly projects and interpersonal and social affairs. As a sign of how we are faring, boredom is polysemic. Being bored with a situation is a sign of a dissatisfaction with, or disinterest in, a situation. It is also, typically, a sign of our inability to attend to features of a given situation, to keep our focus on it, or to become engrossed by it. Relatedly, boredom also indicates a lack of satisfactory mental engagement or a failure to discern and discover meaning. Boredom can even signify a moral transgression or the lack of virtue. To be bored with the beautiful, with your civic duties, or with your children, would be considered a moral or character failure.

Despite its importance, boredom still remains a topic that has garnered, at least in the philosophical literature, limited attention. And even when boredom is discussed, only a partial picture of it emerges. Most philosophical discussions of boredom tend to focus on what might be called ‘existential’ boredom, namely, a type of pervasive state of being that affects a person’s relationships to all possible objects (Healy 1984, Svendsen 2004). The existentially bored finds meaning (almost) nowhere; her world appears pallid or neutral. Existential boredom has a rich and complicated history and is closely related (conceptually, at least) to melancholy, ennui, *tristesse*, *acedia*, and *tedium vitae* (Svendsen 2004, Toohey 2011, cf. Raposa 1999). Perhaps what partly explains philosophers’ attraction to existential boredom is its alleged grand, i.e., metaphysical, import (Heidegger 1983). Regardless of what the allure of existential boredom might be, focusing on existential boredom often leads to the neglect of a simpler and much more mundane type of boredom. Most of us do experience this type of boredom; some, of course, do so more than others. We experience it, for instance, while waiting in line, when our flight is delayed, or when we have to endure the same conversation for the *n*th time.

Yet, even when simple boredom is discussed, it is often portrayed as a distinctively problematic or negative state.<sup>1</sup> To be bored is a problem, and the less one is bored, the better. Simple boredom deserves our attention, according to such a view, only because of its disruptive, negative, or harmful character. If one ought to study simple boredom, one ought to do it for the same reason that one needs to study other harms: to keep them at bay.

Both of these attitudes toward boredom miss, I believe, something quite important. Although mundane or commonplace, simple boredom is not trivial; although unpleasant, it is not an entirely negative state. In fact, an approach that takes simple boredom (hereafter just ‘boredom’) to be essentially a state that needs to be avoided runs the risk of failing to come to terms with the positive aspects of boredom.<sup>2</sup> In what follows, I offer a limited defense of boredom. Boredom, I argue, serves a rather important function in our lives, and my objective in this chapter is to articulate its function and significance.

My approach to the topic of boredom will be informed by Sartre’s account of the emotions as advanced in his 1939 *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*. Sartre’s account is uniquely suited to bring to the fore the function and role of boredom because, for Sartre, emotions, and indeed most affective states, are not only significant but also purposeful. They are significant insofar as they are indicative of the manner in which we exist in the world (Sartre 1939/2004, 11–12, 63), and they are purposeful insofar as they are invested with a finality or functional role (*ibid.*, 48). By examining boredom through the lens of Sartre’s account, I argue that boredom—owing to its affective, cognitive, and volitional character—motivates the pursuit of new goals when the current goal ceases to be satisfactory to the subject. The desire for change that is inherent in boredom increases the possibility

of attuning oneself to emotional, cognitive, and even social opportunities that could have been missed. It also helps to restore the perception that one's activities are meaningful. My aim is not to defend the veracity of Sartre's account of emotion. Nonetheless, by showing that Sartre's account is capable of casting boredom in a positive light and, in doing so, explicating its function, a partial case for its value will be made. A Sartrean reading of boredom provides a much-needed counterbalance to accounts of boredom that portray it as a distinctively negative state.

## 2. SARTRE'S ACCOUNT OF THE EMOTIONS

### 2.1 Overview

For Sartre, emotional episodes are first and foremost ways of apprehending the world (*ibid.*, 35). To experience an emotion is to live *through* that emotion. To be angry (or to experience anger), for instance, is not (primarily) to have an experience *about* anger; when one is angry, anger is only rarely the object of one's consciousness. Rather, to be angry is to experience the world, or part of the world, in a certain affective way (*cf. ibid.*, 34–36).

Emotional consciousness is thus primarily unreflecting consciousness. In emotional experiences, the self is not the positional object of one's emotional consciousness. One is only *non-thetically* conscious of oneself. That is, one is conscious of oneself by “transcend[ing] and apprehend[ing] [oneself] out in the world as a quality of things” (*ibid.*, 38; *cf. Sartre 1937/1960*, 45). Of course, one can reflect both on one's emotional experiences and on oneself as the subject of those experiences. But one does not have to. To be in an emotional state one need not be conscious of oneself as being in such a state. Nor does one need to be conscious (in a second-order way) of one's emotional consciousness. One needs only to apprehend and experience the world in a certain affective manner. “Emotional consciousness,” Sartre emphasizes, “is primarily consciousness of the world” (1939/2004, 34).

In our everyday, ordinary existence, worldly entities are presented to us already as a part of a causal and instrumental nexus. Entities invite or afford certain actions: “they appear to us as potentialities that lay claim to existence” (*ibid.*, 39). The world, as given in this instrumental guise, is “deterministic,” that is to say, prescribed means bring about (or are meant to achieve) prescribed ends (*ibid.*). “From this [instrumental or practical] point of view, the world around us [. . .] appears to be all furrowed with strait and narrow paths leading to such and such determinate end”(ibid.). To advance one's academic career one must publish papers; to get home at night one must walk through a dark alley; to alleviate one's cold symptoms, one must see a doctor; and to find a life-partner one must date.

Often enough, however, the world presents us with obstacles. Either we are unable to achieve the desired means or the means simply cease to be available to us: I do want to advance my career, but the paper is just too hard to write; I wish to get home, but I am too scared to walk through the alley alone; I do want to get better, but it is impossible to make an appointment with the doctor; and I do want a life-partner, but I do not want to (or I cannot) open up to anyone. It is when we encounter such difficulties and many others that emotional episodes occur. Sartre explains:

We can now conceive what an emotion is. It is a transformation of the world. When the paths before us become too difficult, or when we cannot see our way, we can no longer put up with such an exacting and difficult world. All ways are barred and nevertheless we must act. So then we try to change the world; that is, to live it as though the relations between things and their potentialities were not governed by deterministic processes but by magic (*ibid.*, 39–40).

What occurs during an emotional episode is that we alter our perception of the world. We confer on worldly entities or situations alternative qualities, i.e., qualities other than the ones that they are perceived to have in their instrumental guise. Emotions transform our world, but they do so in a unique fashion; the transformation that they bring about is, according to Sartre, *magical*. It is magical insofar as the world itself (i.e., its material constitution) does not change. “[E]motional conduct is not on the same plane as other kinds of behaviour; it is not *effectual* . . . Emotional behaviour seeks by itself, and without modifying the structure of the object, to confer another quality upon it . . .” (*ibid.*, 41). Emotions give rise to a change without causing one. Or, better, emotions change our world by changing *our consciousness of the world*. In bringing about such a transformation, the difficulties that we encounter magically disappear: I do not have to write the paper, for my career is no longer seen as important; I walk through the alley with my eyes closed so that I see nothing; there is no need to make an appointment to see a doctor, for doctors are perceived as worthless; and I have no reason to date because celibate life is now seen as preferable to life in matrimony. Emotions are solutions to problems that we cannot solve via ordinary, practical means.

The transformation that emotions effectuate on the world might be magical, but it is not inconsequential. When we undergo emotional episodes, we find ourselves in a world that is different from the instrumental world. “Consciousness does not limit itself to the projection of affective meanings upon the world around it; it *lives* the new world it has thereby constituted—lives it directly, commits itself to it, and suffers from the qualities that the concomitant behavior has outlined” (*ibid.*, 51). We are absorbed or engrossed by the world that we live in through our emotional consciousness. Emotional consciousness is, in fact, “caught in its own snare” (*ibid.*,

52). The new qualities, relationships, and demands that have been magically conferred upon the world matter to us, for we believe in them. Emotional consciousness is thus not “playacting” (ibid., 50). Or, if it is a kind of play-acting, “the play,” Sartre notes, “is one that we believe in,” i.e., it is one that we do not recognize *as* play (ibid., 41).<sup>3</sup>

## 2.2 The Function of Emotions: The Paradigm of Fear

Emotions are ways of magically transforming the world through the use of one’s body in response to experiences of difficulties. As magical transformations of one’s situation, emotions serve a function: they are meant to be unreflective solutions to perceived difficulties.

Consider passive fear, one of the emotions that Sartre discusses in the *Sketch* (ibid., 42). ‘Passive fear’ refers to a type of conduct that takes place during and shortly after the experience of a threatening situation.<sup>4</sup> In passive fear, the subject remains still or frozen. Freezing is, in fact, a typical initial reaction to the perception of a threatening situation. Upon encountering a threat or danger, e.g., an approaching wild animal or predator, humans and other animals will manifest a series of defensive reflexes that are commonly and collectively known as the “defensive cascade” (Marks 1987, ch. 3, Rattner 1967). When the predator is initially detected, the fearful agent freezes: he or she remains motionless and orients himself or herself towards the threat. It is hypothesized that the value of freezing is to increase the chances that the agent avoids detection and, in turn, to allow the agent to locate the predator, to assess the threat, and to prepare for action (Bovin et al. 2008, Marks 1987, 58–60). If the predator continues to approach, freezing is replaced by a series of defensive postures or movements. Most often, the subject flees in an attempt to escape. If escape is not possible, the subject fights or resists the attack.

Freezing, flight, and fight do not exhaust the gamut of defensive responses. In some situations that involve extreme fear, and during which escape or resistance are not viable options, the subject will enter a state of tonic immobility (Maser and Gallup 1977). Tonic immobility is an automatic and uncontrollable reaction to life-threatening situations, such as a close encounter with a wild animal, a sexual assault, or a plane crash (Fizman et al. 2008, Johnson 1984, Marx et al. 2008). During an episode of tonic immobility, the subject experiences, *inter alia*, a temporary inability to move (i.e., a gross motor inhibition), suppression of vocalization, unresponsiveness to external stimuli, and periods of eye closure (Abrams et al. 2009, Bovin et al. 2008). Although tonic immobility bears a resemblance to the freezing behavior that takes place immediately after the perception of a threat or danger,<sup>5</sup> the two types of behavior are importantly different. Freezing—sometimes called also “attentive immobility” (Marks 1987, 58)—is associated with increased “responsivity to stimuli and volitional action tendencies” and occurs, at least in cases where a predator is involved,

early in the encounter stage, i.e., when the predator is still somewhat distant (Bovin et al. 2008, 402). In contrast, tonic immobility involves unresponsiveness to external stimuli (sometimes even analgesia) and it is thought to be a last-resort reaction to imminent danger.

Unfortunately, Sartre's discussion of passive fear does not distinguish between freezing (or attentive immobility) and tonic immobility. Even more problematically, Sartre asserts that during an episode of passive fear the fearful subject may even faint. "I see a ferocious beast coming towards me: my legs give way under me, my heart beats more feebly, I turn pale, fall down and faint away" (Sartre 1939/2004, 42). Consequently, it is unclear to which type of conduct 'passive fear' should refer. Are freezing, tonic immobility, and fainting all different expressions of the same emotion, i.e., passive fear? For present purposes, I will not adjudicate this issue. Instead, I shall assume, in line with Sartre's comment, that regardless of what the expressions and behavioral manifestations of passive fear might be, passive fear is meant to be a solution to a perceived threat when normal deterministic means are incapable of dealing with the threat. When one cannot outrun, hide from, or fight a predator, one finds *solace* in passive fear by magically transforming the world (or at least attempting to do so). By freezing oneself, one tries to freeze magically the threat; by fainting and losing consciousness, one tries to annihilate magically the threat.

Two points must be made clear. First, although the function of passive fear is to provide the fearful subject with an escape, it is not one that necessarily (or even most often) helps the subject to escape. That is to say, passive fear is not for Sartre a strategy (evolutionarily adapted or not) that increases the chances of survival. "No conduct could seem worse adapted to the danger than this [i.e., fainting], which leaves me defenseless. And nevertheless it is a behavior of *escape*" (ibid., 42). Passive fear gives rise to a magical transformation of the world, but insofar as the transformation is magical, the material constitution of the world remains unaffected. Passive fear as a solution to a perceived threat is thus severely limited, sometimes even impotent. By freezing, one does not freeze the threat. By fainting, the danger does not disappear; only my consciousness of it does.

Second, passive fear is escapist behavior but it is not one that is perceived as such by the agent. As Sartre is quick to emphasize: ". . . let no one suppose that it is a refuge *for me*, that I am trying to save *myself* . . . I have not come out of the non-reflective plane. . . ." (ibid.). In passive fear, my consciousness is and remains *of* the world (ibid., 36).

A similar story can be told for other emotions. Active fear, for example, is also an escapist solution to a perceived threat. Often, in active fear, one flees from the threat. Fleeing, however, is not a means towards an end. That is, it is not a calculated attempt to protect or hide oneself. Sartre, in fact, insists that to suppose that fleeing involves calculation is to misdescribe active fear. The inclusion of calculation would fail to see active fear as an emotional response. Instead, it would render it a prudential action, one during which

the subject relates to the world in an instrumental manner. Like freezing or fainting during passive fear, fleeing is a way of magically transforming one's world in order to negate the threat or difficulty. "Flight is fainting away in play; it is magical behavior which negates the dangerous object with one's whole body, by reversing the vectorial structure of the space we live in and suddenly creating a potential direction on the *other side*" (ibid., 43).

Passive sadness or melancholy is again thought to be a response to perceived difficulties. It often arises, Sartre notes, when conditions necessary in order to achieve certain desirable ends are missing or have been taken from me. I lost my job, yet my need for income persists; I lost a friend but I need his companionship. In order to achieve these ends, I now need to look for, and secure, new means. Passive sadness solves this difficulty by "suppressing the obligation to look for these new ways, by transforming the present structure of the world, replacing it with a totally undifferentiated structure" (ibid., 44). Passive sadness changes the way that we experience the world. If the ends that we previously desired are no longer attractive to us, then there is no need to secure new means for achieving those ends.

What holds for fear (passive or active) and passive sadness holds, *mutatis mutandis*, for anger, joy, and countless other emotions. Or so Sartre maintains. In experiencing an emotion, the subject is effectuating a magical transformation of the world in order to resolve a difficulty that he or she encounters.<sup>6</sup> In emotional consciousness, the world is no longer given in its instrumental guise. It is instead experienced emotionally, i.e., magically.

### 3. BOREDOM: A SARTREAN APPROACH

Given the affective or emotional nature of boredom, a Sartrean account of boredom ought to conform to the general paradigm of emotions delineated above. Hence, to be bored is to apprehend the world (or a worldly situation) magically; as a magical consciousness, boredom arises or is motivated by the perception of certain difficulties; and the experience of boredom is meant to be an attempted solution to those difficulties. In our effort to specify further the nature of boredom according to Sartre's account, we must explicate (a) the problem to which boredom is supposed to provide a solution and (b) the manner in which boredom attempts to solve the problem.

#### 3.1 The Problem of Boredom

According to Sartre, the perception of a threat can give rise to fear, whereas the realization that certain desired means are no longer available to us can give rise to sadness. But what is the difficulty that gives rise to boredom? That is to say, what is the problem to which boredom is supposed to be the answer?

Boredom, I propose, is a reaction to a perceived mismatch between our occurrent desires and what the world is offering to us. More specifically,



boredom arises when (a) the subject's desire for stimulation (or engagement) is not met by the stimulation (or engagement) afforded to the subject by the world and (b) the subject is aware of his or her unfulfilled desire for stimulation (or engagement). The perceived mismatch between the agent's desired stimulation and the availability of environmental stimulation can vary along two dimensions. First, there can be a mismatch between the *kind* of stimulation that the agent wishes for and that which is given or made available to the agent. One experiences such mismatch, for example, when one wishes for novelty (say, a new episode of one's favorite TV series) but instead is presented with a situation that is all too familiar (say, a rerun of an older and previously seen episode). Second, one can experience a mismatch between the *amount* of stimulation that one wishes and the amount of stimulation that one is given. For instance, one experiences this mismatch when one attends a lecture that one finds not to be challenging enough; in this case, one desires not a different type of stimulation (i.e., something that is not a lecture) but, rather, a lecture that is more stimulating. Other things being equal, the greater the mismatch in quantity between stimulation (or engagement) desired and stimulation (or engagement) given, the more intense the resulting feeling of boredom will be. Other things being equal, a lecture that is too elementary for a subject will be more boring than a lecture that is only slightly below the intellectual level of the subject.

The above characterization of boredom has a number of advantages. First, it fits well with our folk psychological understanding of boredom insofar as it captures something essential that happens in the situations that most often elicit boredom. Boredom is typically experienced when dealing with something that is monotonous or repetitive; something that is overly familiar or predictable; something that is compulsory; or something that is either too hard to comprehend or simply not challenging enough. All of these cases are cases in which we desire something different from what the world makes available to us. In monotonous and repetitive activities, we are bored because we want more diversity than we can find; in familiar or predictable situations, we are bored for we wish for novelty, unfamiliarity, or even surprise, yet we find none; during compulsory tasks, we are bored because we desire to do that which is not required of us or we desire not to do that which is required of us; and in situations in which we are presented with an input (a lecture, a book, a film, etc.) that is not given to us at the right level, we are bored for we wish for something that is at the appropriate level. In all of the aforesaid examples, the desire to be stimulated in a way different from what the situation affords is necessary for the experience of boredom. For instance, a monotonous or repetitive situation does not suffice to elicit boredom. One also needs the desire to engage in an activity that is not monotonous or repetitive. This consequence of the provided account of boredom is in line with empirical evidence showing that monotony is not a sufficient condition for the occurrence of boredom (Perkins and Hill 1985).



Second, an account of boredom that maintains that boredom results from the perception of a mismatch between the need for stimulation (or engagement) and the availability of stimulation (or engagement) enjoys the support of a number of contemporary psychological theories of boredom. Despite the fact that there is no consensus as to how to precisely define boredom (Eastwood et al. 2012, Vodanovich 2003), a review of the psychological literature on boredom does yield a fairly uniform description of boredom across the different theories. According to this description of boredom, which echoes the Sartrean account, boredom is a state in which one is unable to engage with the world in a satisfying manner (Bench and Lench 2013, 461, Berlyne 1960, Csikszentmihalyi 1975, Eastwood et al. 2012, 482, Fahlman et al. 2013, 69, Fiske and Maddi 1961, Greenson 1953, Hebb 1966, Mikulas and Vodanovich 1993, Todman 2003).

Finally, a Sartrean reading of boredom supports the phenomenologically accurate observation that boredom admits of many specific objects. A lecture, a work of art, a movie, a conversation, or an intimate relationship can all be found to be boring, depending on what the subject is looking for in those situations and what the situations have to offer to the subject. In fact, the proposed Sartrean account of boredom allows that, in principle, i.e., under the right circumstances, anything can be experienced as boring.

### 3.2 The Significance of Boredom

For Sartre, emotional or affective states arise on account of the perception of a difficulty. As stated above, in the case of boredom, the difficulty is the perceived inability to engage with a situation in the manner in which one desires. If that is the problem to which boredom is a solution, then what is the attempted solution that boredom offers? In order to articulate the solution that boredom offers, and thereby its function, we need to say more about the type of transformation that boredom effectuates on the world. That is to say, we need to speak of the very experience of boredom.

Boredom is a transient, aversive state marked by feelings of dissatisfaction, restlessness, and weariness. All three feelings are essential to the state of boredom and subjects who experience boredom report having those feelings (Fahlman et al. 2013, Hill and Perkins 1985, O'Brien 2014, Perkins and Hill 1985, Thackray et al. 1975, Van Tilburg and Igou 2012). First, at the core of boredom, there is a feeling of dissatisfaction with one's situation. To be bored by or with something (or someone) is to be dissatisfied by or with it (or them). That is to say, if something is the object of boredom, then it is something in which one has lost interest. In fact, to proclaim that you are bored with an object but at the same time interested in it is almost to utter a contradiction.

Boredom also includes restlessness, for when one is bored one is not content being in that state. Rather, while bored one wishes to be doing something else—often, anything but what one is currently doing (Van Tilburg

and Igou 2012). Boredom is hence a state from which we seek to escape. Finally, boredom involves a feeling of weariness. To be bored by something is to experience a certain type of weariness or mental fatigue. The boring is, in a sense, tiresome.

A state of boredom thus includes two affective components that appear, *prima facie* at least, to be incongruent with each other: restlessness and weariness. Both of them, however, are necessary components of boredom (Berlyne 1960, Bernstein 1975, Fenichel 1953, Fiske and Maddi 1961). A state that includes a sense of dissatisfaction and restlessness but lacks weariness is a state that is closer to frustration than to boredom. A state that includes a sense of dissatisfaction and weariness but lacks restlessness is a state that is closer to apathy or even sadness than to boredom. As O'Brien puts it, when I am bored, "I am weary with one thing and restless for another. I lack energy, interest, and patience to attend to what is at hand; but I do have energy to burn, and I long for something else to burn it on" (2014, 4). The combination of weariness and restlessness, along with a sense of dissatisfaction or loss of interest in what one is doing, characterizes the affective component of boredom.

When one is bored, one not only feels a certain way, but also thinks that the situation in which one finds oneself lacks significance or meaning; one wishes to engage in a different and more satisfying activity; and, often, one has a desire to be challenged (Van Tilburg and Igou 2012). Furthermore, the bored subject experiences a slow passage of time (Conrad 1997, Fenichel 1953, Hartocollis 1972, Martin et al. 2006, O'Connor 1967) and has difficulty focusing his or her attention (Bernstein 1975, Eastwood et al. 2012, Fisher 1993, Martin et al. 2006). The entire experiential content of boredom—the affective, cognitive, and volitional aspects of boredom—has been shown to distinguish it from other negative affective states such as sadness, anger, and frustration (Van Tilburg and Igou 2012). That is to say, boredom is a distinct affective or emotional state insofar as it has a unique experiential signature.

To experience boredom is to experience oneself and one's surroundings in a certain way. Or, in Sartre's terminology, an episode of boredom effectuates a magical transformation of the world, and the very experience of boredom is revealing of the character of this transformation. When bored, the situation in which we find ourselves appears to be no longer interesting. There is a perceived loss of value, meaning, or significance. The situation appears foreign and no longer attracts us. At the same time, we feel restless. We wish to escape the state of boredom. We cannot focus our attention on features of the present situation. Instead, our mind wanders, thinking of alternative goals that we can pursue and wishing that we could be pursuing them. Finally, the perception of a slower passage of time that one experiences in an episode of boredom contributes to the aversive character of boredom (Sackett et al. 2010). The unsatisfying situation with which we are engaging seems to last longer and we feel trapped in it.

We are now in a position to specify the significance and function of boredom. On account of its affective, cognitive, and volitional character, boredom facilitates the promotion of alternative goals when the goal with which we are currently engaged is no longer satisfying (Bench and Lench 2013). The negative and aversive experience of boredom motivates subjects to pursue a behavior that appears to them to be more meaningful or more interesting (Barbalet 1999, Elpidorou 2014a, Van Tilburg and Igou 2012). In Sartrean terms, by transforming the situation into one that is both unpleasant to the subject and also bereft of meaning or significance, the experience of boredom offers the subject an escape. That is to say, it creates a world that ‘pushes’ the subject out of an unsatisfactory situation and, at the same time, it makes alternative situations salient and attractive. Of course, boredom does not motivate one to engage in any particular behavior; boredom does not specify an alternative goal or project to be pursued. It simply motivates one to pursue goals that differ from those currently pursued. Typically, boredom will motivate one to seek a novel stimulation, if one’s current situation is perceived as familiar or predictable; or it will motivate a search for a challenge, if one feels unchallenged (Dahlen et al. 2004).

The desire for change that is inherent in a state of boredom underlies the significance of boredom. First, it motivates subjects to pursue opportunities that they would otherwise miss. Second, and most importantly, it promotes the restoration of the perception that one’s activities are meaningful and congruent with one’s overall projects (see, e.g., Elpidorou 2014a, Heine et al. 2006, Locke and Latham 1990, Sansone et al. 1992). If boredom arises on account of the perception of an unfulfilled desire to engage with the environment in a satisfactory way, then in order to alleviate boredom one will seek activities that are judged to be satisfactory and in line with one’s plans, wishes, and desires.

Boredom thus turns out to be informative both of the character of the situation in which one finds oneself and of one’s interests, goals, and even self-perceived well-being. That is because boredom signals the presence of an unfulfilling situation—one that does not meet the expectations and desires of the agent. In doing so, boredom acts as a regulatory state. Not only does it inform one when one is out of tune with one’s interest, but also, on account of its negative and aversive character, it motivates one to engage in a situation that is perceived as meaningful. Boredom, in other words, is a state that tries to keep one in touch with one’s projects.

Given its regulatory aspect, it is a mistake to think of boredom as a passive state of disinterest. It is also a mistake to think of boredom, as it is often thought, as an inconsequential state. Boredom matters, for not only does it inform us of the presence of an unsatisfactory situation, it also motivates us to escape that situation. Following a Sartrean account, the state of boredom is not a *problem* but rather a solution: it is part of a solution to the problem of an unsatisfactory worldly existence.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The proposed account of boredom is not intended as a definition of boredom. It would be a mistake to expect to derive a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for boredom from a Sartrean account of affective states and emotions. This is especially so when even the psychological literature on boredom does not offer such a definition. The benefit of a Sartrean reading of boredom lies elsewhere: it allows us to cast a positive light on the phenomenon of boredom. In so doing, a Sartrean reading of boredom contributes to a specification of the function and role of boredom in our everyday lives.

In a passage that is used as an epigraph to this essay, Kierkegaard writes the following:

Boredom is the root of all evil. It is very curious that boredom, which itself has such a calm and sedate nature, can have such a capacity to initiate motion. The effect that boredom brings about is absolutely magical, but this effect is one not of attraction but of repulsion. (Kierkegaard 1843/1987, 285)

Kierkegaard, I hope to have shown, is only partly correct in his assessment of the character of boredom. He is incorrect to declare that boredom is the root of all evil. Not only does boredom have redeeming qualities, it is a psychological state that is important for sustaining our well-being. But Kierkegaard's description of boredom is partly correct. It captures an aspect of boredom that Sartre's theory helped us to underscore, namely, its magical character. Boredom is magical insofar as when one is bored, the manner in which one experiences and relates to the world becomes transformed. While one is bored, one lives in a world that is, in a sense, alien to one: the world appears to be disconnected to one's projects; it is experienced as unyielding and difficult. Fortunately, the experience of such a magical world is one that is, at least for most of us, temporary. Due to its aversive character, boredom *itself* 'pushes' us out of the state of boredom. For the most part, boredom is thus self-effacing: when our current goal ceases to be stimulating, interesting, or challenging, boredom motivates us to pursue a new goal, one that is in line with our interests and projects. In the absence of boredom, we would remain trapped in unfulfilling situations. We need boredom in order to escape from what we find to be tedious, uninteresting, and utterly humdrum.

#### NOTES

1. There are, of course, exceptions. For example, Nietzsche and Russell both comment on the value of boredom. Nietzsche (1974, 108) stresses the creative force of boredom, whereas Russell notes the motivational potential of

boredom (1996, 48) and claims that the ability to endure boredom is essential to a happy life (*ibid.*, 52). More sustained defenses of boredom can be found in Heidegger 1983/2001 and Brodsky 1995. Heidegger's discussion, however, focuses on "profound boredom," a type of boredom that is perhaps a philosophical construct that does not clearly map on to a concrete experience (1983/2001, 162). Even if one accepts Heidegger's contention that profound boredom exists and carries great ontological significance insofar as it reveals our unexploited possibilities and brings us face-to-face with our temporal character, Heidegger still finds no value in the more mundane experience of boredom, namely, the psychological state that is the topic of this essay. Finally, Brodsky (1995) holds that boredom has value but only insofar as the experience of boredom can teach us our "utter insignificance" and "puts [our] existence in perspective" (109). Even if Brodsky is right to hold that boredom has existential significance, this is not the only positive role that boredom plays in our lives. Or so I argue in this chapter.

2. My focus in this essay is the actual experience of boredom and *not* boredom proneness, i.e., the propensity to experience boredom in a wide range of situations (Farmer and Sundberg 1986, Neu 1998, Fahlman et al. 2013; cf. Fenichel 1953, O'Hanlon 1981). One can experience boredom without one necessarily being prone to boredom: the experience of boredom does not have to be the manifestation of boredom proneness. For more on the distinction between boredom and boredom proneness, see Fahlman et al. 2013 and Elpidorou 2014a.
3. There is empirical evidence to support Sartre's claim that during an affective experience the world appears different to us. For instance, extreme fear is associated with certain perceptual distortions of feared stimuli (Teachman et al. 2008) and fearful subjects overestimate, to a great extent, high heights when they are imagining falling from a height (Clerkin et al. 2009, Stefanucci et al. 2008).
4. The ensuing description of passive fear is influenced by Hatzimoysis 2014.
5. For instance, both are defensive reactions that begin abruptly, they have comparable duration, and are both states of high arousal; see Marks 1987.
6. The emotions of horror, awe, and wonder appear to be exceptions to the hitherto provided account of the emotions (Sartre 1939/2004, 55–56). In the case of horror, Sartre tells us, it is the world *itself* that is apprehended as magical. And it is apprehended as such without requiring a transformation. Ultimately, Sartre's account of the emotions makes use of a double understanding of magic. On the one hand, during emotional experiences such as fear (*ibid.*, 42–43), sadness (*ibid.*, 43–45), and joy (*ibid.*, 46–47), we transform both our consciousness and our experience of the world—the instrumental, determinist world disappears and in its place a magical world is ushered in. Emotions, Sartre writes, "are . . . reducible to the constitution of a magic world, by making use of our bodies as instruments of incantation" (*ibid.*, 47; cf. *ibid.*, 57). On the other hand, during certain other emotional episodes such as horror, terror, or wonder, we apprehend the world magically from the very beginning. Magic, according to this latter analysis of the emotions, is not a quality that we assign to the world (*ibid.*, 56). Rather, it is part of the very existential structure of the world. For purposes of this essay, I shall not examine whether the *Sketch* advances a single, unified account of emotions that accommodates this double role of magic; I do so elsewhere (Elpidorou 2014b). It suffices to say, however, the following: the type of boredom that is the subject of this essay, i.e., simple boredom, behaves less like horror and more like anger, sadness, or fear. The immediacy or urgency that one experiences when one is in a state of horror is not present in simple boredom. Nor is it true that in simple boredom

the entire world is boring. Moreover, simple boredom can most often be easily and quickly alleviated, whereas horror cannot.

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Section VI

# Naturalism and Cognition



# 14 Prospects for a Naturalized Phenomenology

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Though Husserl and his successors were officially opposed to naturalism, phenomenologists have always drawn on empirical sources to some extent. This trend has increased in the last few decades, and it is now common for phenomenologists to draw on psychology, neuroscience, and other cognitive sciences.<sup>1</sup> What is now called ‘naturalized phenomenology’ dates to the 1990s, when Francisco Varela published “Neurophenomenology: A Methodological Remedy for the Hard Problem” (Varela 1996), and a multi-authored volume entitled *Naturalized Phenomenology* appeared (Petitot et al. 1999).<sup>2</sup> In the late 1990s, the journal *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* was launched and has been active to the present day. Today, ‘naturalized phenomenology’ is a standard phrase, occurring in over 200 journal articles and book chapters to date,<sup>3</sup> and the primary subject of several subsequent anthologies (Embree 2004, Gallagher and Schmicking 2010) and special issues of journals (Carel and Meacham 2013, Hasenkamp and Thomson 2013).

A similar process has occurred in psychology and the cognitive sciences. While it was common in the nineteenth century to consider introspective results alongside physiology and experimental psychology,<sup>4</sup> introspectionist approaches to psychology fell out of favor during the behaviorist period.<sup>5</sup> After the cognitive revolution of the 1950s, psychologists began to take internal states seriously again, though consciousness remained largely off limits. In the 1990s some philosophers and psychologists persuasively argued that subjectivity was a legitimate and essential topic for naturalistic study (Baars 1988, Chalmers 1995, Mangan 1991, Searle 1992). Perhaps the defining moment of this period was the first Tucson conference, ‘Towards a Science of Consciousness’ in 1994. Today, consciousness studies is a full-fledged interdisciplinary research area, with several dedicated journals (e.g., *Journal of Consciousness Studies* and *Consciousness and Cognition*) and active professional organizations (e.g., Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness and the Center of Consciousness Studies).

Many questions arise in connection with these developments. Why did Husserl oppose naturalism to begin with? Were his arguments sound? If interactions between phenomenology and the cognitive sciences are allowed,

what form or forms should they take? Does phenomenology (as a discipline) have any special status vis-à-vis the cognitive sciences, and consciousness studies in particular? Does it have anything unique to contribute? In what follows, I provide an overview of these issues, offer my prognosis on some of the key questions, and briefly suggest a specific direction that naturalized phenomenology might take.

In section 1, I give an overview of Husserl's attitude towards the natural sciences and psychology in particular. As we will see, his view is fairly subtle and develops in interesting ways over the course of his career. In section 2, I review developments in phenomenological psychology after Husserl. I gather evidence that phenomenologists in this period regarded phenomenology as having methodological priority over other sciences. In section 3, I describe the kind of approach to naturalized phenomenology that has become standard in recent years, whereby phenomenology is an 'equal partner' in an interdisciplinary matrix of approaches. In section 4, I offer my prognosis of these various forms of naturalized phenomenology. Though much of my argument is deflationary (I believe Husserl's anti-naturalist arguments largely fail, and that phenomenology as a historical movement has not produced any fundamentally novel methodological insights), I do believe that phenomenology has something important to offer: a rich source of theories of and approaches to consciousness. In section 5, I describe a specific and, I believe, promising form of naturalized phenomenology.

## 1. HUSSERL ON PSYCHOLOGY

Husserl had a complex view of the relationship between phenomenology and psychology, which he developed over the entire course of his professional career, from *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (Husserl 1890–1901/1970) to *Crisis* (Husserl 1954/1970). The most relevant texts are *Phenomenological Psychology* (Husserl 1925/1977), *Ideas II* (Husserl 1952/1982), *Ideas III* ("Studies in the Foundations of Science," Husserl 1971/1980), The Encyclopedia articles (Husserl 1997), *Crisis* (Husserl 1954/1970), *The Prolegomena to the Logical Investigations* (Husserl 1900–01/1975), and the article *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft* (Husserl 1965). In these texts, Husserl develops a sophisticated view of the relationship between his own phenomenological program and empirical psychology, as he understood it.<sup>6</sup>

Since Husserl's main critique of psychology (which also contains interesting discussions of psychology in its own right) is based on his transcendental, constitutive program, we begin with a review of these aspects of his theory.

### 1.1 Transcendental Phenomenology and the Constitution of Psychology

The goal of transcendental phenomenology is to study how reality is constituted in flowing streams of conscious experience. The project is (at least

on one interpretation) broadly idealist: to describe a metaphysical picture in which all categories of being are ultimately founded on subjective conscious processes.<sup>7</sup> From this standpoint, consciousness plays a fundamental epistemic role. Transcendental consciousness, and more specifically the transcendental ego or ‘I’, is the sole basis of all being. Chairs, tables, mathematical theories, works of fiction, suits of armor, passing breezes—each of these is real insofar as it is a kind of unity or stable nexus in the flux of conscious experience. Since the emphasis of this project is on how entities are constructed or ‘constituted’ in the flow experience, transcendental phenomenology is sometimes also referred to as ‘constitutive phenomenology.’

When reading his comments on psychology, it is crucial to bear in mind how seriously Husserl took this project (especially after 1905). For Husserl, all the entities and relations posited by all the sciences, from physics through psychology and sociology, are part of reality as we know it and are thus constituted by transcendental consciousness. Electromagnetic fields, action potentials in the brain, social structures, and, crucially, what we take to be the mental states of ourselves and others (desires, beliefs, pains, etc.), as well as their neural bases, are all the proper subject matter of transcendental phenomenology. Insofar as scientific entities are stable unities in the flux of, for example, a scientist’s consciousness, they are proper topics of constitutive phenomenology.

*Ideas II* and *III* (Husserl 1952/1982 and Husserl 1971/1980) contain Husserl’s most detailed discussion of the constitution of scientific entities. Towards the end of *Ideas II*, Husserl focuses on the constitution of psychological entities.<sup>8</sup> For example, he considers how we experience mental states in relation to bodily states. We clearly have some sense of this relation in everyday experience. For example, I know that if I move an object over my arm, a determinate sequence of sensations will result, which can be repeated:

If an object moves mechanically over the surface of my skin, touching it, then I obviously have a succession of sensings ordered in a determinate way. If it always moves in the same way, with the same pressure, touching the same parts of the body at the same pace, then the result is obviously always the same. . . . (Husserl 1952, 154/1982, 161–62).

So we have some sense of what Husserl calls “psycho-physical conditionality” (*psychophysischen Konditionalität*), a relation between our bodily states and our conscious states (*ibid.*, 64ff./69ff). To develop the constitutive phenomenology of psycho-physical conditionality is to develop a kind of phenomenology of the mind-body relation, an account of how we experience bodies in their relation to sensory and conscious states.

## 1.2 Transcendental Phenomenology Cannot Be Naturalized

Transcendental phenomenology is practiced in a special frame of mind or ‘attitude,’ an attitude of philosophical reflection in which all assumptions

about reality are bracketed, and the phenomenologist focuses on the way entities are disclosed in the flux of experience. This is the famous Husserlian method of *epoché*. The transcendental attitude of the phenomenologist is contrasted with the ‘natural attitude’ of everyday life, within which we do not ask about the constitution of reality, but simply take for granted that physical reality exists and is the way we believe it to be.

If transcendental consciousness is the sole basis of reality, it is a mistake to assume that the physical world is the basis of reality. In a similar way, it is a mistake to assume that any science of the natural attitude is ontologically fundamental.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps Husserl’s most detailed reasoning along these lines is in the article “Philosophy as Rigorous Science” (Husserl 1965). The article contains several arguments, but the main argument is that phenomenology studies “being as the correlate of [pure] consciousness” (Husserl 1965, 89), while sciences of the natural attitude, like empirical psychology, simply assume that conscious states are natural events occurring in space-time and so are in no position to address fundamental questions about being. Efforts to “naturalize pure consciousness” are thus “victims [of a] . . . facile confusion between pure and empirical consciousness” (ibid., 92).<sup>10</sup> Consciousness *qua* fundamental constituting medium is not just one more type of real thing to be studied using empirical methods: it is the very basis of reality as we know it, and must be studied in an appropriate way.<sup>11</sup>

Husserl is not anti-scientific; indeed, one can draw on the sciences and admire their results (they fill Husserl with “wondering admiration” (Husserl 1913, 56–7/2012, 59)). His point is that they cannot form the basis of a foundational, transcendental study of being. In the language of *Ideas*, all the results of natural science must be “bracketed” or “disconnected” from phenomenological consideration (ibid.):

[Even though] all sciences which relate to this natural world . . . fill me with wondering admiration . . . I disconnect them all, I make absolutely no use of their standards, I do not appropriate a single one of the propositions that enter into their systems. . . . I take none of them, no one of them serves me for a foundation. (ibid.)

### 1.3 Phenomenological Psychology

Assuming that the naturalistic errors described above are avoided (for example, the physicalist error of taking the physical world to be the ultimate basis of all reality), and that we are good transcendental phenomenologists, then Husserl thinks that the natural sciences, and psychology in particular, have an important role to play. In fact, for the most part, they can simply remain as they are. Phenomenologists can study the foundations of psychology and other natural sciences, and the scientists, for their part, can simply go about their business.

However, in the particular case of psychology, some reform is possible—Gurwitsch went so far as to call it a “radical reform” (Gurwitsch

1964, 159)—insofar as phenomenology provides methods and insights that can be of direct use to psychology. For example, Husserl's theory of the structure of intentional acts, of sensory or hyletic data, and of the structure of time consciousness, are all relevant to psychology. Husserl's most detailed discussion of these issues is in lectures he gave in 1925 on "Phenomenological Psychology," later collected as *Hua IX* (Husserl 1925/1977).<sup>12</sup> The lectures begin with a discussion of the psychology of Husserl's time and are followed by an overview of those features of phenomenology that Husserl thought could inform psychology. There is little sustained consideration of specific psychological experiments or results in the lectures. But by his choice of topics, it is clear that Husserl took himself to be exemplifying the kind of work he envisioned, whereby some psychological topics could be analyzed in new ways using the methods and tools of phenomenology. For example, his overview of intentionality (Husserl 1929/1977, 118) seems to be intended as a supplement and guide to psychological analyses of sensation and perception.

## 2. GENERIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Husserl's mature position with respect to psychology is twofold: (1) don't allow it to influence one's transcendental inquiry, but (2) having left the transcendental attitude and entered the natural attitude, one can pursue psychology and can even do so using phenomenological tools. Among Husserl's immediate successors in the phenomenological movement, a kind of watered-down variant of this approach persisted, usually without the transcendental overtones. I will refer to this as 'generic phenomenological psychology.'

The methodology of generic phenomenological psychology can be characterized by a single proposition, what I will call the 'priority claim':

Priority Claim: Phenomenology has methodological priority over all other disciplines.<sup>13</sup>

Intuitively, this asserts that phenomenological claims should be established solely on the basis of phenomenological methods. In practice, we can understand this as an asymmetric revisability claim: phenomenology has methodological priority in the sense that it can lead to revision of ideas in other disciplines, but its claims *cannot* be revised solely on their basis. Thus, it is ok for phenomenology to correct psychological mistakes, but it is *not* ok for phenomenological claims to be directly revised on the basis of non-phenomenological data. Phenomenologists can draw on and be influenced by empirical results, but any new or revised phenomenological claim made on this basis must subsequently be checked using phenomenological methods. Phenomenology is the final court of epistemic appeals for resolving phenomenological



questions. This is my observation of how phenomenology's priority was understood by the first few generations of phenomenologists after Husserl. There may be counterexamples, but I am not aware of them.

Perhaps the clearest examples are in Gurwitsch, who wrote his dissertation on the relation between Gestalt psychology and phenomenology and published several book-length treatments on the relation between psychology (and science more generally) and phenomenology (Gurwitsch 1979a, b). He considers a wide range of psychologists and neurologists in his work, and in every case abides by the priority claim. For example, Gurwitsch considers the neurologists Gelb and Goldstein, and in particular their patient T, who suffered from color amnesia: the patient could match color samples by hue and saturation but could not name the colors of samples. He used this case to 'corroborate' Husserl's theory of universals and particulars and, more specifically, a phenomenological distinction between categorial equality (two things are seen to fall under the same category) and qualitative homogeneity (two things are seen to have similar sensory properties). Gurwitsch describes this as a case where "essential ideas which Husserl developed . . . have been fully confirmed by the result to which Gelb and Goldstein have been led in their studies of brain injuries" (Gurwitsch 1979b, 359).

Gurwitsch also uses phenomenology to revise psychological claims. This is prominent in his critique of the 'constancy hypothesis,' according to which identical (or 'constant') patterns of sensory stimulation produce identical patterns of sensory experience. Gurwitsch links this idea with a dualistic theory of perception (associated with psychologists from Stump to the school of Graz),<sup>14</sup> which posits two parts of perception: a raw sensory part that is determined solely by external stimulations and an interpretive part that can vary even as stimuli remain the same. However, according to Gurwitsch, phenomenological reflection and Gestalt theory (which for Gurwitsch is implicitly phenomenological) show that the constancy hypothesis and the dualistic perceptual theory it motivates are false: the most basic perceptual structure is an organized theme or Gestalt, which is a total form that cannot be decomposed into perceptual and interpretive elements. Thus, as Gurwitsch says, "Immediate experience does not bear out the dualistic account" (1964, 88).

Merleau-Ponty (who attended Gurwitsch's lectures in France) also drew extensively on psychology and, in fact, held a chair of child psychology at the Sorbonne from 1949–52. Like Gurwitsch, Merleau-Ponty is critical of psychology on phenomenological grounds, for example in his critique of Pavlovian learning theory (animals do not just respond reflexively to stimuli but take in whole situations as fields of significance). Also like Gurwitsch, he draws on neurological cases—most famously Schneider, another Gelb and Goldstein patient, who suffered from apperceptive visual agnosia (an inability to recognize objects despite intact elementary visual functions).<sup>15</sup> Schneider could make 'concrete movements,' like removing his handkerchief from his pocket, but could not smoothly perform 'abstract movements,' like moving his hand in a circle in front of him. Merleau-Ponty takes this to confirm his phenomenological account of the fundamental status of concrete embodied action

(e.g., removing a handkerchief) and his critique of intellectualism (doing abstract things according to rules, like moving your hand in a circle).

In French phenomenology, Sartre and de Beauvoir also drew heavily on empirical sources and seem to abide by the priority claim. De Beauvoir is especially notable for the variety of sources she draws on. For example, in her phenomenology of marriage, she draws on historical data, autobiography, literary depictions, philosophical sources, the Kinsey report, several psychoanalytic and psychological studies (of nervous anxiety, frigidity, and amorous jealousy), and “a survey of Belgian bourgeois, about the problem of matrimonial choice” (de Beauvoir 1949/2012, 445). This rich variety of data, much of it empirical, is used to inform a detailed account of the first-person experiences involved in marriage. The data inform and corroborate De Beauvoir’s account, but no phenomenological features of the account are ever explicitly altered on the basis of empirical data, as far as I can tell.

### 3. NATURALIZED PHENOMENOLOGY SINCE THE 1980S

Since the late 1980s, two main forms of ‘naturalized phenomenology’ have emerged, as noted in the introduction. A first group of theorists explicitly draw on the phenomenological tradition, from a naturalistic perspective. A second group includes theorists who do not draw on phenomenology explicitly, but who nonetheless take consciousness seriously and attempt to understand it in a broadly naturalistic framework. Both groups endorse a kind of theoretical pluralism that is in conflict with the priority claim. In this section, I describe this pluralist methodology and give a provisional taxonomy of interactions between phenomenology and the cognitive sciences.

#### 3.1 Methodology

Naturalized phenomenology and consciousness studies have developed a more or less standard methodology, whereby phenomenology, experimental psychology, neuroscience, and other disciplines are all taken to have equal methodological status, in the sense that results in each area can suggest revisions, corrections, and confirmations of results in any of the others. The hope is that over time these different methodologies and data will interact and ‘co-evolve’ to produce an increasingly accurate picture of consciousness and its neural basis. This kind of approach has been described in many ways: as “Convergent phenomenology” (Mangan 1991, ch. 5; also see Mangan 2014), a system of “reciprocal constraints” (Varela 1996, 343), the “Natural Method” (Flanagan 1992, 11), and “Mutual Enlightenment” (Gallagher 1997, 195).<sup>16</sup> Here are some illustrative quotes:

The Working Hypothesis of Neurophenomenology: Phenomenological accounts of the structure of experience and their counterparts in cognitive science relate to each other through reciprocal constraints . . .

by emphasizing a co-determination of both accounts one can explore the bridges, challenges, insights and contradictions between them. This means that both domains of phenomena have equal status in demanding a full attention and respect for their specificity. (Varela 1996, 343)

Start by treating three different lines of analysis with equal respect. Give *phenomenology* its due. Listen carefully to what individuals have to say about how things seem. Also, let the psychologists and cognitive scientists have their say. Listen carefully to their descriptions about how mental life works, and what jobs, if any, consciousness has in its overall economy . . . Finally, listen carefully to what the neuroscientists say about how conscious mental events of different sorts are realized, and examine the fit between their stories and the phenomenological and psychological stories. The object of the natural method is to see whether and to what extent the three stories can be rendered coherent, meshed, and brought into reflective equilibrium, into a state where theory and data fit coherently together . . . As theory develops analyses at each level are subject to refinement, revision, or rejection. (Flanagan 1997, 101–102)

We propose a rethinking of the standard cognitive mapping paradigm, which would render the mental processes studied in cognitive activation experiments subject to a methodological triangulation in which objective behavioural measurement, recordings of brain activity and introspective evidence can be related to each other. (Jack and Roepstorff 2002, 5)

I refer to these as ‘mixed approaches.’ As noted in the opening of the paper, mixed approaches were at least implicitly present during the introspectionist era, so that to some extent this method represents a rediscovery of earlier patterns of research (cf. Mangan 2007).

Variants on mixed methods are possible whereby, even if all disciplines are taken to have equal status (in the sense of being able to revise one another), some disciplines are given more weight than others. Other types of mixed method spell out particular ways of bridging phenomenology with other disciplines. Neurophenomenology (Varela 1996), for example, can be understood as a specific form of naturalized phenomenology that emphasizes links between Husserlian phenomenology and neuroscience by way of dynamical systems theory.<sup>17</sup>

Mixed approaches are opposed to views that prioritize specific methodologies over others. According to a mixed approach, radical behaviorism is just as mistaken in its method as classical phenomenology. Radical behaviorism denies the value of introspection altogether, and thus leaves consciousness out of consideration. Generic phenomenological psychology did not see empirical methods as having an equal status with phenomenological methods and, in particular, did not allow empirical results to lead directly to changes in a phenomenological theory.

### 3.2 Types of Interaction between Phenomenology and Cognitive Science

We have seen that naturalized phenomenology involves a kind of pluralist mixed method, a ‘co-evolutionary’ or ‘reflective equilibrium’ approach, where data and methods from different domains interact over time to become increasingly coherent with one another. This overall pattern of interaction can, at least to some extent, be broken down into particular forms of interaction, e.g., phenomenology suggesting ways to frame experiments, or neuroscience predicting phenomenological results. In this section, I give a provisional taxonomy. I first consider cases in which phenomenology informs cognitive science, and then cases in which cognitive science informs phenomenology.

Perhaps the most basic way phenomenology can influence cognitive science is by providing data to be explained. As Kelly puts it in the case of neuroscience, “the right relation between phenomenology and brain science is that of data to model . . . it provides the most complete and accurate presentation of the data that ultimately must be accounted for by models of brain function” (Kelly 2001, 152). When subjects are asked to report on what they perceive in an experiment (for example), they are introspecting. Gallagher (2010) calls this “second-order reflective access” (second-order because the subject is reporting on a first-order experience), and says that such reports are based on “quick and minimal introspection” (22). Even if the subject is only pressing a button or clicking a mouse, some introspection is arguably involved:

If one instructs a subject to push a button, or say “now” when they see the light come on, then the subject is reporting about the light, but also about their visual experience. Even if one instructs the subject in a way that carefully avoids mention of an experiential state: “Push the button when the light comes on,” the only access that the subject has to the fact of the light coming on is by way of her experience of the light coming on. In this sense the first-person perspective is inherent in experiments that depend on subjective reports. (Gallagher and Brøsted Sørensen 2006, 22)

These considerations suggest that a large amount of the human psychology literature, even in the behaviorist tradition, is implicitly phenomenological.<sup>18</sup> The degree to which ‘minimal’ phenomenological reflection is involved in behavioral experimentation is an open question.

A more robust role for phenomenology is in influencing the design of experiments. Gallagher calls this “front loading phenomenology,” where “phenomenological insights (concepts, distinctions) developed in separate phenomenological analyses . . . are used to inform the design of experiments” (Gallagher 2010, 27).<sup>19</sup> Gallagher and others have applied this

method in a series of experiments seeking to understand the neural basis of the phenomenology of agency.<sup>20</sup> Gallagher, drawing on Husserl and Sartre, makes a phenomenological distinction between a sense of ownership (my body is being moved) and a sense of agency (I am moving my body). The two can come apart, for example, if someone moves your arm for you (sense of ownership, but no sense of agency).<sup>21</sup> The investigation is ongoing and reciprocal: phenomenological insights have motivated experiments, the results of the experiments have motivated further phenomenological studies, new follow-up experiments have been conducted, etc. Gallagher describes “a dialectical movement between previous insights gained in phenomenology and preliminary trials that will specify or extend these insights” (Gallagher 2010, 27).

Phenomenology can sometimes generate testable predictions. For example, in the realm of color science:

Mach discovered lateral inhibition by noting the purely subjective experience of intensity variations in the objectively homogeneous stripes now called Mach Bands in his honor. Helmholtz based his theory of tri-chromatic receptors on phenomenological evidence. (Mangan 2007, 673)

Mach bands are shown in Figure 14.1. By carefully attending to the figure, one can see that the vertical bands appear darker at their boundaries, though they are physically uniform in their luminance. Mach painstakingly developed numerous stimuli to study this phenomenon and concluded: “. . .



*Figure 14.1* A neurological prediction based on phenomenological evidence. In the figure the boundaries between the vertical bands of color appear to be darker than their surrounds, though the bands are actually of uniform luminance. The neural circuitry underlying this phenomenon was correctly predicted by Mach on the basis of phenomenological evidence.

there can be no doubt about its subjectivity. Its cause is not in the object, but in the visual organ. . . . It appears to me that the phenomena discussed can only be explained on the basis of a reciprocal action of neighboring areas of the retina” (Ratliff 1965, 266–7). Mach’s prediction was confirmed 80 years later in the horseshoe crab, and subsequently in humans (Pojman 2011, Ratliff 1965).

Phenomenology can also enrich our understanding of empirical results by embedding them in a coherent theoretical framework. Many examples of generic phenomenological psychology belong here: by utilizing a phenomenological approach, we gain a fuller understanding of schizophrenia, marriage, and motherhood (to list just a few). In each case, the relevant empirical results are not taken individually, but are placed together into a coherent account of the relevant lived experience. In this mode, the phenomenologist is a kind of higher-level meta-theorist, drawing both on phenomenological and non-phenomenological sources in putting together an account of some kind of experiential process or pattern. Empirical psychologists, when they step back to discuss their results or to write more theoretical pieces, often engage in this type of phenomenological theorizing.

These kinds of enrichments sometimes involve ‘reinterpreting’ psychological results, what might even be thought of as cases of phenomenology *correcting* results from the empirical sciences. Here is how Gallagher describes Merleau-Ponty, who sometimes took this kind of approach:

Merleau-Ponty frequently used phenomenological insights to reinterpret experimental results. In such cases, phenomenology can take on a critical function, offering correctives to various theoretical interpretations of the empirical data. Although this kind of after-the-fact phenomenological reinterpretation can be theoretically productive, in that it develops alternative interpretations, unless these interpretations are subject to further empirical testing, they remain unverified. (Gallagher 2010, 6)<sup>22</sup>

Whether full-fledged corrections of empirical results from phenomenology ever happen is not entirely clear. What does happen (as Gallagher suggests) is that phenomenological reflection and theorizing sometimes suggests new experiments. These new experiments may suggest new phenomenological theorizing, etc., and the whole process continues via the kinds of co-evolutionary feedback loops described above.

Let us now consider ways in which cognitive science can inform phenomenology. In this direction, the most prominent form of interaction occurs when cognitive science corrects phenomenological results. In fact, phenomenology appears to be far less reliable than its practitioners assumed it was. As Schwitzgebel puts it:

We are prone to gross error, even in favorable circumstances of extended reflection, about our own ongoing conscious experience,

our current phenomenology. Even in this apparently privileged domain, our self-knowledge is faulty and untrustworthy. We are not simply fallible at the margins but broadly inept. (Schwitzgebel 2008, abstract)

Schwitzgebel defends his claim on the basis of a broad survey of cases, from our intuitions about why we do things (where the errors are quite surprising, and a mainstay of social psychology), to the phenomenology of thought (whether it proceeds in images or not, a controversy that goes back to the imageless thought debate between Wundt in Leipzig and Külpe and his colleagues at Würzburg).<sup>23</sup> In each case, the phenomenological method led to divergent insights that remain unresolved to this day, suggesting that at least some phenomenologists are getting things wrong.<sup>24</sup> Another example is the idea (prominent in Gurwitsch) that the visual field extends beyond a focus of clear attention to include a periphery of inattention: I am focally aware of this computer and peripherally aware of the windows and walls around me. However, a series of striking experiments in recent decades has shown that we seem to be *unaware* of some objects in the visual periphery, and even of objects almost at the center of the visual field.<sup>25</sup> These and related results suggest that Gurwitsch's development of Husserlian phenomenology is in need of correction, based on empirical results. So this is a case where experimental data motivate revisions of a phenomenological theory.

Just as phenomenological insights can generate neural predictions, so too can neuroscience make phenomenological predictions. The best example of this that I am aware of is in Paul Churchland's paper "Chimerical Colors: Some Phenomenological Predictions from Cognitive Neuroscience" (Churchland 2005). Churchland begins by describing a three-node neural network simulation of human color vision. Patterns of activity across the three nodes tend to occur inside a subset of the network's three-dimensional state space, which has the shape of a spindle. Points in the spindle correspond to the colors a person experiences when the corresponding patterns of sensory inputs occur. Churchland then notes that, by exposing oneself to a color stimulus in a particular way, an after-image will occur whose color corresponds to a specific displacement away from a source point in the color spindle. In this way, we can force the visual system into states that are not in the color spindle and can thereby generate new kinds of color experiences, for example, an "impossibly dark blue" (Churchland 2005, 555). This can easily be tested (I encourage you to get Churchland's article and try it!). Thus, Churchland was able to use his knowledge of color vision in the brain to successfully predict the existence of a new class of color sensations, sensations "that normal people have almost certainly never had before . . . whose accurate descriptions in ordinary language appear semantically ill-formed" (Churchland 2005, 527).

## 4. PROSPECTS FOR A NATURALIZED PHENOMENOLOGY

Based on my survey of the literature, I believe that prospects are good for contemporary styles of naturalized phenomenology that draw on phenomenology and the cognitive sciences without giving any particular discipline priority. However, questions remain. For example, what role should phenomenology—as an explicit discipline tracing its origins to Husserl—play? Moreover, what is the status of Husserl’s own arguments about naturalism, relative to the current discussion? Here my conclusions are more deflationary. I do not think that Husserl’s anti-naturalist arguments are sound, nor do I find the priority claim compelling. In fact, I do not even think that phenomenology as a discipline has anything distinctive to contribute to the cognitive sciences. However, all is not lost. I do think that, *de facto*, philosophical phenomenology has a lot to offer, both in terms of content and methods.

My reasoning can be summarized by the flowchart in Figure 14.2. The flowchart lays out a main argument: each node and outgoing arrow in the flowchart corresponds to a sub-argument concerning a particular approach to naturalized phenomenology. The final node corresponds to my considered position with respect to naturalized phenomenology.

The first sub-argument concerns Husserl’s conception of the relation between psychology and transcendental phenomenology. According to this conception, consciousness plays a fundamental role as the constitutive basis of reality, so that it would be a mistake to treat any other discipline (e.g., psychology or physics) as fundamental. The problem here is that I am unconvinced by Husserl’s transcendental arguments. Fully unpacking my reasons for this is a separate project (see Yoshimi 2014b), but I can briefly elaborate. While I find the concept of ‘world constitution’ compelling (and in fact, that is what I emphasize in my own efforts to naturalize phenomenology), I do not think that it has the metaphysical implications Husserl

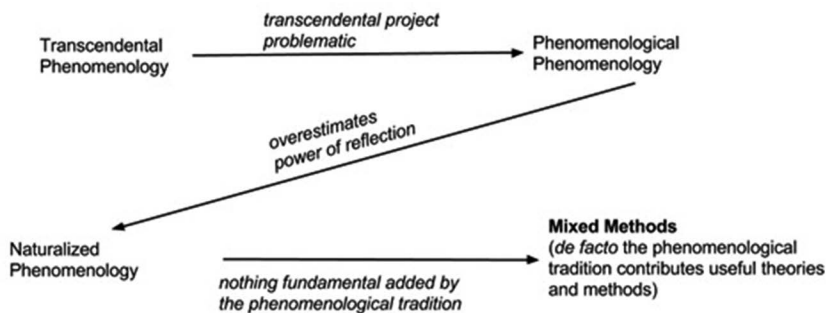


Figure 14.2 Flowchart of the main argument.



takes it to. The world *as we experience it* may well be disclosed in flowing streams of awareness, but this does not tell us about the world *as it really is*. In particular, it is neutral with respect to the realism/idealism debate. Husserl's entire phenomenological program is compatible with realism, idealism, and even (suitably construed) physicalism. If I'm right, the idea that all being is a correlate of consciousness (section 1) is unsupported.

Whether or not I'm right, transcendental idealism is hardly a widespread project today, even among phenomenologists. In fact, as we saw, most subsequent phenomenologists endorsed something weaker, like the priority claim, which simply says that phenomenology has methodological priority over other sciences. This takes us to the second node of the flowchart, and to my second-sub-argument.

I do not agree with the priority claim. In particular, I disagree with the idea that phenomenological claims should *not* be revised on the basis of empirical evidence. The best arguments here are provided by Schwitzgebel (2008), who, as we saw, has documented cases in which introspective techniques lead to contradictory conclusions. The relevant issues seem impossible to resolve using introspective resources alone. If Schwitzgebel is right, phenomenological claims not only *can* be revised by facts from other disciplines, but *should* be, given how unreliable phenomenological methods are. Recall the example of the visual field, which empirical evidence suggests is much less rich and expansive than some phenomenologists, like Gurwitsch, thought. So it's just not clear that phenomenology should have the kind of priority Gurwitsch, Merleau-Ponty, and most others in that era gave to it. The upshot is that phenomenological techniques are just as error-prone as other types of inquiry (if not more so) and should be an 'equal partner' in the cognitive sciences.<sup>26</sup>

This takes us to the third node of Figure 14.2, corresponding to naturalized phenomenology (or a particular form of it that still privileges phenomenology in a certain way). At this point, I am mostly ok with things. As I said above, prospects for an 'equal partners' approach to naturalized phenomenology are good. However, the question remains whether phenomenology has anything *distinctive* to contribute (i.e., any method or approach that has not been independently developed elsewhere). Some have suggested it does, e.g., Varela. Though Varela accepts a mixed approach to naturalized phenomenology in which phenomenology and other disciplines can mutually constrain one another, he also suggests that phenomenology has distinctive methods (e.g., the method of *epoché*), which are essential to making progress on certain fundamental questions in cognitive science. He believes, for example, that phenomenology will provide for a full-blown Copernican revolution that will make the 'hard problem' of consciousness<sup>27</sup> disappear:

. . . my claim is that neurophenomenology is a natural solution that can allow us to move beyond the hard problem in the study of consciousness . . . like all solutions in science which radically reframe an outstanding problem rather than trying to solve it within its original setting it has a revolutionary potential. (Varela 1996, 340)

In a similar way, one might claim that eidetic variation, or some other idea in phenomenology that is seemingly absent in the cognitive sciences, is essential to our making progress in consciousness studies.

The problem here is that phenomenological methods either do not live up to the status Husserl attributed to them or else correspond to existing and independently developed methods in consciousness studies. For example, the *epoché* and phenomenological reduction can either be taken to secure apodictic insight into consciousness, which we already saw to be problematic, or be regarded as tools that help reduce bias by allowing us to bracket potentially misleading sources of evidence during reflection. But one does not need to read hundreds of pages of Husserl to know that one must be on guard against subjective bias when studying consciousness. Indeed, finding ways to get around subjective bias is a key feature of experimental design in consciousness studies and in psychology generally. Eidetic variation, for its part, is arguably just a form of conceptual analysis (Yoshimi 2010). Moreover, it's not at all clear that it secures the kind of absolute truths Husserl sometimes seems to think it does (Mohanty 1991, Zaner, 1973). Thus, it is not clear that phenomenology contributes any distinctive methodological tools to consciousness studies. As Bayne puts it:

I can discern little evidence of any of the “technical developments of Husserlian phenomenology” (Roy et al. 1999, 21) at work in neurophenomenology. It seems to me that the methods for collecting first person data employed by neurophenomenologists are much the same as those employed elsewhere in the study of consciousness. (Bayne 2004, 353)

Of course, I could be wrong at any of steps 1–3, in which case phenomenology does have something essential to offer: a transcendental method, an epistemically superior source of insight, or some technical method that has not been developed elsewhere. Given my love for phenomenology, some part of me wants to be wrong in one of these ways (or some other way I have not anticipated), but, as it stands, I think we end up in the final node of Figure 14.2, of mixed methods for naturalized phenomenology. Here the idea is that we should treat phenomenology as an equal partner among the cognitive sciences, with no special or privileged status.

I do not think this is bad news for phenomenology. Even if I'm right that phenomenology has nothing *distinctive* to offer to the cognitive sciences, I do think that phenomenology has, *de facto*, several core contributions to make.

First, phenomenology contains what is perhaps the most detailed repository of phenomenological observations in existence. Thousands of pages of phenomenological analysis were written by each of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, de Beauvoir, and Sartre, not to mention their many successors. This is a vast body of research to draw on. Moreover, I think much of it is quite compelling. I am particularly drawn to Husserl's theory of

world-constitution, and Gurwitsch's field theory of consciousness. Neither theory is based on infallible insight, and both are in need of revision, but they are extremely detailed and could serve as the basis of a more integrated, coherent story about how our conscious experience of the world is related to the dynamics of neural activity. I believe that many other phenomenological theories are plausible as well and that they ought to co-evolve with other cognitive sciences to produce richer theories of human experience in relation to their physical underpinnings. Indeed, that is exactly what is happening in most naturalized phenomenology today.

Phenomenology can also offer (again *de facto*) a style of work, a kind of holistic, interpretive attitude that can serve as a good model for research in consciousness studies. For example, Merleau-Ponty had an overarching vision of embodied existence whereby we live in a world structured by our bodies and our overall concerns. He uses this point of view as a kind of template for connecting together all the various strands of psychological data he draws on. In this way, individual results in the empirical sciences are woven together into a single coherent story about human experience. I believe that this kind of approach is valuable. Someone needs to be out there thinking about what different empirical results mean and weaving them together into coherent systems. I don't think this attitude is proprietary to phenomenology, but nonetheless, as a matter of historical fact, the phenomenologists have done a good job of exemplifying this style of work.<sup>28</sup>

## 5. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

I end by describing a specific form of naturalized phenomenology, a variant on the pluralist approach described above. I focus on a core set of ideas in Husserl concerning world-constitution. Interestingly enough, the ideas that I aim to naturalize are themselves the basis of Husserl's transcendental critique of naturalism (section 1).<sup>29</sup>

Husserl's theory of constitution concerns the way we develop our sense of reality over time in flowing streams of experience. I have argued that part of this theory can be formalized in terms of dynamical laws that relate perceptions and bodily movements to adumbrations, which are subsequently fulfilled or frustrated by incoming visual experiences (Yoshimi 2012). On the basis of dynamical rules like this, we incrementally build up or 'constitute' a sense of the world we live in. This story can be linked with a structurally parallel theory in the cognitive sciences about how animals learn to navigate environments. According to this parallel theory, animals develop internal models of their environments on the basis of comparisons between what they expect at a given moment and what they subsequently see.<sup>30</sup> These comparisons or 'errors' are used to update synapses in the brain and produce increasingly successful predictive models for guiding behavior.

Andy Clark, summarizing recent research in this area, has said that expectation and prediction are the essential hallmarks of brain function:

Brains . . . are essentially prediction machines. They are bundles of cells that support perception and action by constantly attempting to match incoming sensory inputs with top-down expectations or predictions. This is achieved using a hierarchical generative model that aims to minimize prediction error within a bidirectional cascade of cortical processing. Such accounts offer a unifying model of perception and action. (Clark 2013, 1)

These parallels between Husserl's theory of constitution and contemporary theories of the brain as a prediction machine can be visualized using computer simulations of agents in virtual environments (Yoshimi 2014a). When this type of simulation is run, a literal picture of an agent's model of its environment takes form. This picture plots the states the agent has previously been in as points in a 2D or 3D 'state space' diagram. States that the agent predicts it will be in relative to its current sensory state and movement are drawn in a distinctive color, e.g., red. As a simulation like this runs, a manifold of points takes form in the state space, and a moving 'halo' of predictions can be observed moving across the surface of the manifold. These manifolds have specific shapes, e.g., sets of arcs (or loops or other shapes) connected at a common point, where each arc corresponds to perceiving a specific object, and the common intersection point between the arcs corresponds to perceiving no object. These manifolds can be simultaneously interpreted as sets of brain states that model an agent's environment and as sets of experiences, or 'manifolds' in Husserl's own technical sense (a structured set of possible experiences, something like what he also calls a 'horizon'). The moving halo of neural state predictions can be interpreted as a set of 'protentions' or 'adumbrations' in Husserl's sense. The error-based rules by which the neural model learns about its environment can be understood in terms of Husserl's theory of fulfillment and frustration, and the kinds of knowledge update or 'synthesis' they give rise to.

Because these visualizations are simultaneously interpretable as (1) an agent's internal model of its environment and (2) an agent's way of constituting its sense of reality, they can serve as 'bridge metaphors,' which provide an intuitive link between our understanding of dynamics in these two very different domains. We can use the simulation to visualize the neuroscience, the phenomenology, and thereby the neurophenomenology. I believe that, by developing and expanding on this type of visualization procedure, we can begin to develop a detailed sense of how the dynamics of consciousness, as described by Husserl, is related to the dynamics of neural activity, as described by contemporary cognitive science. In pursuing this project, Husserlian phenomenology can be treated as a source of detailed, fallible insights into the structure and dynamics of consciousness.

## NOTES

1. Some terminological notes: I take ‘cognitive science’ to refer to cognitive sciences besides phenomenology, e.g., neuroscience, behavioral psychology, and linguistics (though of course phenomenology can, and I think should, be considered one of the cognitive sciences). I take ‘phenomenology’ to refer either generically to the study of consciousness or more specifically to the tradition of philosophical research that originates in Husserl’s work. Where context does not make my meaning clear, I add suitable qualifiers (e.g., ‘phenomenology as a philosophical discipline.’) By ‘introspection,’ I simply mean reflection and, unless otherwise stated, do not intend to refer to the historical form of introspectionist psychology that Husserl explicitly distanced himself from.
2. In addition to the forms of naturalized phenomenology described here, several other lines of inquiry should be mentioned. (1) A handful of earlier papers in the Husserlian tradition connecting it with psychology and the cognitive sciences (e.g., Chokr 1992, Ihde 1986, McIntyre 1986). (2) A separate thematic line that begins roughly with (Dreyfus and Hall 1982), which draws more on Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty than Husserl and has engaged closely with research in cognitive science, initially critically, but recently in a richer variety of ways. Anthologies that give overviews of work in this area include Kiverstein and Wheeler (2012) and Wrathall and Malpas (2000). (3) Some research in the social sciences, where phenomenology has long been considered to be one of five main ‘traditions’ of qualitative research (Creswell 2012), and also in psychology (see, in particular, the *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, which was founded in 1970).
3. As of September 2014.
4. For the nineteenth-century background see Baars (1986), Boring (1957), and Gurwitsch (2010), which considers this history from a Husserlian perspective. Baars also considers developments in the twentieth century and includes useful interviews with prominent cognitive psychologists.
5. To get a sense of the original anti-introspectionist impulses behind behaviorism (e.g., animal psychologists being asked to speculate about the experiences of rats and birds), see Watson 1913.
6. For additional discussion see Moran 2008, Zahavi 2004, 2010, Ramstead 2014.
7. The question of whether Husserl was a realist or idealist is one of the most controversial in Husserl scholarship, though most commentators agree that Husserl was some kind of an idealist by the time of *Cartesian Meditations* (1931/1960). For an overview of the scholarly debate see Yoshimi (2014b), and Drummond 1990, 250.
8. For more detailed discussion of these texts see Yoshimi 2010. Of particular note here is that Husserl gives a specific argument against the possibility of deriving psychological laws from neurological or physical laws. I evaluate this argument in Yoshimi 2010.
9. These ideas are the basis of a wide range of critical analyses in Husserl and are closely related to his well-known early critique of psychologism (the view that logical laws are psychological laws; Husserl 1900–01/1975; also see Kusch 2011).
10. As Gurwitsch puts it: “Since the clarification and justification of the procedures of positive science and of their concepts are two of the tasks of phenomenology, it would be obviously be circular reasoning if clarification and justification were attempted in terms of the very concepts and procedures to be clarified and justified” (Gurwitsch 1964, 168).

11. This is related to Husserl's claim that phenomenology is a source of apodictic insight, which raises numerous questions and interpretive issues (given that Husserl admits his own fallibility and develops a kind of phenomenological account of human fallibility). For more on this issue see Hopp 2009.
12. Though the concepts are also discussed in other places, in particular in the *Encyclopedia* article and in *Ideas II* and *III*. In the *Encyclopedia* article, Husserl seems to distinguish psychology, pure psychology, phenomenological psychology, and pure phenomenological psychology. So there is more work to be done clearly differentiating these subtypes of phenomenological psychology (and even further related concepts, e.g., intentional psychology and eidetic psychology).
13. Compare what Murray 2002 calls phenomenology's "anteriority complex" (31).
14. The dualistic view is also associated with Husserl; hence this is an instance where Gurwitsch is critical of Husserl's phenomenology.
15. For discussion see Jensen 2009.
16. Wilson's concept of 'consilience' (Wilson 1999) and Patricia Churchland's "co-evolutionary research ideology" (Churchland 1989, 362) are similar, though they do not emphasize phenomenology. Also compare discussions of explanatory pluralism, e.g., Dale et al. 2009.
17. Another variant, spelled out in detail, is Thompson 2007.
18. One might even be tempted to say that *all* behavioral experiments have an implicit phenomenological component. On the other hand, psychologists often try to minimize the involvement of a subject's introspective interpretations, for instance, by studying unconscious responses irrelevant to a task (sometimes a fake distractor task) the subject is asked to engage in.
19. This does not directly involve the subjects in the experiments at all, and in fact, as Gallagher notes, "there may or may not be any phenomenological method, or even introspection . . . used in the experiment itself (Gallagher and Sørensen 2006, 125).
20. There are other examples as well. See, e.g., Zahavi 2010 on the mirror-recognition task in relation to the phenomenology of self.
21. Additional distinctions have been made. Our 'pre-reflective' immediate sense of agency and ownership can be distinguished from more reflective (in Husserlian terms 'active') processes of attributing agency or ownership to ourselves or others. It's also notable that, in the course of the back and forth, various issues in experimental design arose and that there are applications of this research to (for example) schizophrenia, where the sense of agency is disturbed in a complex way that could benefit from more refined distinctions.
22. This passage (and others, e.g., in Schwitzgebel) makes empirical confirmation the final court of appeals, a kind of symmetrical counterpart to the 'priority claim' described in section 2 (where any empirically-motivated revision of phenomenology must be checked against our phenomenological intuitions before being accepted). Whether either method should have ultimate epistemic authority is not clear to me, but I will not take the issue up here.
23. On the imageless thought controversy see Beenfeldt 2013.
24. This objection was prominent in the introspectionist era. A detailed consideration of this and related arguments, with an introspectionist response, is in Titchener 1912.
25. The most famous example is probably the case of a gorilla walking through a scene without some subjects noticing (Simons et al. 1999). The experiments are controversial, and it is not clear how they should be interpreted (Mole 2013, Simons 2000), but they strongly suggest that we have less peripheral awareness than we intuitively believe ourselves to have.

26. The claim here is that each of the relevant disciplines should in principle be able to influence any of the others. I have not addressed the question of how often this should happen (i.e., how heavily different disciplines are “weighted”), or whether any more detailed specification of the nature of these interactions is necessary.
27. The ‘hard problem’ is to understand how physical matter can give rise to subjective experience. The phrase is due to Chalmers (1995), but perhaps the earliest detailed statement of the problem is (Levine 1983).
28. The more specific methodological innovations of phenomenology could also enrich the cognitive sciences. For example, I think that eidetic variation could be reconceived as a kind of ‘geometric’ form of conceptual analysis, an idea I hope to pursue in future work.
29. Compare the discussion of ‘sciences of constitution’ in Ramstead 2014.
30. References to an agent’s model of its environment are suggestive of internalist, representational approaches to cognitive science, which have been subject to extensive critique in recent years by advocates of embodied approaches to cognition, which are associated with phenomenology (Wilson and Foglia 2011). Thus, my claim that an agent’s internal model of its environment can be associated with the phenomenology of world constitution is, at least on the face of it, surprising. This and related tensions are addressed in (Hotton and Yoshimi 2010, Yoshimi 2011). We argue that one can maintain a concept of internal representation in an ‘open’ dynamical framework that acknowledges the radical ways that environmental couplings can affect an agent’s behavior. I believe that these arguments show how one can accept the main features of embodied cognition (including those that are phenomenologically motivated) in a neurophenomenological framework that emphasizes internal models and internal agent states.

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# 15 Bringing Philosophy Back

## 4e Cognition and the Argument from Phenomenology

*Mark Rowlands*

### 1. THE VIEW

The view I shall defend in this paper is this: *some* (*not* all, by any means, but some) mental processes are *partly* (not exclusively, obviously) made up of processes whereby an individual manipulates, transforms, and/or exploits structures in its environment. These structures carry information that is relevant to the cognitive task in which the individual is engaged, and the processes are ones that transform this information from information that is merely *present* to information that is *available* to the individual. This was a common theme of all my ruminations on this topic, all the way back to the mid 1990s (Rowlands 1995, 1999, 2003, 2006, 2010).

It is not entirely clear where this view sits in the burgeoning literature on 4e cognition. Properly understood, it subsumes the idea that some mental processes are *embodied*, and also that they are *extended*. It also, quite centrally, involves the *enactivist* theme of mental processes being, at least sometimes, a transaction between individuals and their environments. It is stronger than, but compatible with, the claim that mental processes are often *embedded* in environmental scaffolding. The embedding claim is one of causation: the ability of an individual to engage in a cognitive process or to complete a cognitive task is often causally facilitated by his, her, or its reliance on external information-bearing structures. The claim I defend is one of constitution or composition, not causation: some—note some, *not* all—mental processes are partly—note partly, *never* exclusively—constituted by, or composed of, actions performed on the world.

Claims that mental processes are embodied, enacted, or extended have become interpreted in so many different ways that it is, perhaps, no longer advisable to define one's view in terms of them. Moreover, there are elements of, or interpretations of, each of these views that I would not endorse. The constraints of this chapter do not permit the sort of extensive disambiguation required to make the relation between the view I want to defend and these other views clearer. So, I shall simply leave the view as defined above and not worry about under which other rubrics it may be subsumed.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. THE ARGUMENT

Many arguments for the different varieties of 4e cognition have been functionalist ones. The general idea has been that, from the functionalist perspective, if something walks like a duck and talks like a duck then it is a duck—a duck, in this case, generally being a cognitive process. It doesn't matter *how* it walks and talks like a duck, and it does not matter *where*. If something plays the defining functional role of a cognitive state or process, then it qualifies as that state or process—irrespective of what it is or where it is. If, for example, a sentence in a notebook plays the functional role of a belief, then it is a belief. If the functional role definitive of a given cognitive process is realized in part by a dynamic pattern of interaction between an organism and environment, then this pattern of interaction is part of the process.

This emphasis on functionalism, however, has engendered certain problems. First, it means that arguments for the various versions of 4e cognition are unlikely to convince anyone not wedded to functionalism. Second, it threatens the overall theoretical coherence of these anti-Cartesian ways of thinking about the mind. This is because not all of them are equally enthusiastic about the same form of functionalism. For example, it is common to think—largely due to some influential arguments of Andy Clark (2008)—that the theses of embodied and extended cognition are dubiously compatible at best. The thesis of extended cognition, it is thought, is predicated on a fairly liberal version of functionalism, a version that the thesis of embodied cognition is committed to denying. Third, it means that arguments for these various anti-Cartesian views are most obviously applicable to states or processes that are, or are thought to be, functionally definable. This explains the literature's heavy emphasis on cognition. The application of these arguments to states that are less obviously functionally definable—phenomenal consciousness, affective states such as moods and emotions, and so on—is, therefore, unclear.

The arguments I shall develop for the view stated in the previous section are not functionalist ones. Therefore, they are immune to the doubts of the functionalist-phobic, are able to reunite anti-Cartesian themes driven asunder by a reliance on functionalism, and apply to cognitive, phenomenal, and affective states equally. The argument I shall develop is based on an account of intentionality: of what it is for a mental act to be intentionally directed towards the world. Intentionality, I shall argue, is essentially revealing activity. The view I want to defend emerges quickly and easily from this account of intentionality.

## 3. THE METHODOLOGY

So, mental processes: exclusively intracranial or not? How do we even *approach* this question? To what disciplinary kind does it belong? Is it a question of philosophy? Or does it belong to cognitive science? Or is it a question in the philosophy of cognitive science?

As a way of getting a grip on the differences between these questions, and why they matter, consider what many think of as the ‘early years’ of the debate over the intracraniality, or lack thereof, of cognition.<sup>2</sup> Clark and Chalmers (henceforth, C&C) prosecuted their case for extended cognition by way of an imaginative thought experiment—the case of Otto. This case provided much of the focus of ensuing discussions of extended cognition—both for and against. That the case of Otto was an imaginative thought experiment grounded in what is ultimately a philosophical view of the nature of mental kinds—functionalism—might have suggested that the case for extended cognition was grounded in traditional philosophical fare: intuitions, thought experiments, analysis of concepts, and so on. However, in the responses to this paper, a new trend began to emerge.

Fred Adams and Ken Aizawa (henceforth A&A) objected to C&C’s view on two grounds (Adams and Aizawa 2001). First, there was an argument from *original or non-derived intentionality*. The sentences in Otto’s notebook do not possess original intentionality. Therefore, they do not qualify as mental. Since beliefs are mental entities, the sentences, therefore, do not qualify as beliefs. This is still traditional philosophical fare—resting on a criterion of the mental as intentionality associated with Brentano and the phenomenological tradition. Their second objection, however, was rather different. Accepting the thesis of extended cognition would have unfortunate consequences for the future development of cognitive science. The kinds this enterprise invoked would be messy, unruly ones, and no genuine science could be constructed on their basis. This argument is rooted firmly in the philosophy of cognitive science. That is, it is based on a conception of what cognitive science does or is supposed to do.

In subsequent work A&A (2009) arguably moved further away from traditional philosophical analysis by relocating the original intentionality argument as a thesis in the philosophy of cognitive science: thus transmuted, it became a thesis about how cognitive science is committed to a *rules and representations* (henceforth, R&R) meta-model of cognitive processes (and the idea of original intentionality became part and parcel of the second R).

This refocusing of the debate as one in the philosophy of cognitive science has been a consistent theme of Rob Rupert’s work. He sets out his stall in the early pages of his (2004) as follows:

If HEC [the hypothesis of extended cognition] does not provide a promising framework for the pursuit of cognitive science (as it attempts to understand actual mental states), the radical theses of extended mind and extended self lose much of their current appeal. (2004, 392–3)

And, in a recent review of my book, *The New Science of the Mind* (2010), he writes:

What scientific utility might there be to the inclusion of all of this as part of cognition? . . . Attempts to reinterpret cognitive science so as

to draw the boundary somewhere else strike me as gratuitous; from the standpoint of philosophy of science, they would seem to amount to an unnecessary reinterpretation or remapping of current practices. (Rupert 2011)

I leave the reader to interpolate the content of the expression ‘all of this.’ The idea, pretty clearly, is this: the thesis of extended cognition stands or falls on its implications for cognitive science.

I am, however, simply not playing the game A&A and Rupert believe me to be playing, or would like me to be playing. The view I defend—advertised in section 1—is a thesis that emerges not from what we think cognitive science is or should be doing but from philosophical analysis, broadly construed. At stake is, of course, the issue of the status of philosophy in this debate. Can philosophy make any distinctive contribution to the debate over embodied/extended cognition? Or is its contribution limited to reflection on the practices of cognitive scientists? I shall try to show that philosophy can play a distinctive role in shaping this debate, and its role is not merely that of commentator on cognitive science.

To see what the distinctive role of philosophy might be, consider, for example, the book that Rupert was actually reviewing in the preceding quotation. The central argument of this book was that cognition is *revealing activity* that conforms to the *mark of the cognitive*. As such, the argument divides into two strands: (a) a *picture of intentionality* as revealing activity, and (b) an *analysis of cognition*—the ‘mark of the cognitive’ (MOTC). The distinctive contribution philosophy can make to this debate is in providing either (i) organizing *pictures* of or (ii) analyses of certain (poorly understood) phenomena.

The mark of the cognitive I identified and defended is an analysis of cognition as this features in contemporary cognitive science. I don’t really care that much about the mark of the cognitive—which makes it somewhat ironic that most of the commentators on and reviewers of that book have focused almost exclusively on it. Its principal aim was tactical: to provide a criterion of cognition that my opponents would have to accept (because it was so bland, traditional, and inclusive) and then show that extended cognition still follows. In my more optimistic moments, however, I do suspect that it provides a sufficient condition for cognition. For the record, here is the analysis:

A process *P* is a *cognitive* process if:

- (1) *P* involves *information processing*—the manipulation and transformation of information-bearing structures.
- (2) This information processing has the *proper function* of *making available* either to the subject or to subsequent processing operations information that was, prior to this processing, unavailable.
- (3) This information is made available by way of the production, in the subject of *P*, of a *representational* state.

- (4) *P* is a process that *belongs* to the *subject* of that *representational state* (2010, 110–11).

These conditions are presented, precisely, as an *analysis* (incomplete—since they only provide a sufficient condition—but an analysis nonetheless) of cognition, as this features in at least some strands of contemporary cognitive science.

The idea that philosophical analysis can make any distinctive contribution to the debate concerning 4e cognition has been resisted, on grounds that are not entirely clear and never made explicit. However, one common theme, voiced on many occasions by A&A, is that the issue is not whether embodied/extended cognition is *possible* but whether it is *actual*. A similar sentiment can, perhaps, be detected in Rupert's use of the word 'actual' in the first passage cited above: the hypothesis of extended cognition must provide a promising framework for the pursuit of cognitive science 'as it attempts to understand *actual* mental states.' Similarly, Andreas Elpidorou (2012), in a generally useful and perceptive critique of *The New Science of the Mind* (and earlier work of mine), argues that I have shown only that extended cognition is possible, and not that it is actual. I find this charge puzzling, since, in that book, I gave various (actual) examples of extended cognition.

Let us agree: that cognition might possibly extend beyond the skull is neither here nor there. The issue is whether it actually thus extends. Few, I think, would argue with this quotidian claim. (Certainly I would not.) However, it would be a mistake to suppose that philosophical or conceptual analysis is restricted to showing the possibility of cognition extending beyond the skull. That would be a naïve mistake. There is a range of conclusions that might be established by conceptual analysis. It might show, for example, that phenomenon P1 is *compatible* with P2. It might show that P1 makes P2 more *likely*. It might show that P1 *necessitates* P2. One reason why conceptual analysis can establish a range of conclusions is that it does not occur in a vacuum, but only in conjunction with relevant empirical facts.

Consider, for example, C&C's case for extended cognition. Their argument is based on analysis: a functionalist analysis of mental state types. This analysis is then combined with relevant empirical facts: brain-world couplings are common. This yields an inference: it is likely that defining functional roles of some mental state types can be filled by these coupled states, as well as by neural states alone. And from this, we get a conclusion: extended cognition is not merely possible but likely. Or, consider the case for non-cranial cognition, as developed in my (2010). It is based on a picture of intentionality—to which I shall turn in a moment—and the aforementioned analysis of cognition. Intentionality is, I argued, revealing activity, and there are four conditions whose satisfaction is collectively sufficient for a process to count as cognitive. Both picture and analysis are then combined with relevant facts: disclosing activity is often—not always, not necessarily,



but often—realized by actions performed on relevant structures in the environment. This yields a conclusion: non-cranial cognition (i.e., cognition that is partly but not *entirely* composed of neural processes) is not merely possible but very likely indeed.

The idea that an approach based on philosophical analysis is confined to demonstrating the possibility of non-cranial cognition rests on a simple mistake. A philosophical approach that has analysis as one of its core elements is never restricted to demonstrations of possibility because such analysis can always be combined with relevant empirical facts. There are, in addition, two other misconceptions concerning philosophical analysis that should be dispelled. First, philosophical analysis is not, in general, something that can be done from the armchair. Suppose the phenomenon one wishes to address is a theoretical one—for example, the understanding of cognition as it figures in contemporary cognitive science. Then one had better be prepared to familiarize oneself with the relevant theories (in this case, prominent models of cognitive processes). One will get nowhere sitting in an armchair examining what one intuitively thinks about cognition. The idea that philosophical analysis amounts to sitting in a chair examining one's intuitions is, of course, a parody. It is rather strange that so many people seem to believe it.

Second, and relatedly, conceptual analysis is *not* the analysis of concepts. Many think it is, but it is not. Conceptual analysis is the analysis of things—conceptually. That is, in the expression 'conceptual analysis,' the term 'conceptual' functions as an adverb and denotes a method of analysis, rather than an object of analysis. When Socrates asked questions such as 'What is justice?' he was asking a question about justice itself. To analyze something conceptually is to analyze a thing—but to do it conceptually, as opposed to physically, chemically, functionally, algorithmically, computationally, and so on.<sup>3</sup>

Putting these two points together: the analysis I offered of cognition was not gleaned from intuitions identified in some mythical armchair. Rather, it was gleaned from examination of models of cognition in recent cognitive science. The analysis is not an analysis of the concept of cognition: it is an analysis of cognition—of a phenomenon that is analyzed *conceptually*.

The contribution that philosophy can make is—mercifully—not confined to providing analyses of given phenomena. Philosophy, as Wittgenstein once pointed out, can provide us with pictures of poorly understood phenomena. These pictures are extraordinarily abstract but can play a crucial role in organizing the way we think about, and investigate, a given phenomenon. At the heart of *The New Science of the Mind* is a picture of intentionality. It is not an analysis—if it were it would be obviously either circular or question-begging. Rather, it is a picture: a way of thinking about the sort of thing intentionality is. Pictures of a given phenomenon, *p*, are logically and methodologically prior to any analysis of *p*. The analysis will be predicated on the picture, and is essentially the sort of mopping up operation—the dotting of 'i's and the crossing of 't's—that can be attempted only when the



picture is in place. I am rather fond of this picture of intentionality. I can take or leave the mark of the cognitive. But you will have to pry the picture of intentionality from my cold dead fingers.

#### 4. AND FINALLY, SOME PHILOSOPHY: THE HARD PROBLEM OF INTENTIONALITY

There is a hard problem of intentionality, just as there is a hard problem of consciousness. The hard problem of intentionality is, I suspect, much worse. The hard problem of consciousness is a problem of understanding how one thing—phenomenal consciousness, what it is like to have or undergo a conscious experience—could be produced or constituted by another thing—neural activity—when the two things seem so essentially disparate. We know or strongly suspect that brain activity produces or constitutes phenomenal consciousness, but we are at a loss to understand how.

The hard problem assumes that phenomenal consciousness is an object of awareness: roughly, it is something of which I can become aware if I suitably direct my attention. So too, of course, is neural activity. Ordinarily, I am not aware of what is going on in my brain, certainly not under that description, but I can become aware of this if, for example, I were placed in an fMRI and allowed to view the resulting images in real time. Let us call things that are actual or potential objects of consciousness *empirical* items. This is a roughly Kantian sense of ‘empirical’ that opposes empirical items to the transcendental—understood as conditions of possibility of empirical items. Put in these terms, the hard problem of consciousness is a problem of understanding how one empirical item could produce or constitute another when the two items seem so essentially different.

That is a hard problem, admittedly. But it pales in comparison to the hard problem of intentionality. When we try to teach the concept of intentionality to students, it will often be by way of drawing on a board, with a poorly drawn head and an arrow pointing to some equally poorly drawn object in the world (or maybe that is just me). The attempt is, thus, to make intentionality into an object of the student’s scrutiny. The problem with this strategy, however, is that intentionality is the directedness of a mental act towards the world. And if we want to understand the intentionality—the directedness—of an act, we will look in vain to objects of this directedness. The hard problem of intentionality is the problem of understanding intentionality as directedness towards the world, rather than as an object of that directedness. But the only way we can think about, or understand, something, it seems, is by making it into an object of a mental act (of thought, understanding, apprehension, critical scrutiny, etc.)

How do we understand intentionality from the *inside*, so to speak—as the directedness of a mental act, rather than as an object of a mental act? This is what the picture of intentionality is, in effect, all about. It is a picture

constructed from materials that date back to a time when the idea that intentionality had an inside as well as an outside was taken a little more seriously—when it was the sort of idea that might, for example, be made the foundation of one’s philosophical system.<sup>4</sup>

## 5. THE PICTURE OF INTENTIONALITY: FREGE AND HUSSERL

As a way of understanding the picture of intentionality, consider Frege’s struggles to clarify his notion of *sense* (*Sinn*). As many commentators have noted, there is a pronounced tension in Frege’s account. He wants to attribute two distinct types of feature or function to *senses* or *thoughts* (*Gedanken*). On the one hand, Frege claims that senses can be objects of mental acts in a way akin—although not identical—to that in which physical objects can be the objects of mental acts (Harnish 2000). Physical objects can be perceived; senses or thoughts (that is, the sense of a declarative sentence) can be *apprehended*. Moreover, when a thought is apprehended, Frege claims, “something in [the thinker’s] consciousness must be *aimed at* the thought” (Frege 1918/1994, 34–5). In one of its guises, therefore, a sense is an intentional object of an act of apprehension.

However, according to Frege, senses also have the role of fixing reference. Although senses can be objects of reference, that is not their only, or even typical, role. In its second guise, the function of sense is to direct the speaker or hearer’s thinking not to the sense itself, but to the object picked out by that sense. In this case, senses do not figure as intentional objects of mental acts, but as items *in virtue of which* a mental act can have an object. In their customary role, senses are *determinants* of reference: they are what fix reference rather than objects of reference.

The tension between these two conceptions of sense lies in the fact that when sense is playing the role described in the first characterization, it cannot also play the role described in the second, and vice versa. This inability to play both roles simultaneously shows itself in a certain *non-eliminability* that attaches to sense in its reference-determining role.

In its first guise, a sense is an object of apprehension: an intentional object of a mental act. But the second characterization of sense tells us that whenever there is an intentional object of a mental act, there is also a sense that fixes reference to this object. If we combine these characterizations, therefore, it seems that we must conclude that, whenever sense exists as an intentional object of a mental act of apprehension, there must, in that act, be another sense that allows it to exist in this way. And if this latter sense were also to exist as an intentional object of a mental act, then there would have to be yet another sense that allowed it to do so. Sense in its reference-determining guise, therefore, has a non-eliminable status within any intentional act. In any intentional act, there is always a sense that is not, and in that act cannot be, an intentional object.

Therefore, the concept of sense, as employed by Frege, admits of what we might call *empirical* and *transcendental* interpretations. Empirically, sense is an intentional object of an act of apprehension. Transcendentally, it is that in virtue of which any intentional act can refer to—or have—an object. Sense, as transcendental, occupies a non-eliminable position in any intentional act: whenever there is a referent, there is a sense in virtue of which this referent is picked out as falling under an empirical mode of presentation. It is the second way of thinking about sense, sense as determinant of reference, that underwrites the familiar idea that Fregean sense is *inexpressible*: something that can be *shown* but not *said*. As Dummett puts it: “even when Frege is purporting to give the sense of a word or symbol, what he actually *states* is what its reference is” (1973, 227). This inexpressibility is an inevitable consequence of the non-eliminability of sense.

A similar pattern of thought can be identified in Husserl’s (early) attempts to explain the nature of what he called *Auffassungssinn* and also in his (later) attempts to explain the distinction between *noesis* and *noema*. I shall focus on the latter. There are two ways of interpreting this distinction, which have become known as the ‘East Coast’ and the ‘West Coast’ interpretations. According to the former, the distinction between *noesis* and *noema* is intended to track the distinction between transcendental and empirical interpretations of sense (Sokolowski 1987). On this interpretation, *noesis* corresponds to sense understood transcendently as a determinant of reference; *noema* corresponds to sense understood empirically as an object of reference. Thus, on the East Coast interpretation, when Husserl introduces the distinction between *noesis* and *noema*, he is simply recording the systematic ambiguity of the notion of sense and effecting an appropriate disambiguation.

The West Coast interpretation relates the *noesis/noema* to Husserl’s *anti-psychologism* (Føllesdal 1969). Husserl, like Frege, was insistent that senses should be understood as (i) objective, in the sense that they exist independently of the mental activity of any subject, and (ii) ideal, in the sense that they are neither spatial nor temporal entities. The transcendental notion of sense would threaten this anti-psychologism. Understood empirically, senses are extrinsic objects of mental acts of apprehension—and one is at liberty to understand them as objective, ideal entities. However, as transcendental, they are not extrinsic to the mental act at all. The worry is that if senses are so intimately connected to mental acts as to be determinants of their reference, then it would seem that they should be the same sort of things as mental acts—subjective, spatial, temporal, dated, concrete particulars.

According to the West Coast interpretation, Husserl’s solution to this problem builds on his earlier distinction, made in the *Logical Investigations*, between the *real* (*reell*) and *ideal* content of a mental act (Husserl 1900–01/2001). Real content is specific to a particular mental act, whereas ideal content can be shared by different acts—in effect, the latter is a universal that can be instantiated by different acts.<sup>5</sup> What in *Ideas I* (Husserl

1913/1983) Husserl calls the *noema* is the intentional act individuated by its ideal content. The *noesis* would be the same act individuated according to its real content.

On the West Coast interpretation, therefore, the *noesis/noema* distinction does not map as neatly onto the *transcendental/empirical* distinction as it does in its Eastern counterpart. Nevertheless, the former distinction is still motivated by the latter. The *noesis/noema* distinction is, on the East Coast interpretation, motivated by Husserl's desire to safeguard the objectivity of sense, but to do so precisely in the face of the problem that sense has a transcendental, as well as an empirical, interpretation. The possibility of a transcendental interpretation of sense entails that sense is more closely connected to mental acts than being merely an extrinsic object grasped by such acts. Husserl's suggestion is that the experiential *noema* is an ideal reference-determining content, whereas the *noesis* is the real, concrete, psychic counterpart to this ideal particular.

## 6. INTENTIONALITY AS DISCLOSURE

The themes found in Frege and Husserl can be woven together into a general argument. Suppose we think of examples of intentional states as possessing a tripartite structure comprising *act*, *object*, and *mode of presentation*. Despite some lean years (c. 1970–2000), this way of thinking of intentionality is still sufficiently widely accepted to be dubbed the *standard model*. The mode of presentation connects act and object, but the precise way in which it does this can be left open. On one influential way of explaining this connection, for example, the act has a certain content, expressible in the form of a description, and the mode of presentation is that in virtue of which the object satisfies that description. This description-theoretic explanation is, however, entirely optional. Nothing in the tripartite model itself entails that the act's content can be expressed in the form of a description.

The core argument begins by showing that the idea of a mode of presentation (the generalized form of *sense*, *Auffassungsin*, or *noesis/noema*) is ambiguous. In any intentional act, we find two different sorts of mode of presentation.

*Empirical modes of presentation (aspects)*: Often, indeed typically, the notion of a mode of presentation is understood as the way that objects appear to subjects. If a tomato appears red and shiny, then redness and shininess is the mode of presentation of the tomato. In this sense, the mode of presentation is an intentional object—it is the sort of thing of which I can become aware if my attention is suitably engaged. I can attend not only to the tomato, but also to its redness and shininess. An empirical mode of presentation is an intentional object. As such, it is identical with what is sometimes called an *aspect* of an object.

*Transcendental modes of presentation:* The standard mode of intentionality has a clear, if curiously overlooked, implication. In any intentional act, there must be more than an empirical mode of presentation. There must also be a transcendental mode of presentation. The reason is that the mode of presentation is supposedly what *fixes reference*—determines the intentional object of a mental act. So, if the object of an intentional act is an empirical mode of presentation (for example, the redness and shininess of the tomato), there must be another mode of presentation—a *transcendental* mode of presentation—that fixes reference to the empirical mode of presentation. The transcendental mode of presentation is that component of the intentional act that permits the object of the act to appear under empirical modes of presentation (or aspects).

If we want to understand the intentionality—the directedness—of an act, we will look in vain to the objects of this directedness (i.e., objects or empirical modes of presentation of those objects). The directedness of an intentional act towards the world consists in its transcendental mode of presentation. The transcendental mode of presentation is the intentional core of an act. That is, the directedness of an intentional act consists in its permitting objects to appear under aspects. Therefore, in this sense, intentional directedness is a form of *revealing* or *disclosing* activity: activity that reveals objects as falling under aspects or empirical modes of presentation. That, in its most abstract form, is what intentional directedness is.

It is possible to distinguish two forms of disclosing activity: *causal* and *constitutive*. Constitutive disclosure takes the form of a logically sufficient condition for the world to fall under an empirical mode of presentation. For example, what it is like to have an experience provides a logically sufficient condition for the world to fall under an empirical mode of presentation. If I have an experience with qualitative character, *c*, this is logically sufficient for the world—an object in the world if the experience is a perception or illusion, a region of the world if it is a hallucination—to appear as *c*. If I think that *p*, this is logically sufficient for the world to appear to me, in thought, as *p*.

We might also recognize the category of causal disclosure, where this takes the form of a physically sufficient condition for the world to fall under an empirical mode of presentation. Cognitive vehicles typically supply only a physically sufficient condition for the world to fall under an empirical mode of presentation. For example, if correct, David Marr's account of the computational processes that progressively transform the retinal image into a 3D object representation would provide a physically, but not logically, sufficient condition for an object to appear a certain way. *Constitutive disclosure* is disclosure by way of *content*. *Causal disclosure* is disclosure by way of *vehicles* of content. It is causal disclosure that is relevant to the various theses of 4e cognition (since these are theses about cognitive vehicles).

## 7. FROM INTENTIONALITY TO THE 4E MIND

The various versions of 4e cognition are usually taken to be *recherché* doctrines, radically at odds with common sense. However, given the picture of intentionality as revealing or disclosing activity, various versions of the 4e view of cognition emerge as natural, obvious—perhaps even mundane—consequences. In particular, the ‘view’ advertised in the opening section emerges as precisely such a consequence.

The activity whereby an object is disclosed as falling under a given aspect or empirical mode of presentation often—not always, certainly not necessarily, but often—straddles neural processes, bodily processes, and processes of manipulating or transforming environmental structures. This is why the vehicles of cognitive processes are often amalgamations of all three.

We might give flesh to this rather abstract characterization using a familiar (indeed, by now, perhaps rather hackneyed) example. According to a common interpretation of Clark and Chalmers’s famous case of Otto, the sentences in Otto’s notebook are identical with a subset to his beliefs. I do not endorse this claim. Indeed, I reject it. Nevertheless, I do endorse the claim that Otto’s manipulation of his notebook can form part of a cognitive process—in this case, the process of remembering. The activity of manipulating the book is part of the means whereby, in the case of memory, Otto’s intentional directedness toward the world is brought about. The manipulation of the book is, in part, that in virtue of which a certain object in the world—a museum—is disclosed to Otto as falling under a specific empirical mode of presentation: that of being located on 53rd Street.

Consider another example: suppose I am asked, *à la* Yarus (1967), to look at a picture and identify certain information contained in it. For example, suppose I am asked to determine the approximate age of the picture’s central figure. To accomplish this task, my eyes engage in a certain saccadic scan path. This scan path is part of the visual, causal disclosure of the world as containing an object—a painted figure—that falls under a given empirical mode of presentation: for example, as being a depiction of someone roughly 40 years old, or as someone not seen by the others for many years. As such, the saccadic eye movements are part of the means by which an object in the world is revealed to me as falling under an empirical mode of presentation. The saccadic eye movements are, therefore, among of the vehicles of intentional directedness. Often—by no means always, certainly not necessarily, but often—the vehicles of intentional directedness subsume (in these sorts of ways) both bodily and wider environmental processes. That is why, fundamentally, mental processes often subsume both bodily and wider environmental processes.

There are many other possible examples of the same general phenomenon. When the subject moves, and thus—*à la* Gibson—manipulates the optic array, invariant information is obtained or appropriated: information that can be identified only in the transformation from one optic array to

another. In virtue of this information, in part, an object may be subsumed under one or another perceptual mode of presentation: as being the same size as, or as being a different size from, another object.

The kind of sensorimotor probing that enactivists have (rightly) emphasized (see Noë 2004) is another example of revealing activity. Casting one's attention at will to any part of the visually presented world, or having one's attention automatically drawn to a visual transient are examples of probing or exploratory activity. They are activities in virtue of which an object in the world can be presented as falling under one or another perceptual mode of presentation. Thus, it is partly in virtue of such activity that a wall can be subsumed under the mode of presentation 'wall of Marilyn's' rather than the alternative 'wall of indeterminate shapes.'<sup>6</sup>

## 8. CONCLUSION

There are, essentially, two ways of thinking about experiences and other intentional states. The first is to think of them as items *of* which one is aware. This way of thinking about intentional states is not so much false as misleading. It is, of course, true that I can attend to my intentional states and their various properties. I might attend to a particular thought that I have, and I might do so because, for example, I find it troubling. Therefore, intentional states (and their properties) can be items of which I am aware. However, these sorts of situations in which I have reflective consciousness of my intentional states are far from the norm. Most of the time, my intentional states are simply things I have without attending to them. Typically, my intentional states are not items *of* which I am aware, but items *with* which I am aware. That is, they are items that make me aware of other things: objects (broadly construed) or states-of-affairs (depending on one's preferred view of the objects of intentional directedness). An intentional state is an item in virtue of which I become aware of its intentional object.

Suppose we think of intentional states as items *of* which we are aware. If we do this, we are almost ineluctably led to a certain way of thinking about intentional directedness. We will think of this directedness as an empirical item, in the sense introduced earlier: as an item of which I am, or can become, aware if my attention is suitably engaged. The intentional state itself is empirical in this sense—an object of my introspective gaze or grasp—and so too will be the state's intentional object. Then, we postulate that there is some relation between the intentional state and its object in virtue of which the former is about the latter. If we can understand this relation, we will have understood intentional directedness. This is to think of intentionality from the outside: as an object of intentional directedness. Since the two relata are both empirical, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the relation between them has the same status also. Most contemporary treatments of intentionality conform to this general profile.



Suppose, on the other hand, that we think of mental states as, fundamentally, items *with* which we are aware: as items that make us aware of their intentional objects. Then, we can eschew the above way of thinking of intentionality in favor of a quite different picture. Here, we begin with the intentional object, as it appears to the subject, and work backwards from this to identify the features of the act in virtue of which it can appear this way. To do this is to understand intentionality from the inside: as directedness towards the world rather than an item directed upon—as transcendental rather than empirical. This, in broad outline, is the method of, and rationale for, phenomenology. There is, I have argued, an abstract, general picture of intentionality that emerges from this approach: intentionality is, fundamentally, revealing or disclosing activity. Intentional directedness consists in the disclosing of an object, *x*, as falling under an empirical mode of presentation, *P*.

Wittgenstein once said that philosophy is useful only against philosophers—and the philosopher in us. We are all philosophers, and what we regard as our common sense in reality embodies various philosophical pictures, assumptions, and often confusions. The various 4e understandings of the mental—mental processes as embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended—fall out of the picture of intentionality I have defended in this paper: they emerge from it as obvious, even banal, consequences. Certainly, the view advertised at the beginning of this paper—the claim that some mental processes are partly made up of processes in which an individual manipulates, transforms, and/or exploits structures in its environment—is a mundane consequence of this picture of intentionality. Intentionality is revealing activity, and this revealing activity will often—not always, not necessarily, but often—straddle processes occurring in the brain, processes occurring in the body, and processes whereby an individual manipulates, exploits, and transforms relevant structures in its environment. The idea that mental items are not confined to the skull or skin is usually regarded as a *recherché* doctrine, radically at odds with common sense. If this is so, it can only be because common sense embodies a picture of intentionality. I have argued that this picture is defective.

## NOTES

1. If one likes labels, one might, in deference to the central role it accords an individual's action on the world, refer to it as *actionism*—though, to my ears, that is so ugly I can't quite bring myself to use it.
2. This is tendentious, of course. Some seem to think that the thesis of extended cognition was born with Andy Clark and David Chalmers's paper "The Extended Mind" (2008), instead of having a lineage that could be traced back at least as far as Heidegger through, to name but a few, Ed Hutchins, Merlin Donald, and James Gibson. I don't endorse this historical myopia, of course. Indeed, even Andy Clark was writing about the extended mind long before



“The Extended Mind.” By early days, I refer to the historically myopic understanding of this idea. That is ‘the early days’ refers to days of “The Extended Mind” and its aftermath, up to Rob Rupert’s (2004) paper, “Challenges to the Hypothesis of Extended Cognition.”

3. The question of what makes an analysis conceptual is a good one, but not one that can be addressed here.
4. I am, of course, adverting to the phenomenological tradition, which I shall discuss soon (rather than Frege, whom I shall discuss next).
5. By the time of *Ideas I* (Husserl 1913/1983), Husserl understands this as a trope—an abstract particular—rather than a universal.
6. I discuss this example in my 2010, 204–5. The idea is that only a small portion of Warhol’s wall of Marilyn’s will fall within the range of foveal vision. Parafoveal vision is incapable of discriminating images of Marilyn from indeterminate shapes. The slack, on the sensorimotor account, is taken up by my ability to direct my attention at will to any part of the wall—and my anticipation that I will encounter more Marilyn’s when I do so. See also Dennett 1991.

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