

# Phenomenology *for the* Twenty-First Century

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*Edited by*

J. Aaron Simmons &  
J. Edward Hackett



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J. Aaron Simmons • J. Edward Hackett  
Editors

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palgrave  
macmillan

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ISBN 978-1-137-55038-5      ISBN 978-1-137-55039-2 (eBook)  
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-55039-2

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016948745

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Printed on acid-free paper

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*To Vanessa and Ashley, for making it possible for us to  
continue to think this way*

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## Preface

I've just returned from the future, or from a glimpse of the future offered here and now in *Phenomenology for the Twenty-First Century*. I've been so caught up in my own narrow and all-too-present phenomenological projects that I haven't had much time to think about how expansive phenomenology has become and how extensive its promise is. The set of essays collected here are replete with foresight, and impressive for their collective scope.

We can debate what phenomenology has been, or what it is today, and there are debates about such issues in this volume, but in the end, whether phenomenology has an essence, or is simply a family resemblance concept (questions that apply equally to other philosophical traditions, to other disciplines, and to science itself), the test is whether something that we recognize as phenomenology will continue to produce significant results in the future. Recognizing something as phenomenology, however, may be difficult for two reasons.

First, it is clear that phenomenology is less pure than as proposed in its Husserlian origins. At least for contemporary sensibilities, however, *impure* phenomenology is much more interesting. One way to understand this impurity is to see that in every study presented in this book, phenomenology is interfacing with some other discipline or practice—psychology, studies of emotion and affect, cognitive science, psychiatry, politics, ethics, art, jurisprudence, religious studies, and so on. Another

way to understand it is to recognize that, following Merleau-Ponty, the experience phenomenology studies is embodied. We see this acknowledgement in many of the essays. If Husserl was once able to speak about a pure zero-point at the origin of the first-person perspective, we know from Husserl himself, and the phenomenology that followed him, the zero-point is never zero; it always has some temporal and material thickness to it, and to explore that thickness one needs to do phenomenology in close interdisciplinary dialogue with the other aforementioned disciplines.

Second, and despite the impurity, phenomenology comes with a certain methodological transparency. If Husserl was always fretting about method, it was because he wanted to make it as precise and as transparent as possible so that it would not get in the way of the things themselves. The best phenomenology is one that in a certain sense disappears. One does not always explicitly conduct a phenomenology; it is sometimes, like a good tool, or like the blind man's cane, something that conducts its user as it recedes into the margins. Unlike an fMRI machine, which is at least twice removed from the neural processes it aims to investigate, and unlike theoretical models that distort by oversimplification and abstraction the very thing they attempt to explain, phenomenology, to the extent that it is a method, is meant to deliver directly what it sets out to explicate. In this respect, phenomenology tries to be as transparent as the lived body itself as it engages in action.

Phenomenology is not the study of everything; moreover, every phenomenological study is a contingent study. But whatever it does study, it does not reduce its subject matter to an abstraction. Phenomenology does not deliver a model or a representation of its subject matter; it dives into it, or better, it is pulled into it through descriptive explications that try to capture the complexity of form or structure, or what Merleau-Ponty called the structural tapestries of things. This happens in a way that leads the phenomenologist to an engagement with others who share the same world, and with the very materiality and meaning of things. Phenomenology can study materiality and meaning in structures of history and power, instituted normativity, relational conceptions

of responsibility, emotional and broadly affective experiences, religious practices, pathological conditions, and so on, as well as the everyday experience of life. Such studies define the scope of, as well as the limitations of, phenomenology. In this regard, phenomenology opens up areas of analysis that are not open to scientific solutions, models, or representations. The matrix of dynamically related dimensions—the neuronal, chemical, bodily, intersubjective, action-related, context-related, cultural, normative, and personal dimensions—that characterize emotion, for example, are not reducible to any one dimension and so cannot be captured by any one experiment that would control for all but one variable, or by multiple experiments if we do not know how to put the disrupted dynamics back together. Phenomenology aims to grasp the dynamical form, the contingent patterns that form any instance of a phenomenon like emotion.

Each of these dimensions of human experience, in turn, reflects a different interdependent matrix with a dynamics that experiments and models can, again, only inadequately grasp. Phenomenology keeps us honest about this. It doesn't provide what science fails to provide; but in its own limited way it shows us the limits of science. It brings us close enough to things so that it shows us an infinite task. As it engages with the finitude of our existence and the infinitude of understanding it, phenomenology has shown that it can undergo pragmatic adaptability. It can be pure or impure, hermeneutical and critical, antinaturalist or attuned to the truth of naturalism, moral and existential, pragmatic or mystical. The versatility of phenomenology seems to mirror the versatility of philosophy itself.

The authors in this collection consistently reach back to retrieve insights from classic phenomenological studies with the aim of pushing these insights forward into new contexts. They show the continuing relevance of Husserl, Scheler, Reinach, Heidegger, Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, and others, sometimes mixed into a 'new phenomenology' (an old term that gets *renewed* every so often, e.g., Royce, Schmitz, respectively) with thinkers like Dooyeweerd, Marion, Lacoste, Sokolowski, and others, or into a periphenomenology or postphenomenology (which is 'peri' but not at all 'post') with Idhe, Casey, and other future-oriented thinkers.

If phenomenology is an infinite task, we'll never have enough time or sunlight. 'In 4.5 billion years there will arrive the demise of your phenomenology ... and there'll be no one there to toll the death knell or hear it.' Lyotard wrote that in 1991. On his calculation (which, he fails to note, is only an approximation) we still have 4.499997 billion years or so to get it right. This volume is a good start toward that.

Shaun Gallagher

## Notes on Contributors

**Kimberly Baltzer-Jaray** is an independent scholar whose area of expertise is early phenomenology and existentialism. She is a lecturer at King's University College, President of the North American Society for Early Phenomenology (NASEP), and a writer for *Things & Ink Magazine*. Baltzer-Jaray has edited special issues of *Symposium: Journal for the Canadian Society for Continental Philosophy* (Fall 2012) and *Quaestiones Disputatae* (Fall 2012). She is the author of *Doorway to the World of Essences: Adolf Reinach and the Early Phenomenology Movement* (VDM Verlag, 2009; an expanded, second edition is forthcoming), and her articles have appeared in scholarly journals, collected works on early phenomenology, and pop culture books. She facilitates a Reinach blog on OPHEN ([ophen.org](http://ophen.org)), is an associate editor for the *Journal of Camus Studies*, and for a new series at Traugott Bautz, Ad Fontes.

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# 1

## Introduction: On Living into the Future

J. Aaron Simmons

In a sustained consideration of the notion of ‘futurity’ in phenomenology, Neal DeRoo describes phenomenology as a ‘promissory discipline’.<sup>1</sup> Having worked through the way in which epistemology opens onto ethical, political, and religious domains in phenomenological inquiry, DeRoo concludes as follows: ‘By opening ourselves to the essential role of futurity in phenomenology, we have opened ourselves also to new possibilities, new pursuits, for the present and future of phenomenology.’<sup>2</sup> The present volume aims at exploring such possibilities and pursuits as displayed in phenomenology, *today*, in the hope that doing so will facilitate thinking about where phenomenology might be going, *tomorrow*.

Nonetheless, it is worth asking straightaway why bringing together scholars to think about the future of phenomenology is even needed? Edmund Husserl famously articulated a crisis in the ‘European Sciences’ and, more recently, Michel Henry expressed worry about a crisis for

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© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016  
J.A. Simmons, J.E. Hackett (eds.), *Phenomenology for the  
Twenty-First Century*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-55039-2\_1

‘culture’ more broadly due to the objectivist tendencies of scientism.<sup>3</sup> For both Husserl and Henry, phenomenology is offered as something of a prescription for the illness that threatens humanity. However, is it the case that phenomenology, itself, now faces its own crisis? Like a doctor working in a communicable disease lab, has phenomenology caught the sickness that it was trying to cure? Such questions are certainly important for the future of phenomenology, and in order to face the challenge head on, the final section of this volume provides essays by scholars who think that phenomenology is no longer the best drug available.

However, this volume is not united by a sense of crisis, but rather a sense of uncertainty resulting from simultaneous diversity and narrowness. Phenomenology is diverse in that it spans philosophical traditions and styles, it occurs internationally rather than having a specific geographic locus, and it is applied to nearly every area of philosophical inquiry. It is narrow in that there are many different phenomenological camps that get established around competing orthodoxies. As such, it can be difficult to articulate a unified conception of what it is that phenomenology aims to do and why it matters that such things get done. Yet, is something like a ‘unified conception’ even desirable for phenomenology? In his chapter, Tom Sparrow finds the diversity of phenomenological approaches to be reason to doubt that phenomenology can continue to be of significant value in contemporary philosophy. In response, though, Bruce Ellis Benson contends that such diversity allows for the potential narrowness to be a reflection of the breadth of phenomenology’s application, rather than of the elimination of its relevance. Accordingly, rather than asking ‘Is phenomenology in crisis?’ this volume asks ‘How can what passes under the name of “phenomenology” stand as a resource for contemporary philosophical inquiry, human culture, personal identity, and social life?’

Only by answering this question can phenomenology hope to have a future—and the specific answers offered to this question can then stand as proposals for that future. This volume is unified, then, not by a *threat* to phenomenology, but by a *hope* for it. The hope is that phenomenology can avoid the fate of so many ‘mega-churches’ and find a way to be a mile wide, as it were, without only being an inch deep. In light of this hope, the chapters in this volume are wide-ranging and visionary, rather than all being narrowly focused on only one aspect or dimension

of phenomenology's promise in line with a singular conception of phenomenological orthodoxy. In this sense, the volume itself is prescriptive more than proscriptive. Rather than shutting down possibilities, the contributors attempt to open such possibilities up for discussion and debate, and also for challenge and critique. Philosophical resources must make room for the possibility of philosophical refutation and this volume allows for both. Crucially, visions for the future might turn out to be compelling or catastrophic. Yet, responsibly owning up to such uncertainty is, itself, a task to which phenomenology can distinctly attend.

In light of such hope, while admitting of such uncertainty, the contributors to this volume demonstrate that perhaps more than any other contemporary philosophical movement, phenomenology is able to bring together diverse thinkers to work on pressing challenges that humanity faces in a time of globalization, environmental awareness, religious tension, and political gridlock. To be sure, such challenges are difficult and phenomenology cannot do everything. Nonetheless, phenomenology attends specifically to the givenness of the world and getting clear on how things confront us is an important first step in the task of thinking about how things might be transformed for the better. As such, phenomenology must be considered as not only occurring *in* the twenty-first century, but as presented *for* the twenty-first century. United in this effort, the contributors to this volume all offer bold proposals for specific questions, themes, and thinkers that should receive sustained attention as the debates unfold in the coming decades.

Visionary proclamations, however, can often fall short on content and specifics. Refreshingly, though, this is not the case for the chapters in this volume. Striking a fine balance, the contributors have all dug deep in order to think broadly. Not content with merely calling for questions to be asked and issues to be considered, the contributors both ask the questions and offer concrete suggestions for how best to answer them. They not only consider *what* issues might be considered, but also provide constructive analyses for *how* such issues should be approached. Attempting to be simultaneously historically sensitive and also future-oriented, hermeneutically aware and also critically engaged, the chapters contained herein do open spaces for the future of phenomenology, but more importantly they describe what such a future can and possibly should look like.

Such work does not come without important risks and limitations. In particular the attempt to predict where things are likely to go is inherently risky. Explaining such risk, Jacques Derrida famously distinguishes between two notions of the future—the future that is predictable and foreseeable, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the future (*l'avenir*/to-come) that is absolutely unpredictable and announces the coming of someone or something that is unexpected.<sup>4</sup> This volume attempts to keep both conceptions, or valences, of futurity in play. By envisioning and inhabiting a particular future, we also necessarily open ourselves to what couldn't be expected in it. In fact, just as I was writing the previous sentence, a student of mine unexpectedly (he did not have an appointment) walked into my office and asked what I was working on. I told him that I was writing the introduction to a book that I was coediting, to which he remarked, 'Well, I hope that there is some John Travolta in it.' This was indeed a comment that I would not have expected, but, as it turns out, as a result of it, John Travolta *has* indeed made an appearance in this book. I mention this odd anecdote simply to illustrate that the task that has been set for the contributors to this volume is not an easy one—expecting the unexpected is difficult business.

This task is further complicated, however, by the dynamism operative in the phenomenological tradition itself. Rather than being a dead tradition, movement, or school that is primarily considered from the perspective of historical hindsight, it is instead *a living tradition*—still open to further definition, expansion, elaboration, and critique. In other words, phenomenology occurs in relation to both futures about which Derrida speaks because its present is active and its future undecided. What is envisioned and enacted here will necessarily, then, be limited in a variety of ways. It is limited both by the fact that no single book can be comprehensive of all the various possibilities for phenomenology and by the fact that what has historically gone under the name of 'phenomenology' is, in many ways, not a single 'thing' such that possibilities for 'it' could be neatly articulated. Yet, in its very plurality, dynamism, and open-endedness, phenomenology provides especially productive ways forward for a variety of areas of human thought, moral action, and social existence.

Many others have elsewhere provided extremely nuanced and sophisticated accounts of how best to understand phenomenology.<sup>5</sup> Some draw the tent rather tightly in relation to the specifics of Husserl's authorship. Others expand the tent quite broadly and understand phenomenology

to be any attempt to inquire into the way the world appears and what it is like to experience it as it is given.<sup>6</sup> Alternatively, some argue that phenomenology is exclusively a methodology, while others claim that it contains a particular set of philosophical commitments that have ontological, epistemological, and perhaps even moral and religious implications.<sup>7</sup> Further, many phenomenologists operate in what might be described as a generally 'analytic' mode where scientific analysis is held to be the relevant evidential framework, but many others approach their work in relation to a more 'continental' style and tone such that a more literary and existentialist orientation is characteristic.<sup>8</sup> Crucially, phenomenology is global, interdisciplinary, and energetic, but it is also not without its detractors.<sup>9</sup>

Attempting to be productively inclusive without becoming unwieldy, this volume operates with a big-tent approach to phenomenological philosophy and does so in order that the notion of phenomenology for the twenty-first century is not limited to merely one conception of what phenomenology is or can be. Accordingly, rather than focus on only one philosophical area or question as the central concern of the volume, the chapters are divided into a variety of areas that are especially important for phenomenology's present and future, though many other areas could have just as easily been included. Divided into six sections, the volume attends to the following thematic concerns: (1) *Justice and Value*, (2) *Meaning and Critique*, (3) *Emotion and Revelation*, (4) *Embodiment and Affectivity*, (5) *Pragmatism*, and (6) *Calling Phenomenology into Question*. These thematic foci have been carefully chosen in the attempt to demonstrate the philosophical rigor and existential traction that can result from the pluralism operative in phenomenological research. Crucially, none of these themes can be isolated from the others, however. To think about justice is also to think about the possibility of critique; to reflect on emotion is to attend to embodiment; and to consider revelation necessarily requires a concern for affectivity, and so on. The divisions are, therefore, best understood not as hard lines between the essays (such that the volume comprises really six very short books all published under the same title), but merely as a grouping mechanism that sets into relief the specific, though interlocking, issues being engaged. Of course, none of these foci, taken individually, is radically novel. Indeed, they animate the continuity occurring in phenomenological inquiry despite the discursive plurality of the tradition.

In the attempt to demonstrate the activity of the current debates, then, the volume concludes with a section that provides two critics of phenomenology the opportunity to explain why they take the future of philosophy to be better off without phenomenology at the forefront of scholarly attention. For these scholars, phenomenology *does* face something of an existential crisis. Turning to speculative realism and cognitive science as more promising alternatives, the authors of those chapters call the volume itself to task such that there is no possibility of resting easy in the security of phenomenology's future. Indeed, given the diversity and narrowness of phenomenology's present, it is likely that its future will be brightest only as a result of the joint work of established and emerging scholars like those included here. As such, the final chapter is offered as a phenomenological reply to these critics in the hope that phenomenological work continues undaunted, but deeply affected and perhaps transformed by such critical engagement.

Intentionally engaging both classical phenomenology and recent 'new' phenomenology, the chapters variously draw on analytic and continental resources.<sup>10</sup> When new phenomenology is combined with the logical and epistemological rigor of classical phenomenology, and the scientific orientation and empirical analysis of many of the contemporary phenomenological approaches to the philosophy of language and the philosophy of mind, the results are sweeping and original. The outcome is something that we hope will demonstrate that whatever the future of phenomenology turns out to be (and whether it is something that we can decidedly prepare for or something, like a discussion of John Travolta, that we cannot), it must reflect the plurality and dynamism of this living tradition itself rather than shutting such aspects down in the name of a singular conception. In other words, thinking about phenomenology for the twenty-first century must itself be a practice in *living-toward* that very future (expected and unexpected) with boldness and humility.

Like all philosophy, phenomenology is rightly viewed as not only a professional discourse, but also a type of spiritual exercise that sharpens the mind, enlivens the body, and invites us all to clear thinking, right living, and embracing the constancy of questioning.<sup>11</sup> If it does anything at all, phenomenology for the twenty-first century should do that. We hope that this volume helps us all, whether proponents or detractors, to

expect such a future as we expect the most from ourselves. In this way, phenomenology will ideally continue to enact its role as a ‘promissory discipline’, as DeRoo describes it, both by offering ‘promising’ avenues for philosophy and by striving to live up to the ‘promise’ of phenomenology that was articulated by Husserl, revised by Heidegger, expanded by Merleau-Ponty, radicalized by Henry and Levinas, and challenged by Derrida and Marion, among many others. To that continuing conversation the contributors of this volume add their voices.

## Notes

1. Neal DeRoo, *Futurity in Phenomenology: Promise and Method in Husserl, Levinas, and Derrida* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2013), pp. 150–3.
2. DeRoo, *Futurity in Phenomenology*, p. 153.
3. See Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970); Michel Henry, *Barbarism*, trans. Scott Davidson (London: Continuum, 2012).
4. Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering Kofman, directors, *Derrida: Screenplay and Essays on the Film* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), p. 53.
5. As just a few recent introductions to phenomenology, see Stephen Käufer and Anthony Chemero, *Phenomenology: An Introduction* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity, 2015); Michael Lewis and Tanja Staehler, *Phenomenology: An Introduction* (London: Continuum, 2010); Shaun Gallagher, *Phenomenology* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012); Simon Glendinning, *In the Name of Phenomenology* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2007).
6. For a defense of a narrowly Husserlian conception of phenomenology, see Dominique Janicaud, ‘The Theological Turn of French Phenomenology’, trans. Bernard G. Prusak, in Janicaud et al., *Phenomenology and the ‘Theological Turn’: The French Debate* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2000). For specific considerations of Husserl’s phenomenology more broadly, see Kevin Hermberg, *Husserl’s Phenomenology: Knowledge, Objectivity, and Others* (London: Continuum, 2006); Dan Zahavi, *Husserl’s Phenomenology* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); Donn Welton, *The Other Husserl: The Horizons of Transcendental Phenomenology*



- (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000). Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann offers a good consideration of how phenomenology gets inaugurated by Husserl and then reconsidered by Heidegger in his *Hermeneutics and Reflection: Heidegger and Husserl on the Concept of Phenomenology*, trans. Kenneth Maly (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013). For general approaches to phenomenology that expand the possible framework, see J. Aaron Simmons and Bruce Ellis Benson, *The New Phenomenology: A Philosophical Introduction* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Michael Hammond, Jane Howarth, and Russell Keat, *Understanding Phenomenology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991); Tilottama Rajan, *Deconstruction and the Reminders of Phenomenology: Sartre, Derrida, Foucault, Baudrillard* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).
7. As good overviews of some of the main philosophical areas in which phenomenology has been applied, see Dan Zahavi, ed., *The Oxford Handbook to Contemporary Phenomenology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Sebastian Luft and Søren Overgaard, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Phenomenology* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012). For applications in aesthetics, Renato Barilli, *The Science of Culture and the Phenomenology of Styles* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2012); Bruce Ellis Benson, *The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: A Phenomenology of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Paul Crowther, *Phenomenology of the Visual Arts (even the frame)* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009). For applications and engagements with the sciences, see Jean Petitot, Francisco J. Varela, Bernard Pachoud, and Jean-Michel Roy, eds., *Naturalizing Phenomenology: Issues in Contemporary Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Havi Carel and Darian Meacham, eds., *Phenomenology and Naturalism: Examining the Relationship between Human Experience and Nature*, *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement 72* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). For applications in religion, see Janicaud et al., *Phenomenology and the 'Theological Turn'*; Bruce Ellis Benson and Norman Wirzba, eds., *Words of Life: New Theological Turns in French Phenomenology* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2010); James L. Cox, *An Introduction to The Phenomenology of Religion* (London: Continuum, 2010).
  8. For generally analytic approaches, see Cornelis A. van Peursen, *Phenomenology and Analytical Philosophy* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne

University Press, 1972); David Woodruff Smith and Amie L. Thomasson, eds., *Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). For generally continental approaches, see François-David Sebbah, *Testing the Limit: Derrida, Henry, Levinas, and the Phenomenological Tradition*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012). Many texts have demonstrated that phenomenology importantly resists easy classification into analytic or continental categories. For just a few examples of work that crosses such lines, see Simmons and Benson, *The New Phenomenology*; Ronald Bruzina and Bruce Wilshire, eds., *Phenomenology: Dialogues and Bridges* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1982); William L. McBride and Calvin O. Schrag, eds., *Phenomenology in a Pluralistic Context* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1983).

9. As just two examples of ‘interdisciplinary phenomenology’, see Neal DeRoo, ‘Facticity and Transcendence across the Disciplines: Phenomenology and the Promise’, *Schutzian Research* 7 (2015); Don Ihde and Richard M. Zaner, eds., *Interdisciplinary Phenomenology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977). See also The Interdisciplinary Coalition of North American Phenomenologists ([www.icnap.org](http://www.icnap.org)). For cross-cultural engagements, see Mark Siderits, Evan Thompson, and Dan Zahavi, eds., *Self, No Self?: Perspectives from Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian Traditions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); D.P. Chattopadhyaya, Lester Embree, and Jitendranath Mohanty, eds., *Philosophy and Indian Philosophy* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992); Vincent Shen, Richard Knowles, and Tran van Doan, eds., *Psychology, Phenomenology, and Chinese Philosophy, Chinese Philosophical Studies VI* (1994). When it comes to critiques of phenomenology, the objections are wide-ranging, but for specific challenges of particular relevance to the content of this volume, see Janicaud et al., *Phenomenology and the ‘Theological Turn’*; Tom Sparrow, *The End of Phenomenology: Metaphysics and the New Realism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014); Paul J. Ennis, *Continental Realism* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2011).
10. By ‘new phenomenology’, I mean to refer to recent French phenomenology sometimes understood to be involved in a ‘theological turn’. For more on ‘new phenomenology’, see Simmons and Benson, *The New Phenomenology*; see also Sebbah, *Testing the Limit*.
11. See Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), especially chapters 3, 4, and 11.

# Part I

Justice and Value

# 2

## To the People Themselves: The Value of Phenomenology for Global Ethics

Stephen Minister

The twenty-first century calls for ethical reflection on global issues with a depth and breadth heretofore unknown. From climate and the environment to trade and aid, war and security, and poverty and human rights, it has become impossible to adequately reflect on the demands of justice and responsibility without taking account of the transnational and global contexts in which these issues arise. Yet such reflection has lagged behind the professional and political discourses on global issues, which are dominated by economic and/or nationalist motivations and rationalities. Over the last two decades, philosophers like Martha Nussbaum and Thomas Pogge have criticized this dominance and articulated important ethical approaches to these issues. While this recent work contains many vital insights, it also often assumes modern ethical and epistemological views that many phenomenologists rightly criticize. Because of this, the phenomenological tradition has much to offer us as we aim to deepen

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our thinking on global ethics.<sup>1</sup> This chapter suggests a number of ways that phenomenology can be brought to bear critically on philosophical, professional, and political discourses around global issues. Because the debates in global ethics are so sprawling and the resources of the phenomenological tradition so deep, this chapter can only offer a partial sketch of the value of phenomenology for global ethics.<sup>2</sup> It is my hope that this sketch will be sufficient to spark interest in further inquiry as phenomenology unfolds in the twenty-first century.

## Embodied Subjectivity

One of the well-known slogans of phenomenology is ‘To the things themselves!’<sup>3</sup> Whereas the Cartesian mind is isolated from the world and only capable of experiencing representations, for phenomenology consciousness reaches beyond itself to engage objects in the world. Rather than being isolated from the world, consciousness is that which connects us to the world, which puts us in touch with the things themselves. Conscious subjectivity and worldly objectivity are thus inextricably related, but also irreducible to each other. This has significant implications for how we think about ourselves (which this section and the next will consider) and how we think about the world (which the third and fourth sections will consider). These implications in turn have consequences for how we think about global ethics.

The irreducibility of subjectivity and objectivity means that we must conceive of human beings as both conscious subjects and physical objects, that is, bodies. As conscious subjects we are agents capable of deliberation and choice. As physical bodies we are situated in particular material and social contexts with all the gendered, raced, cultural, economic, political, and historical dynamics that they include. These material realities are not ancillary to the would-be true self of subjectivity, but are precisely that in which we live and move and have our being. Because our conscious subjectivity and our embodiment are inseparable, yet irreducible, ethical action toward others must take seriously both the subjectivity and the embodiment of others.<sup>4</sup> Ethics will fail both when it responds to others without taking into account significant material and social realities of their embodiment and also when it responds only to the physical or social realities without engaging the subjectivity of others.

In global ethics, the former happens whenever significant embodied realities are abstracted away or ignored. This is typical of ideal theory in mainstream philosophy, but also happens all too often in policy-setting and project interventions. For example, if we ignore local political and economic power, we create principles and policies that are doomed to failure. Often these failures are blamed on ‘corruption’, which in some cases simply means the predictable, but ignored influence that local power structures have. If we abstract away gender, we overlook the differential gender impacts of social, political, and economic policies. If we abstract away race, we overlook discriminatory practices and perceptions. If we ignore colonial history and the entrenched inequalities it created, we silence legitimate grievances before they can even be heard. If we ignore cultural and social differences, we overgeneralize the value of policies and programs. These material and social realities, and many others, significantly impact people’s lived experience and so they must impact our ethical reflection as well. When we ignore or abstract away aspects of embodiment, we set ourselves up for principles, policies, and actions that produce unintended consequences—consequences that are often foreseeable but unforeseen.

Ignoring subjectivity in favor of objectivity can be equally damaging for global ethics. This error is often committed by economists and development experts who are focused on using their expertise to craft top-down policy interventions. To the degree that they fail to engage the agency of those they mean to help, they are unwittingly—or sometimes wittingly—adopting a paternalistic mindset, which imagines that ‘we’ know what is best for ‘them’. Peter Singer’s writings on poverty also neglect human agency since ‘the poor’ only show up in his argument as passive bodies, defined by physical suffering and in need of ‘us’ to save them. Though there are humanitarian emergencies where people suffer from such extreme deprivation that immediate, external rescue is necessary, this is not the dominant way people experience poverty. In ignoring the subjectivity of others, we dehumanize them, turning them into objects to be manipulated or otherwise acted upon.

Phenomenology draws our attention to these shortcomings and has the potential to help us overcome them. To address the many challenges that arise in global ethics, we need a new ethical methodology that is capable of taking seriously both subjectivity and embodiment, in all their diverse manifestations. We need a methodology that goes beyond abstract

reflection to concrete, lived realities, and that engages, rather than ignores, fields like anthropology, gender studies, and religious studies. Above all, we need a methodology that takes us back ‘to the people themselves’! Phenomenology’s commitment to both subjectivity and embodiment, including its commitment to taking seriously qualitative accounts of lived experience, make it well-suited to contribute to such a methodology.

## The Ethics of Alterity

In his development of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl was primarily interested in epistemological questions. Thus, he focused on the fact that it is a mistake to treat others as mere objects, since they are also subjects and co-constitutors of the world.<sup>5</sup> Emmanuel Levinas builds on this insight to argue that objectifying others is not only epistemically wrong, but also ethically wrong. When we think and act as if others are simply objects to be acted upon, we not only misunderstand them, but also violate them. Since phenomenological subjectivity always defies objectification, Levinas argues that we have responsibility toward others not because of some objective property that others have, but simply because they are singular others. Rather than an ethics rooted in a shared identity, this yields a notion of responsibility amid alterity and difference. In contrast to Husserl’s prioritization of rationality, Levinas argues that this responsibility toward others orients subjectivity in the world. Thus, Levinas often frames his project as an attempt to rethink human life starting from ethical responsibility.

This distinguishes Levinas’s view not only from Husserl, but also from major strands of modern ethical theory that attempt to root ethics in a common, objective feature such as reason, freedom, or self-interest. Though Levinas embraces a role for reason, freedom, and self-interest when conceived on the basis of responsibility, he is concerned that taking any of these three as prior to responsibility makes it possible to disregard other people in good conscience. For example, grounding ethics in rationality runs the risk of ignoring the voices of others as one looks to (one’s own) reason for ethical guidance. This tendency is emboldened when others are regarded as irrational, superstitious, primitive, or senseless. Of course, modern colonial

history abounds with such designations, which offer ethical cover for violence and imperialism. This pattern is not confined to the past as these designations continue to be used as justification for intervention in the lives of people elsewhere, militarily or otherwise.

In a different way, appeals to freedom and self-interest can readily be deployed to shirk responsibility toward others. At the beginning of *Otherwise than Being*, Levinas recalls one of Pascal's *penseés*: "That is my place in the sun." That is how the usurpation of the whole world began.<sup>6</sup> When appeals to freedom or self-interest are used as justification independent of ethical considerations, the result is often disregard for the legitimate concerns of others. This is a particular pressing point for contemporary global ethics as appeals to freedom and self-interest readily legitimize disregard for people beyond our borders. Former US President George W. Bush gave a clear example of this when he responded to concerns about climate change by saying: 'We will not do anything that harms our economy, because first things first are the people who live in America.'<sup>7</sup> Given the realities of climate change, Americans' freedom to burn fossil fuels and interest in a strong economy cannot ethically be regarded as independent of our responsibilities toward people elsewhere. The same is true for the many other economic, political, and military connections we have with others around the world. And yet on these issues, as with climate change, it is common to hear appeals to freedom or self-interest given as justification for actions or policies that harm other people. In this context, Levinas's emphasis on the priority of responsibility over freedom and self-interest is much needed.

Levinas's ethics of alterity offers a novel type of moral cosmopolitanism. He writes that there is justice only 'where there is no distinction between those close and those far off, but in which there also remains the impossibility of passing by the closest'.<sup>8</sup> This articulates a strong commitment to moral equality ('no distinction'), while trying to avoid the sort of 'rootless cosmopolitanism' that nationalists and communitarians rightly criticize. For Levinas, one of the major threats to moral equality in which there is 'no distinction' between people is the way in which we categorize people so as to legitimate morally differential treatment. As a Jew in Europe during World War II, Levinas was all too aware of the way that categorization could function to justify moral disregard and even violence.



How do we conceptualize those outside our borders? In some contexts, simply designating someone as a 'foreigner' can legitimate moral disregard. More pernicious examples occur in discourses that encourage us to think of people elsewhere simply as threats, as extremists, insurgents, fundamentalists, terrorists, workers who want to take our jobs, or aliens who want to sneak into our country. These are not just innocuous descriptions, but instead have a normative function, legitimating certain policies or actions. When people are defined in this way, they are stripped of history, complexity, and possible shared identities, making it impossible to see them as potential co-participants in a future peace. Violence then becomes not only inevitable, but also justified. Moral regard, thus, becomes hopelessly naive.

Because Levinas's ethics of alterity provides an account of responsibility without being committed to the elevation of a certain aspect of humanity as the key to moral worth, he also resists too quick a transition from moral cosmopolitanism to specific universal principles. This distinguishes Levinas from utilitarian and Kantian cosmopolitans. Unlike their accounts, Levinas's account of responsibility need not bias us in favor of specific political or economic agendas (for example, minimizing pain or protecting rational freedom), but actually requires conversation between people. For Levinas, responsibility is an orientation, a call to solidarity and partnership in forging the world, rather than allegiance to specific rules or principles. This is not to say that we can do without norms, rules, and laws, but simply to remind us that our primary commitment is to people, not principles. People are not made for ethical principles, but ethical principles are made for people.

Levinas's view also decouples responsibility from freedom and reason, and thereby undermines the idea that responsibility is a function of having and expressing power. This latter idea is present in both Singer's and Pogge's models for thinking about responsibility in relation to poverty. In Singer's utilitarian approach, responsibility is linked with the 'power to prevent something bad from happening'.<sup>9</sup> In Pogge's deontological approach, responsibility is linked to the power to 'uphold and impose... coercive social institutions'.<sup>10</sup> Either way of framing responsibility suggests a worrisome dichotomy between those with power, and thus responsibility, and therefore the obligation to be agents of change, and

those without power, and thus without responsibility, and therefore with the role of those to be helped. To make responsibility the privilege or prerogative of the powerful is to slide toward a paternalistic mindset that can legitimate ‘us’ intervening in ‘their’ lives for their own good.

Without in any way denying the realities of power and its significance for concrete action, Levinas’s work allows us to think of responsibility as prior to power relations. To say that ‘what is truly human is... responsibility’<sup>11</sup> is to say that all people, regardless of their socioeconomic or political status, are ethical subjects. People experiencing poverty are not patients waiting to be acted upon but are active subjects capable of responsible agency. Hence, ethical action, the work of justice, is not the privilege of the powerful, but is effected in the dignified hospitality of those with little to give, the ‘sharing of one’s world’ in conversation between strangers, the protests and criticisms of the disempowered against the powers that be, and the cooperative efforts of diverse groups of people working together for a better future.

Rather than giving pride of place in ethics to those with power, Levinas actually gives a certain pride of place to those who are powerless, vulnerable, or marginalized: widows, orphans, and strangers (or foreigners). For it is their lives that reveal injustice, that stand as a critique of the social order, and that call into question the complacency of those who accept it. Levinas suggests a priority for the perspectives of those who are in these situations, not because they are pure, innocent victims, but because they are more likely to see the gap between the dominant social rhetoric or abstract ideals and the lived reality. Dominant classes who enjoy the benefits of the status quo are not as likely to see the injustices of the present order. Principles or policies may be based on abstract ideals of equality or fairness, but when superimposed on situations of historical injustice and inequality, can simply result in perpetuating injustice and inequality. With regard to global justice, this concern is especially relevant for issues such as economic justice, trade justice, and climate justice. What matters is not simply the abstract guise of fairness or equality, but the actual outcomes in people’s lives, especially the lives of those who are, or historically have been, marginalized. Though Levinas suggests a priority for marginalized voices, he does not claim that they are uniquely authoritative or infallible. The critique they offer is a call to solidarity, to think and act together.

Solidarity here should not be interpreted as harmony, unity, or agreement. In fact, Levinas thinks it is dangerous to do so. He suggests that in the Western tradition, thinkers have often endorsed the project of achieving peace through unity, unity through truth, and truth through reason. When the 'recalcitrant' resist 'reason', force can be justified for the sake of achieving peace. The drive for unity can legitimate violent exclusion. For Levinas, this conception of peace is complicit in many of the occurrences of violence in European history, from colonialism and imperialism to German National Socialism and Stalinism. In opposition to this model, Levinas recommends a conception of peace as responsibility amid alterity, a solidarity that need not collapse difference.<sup>12</sup>

## Objectivity as Intersubjectivity

In addition to reframing our conception of the human being, consciousness as the relation between subjectivity and objectivity also has significant implications for how we think about the world. Because the world is always experienced by a particular subject, who is always situated in a particular context with a particular perspective, phenomenology rejects naive realism. Instead, we play a role in constituting our experience since as subjects we are active in the process of perception, construing what we see as meaningful in accordance with our particular perspective. This perspective is influenced by all the complexities of our humanity, from the physiology of our bodies to the cultural meanings sedimented in our languages to the past experiences we have had as individuals.

This need not give rise to relativism or skepticism since, as subjects, we all experience a shared world. As such we have a common reference point, even if the meanings we give to what we are experiencing are sometimes markedly different. Just because we see things differently does not mean that we see different things. This provides grounding for a notion of objectivity, albeit one that differs from the Cartesian conception of objectivity as mind-independence. For phenomenology, the notion of objectivity presupposes that the given is not just there for me, but also for others.<sup>13</sup> To experience something as objective is precisely to experience it as being there for others (at least potentially). Conversely, to

be merely subjective is to be given for me but not for others. This leads to a reformulation of objectivity as intersubjective validity.

This conception of objectivity has, in turn, significant implications for epistemology. It means that the pursuit of truth cannot be carried out by solitary individuals alone in their rooms. Instead, to find out what is objectively (that is, intersubjectively) true we must interact with and listen to others. It is not by getting beyond particular perspectives, but by multiplying them, that we get a fuller picture of the world we share. Hence, we should be suspicious of claims made as if from a universal or abstract (de-situated) perspective and instead give priority to the local, situated, and particular, which are after all characteristics of the perspectives from which we actually live. Dialogue is thus an essential epistemic strategy. As Levinas reminds us, genuine dialogue requires an openness to the perspectives of others, which means being willing to have one's views and actions called into question. A shared world requires the ongoing sharing of perspectives, especially those that are critical of one's own perspective.

This Levinasian account contrasts with Martha Nussbaum's early presentations of the capabilities approach and her list of central capabilities. In her early presentations she tried to justify the capabilities list by offering a sort of intuitionist epistemology that dismissed views that conflicted with her own.<sup>14</sup> Despite Nussbaum's intention to be open to the views of others, she is driven to this exclusionary position by her greater allegiance to the modernist philosophical demand for fully justified, universal truths. Rather than seeking to work creatively and cooperatively amid a variety of perspectives, Nussbaum tries to rise above the perspectives to produce an objective justification of her judgments of them. But given the complexity involved, she can only do this by silencing the voices of those who disagree with her. In her newer work, she moderates her account of justification, bringing it closer to the phenomenological one argued for here.<sup>15</sup>

Because of the importance of ongoing dialogue, Levinas writes that justice requires not only rules and reasons, but also 'friendship and faces'.<sup>16</sup> The best way to understand the particular contexts in which people live is to get to know people. Levinas suggests that there is a power in direct relational encounters, 'the face', that is lost in the mere theoretical analysis of ideas. Direct relational encounters are a powerful antidote to the simplifications and stereotypes that abound regarding people elsewhere.

When we think of distant strangers we tend to think of them in terms of the ways in which they are strange. After all, from cultural anthropology to contemporary media, emphasis usually falls on the differences of people elsewhere. Direct encounters help us see beyond strangeness to recognize that people elsewhere are in fact real people, that is, people with rich, complicated lives and with many similar aspirations and faults, rationalities and irrationalities, as others. In these encounters, one is likely to recognize multiple dimensions of a person's identity, some similar to and some different from one's own. This should lead to the rejection of both naive universalism (that is, people are really the same everywhere) and the absolutizing of difference.

Such direct relational encounters can also help motivate an ethical concern for the lives of others. The empathy such encounters activate seems to explain why people show more concern about deprivation when confronted with the needs of a single person than when presented with statistics that indicate how widespread such deprivations are. I have seen in my own experience, especially my experience of taking students on international study courses, that direct face-to-face contact can help motivate both a concern for others and also openness to their perspectives, including to criticisms of American policies or global institutional designs from which Americans benefit. It is all too easy to dismiss views that differ from one's own when one encounters them in a book. It is much harder to be dismissive when such views are expressed by a sincere, friendly person over a shared meal. The empathy, trust, and care that such encounters can engender provide the motivational spark necessary to take seriously issues in global ethics.

None of this should be taken as reason simply to dismiss expert analyses of social scientists or theoretical debates about the demands of global justice. The point here is, first, that empathetic relationships have a unique ability to motivate concern for the demands of global justice. And, second, that direct contact with people from elsewhere provides essential grounding for the more abstract, professionalized discourse that tends to dominate theoretical and policy debates. Ultimately the lives of real, living people are more important than the discourse. Because theoretical and policy debates are accountable to the lives people are able to live in their concrete, particular circumstances, it is vital to actually know people

in their concrete, particular circumstances. Metrics and data can be very useful, but they can never fully capture the life of an individual. Because of this, data can never replace dialogue; nor can rules replace relationships. This is not to deny the importance of rules as shared institutions are surely required for global justice. But just as surely, such institutions will lose sight of justice when we lose sight of those with whom we share them.

## Internal Complexity

Dialogue with those holding different perspectives has a tendency to challenge our conceptualization of the world in ways that individually exercised rationality rarely does. For phenomenology, this is possible since the objects we experience are not simply given, but require us as subjects to constitute them as meaningful. This leads some in the phenomenological tradition to conclude that the categories through which we perceive and reflect on the world are constructed by us. Since there is no guarantee that they accurately carve reality at the joints, they are always at risk of deconstructing, that is, being destabilized by the fuzzy boundaries and internal complexities they contain and attempt to conceal. Phenomenology hastens this deconstruction by attending to concrete, lived realities, which help reveal this complexity.

In pointing to the constructed nature of our categories, deconstructive phenomenology also questions why we have the particular categories we do. What motivated the construction and perpetuation of those specific categories rather than other possible categories? Categories are typically constructed to serve a purpose or respond to a particular interest and as such are often embedded with particular values. We readily forget this when we take categories to be neutral descriptive terms. We are sometimes encouraged in this forgetting by claims that certain categories are natural or necessary. Modern social science encourages this forgetting through the use of seemingly neutral technical language designed to depoliticize social issues and turn them over to expert management. Deconstructive phenomenology, in revealing the contingent, motivated, and value-laden nature of our categories, calls us to attend to the political dimensions of our basic conceptual frameworks.

Recognizing the internal complexity and instability of our categories as well as the ways they are value-laden is vitally important for global ethics. Because global ethics deals with people and places that are distant and diverse, it is quite common for thinkers to deploy general categories that cover over incredibly complex realities. For example, most uses of the terms 'Africa' or 'African', let alone 'African culture', fall into this category.<sup>17</sup> Given that Africa has more cultural diversity among almost twice as many people in almost twice as many countries covering almost twice as much land as North America, the adjective 'African' is only half as descriptively useful as the little-used adjective 'North American'.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, there is no such thing as 'the Muslim world'. There are, of course, many countries where a majority of the people identify themselves as Muslim, but both within and between those countries there is wide variation, including about what people think it means to be Muslim.<sup>19</sup> In these cases and many more, the generality of our categories is often an expression of ignorance, and yet the generalized meanings attached to these categories are used to justify certain actions or policies.

Moreover, the internal complexity of many of the basic categories used to discuss global issues renders almost meaningless some common questions. Does 'aid' really work? Is 'trade' good for the poor? Both aid and trade are highly internally complex concepts, as the form they take, the regulations governing them, the motivations driving them, and the people and contexts they impact vary significantly. Even if one could get aggregated answers to questions about aid or trade, they would be useless in determining what kind of aid, if any, or what kind of trade, if any, would be best for a given situation. Answering those questions would require knowledge of the local context, including especially what the people there actually want. Given that people in a community typically have a variety of different desires and that aid and trade typically affect different people differently, the very notion of 'what people want' is itself internally complex and its production requires some sort of political process.

Even a specific practice like microfinance can be delivered in a variety of different ways resulting in very different outcomes. I have personally seen microfinance programs that have enriched and empowered families and others that have sparked social conflict and exacerbated financial burdens. The general question 'Does microfinance work?' is about as meaningless as asking, in an American context, 'Do loans work?' Loans

can be useful and beneficial or exploitative and ruinous; it depends on how they are distributed. The same is true of microfinance. Details matter and the oversimplified categories we are prone to deploying in global ethics ignore these.

Another key, yet problematic, category for global ethics is ‘the poor’, as well as the closely related ‘global poverty’. Both these terms lump together a wide variety of people facing a wide variety of challenges in a wide variety of places. As such, they encourage stereotyping, so that ‘the poor’ are regarded as lazy, ignorant, backward, victimized, virtuous, entrepreneurial, or happy. But since ‘the poor’ covers such a wide range of people with a wide range of personal characteristics, there is no one feature ‘the poor’ share. Moreover, thinking in terms of ‘the poor’ encourages the idea that there is a *single* experience of impoverishment, a *single* causal account of ‘global poverty’, and so a *single* best response to it: *the* solution to global poverty.<sup>20</sup> This ignores the variety of experiences of impoverishment, the complex circumstances in which they occur, and the differing local political possibilities for addressing them.

The notion of ‘the poor’ oversimplifies not only the diversity among those who are living in poverty, but also the complex individual lives of each of these people. Defining people narrowly in terms of their poverty, that is, in relation to what they lack, ignores the resources they do have as well as their capacities as agents. So far from being a neutral descriptor, ‘the poor’ readily encourages the conclusion that ‘we’ ought to do something to help those ‘needy’ people. We would perhaps do well to remember that political protest slogans from those who are marginalized—such as ‘I am a man’ during the civil rights movement in the USA and ‘*Tout moun se moun*’ (‘Every person is a person’) in Haitian political struggles—often call for recognizing the full humanity of those who have been reduced to impoverished stereotypes.

‘The poor’ are primarily found in ‘developing’ countries and the ‘least developed countries’ rather than in ‘developed’ countries. This hierarchy of ‘development’ has become ubiquitous in discussions of global issues. Aside from the problems of shoehorning a couple hundred diverse countries into a few categories, the language of development is clearly value-loaded. This use of the concept of development traces its roots to the historical narratives of the nineteenth century, which set up Europe as the end goal of humanity and which were complicit in the justification



of colonialism. As such, the discourse on development risks encouraging a neocolonial mindset insofar as it functions to differentiate between the 'developing countries', which have problems that need fixing, and the 'developed' countries, which have it all figured out and so can (or even should) help fix the problem countries, help make them more 'developed', more like 'us'. As such, this discourse actually closes off ethical questions about the goals of social life by positing certain countries—not coincidentally 'our' countries—as the ideal at which all others aim. This delivers the development discourse over to technicians, social scientists, and development experts to use instrumental reasoning to calculate the best strategies for achieving the pre-given, unquestioned ends.

The problems with this approach are, by now, easy to see since it neglects the desires, interests, and aspirations of those deemed underdeveloped, denying them not only the ability to effect change in their own societies, but even the ability to formulate their own goals. On the flip side, this approach uncritically affirms the institutions and practices of the 'developed' countries. To put this in Levinasian language, referring to the USA as a 'developed' country closes off fundamental criticism of the American way of life, turning 'our place in the sun' into a self-justifying *chez soi*. As such, it hides the suffering and violence still present in a country with the highest incarceration rate in the world, food insecurity stalking one in every seven households, historic and expanding inequality, and indigenous populations that remain largely excluded and ignored. Moreover, it is the so-called developed countries and the development model they have initiated that have led to rampant environmental exploitation and degradation as well as a catastrophic climate shifting. Such societies surely cannot be the end goal, though in another sense they may certainly bring about the end.

The discourse around developed and developing countries also tends to encourage explanatory nationalism, that is, the idea that the situation a nation is in is explained primarily by factors internal to that nation. But this overlooks the international and global forces that historically and at present have shaped nations' internal circumstances politically, economically, and socially. When we overlook the significance of international and global forces, we readily adopt John Rawls's view that poverty and oppression can be explained primarily in terms of a nation's culture or institutions.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, when we overlook local inequalities

and exploitation, we readily adopt Pogge's view that poverty and oppression are primarily the fault of powerful Western countries.<sup>22</sup> What both of these views neglect is that for some time now the complex connections that exist between transnational forces and the internal circumstances of states defy any clean analytic separation of the two. What we need instead is an ethical methodology capable of recognizing the complex interactions that take place between transnational forces and states, as well as subnational and local actors.<sup>23</sup>

Sometimes the complexity that deconstructive analysis uncovers leads to consternation or even apathy. If everything is so complex, what difference can we possibly make? Rather than being demotivating, Jacques Derrida suggests that deconstruction is ultimately hopeful since it helps us realize that things are not as fixed and static as we tend to think. If the goal is, as is common in modern social and natural sciences, a technocratic understanding that will allow for expert manipulation in order to produce predetermined ends, then, yes, deconstruction is confounding. If, on the contrary, the goal is working with and alongside others to create a more just and humane world, then recognition of complexity opens possibilities for unexpected synergies. Essentialist, determinist discourses close off possibilities and set up irreconcilable conflicts. Recognition of complexity, fluidity, and lack of essential determinants can reopen concealed possibilities. The complexity that deconstructive analysis uncovers need not be discouraging, but can instead provoke creative approaches to entrenched challenges.

## The Priority of Verbs and a Justice to Come

The final lesson to be learned from phenomenology in this area takes its cue from both Husserl's account of consciousness and Heidegger's account of the ontological difference. For Husserl, consciousness is not something one *has*, but something one *does*. We should not say that one has a mind, but that one minds things. Similarly, Heidegger's ontological difference focuses us not on beings as entities, but on being as a verb. Phenomenology's preference for verbs over nouns is a consequence of its close attention to experience, which is always temporally structured. As such, our experiences are not of discrete things in static, isolated

snapshots, but of temporally extended activities, doings, and existings. Consciousness is encountered in our mental activities, such as perceiving, imagining, thinking, and feeling. It is only by abstracting away from our lived, temporal experience that we can imagine consciousness as a static, ideal thing. The same is true of our bodies, which are constantly doing, changing, respirating, metabolizing, and aging. To be a body is not simply to be an entity, but to be living.

Phenomenology's prioritization of verbs stands as a critique of the Platonic preference for fixed, transcendent ideals. It also stands as a critique of important trends in modern epistemology and ethics that have been influenced by this Platonic preference. For example, modern epistemology often objectifies 'Reason' rather than regarding it as a verb, as in 'come, let us reason together'. The objectification of 'Reason' makes possible a conception of reason as universal, static, and transcendent—something that can be possessed in its entirety by an individual and that will produce the same results everywhere. By contrast, taking reason as a verb allows us to see reasoning as something we do together that can build understanding, advance inquiry, and discern solutions to practical problems, but that does not guarantee universally valid conclusions or even consensus. Rather than an ideal 'Reason' that can settle the matter, we should expect that reasoning as the honest, open reason-giving we do with each other will always be ongoing. There will always be more to reason about. As such there is no sense in talking about epistemic justification, but only the always incomplete task of justifying ourselves to others.

Levinas and Derrida use the temporal structure of experience to rethink justice as well. Rather than thinking of justice in terms of achieving a particular institutional structure or state-of-affairs, or even as a regulative ideal, they both suggest that justice is an always unfulfilled task that, as such, entails a futural orientation. Levinas says that 'justice is always a justice which desires a better justice'.<sup>24</sup> Derrida writes that justice is always 'to come'.<sup>25</sup> Justice is always 'to come' not only because there is always more work to be done to implement our conceptions of justice, but also because there is always more work to be done on our conceptions of justice themselves. Given our partial perspectives, we have reason to believe that our ideas of justice are inadequate. This means that even if they could be implemented, they would contain injustices. The work of justice is not

simply a technical matter of figuring out how to achieve given ends, but includes the ongoing task of working out the ends to be pursued.

This conception of justice reframes how we think about global justice and cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitan theories tend to move very swiftly from the idea that everyone has moral worth to ideas about the appropriate universal ideals, principles, or institutions. But the problem with any particular universal principle is just that, that it is particular. The swift claim of universality for a particular conception of cosmopolitan justice clashes with cosmopolitanism's commitment to the value of each person as a conscious agent, that is, as a person with a vital perspective on what justice ought to look like. At best we can talk about a cosmopolitanism to come, perhaps a cosmopolitanism that will always be to come.<sup>26</sup> Or, we can turn to the practical work of a cosmopolitanism to come, namely 'cosmopolitics'.<sup>27</sup> Cosmopolitics is focused on concrete, collaborative efforts to address specific injustices in the here and now. We may not be in a position to articulate a comprehensive, determinate account of global justice, but we can still recognize injustices when they occur. To be consistent with the commitments of moral cosmopolitanism, as understood through the ethics of alterity, addressing injustices requires the empowerment of those whose lives and voices have been marginalized, rather than 'us' coming up with universal principles to solve 'their' problems. Accordingly, cosmopolitics refers to specific, collaborative work to be done rather than a fixed transcendent ideal. It is cosmopolitanism regarded as a verb.

## Conclusion

This chapter has only provided a sketch of the value of phenomenology for global ethics, but hopefully this sketch is suggestive of some promising lines for future inquiry. Throughout the twenty-first century, global ethical issues are only going to intensify as transnational impacts grow and climate change worsens. We need more and better ethical thinking on these issues. The phenomenological tradition has much of value to offer to this crucial task. It is my sincere hope that many of us who have been formed by this tradition will recognize the value of what we have to offer and will take up the responsibility to work together for a global justice to come.

## Notes

1. For the sake of simplicity, I will use the term global ethics to cover issues of both ethics and justice that arise from transnational connections. I follow Aristotle in thinking that though issues of ethics and justice are theoretically separable, they are intimately connected in practice.
2. I see the phenomenological tradition as offering us resources rather than dogma. Hence, I shall shamelessly draw from the parts of the tradition I find valuable, while ignoring the parts I consider wrongheaded.
3. Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, ed. Dermot Moran (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 168.
4. The point that global ethics needs to take seriously both subjectivity and embodiment is very similar to Amartya Sen's view that development should consider both well-being and agency. See Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999), pp. 189–92.
5. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), Fifth Meditation.
6. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998), vii.
7. Quoted in Singer, *One World: The Ethics of Globalization* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 1–2.
8. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, p. 159.
9. Singer, *The Life You Can Save* (New York: Random House, 2009), p. 15.
10. Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2008), p. 72.
11. Levinas, *Is It Righteous to Be?: Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. Jill Robbins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 143.
12. Levinas, 'Peace and Proximity' in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, eds. Adriaan Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996).
13. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, Fifth Meditation.
14. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 149.
15. Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011), p. 111.
16. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, p. 160.
17. For an example of an expert falling into this error, see Jeffrey Sachs's discussion of 'African culture' in *Commonwealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet* (New York: Penguin, 2008), p. 192.

18. Pan-Africanist thinkers have used a singular notion of Africa in an attempt to unify people against colonial and neocolonial oppression. As such, their use of 'Africa' is clearly an attempt to construct a political identity, rather than naming a naturally existing entity with uniform features.
19. Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996) is exemplary in its general disregard for the internal diversity of both Islam and 'the West'.
20. For a classic reference, see 'The Singer Solution to World Poverty', *New York Times*, 5 September 1999.
21. Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 108.
22. Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights*, 'General Introduction'.
23. Iris Marion Young's social connection model gives an example of a move in this direction. See Young, *Global Challenges: War, Self-Determination, and Responsibility for Justice* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2007), Chapter 9.
24. Levinas, 'The Paradox of Morality', in *The Provocation of Levinas*, eds. Robert Bernasconi and David Wood (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 178.
25. Derrida, 'Force of Law' in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 256.
26. See Derrida, 'On Cosmopolitanism' in *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (New York: Routledge, 2001).
27. For the sort of account of cosmopolitics I have in mind, see James Ingram, *Radical Cosmopolitics: The Ethics and Politics of Democratic Universalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

# 3

## The Problem of the Other and the Ethics of Resistance: Confronting the Ethical Deadlock of Phenomenology with Jacques Lacan

Drew M. Dalton

### The Phenomenological Problem of the Other

A problem lurks at the heart of the phenomenological project—a problem that, though latent in the earliest articulations of Edmund Husserl’s work, and inexorably a part of Martin Heidegger’s development of it, nevertheless remains relatively obscure until Emmanuel Levinas. Simply stated the problem is this: how are we to deal with the question of the Other in phenomenology? How are we to navigate the complications of what phenomenological research reveals to be our inexorable relation to the Other? There are at least two components to this problem.

Part of this problem consists in phenomenology’s *ability*, on the one hand, to identify, describe, and differentiate the nature of the Other from other manifest phenomena; and, its apparent *inability*, on the other hand, to prescribe a practical response to that Other. There appears to be an

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impassable gap between phenomenology's power as a theoretical science, capable of detailing with profound accuracy the structures of lived experience, and its relative impotence as a practical science, capable of dictating social, political, and ethical action. This problem is of course grounded in phenomenology's aim to be nothing more than a 'pure *descriptive* science', as Husserl called it in his *Logical Investigations*.<sup>1</sup> In order to surmount this problem then, it would appear necessary to eventually step beyond the borders of pure phenomenological analysis and to venture into the realm of *prescriptive* ethics. But how? How can we step beyond the limitations of phenomenological analysis without betraying its insights?

Levinas famously compared this step with Kierkegaard's 'leap of faith' into the unknown framing prescriptive ethics as a kind of 'religion'; but a religion, as he puts it, which is 'for adults'.<sup>2</sup> This analogy has led many scholars, somewhat hastily, to link Levinas's work to the so-called theological turn of twentieth-century French philosophy. Of course, what Levinas means by 'religion' is hardly contiguous with traditional faith practices. In fact, Levinas's 'religion' has much more in common with 'atheism' than with anything else.<sup>3</sup> His point in comparing the step beyond phenomenological recognition into ethical relation with religious faith in Kierkegaard is simply meant to highlight his conviction that though phenomenological research may reveal one's responsibility to the Other, it cannot dictate how actually to respond to that Other. In other words, though phenomenology is capable of uncovering an ethical problem, it does not itself have the resources to solve this problem. In order to overcome the 'ethical deadlock' one confronts through phenomenological research, Levinas thinks, one must ultimately leap beyond phenomenology.

Unfortunately, this is a subtlety that has been missed by many of Levinas's most vocal supporters. For far too many, Levinas's *articulation* of the problem of the Other in phenomenology has been read as a tacit *solution* to it. According to them, what Levinas's work reveals is that the apparent problem of the Other for phenomenology only exists in as much as the predominance of the ego is maintained. But, by laying bare the 'myth of a legislative consciousness' through a rigorous phenomenological accounting of the priority and superiority of the Other, Levinas's work solves this problem, they argue.<sup>4</sup> To some extent this is true. Where this reading falls short, however, is in recognizing that Levinas only solves



this problem, as we will see shortly, by revealing another deeper and more insidious problem concerning the Other in phenomenology.

Having missed this dimension, too many have read Levinas's work as a sort of *prescriptive* ethics in its own right; indeed, a new kind of *religion* in the Levinasian sense. What Levinas's work prescribes, they think, is an ethically vigilant attentiveness to the Other: a mode of being which *welcomes* the superiority of the Other—which says 'yes' to the Other, 'here I am, under your eyes, at your service, your obedient servant'.<sup>5</sup> So it is, they conclude, that the apparent 'ethical deadlock' of phenomenological research revealed by Levinas is simultaneously resolved by him.

The trouble with this apparent solution is that it fails to see that what appears to be *prescription* in Levinas's work is really just his *description* of the ethical power of the Other—the Other's ability to dispossess us of our own being, to reorient subjectivity around its own demands. And, it is precisely in this power that the real heart of the problem of the Other lies. Such a description is therefore most definitely *not* a solution to the problem the Other presents for phenomenology. To the contrary, it is a way of reframing and radicalizing the problem. In missing this fact, what these scholars fail to see is that the prescriptive solutions they make of Levinas's descriptive phenomenology may actually exacerbate the problem of the Other for phenomenology; and, as will become clear, could have dire social and political consequences.

If phenomenology is going to have any continued relevance in the twenty-first century it must confront the true heart of the problem of the Other and find a better way of resolving its 'ethical deadlock' than has been done by most readers of Levinas. In order to do so, it must first rigorously assess what is really at root in Levinas's understanding of the problem of the Other. This chapter will pursue this goal by tracing a genealogy of the problem of the Other in phenomenology through the work of Husserl, Heidegger, and Levinas, respectively. Once this is done, I will show how, on the basis of this understanding, one may approach anew the apparent 'ethical deadlock' of phenomenology and discover a way of stepping beyond it without betraying it. This, as we will see, can be accomplished through the work of Jacques Lacan, which has strange and unexpected harmonies with Levinas's *descriptive* phenomenology, but is, in contrast, aimed explicitly at grounding a *prescriptive* science.

## The Foundations of Husserl's Phenomenological Revolution

There are two radical claims at the heart of Husserl's project—two claims which ground the problem of the Other for phenomenology. The first of these two claims lies hidden within the rallying cry of the Husserlian project itself: *zu den sachen selbst*, 'back to things themselves'.

When first studying Husserl, one is quick to note the apparent resemblance between Husserl's *things themselves*, and Kant's *things-in-themselves*. This is of course a homophonic connection that only exists in translation. In the original German, Husserl's *sachen selbst* bears no immediate connection to Kant's *Ding-an-sich*. It is nevertheless a useful mistake to make. For, however *exterior* it is to the original language, it is still a connection that reveals something *interior* and essential to the Husserlian project: the specific way he revolutionizes the Kantian critique.

The hard core of the Kantian system is the claim that it is impossible rationally to conceive of things existing 'in themselves'. Such *noumenal* objects, Kant asserts, exceed the scope of human perception. As such, he argues, while such noumena *may* exist and *may* function as a ground for human experience, they cannot be known or addressed as such. Indeed, according to Kant, one cannot even talk about them in any meaningful way as *actual*. At best, one can think of them as *possible* objects—one can act *as if* they are out there. But such a move is ultimately a kind of leap of faith for him, albeit a rationally grounded one. For Kant, then, these *possible* objects should not be treated as the *actual* ground of experience. Instead, he argues, one must acknowledge that the *real* and *actual* ground of phenomenal experience lies in the transcendental structures of subjectivity itself: the a priori concepts of space and time, for example. It is these a priori concepts which, argues Kant, while functionally empty without the content of a posteriori experience, nevertheless operate as the real ground of phenomenal experience.<sup>6</sup>

In calling for a return to the *sache* of the *things themselves*, it was Husserl's aim to question the grounding assumptions of the Kantian schema and to rupture this split between phenomenal and noumenal realities. For Husserl, phenomenal life must be grounded anew in a more primal encounter with some external reality. In this regard, Husserl's *transcendental phenomenology*

can be read as a direct response to Kant's *transcendental idealism*—not a rejection of it, but a revolution of its assumptions.

For Husserl, prior to the subjective experience of objective reality, there must be a more immediate engagement with *things*. Husserl famously names the raw material of this primal engagement the *pure plena* of *noetic data*.<sup>7</sup> For him, this pure plena, this unstructured noetic material, is the ultimate ground and condition for subjective experience, even the abstract concepts of time and space.

Of course, he concedes to Kant the realization that, in order for the noetic data of primal experience to take on any real meaning or value for the subject, as this or that concrete object, it must be apprehended and organized according to certain *noematic ideas*.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, Husserl insists throughout his work, such *noematic ideas* are not primary, but secondary to the non-subjective consciousness of pure *noetic data*. That is, they do not precede the reception of noetic data, but come afterward, as an adopted structure employed to give meaning to and makes sense of that data.

The call to return to 'things themselves', is in part a call to push beyond the structure of subjectivity and to discover beneath it the *pre-subjective ground* of thinghood. It is a call to discover beneath the Kantian structures of transcendental idealism a more primal ontological immanence. To put it another way, what Husserl wants us to acknowledge is that, to borrow language from Ed Casey, before we can have the abstract analytic ideas of space and time, we must have the lived experience of place and history.<sup>9</sup> It is from these more primal experiences, Husserl thinks, that the structures of egoic life arise and subsequently shape phenomenal life qua subjectivity and objectivity.

This argument is of course made especially clear in Husserl's later works, particularly the *Krises* (1934–1937), but is equally present throughout his career.<sup>10</sup> Think, for example, of the first section of *Ideas II* (particularly Alinea §8 through §11), which Husserl first began writing in 1912 and later added to in 1928 (after the rigorous reworking of Edith Stein in 1916 and Ludwig Landgrebe from 1923 to 1925).<sup>11</sup> There he expounds on the primacy of what he refers to as the *sensuous* (e.g., sense-objects, sense-data) as the pre-given ground for egoic life; a pre-given which, he argues later, is present for the ego through the *aesthesis* of the body.<sup>12</sup> Such allusions to a pre-subjective aesthesis localized in a lived body can be found even in Husserl's earliest works. Take, for example, Alinea §3 of

*The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1910–1911), where Husserl localizes lived conscious experience in a pre-subjective bodily engagement.<sup>13</sup> This same basic intuition can even be discovered in Husserl's first explorations of *consciousness* (*Bewusstsein*) in the *Logical Investigations* (1900–1901); a consciousness which, he argues there, underlies and supports all egoic experience<sup>14</sup>; and which, as early as 1907, he situates in what he calls the 'kinaesthetic sensations of the Body'.<sup>15</sup>

The assertion that beneath the phenomenal life of the subject lies a more primal pre-subjective ground is absolutely essential to understanding the power of Husserl's critique of Kant. And it leads directly to the second of what I take to be Husserl's most radical claims: the recognition that this pre-subjective ground is a shared life-world (*Lebenswelt*), one which is constituted intersubjectively with and through our interaction with others.<sup>16</sup>

The other is not for Husserl, as it is for Kant, a mere object of consciousness: something we confront on the basis of our subjective structures or conceive of according to our noematic ideas, a point he makes clear in Alinea §62 of his 1929 *Cartesian Meditations*.<sup>17</sup> To the contrary, Husserl argues, the other resides in the pre-given sensuous life-world of noetic data. As such, the experience of the other, he insists, precedes subjective life, and, as he makes especially clear in *Ideas I* and *II*, even conditions it.

Our pre-subjective contact with others is mediated, thinks Husserl, by the primal affect of *empathy* (*Einfühlung*).<sup>18</sup> It is through empathy, argues Husserl, that one connects with the other pre-subjectively; and, it is therefore in empathy, he thinks, that the conditions for subjective life are established. For Husserl, empathy operates as the channel through which the ego receives the noematic structures around which subjectivity and objectivity are organized. As the source of these structures, the other is latent for Husserl in every phenomenal apperception of subjectivity. It is for this reason that he writes in the *Krisis*: '[W]e, each "I-the-man" and all of us together, belong to the world as living with one another in the world; and the world is our world, valid for our consciousness as existing precisely through this "living together."<sup>19</sup> The objective world and my subjective experience of it are inexorably shared, intersubjective constructs for Husserl. They are products of this pre-subjective 'living-together'. Since all phenomenal life is fundamentally structured socially, Husserl concludes, any rigorous inquiry into the nature of the world must involve an inquiry into the nature of the others with whom we share it.

## Levinas and the Lure of Phenomenological Foundations

It was this insight about intersubjectivity and social existence that first attracted Emmanuel Levinas to Husserl and motivated him to travel to Freiburg in 1928 for a year of study. For Levinas, the history of Western philosophy prior to Husserl was little more than a history of various *idealisms*, a history he defined, as we have seen, as the perpetuation of ‘the myth of a legislative consciousness of things, where difference and identity are reconciled’.<sup>20</sup> These prevailing idealisms, argued Levinas, rested on a fundamental error in perception which privileged the self over the other in the formation of conscious life. Levinas defined this privileging in the history of philosophy as the persistent ‘totalitarianism or imperialism of the Same’.<sup>21</sup> For Levinas, the consequences of this imperialism have been multitude: from rampant solipsism, at best, to outright violence and murder, at worst.

It was therefore in the hopes of discovering a philosophical system that moved beyond idealism and violence that Levinas turned to phenomenology, seeing in Husserl’s insistence on the intersubjective nature of the life-world the path to a non-subjective foundation for philosophical thought. But, as Levinas famously wrote in his 1929 report ‘*Freiburg, Husserl, and Phenomenology*’, though he went to Freiburg ‘because of Husserl’, there he ‘found Heidegger’, who had just taken over Husserl’s chair in philosophy.<sup>22</sup>

## Heidegger and the Radicalization of Primal Ontology

Heidegger was at that time just coming into his glory as copies of his lecture notes and his recently published *Being and Time* circulated Germany, prompting what Hannah Arendt described as ‘rumor of the hidden [philosopher] king’.<sup>23</sup>

In Heidegger, Levinas found an even clearer articulation of the primacy of a pre-subjective engagement with the world that was announced in Husserl. According to Levinas, ‘[w]hile Husserl still proposed—or seemed

to propose to me—a transcendental program for philosophy, Heidegger clearly defined philosophy in relation to other forms of knowledge as “fundamental ontology”.<sup>24</sup> It was through Heidegger’s ‘fundamental ontology’ then, that Levinas finally discovered a path beyond idealism, inspiring him to report of Heidegger that ‘his teaching and his works are the best proof of the fecundity of the phenomenological method’, for overcoming the errors of previous thinkers.<sup>25</sup>

By developing a phenomenological analysis of the pre-subjective givenness of the world, Heidegger illuminated for Levinas what he, and even some today, saw as obscured in Husserl. For Levinas, the great achievement of Heidegger’s work lay in how it was able to abandon entirely the structures of subjectivity through an ontological analysis of pre-subjective *being-in-the-world*. In Heidegger’s ontology, then, Levinas found what he had come to Germany looking for: a way out of the ‘myth of the legislative consciousness’. The great revelation of Heidegger’s Dasein analysis was for him this regrounding of existence in a pre-given sensuous life-world, a move which irrevocably cut the legs out of philosophical idealism. In this way, Heidegger’s thought represented for Levinas, as he wrote in 1934, the final death knell of subjectivism in philosophy.<sup>26</sup> What Levinas failed to realize then, and only really became aware of after the war, was that what Heidegger’s work gave to him on the one hand, it simultaneously took away from him, on the other; namely, the other side of Husserl’s radical project: the insistence on the primacy of the other in the formation of consciousness.

For Heidegger, as for Husserl, the inexorability of *being-in-the-world* entails a being-with-others (*Mit-sein*).<sup>27</sup> In as much as Dasein finds itself thrown into the world, handling and absorbed in the tool-being of the world, it finds itself thrown alongside others. Yet, despite the inexorable sociality of Dasein’s everyday being-in-the-world, Heidegger insists, in contrast to Husserl, that the fundamental ontological nature of Dasein’s being-in-the-world is *not* its being-with-others, but what he calls its *ownness* or *mineness* (*Jemeinigkeit*).<sup>28</sup> This is a reality which is testified to, thinks Heidegger, in the facticity of death.

One’s death, he writes, is exclusively *one’s own*.<sup>29</sup> No one can rescue us from its inevitability, alleviate us from the weight it places upon our lives, or venture into that darkness with us. As the ultimate possibility

of one's life, death is for Heidegger the expression of one's *ownmost* reality, that which most defines or circumscribes the nature of one's being.<sup>30</sup> It is only through *being-toward-death* (*Sein-zum-Tode*), he therefore concludes, that Dasein can discover that, despite the inexorability of its being-with others, it is *ultimately* alone—bound to itself in a way it can never be to others. So it is, he concludes, that in light of an analytic of death the sociality of Dasein's being-with-Others must inevitably fall away—revealing that others are not a structural part of my being, but merely an addition to it, one which, moreover, presents a threat to it. As such, one's being-with-others does not represent for Heidegger a modality of being-in-the-world to be embraced, but one which must be resisted. For it is by being too closely with-others, he argues, that one can lose sight of the singularity of one's own being and forget the inevitable aloneness of *mineness*. This possibility is, of course, what Heidegger names inauthenticity, *un-eigen-tlich-keit*—the possibility of *not-being-one's-own*; or, to romanticize it, being *in-appropriate*.<sup>31</sup> But, thinks Heidegger, no matter how suffused or entwined with others one becomes, no matter how inauthentically one lives one's life, one will always hear, he insists, the call of being to return to one's true self. Heidegger calls this '*die Anrufung der gewissen*',—*the call of conscience*.<sup>32</sup>

For Heidegger, the true power of phenomenology lies in this ability to amplify this call. For him, the summons to 'return to things themselves', is therefore framed as a means of hearing clearly the call to conscience articulated by Dasein's *mineness*. What Heidegger saw in the phenomenological method, then, was a means of resisting the lure presented by others—of harkening to the solicitation of being and becoming authentic (*eigentlich*).

It is therefore with good reason that so many have sensed in Heidegger's phenomenology a kind of ethics of authenticity. Heidegger, of course, always denied this claim, insisting instead that his account of authenticity was purely descriptive. Still, I think there is sufficient reason to suspect that in Husserl's *epoche*, Heidegger found a path through phenomenology to the kind of ethical ontology he credits with first appearing in Hellenistic skepticism and stoicism, two schools of thought which seem to have obsessed him as a young man.

## Levinas and the Ethical Primacy of the Other

This potential ethical dimension of Heidegger's thought was a fact immediately apparent to Levinas. Indeed, part of what Levinas seems to have found so invigorating in Heidegger's project was the way in which it refigured the call to return to things in themselves as an ethical mandate, one which revealed the primacy of ethical phenomena. Indeed, Levinas's earliest works praise Heidegger precisely for the way they unite phenomenological analysis with an ethos for life. But what began to trouble Levinas increasingly, particularly in his work from 1946 onward, was the way in which Heidegger's particular account of the ethical power of the call to 'return to things themselves', sacrificed the primal sociality of a shared life-world. What Levinas sought to do in his mature work then was to infuse Heidegger's fundamental ontology with Husserl's insistence on the primal sociality of the life-world. To do so, however, required radically refiguring the nature of the relationship to the other as conceived by Husserl. Specifically, Levinas had to recast the appearance of the other beyond the structures of subjective apperception, not as an intersubjectivity, but as an extra- or supra-subjectivity.

According to Levinas, if contact with the Other is to occur within a primal structure of one's *being-in-the-world*, it must appear somehow *otherwise than* subjectivity, as he writes, it must appear *on its own*, beyond the structures of an apperceiving subject whose gaze illuminates the world as this or that object.<sup>33</sup> Only in this way, he reasons, can contact with the Other remain prior to subjectivity and therefore free from it. The Other must therefore manifest to subjectivity, claims Levinas, as a force which comes to it from the 'outside', from the 'beyond'.<sup>34</sup> Only understood thusly, thinks Levinas, can interaction with the Other be framed outside the confines of idealism and subjectivism. What Levinas's phenomenology attempts to accomplish, then, is to identify an appearance within the phenomenal realm which indicates a rupture within the structures of phenomenality and points to an Otherness which lies beyond it but which nevertheless operates as its ground.

Famously, Levinas identifies precisely such an anomalous phenomenon in the human *face (le visage)*, a phenomenon which, according to Levinas, cannot be reduced to its *morphe*, and therefore 'exceeds its form', thereby



signaling beyond subjectivity to a more primal ground.<sup>35</sup> For Levinas, evidence for the anarchic power of the face is manifest in the existential experience of the kind of *shame* (*la honte*), *conscience* (*la conscience*), and *desire* for the otherwise (*désir métaphysique*) that the gaze of the face can induce within us—all experiences which, we should note, seem to be corollaries to Husserl's *empathy* and Heidegger's *call*.<sup>36</sup> But, thinks Levinas, the face's power is unique from Husserl's *empathy* and Heidegger's *call* in the way that it functions to turn one's attention away from one's self, reorienting being around itself such that one feels the need to give account of one's very existence.

This experience of the priority of the Other in the givenness of the face, as experienced in phenomena such as shame and desire, is what Levinas names *responsibility*: a condition which he defines as the priority of the Other in the existential structure of existence.<sup>37</sup> We are, fundamentally, responsible to the Other—always capable of being summoned to respond to the Other—to give an account for or justify ourselves before the Other. Such a *response-ability* is for Levinas a trace of the primal ground of existence—evidence of the Other's priority in the constitution of consciousness.

Given the way that responsibility indicates the power of the Other radically to reorient the subject to itself, Levinas redefines the nature of subjectivity not as a perceiving ego center, but as a mode of being *for-the-Other*. 'To utter "I",' he writes, is 'to affirm the irreducible singularity in which the apology is pursued'; it 'means to possess a privileged place with regard to responsibilities for which no one can replace me and from which no one can release me. To be unable to shirk: this is the I.'<sup>38</sup> The relation we have to the Other, he concludes, is not therefore an intersubjectivity—it is not worked out horizontally between equal ego poles. The relation with the Other is, for Levinas, an extra- or supra-subjectivity—it is, what he calls, a relation of 'transcendence'.<sup>39</sup> It is exteriority itself—being called out of and beyond the center of one's own being.

For Levinas, the phenomenological call to return to things themselves is ultimately a call to recognize the priority of the Other in phenomenal life, and, by doing so, to make ethical consideration 'first philosophy'.<sup>40</sup> This, he thinks, is the crowning achievement and lasting contribution of phenomenology to philosophy: when pursued diligently it announces

the priority of the Other within existence. This recognition does not come without its own logical consequents, however; and, it is these logical consequents that many Levinas scholars seem to miss in their attempt to read a prescriptive project into his descriptive phenomenology. For, in as much as Levinas's work may announce the collapse of the tyranny of the subject, it does so by installing a new tyrant in its place—a tyrant that we should be wary of giving way to entirely, as we will see shortly. This new tyrant is none other than the Other.

## The Problem of the Other in Levinas's Phenomenology

According to Levinas, the Other who appears through diligent phenomenological attention to the realities of factual life 'reveals himself in his lordship. This exteriority coincides with a mastery.'<sup>41</sup> This is the hard core of the problem of the Other which Levinas details in his work and which so many seem to miss: the fact that the Other does not appear on the scene as our equal. Our relation to the Other is a relation to a superior, to one who has a power over us. The Other does not manifest as a rival to the power of the ego, according to Levinas. To the contrary, the Other appears as one who can call into question and usurp our power. The Other appears as a sovereign.

Of course, according to Levinas, the sovereignty of the Other 'imposes itself without violence'.<sup>42</sup> It is therefore, he assures us, 'a mastery that does not conquer, but teaches'.<sup>43</sup> In this regard, the Other appears to come in 'peace'<sup>44</sup>; not to 'limit the freedom' of its subjects, but to 'found and justify it',<sup>45</sup>—a common refrain repeated by all colonial powers in their conquest. The problem with such assurances is that they are rarely, if ever, true, and all too quickly collapse under the weight of harsh realities of occupation.

Indeed, Levinas's own descriptions of the manifestation of the Other betray these evaluative claims. According to him, '[t]he unlimited responsibility in which I find myself [before the Other] comes from the hither side of my freedom'.<sup>46</sup> It therefore 'provokes my responsibility against my will', taking me 'hostage'.<sup>47</sup> For these reasons, Levinas thinks, the ethical subjectivity imposed by the sovereignty of the Other is experienced as a 'trauma'.<sup>48</sup> The Other, he claims, hunts us down 'to the point

of persecution', and 'strip[s us] of all protection'.<sup>49</sup> Because of the Other we are made to 'suffer'—a suffering which Levinas equates with 'obsession', and 'insomnia'.<sup>50</sup> What's more, Levinas claims, the sovereignty of the Other, established as it is in the primal grounds of our very being, is 'without any escape possible'.<sup>51</sup> The demands levied upon us by the Other are therefore, he concludes, 'absolute', 'infinite', and 'can never be satisfied'.<sup>52</sup> This is, I think, the real heart of the problem with the Other: the fact that the Other appears on the scene as a tyrant.

The problem with many interpretations of Levinas is that they fail to recognize this traumatic core at the heart of the appearance of the Other. As such, they all too easily invite acquiescence to the sovereignty of the Other. In offering such interpretations, scholars risk forging a prescriptive ethics from Levinas's descriptive phenomenology which could all too easily be confused with what Levinas himself details as *evil*: the situation in which the singularity of a being is reduced infinitely into the morass of undifferentiated beings (*il y a*).<sup>53</sup> This is a concern I share with Maurice Blanchot, Levinas's closest friend and deepest reader who in 1979 noted that Levinas's account of the horror of the *il y a*, which represents for Levinas the possibility of 'evil in its very quiddity',<sup>54</sup> and the ethical summons of the Other are ambiguous 'to the point of possible confusion'.<sup>55</sup> A similar concern is noted by Derrida in his brilliant critical analysis of Levinas's ethics, 'Violence and Metaphysics', which meticulously details how the violence of the Other functions merely as an inverse of the ontological violence of Being qua *il y a*.<sup>56</sup> This 'possible confusion' is precisely what makes resisting the temptation to make a prescriptive project of Levinas's work so important.

It would seem then that to mildly accept the domination of the Other, to dispose ourselves willing to the commands of the Other—in other words, to treat Levinas's descriptive accounts of the sovereignty of the Other as prescriptive edicts—could make one complicit in some form of evil. To make this possibility clear, think, for example, of the various neo-fascist political movements currently on the rise throughout Europe, or of the increasingly popular brand of blind nationalism in the USA, or of the various forms of religious fundamentalisms equally on the rise. What all of these movements have in common is that each levies an absolute demand upon the subject in the name of some transcendent and absolute Other (the Fatherland, for example; or God) and demands that

the subject sacrifice itself entirely in service to this Other—it demands that one bow before the sovereignty of this absolute Other. Far from pointing the way toward a prescriptive ethics, Levinas's phenomenological description of the ethical exigency of the Other explains the conditions for the possibility of what Hannah Arendt describes as the 'banality of evil'—the fact that evil is not effected by ethical monsters, but by those who all too easily lose themselves in obedience to some other's will as an absolute imperative.<sup>57</sup> If we confuse Levinas's descriptions of the power of the Other with prescriptions for obedience, do we not risk becoming, like Eichmann, a henchman in the empire of the Other?

We must therefore insist with great vehemence that while Levinas's ethics opens up a means of understanding the ethical exigency the appearance of the Other exhorts from us, it does not prescribe a way of responding to the fundamental problem that is the manifestation of the Other. It becomes incumbent upon us, therefore, to forge a prescriptive ethics on the basis of Levinas's phenomenology which, while acknowledging the primacy of the Other in the constitution of subjective life, does not acquiesce to that power. What I hope to show in the remainder of this chapter is that while Levinas's ethics of the Other may ultimately be an accurate phenomenology of the genesis of subjective life, something like Heidegger's phenomenology of authenticity may, in the end, provide a more useful ethics for the contemporary world. In order to explore this idea, I will examine the possibility of a kind of return to Heidegger's thought, forged, however, against Heidegger's intentions, as a prescriptive ethic cast in light of Levinas's insistence on the sovereignty of the Other.

Fortunately, I don't think I am alone in this general project. Indeed, I think that a similar project can be found in the work of Jacques Lacan. For, like Levinas, Lacan insists on the primacy of social and political forces in the formation of self and indeed the sovereignty of the Other in the constitution of subjectivity. However, unlike so many of Levinas's readers, Lacan correctly identifies the inherent dangers such a constitution contains and insists, therefore, on the cultivation of an ethical response, which resists, qua Heidegger, possible domination by the Other. By tracing the legacy of Heidegger's 'ethics' as a resistance to the Other in the work of Jacques Lacan, I think we discover a way to go beyond the 'ethical deadlock' inherent to the problem of the Other in phenomenology.

## Lacan and the Ethics of Resistance

Heidegger's influence on Lacan is undeniable. Early in his career Lacan was deeply impressed with the work of Heidegger, even going so far as to travel to Freiburg in 1955 to meet *Herr Professor*, as he referred to him in his letters home, and to request permission to translate an article of his on the concept of *logos* for the French Journal *La Psychoanalyse*.<sup>58</sup> But, as shaped as he was by the thought of Heidegger, he was also under the sway of Saussurian structuralism and the recognition demanded therein that psychic life be seen as a product of social discourse. It is on this crossroads that he attempted to forge a new account of the nature of the subject of psychoanalysis and the goal of psychoanalytic practice—and it is for this reason that his work can function as a kind of parallel to Levinas's for our purposes.<sup>59</sup>

Indeed, as Lacan makes clear, the subject is a product of the Other who exists both in the network of significances established in the discourse of the Other and in the points of dissonance where this symbolic order breaks up and collapses.<sup>60</sup> As a result, he argues, the Other cannot be seen as somehow separate or distinct from the field of forces that makes up the subject.<sup>61</sup> To the contrary, it must be seen as synonymous with them. Hence his infamous appropriation of Rimbaud's line that 'the I is an Other'.<sup>62</sup> For Lacan, to utter *I* is to rebroadcast the message one receives from the Other into the field inhabited by the Other, all in the hopes of gaining the Other's recognition and affirmation.<sup>63</sup> All of this is perfectly in line with Levinas's analysis.

What's more, this discursive loop manifests, according to Lacan, as a *Desire (le désir)*.<sup>64</sup> In desire, he claims, the subject experiences itself as what it truly is, always in *want*—*manqué*, lacking something essential to itself and pursuing it forever in the field of significance occupied by the Other.<sup>65</sup> This lack is for Lacan the underlying structure of subjectivity. Subjectivity is for him a *manqué-à-être*, a desiring hole within existence.<sup>66</sup> It is for this reason that he defines the subject of psychoanalysis as irrevocably 'split' from itself, 'subverted' by the Other, and abrogated by desire, a dynamic which Lacan thinks, in conformity with Levinas, leaves the subject in a vulnerable position with regard to the Other.<sup>67</sup>

However, here we discover a critical difference between Levinas's analysis and Lacan's. Namely, when inappropriately managed, Lacan warns, this vulnerability leads to destructive pathologies.<sup>68</sup> One the one

hand, he thinks, this vulnerability can prompt the subject to completely renounce itself to the Other, giving itself entirely over to the symbolic field. In other words, the subject may succumb to the sovereignty of the Other and, in turn, attempt to evacuate itself of the desire which constitutes its very nature in favor of the demands or laws of the Other. That is, the subject may attempt to sacrifice its desires to the Other in attempt to lose itself to the Other. Such an attempt is the origin, according to Lacan, of pathological *neurosis*.<sup>69</sup> It has to be said that something of this attempt seems to be at the heart of those who would make of Levinas's descriptive phenomenology a prescriptive ethics. Alternatively, thinks Lacan, it is possible that the subject may attempt to rid itself of its vulnerability by attempting to shut out the Other in pursuit of its own desire. That is, the subject may attempt to revolt against the Other and make itself sovereign in its place—subjecting the Other in its stead. Such an attempt to assume its own grounds is, for Lacan, the source of pathological *psychosis*.<sup>70</sup>

The goal of psychoanalysis for Lacan is to avoid these two dangers inherent to the subject's vulnerability before a sovereign Other by cultivating within the subject an ethics which can resist its powers without rejecting it. The analyst accomplishes this task, he claims, by helping the patient to cultivate what he called in his 1959–1960 lecture course on the subject an ethical 'no'!—an ethics which responds to ethical demand with resistance.<sup>71</sup> Only once the patient can appropriately resist, not reject nor meekly accept, the twin temptations inherent in his or her vulnerability before the absolute Other by saying 'no' to the Other can he or she avoid the destructive lure of neurosis and psychosis. Lacan sums up the heart of this ethics of resistance with the phrase '*Ne cède pas sur son désir*'—don't betray your desire.<sup>72</sup> This phrase of course has a certain doubleness to it in French: the *cède pas* bearing two possible meanings, both of which are explicitly implied by Lacan. On the one hand, it means to not give *up on* one's desires (qua neurotic collapse) while simultaneously signifying that neither should one give *into* one's desires (qua psychotic expansion). In other words, what this phrase means is that one should neither give up on nor give into the very tension that forms subjective life in relation and in response to the Other. That is, one should neither acquiesce to nor attempt to assume the sovereignty of the Other. Instead, one must practice an ethical vigilance that resists the power of the Other both as

a threat and as a temptation. Only in this way, thinks Lacan, will the dynamic tension with the Other which founds and constitutes subjective life be maintained.

## The Ethics of Resistance and Phenomenology in a New Century

By following Lacan's prescriptive reinvigoration of Heidegger's descriptive phenomenology in this way, I think we discover a way of solving the real root 'ethical deadlock' of phenomenology revealed in Levinas's analysis of the problem of the Other. Lacan's ethics of resistance provides a better model of developing a prescriptive ethical project on phenomenological grounds than the ones offered by many of Levinas's readers. As such, it helps phenomenology not only to probe more critically, but to craft more appropriate responses to the sociopolitical threats which face us at the start of a new century.

### Notes

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4. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Transcendence and Height,' in *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, eds. Adriaan Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 14.
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19. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences*, Part III A, p. 108.
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72. Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, p. 319.

# 4

## Ross and Scheler on the Givenness and Unity of Value

J. Edward Hackett

In this chapter, I will argue for the relevance of Max Scheler's phenomenology to contemporary metaethics. Scheler's *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values* both engages a critical analysis of the formal elements of Kant's philosophy against Scheler's material-value ethics and offers a series of phenomenological meditations on value and moral experience more generally. In this way, Scheler's *Formalism* does not offer a prescriptive ethics or concrete procedure for deciding between competing moral claims, but rather extends phenomenology into metaethics itself. To introduce Scheler's efforts to the current debates in metaethics, I will present Scheler as offering a solution to one of the difficulties raised by W.D. Ross's ethical intuitionism. In so doing, I will propose that Scheler's phenomenological theory of value is best understood as a form of ethical intuitionism, or more specifically what Scheler would call an emotional intuitionism, and reading it this way allows it to reinvigorate a non-natural

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conception of value. This chapter is guided by the idea that phenomenology's relevance turns on rejecting ethical naturalism and providing a robust way to account for the non-reductive status of moral claims, reality, and the nature of moral experience itself. It is my contention that phenomenology can be understood to endorse a form of non-natural realism about such values, and phenomenology's continued relevance in the twenty-first century depends on whether non-reductive accounts of experience (whether natural or non-natural) will stand the test of time.<sup>1</sup>

Ross develops a list of *prima facie* duties—some of which he defines as compound (derived) and some as basic (fundamental). Yet, despite Ross and his defenders, there is little or no reason to find systematicity in Ross's list. The distinction between what is more basic and what is compound cannot be conceptually distinguished without problems. The fact that Ross appeals to the phenomenology of experience, but fails to commensurate different values with respect to each other is not surprising, however. Ross did not have a developed phenomenological approach to bring to bear on this problem. In this chapter, then, I will explain why a tension persists between experience and incommensurability of the various duties highlighted by Ross. Second, I will propose a solution rooted in Scheler's phenomenology. My goal is to show how Scheler's accounts of emotional intuitionism, affective intentionality, and the order of preferring reveal a layer of complexity that both preserves the appeal of looking to experience (as Ross does as well) and offers a way for values and duties to be ranked in relation to each other.

## Cross-Traditional Ethics

Intuitionism flourished between the two world wars in England, and, like their phenomenological counterparts, intuitionists were skeptical about extending naturalism to encompass certain domains of inquiry.<sup>2</sup> Husserl inaugurated the phenomenological movement, at least in part, as an effort to repudiate Theodor Lipp's psychologism. A similar concern animates Scheler's phenomenological inquiry into morality. In G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* (1903), Moore defended the view that we know goodness as an unanalyzable and simple property. In this way, Moore made an

analogy to the color yellow.<sup>3</sup> You know yellow when you see it, and if you were to define something simple, a definition would break down the concept into simpler parts. For example, defining the concept 'bachelor' requires that you break it down into 'unmarried' and 'male'. Moreover, Moore's argument turned on showing the non-identifiability of moral properties and natural properties. Although this chapter is not about the relationship between Moore and phenomenology, thinking that we apprehend the givenness of the *good* is another way to articulate the idea of how *values* are *given* to us in experience.

What both intuitionists and phenomenologists share in general is a commitment to the pre-intelligibility of the world, and that moral reality is given content (made intelligible) when persons experience its content already in the world. The phenomenological datum of morality is already there. Whereas skeptics about intuitionism may cite the lack of systematicity and the non-explanatory nature of moral action, there is something about the attempt to make sense of the deliverance of moral reality and the overall contours in which such deliverance is experienced that is shared by intuitionism and phenomenology. Like other intuitionists, Ross's basic epistemic orientation is incapable of picking up on the raw deliverance of the intersubjective world in which the reality of persons, agency, and values are experienced as such. To express this insight in a slightly different way, we might say that Rossian intuitionism is a by-product of thinking that the fundamental orientation of the subject's experiencing values is, and can only be, *epistemic* without attention to the content of experience that goes unnoticed and un-theorized in a strictly epistemic orientation to the problem of values. Since phenomenology can explain how and why experience is intelligible (and also why Ross's epistemic intuitionism preserves the nonsensical divisions between the subject and the objects of inquiry it claims to know), a lot of the conceptual work left neglected by the intuitionist can be addressed by phenomenology.<sup>4</sup> In other words, Scheler's phenomenology provides a way to talk about apprehending the givenness of value itself, providing adequate systematicity to our account, and most of all explaining why we can distinguish between fundamental and derived duties.

The fact that values are given, that is, that they are known through what we could call *intuition*, might be able to bring together analytic and

continental philosophical approaches. Accordingly, I hope my account here avoids being circumscribed by either approach. Accordingly, in the next section I will provide a survey of Ross's ethical intuitionism as presented in his *The Right and the Good* (1930) before making the case that Scheler can help to offer a better version of what I will call *emotional intuitionism*. In the subsequent section, I will consider David McNaughton's failed defense of Ross's list of prima facie duties and explain the problem of Ross's inability to distinguish between fundamental and derived duties. Like two rival families, however, the deep similarities can also give rise to persistent challenges. This is the case for Scheler and Ross.

## Ross on Duties

Ross holds that duties are generated in the context of particular situations as a moral property. In his own words, the notion of something being prima facie expresses 'an objective fact involved in the nature of the situation, or more strictly in an element of its nature, though not, as a duty proper, arising from the *whole* situation'.<sup>5</sup> Each situation may have a different salient moral property that calls us to act in a certain way, which we may also eventually equate in phenomenological terms with the *givenness* of value in the particular situation. This identity is made possible by the sheer fact that intuitionists all hold that some aspects of moral properties are not definable in non-moral terms. Although Sidgwick holds that 'ought' is unanalyzable, Moore holds that 'good' cannot be broken down any further. Moreover, Ross holds that both the 'right' and the 'ought' cannot be defined in non-ethical terms.<sup>6</sup> Phenomenologically, it might be better to say that the 'right' and the 'ought' are given to us *as valuable*, and that givenness is where ethical theorizing starts, not ends. In every situation, a person may have many duties incumbent upon her; therefore, the person is required to act on that duty which is most significant for her. However, if another more pressing duty were to arise, then she must realize that the more pressing duty takes precedence over the less compelling one, and that unlike Kantian or utilitarian theories that might be interpreted as offering a final proper duty, all moral duties are,

instead, defeasible and conditional. For example, if I promise to meet my wife, Ashley, for lunch on campus, then I have a duty to live up to my promise. However, if a student facing a dire emergency comes to my office and it's so pressing that I have good reason to ask my wife for a rain check, then the duty to honor my promise is defeated by a more pressing moral duty. I still owe my wife an apology, but certainly there are understandable reasons as to why I might miss our daily lunch date for a student that needs my help.

The defeasibility of duty carries with it several theoretical advantages. Ross allows for multiple moral principles to play a role in ethics. This advantage is significant since so many debates between, say, utilitarian and Kantian ethics tend to take place by oversimplifying the complexity of moral life in order to conceptually fit one supreme moral principle over another. A Kantian is forced to show that consequences do not matter, and a utilitarian act must be committed to the fact that rights are nonsense upon stilts. Each side attempts to conceptualize the entirety of moral life in relation to one moral principle that it finds most appealing, even though our moral life seems to require a combination of appeals to both intention and consequences. Put another way, this oversimplification phenomenologically distorts the content of moral experience. It is in order to avoid such oversimplification that Ross creates a list of *prima facie* duties.

Ross formulates a list of all the types of duties that may call us to act, and thereby attempts to preserve the complexity, depth, and range of moral experience. His list reflects a pluralist deontology regarding what types of duties we have. Importantly, though, Ross offers this list 'without claiming completeness or finality for it'.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, he assumes 'the correctness of some of our main convictions as to *prima facie* duties, or more strictly ... that we know them to be true'. He continues, 'To me it seems as self-evident as anything could be ... I certainly cannot prove them.'<sup>8</sup> Even in *The Foundations of Ethics*, Ross claims that '[t]he general principles which [intuitionism] regards as intuitively seen to be true are very few in number and very general in character'.<sup>9</sup> Since I will be taking issue with McNaughton's analysis, I will cite his summary of Ross's list of *prima facie duties* here:



1. Duties resting on a previous act of my own. These in turn divide into two main categories:
  - (a) duties of *fidelity*—these result from my having made a promise or something like a promise; and
  - (b) duties of *reparation*—these stem from my having done something wrong so that I am now required to make amends.
2. Duties resting on previous acts of others; these are duties of *gratitude*, which I owe to those who have helped me.
3. Duties to prevent (or overturn) a distribution of benefits and burdens which is not in accordance with the merit of persons concerned; these are duties of *justice*.
4. Duties which rest on the fact that there are other people in the world whose condition we could make better; these are duties of *beneficence*.
5. Duties which rest on the fact that I could better myself; these are duties of *self-improvement*.
6. Duties of not injuring others; these are the duties of *non-maleficence*.<sup>10</sup>

McNaughton is correct to suggest that we should think of these duties more ‘as a list of fundamental morally relevant characteristic of actions—of features of actions which are right- or wrong-making characteristics and which always carry the weight when we are considering whether a particular action is right or wrong’.<sup>11</sup> Intuitions are connected to how various duties are given to us in the form of certain intelligible patterns of actions and how those actions manifest themselves by appearing to the moral consciousness of a person. In the next section, I will review McNaughton’s solution to the criticism that there is no principled way to unify the rationale of Ross’s list.<sup>12</sup> Ross’s intuitionism requires that the list is able to be, to some degree, unified. However, McNaughton admits that Ross fails at providing a way to distinguish between fundamental and derived duties. Scheler’s phenomenology will provide a way to systematize the rationale of these duties in two respects. First, the hierarchy of values is disclosed within the structure Scheler describes as

affective intentionality. In this structure, Scheler discloses actual evidence for value rankings. Additionally, the test of defeasibility can be clarified by a phenomenological consideration of comparing one value to another (or in Ross's vocabulary 'duty') with respect to the order of preferencing. Without such a phenomenological supplement, an intuitionist approach in ethical theory seems to face insurmountable challenges.

## McNaughton on Ross's List

McNaughton goes through several meditations about particular examples on Ross's list to show there are some problems with distinguishing between derived and underived *prima facie* duties, and it would be too cumbersome to go through all of them. However, all of his various criticisms can be summarized in the idea that Ross's list has no unifying character, which may indicate a phenomenological commitment to the notion that there is no unifying character to moral experience in general. Even though both Ross and Scheler would likely challenge the claim that there is no such unifying character, Scheler is better equipped to provide evidence for such a challenge. In order to get a better sense of the stakes of a failure of unification, let's consider *some* of the criticisms that stem from the inability to tell derived and fundamental duties apart.

1. The list may be too short. If that is the case, then there may be underived duties not on the list that should be there.
2. The list may be too big. If that is the case, then there are duties on the list that should not be there at all.
3. Different intuitionists 'cannot agree about which are basic duties'.<sup>13</sup> This objection is only a problem if intuitionism 'held that the contents of the list should be immediately obvious'.<sup>14</sup> Self-evident intuitions and the givenness of value in a particular situation that delivers intuitive content about what we ought to do are rarely, if ever, 'immediately obvious' in all cases. Here the objection threatens to target a straw man of intuitionism in similar ways to critics of phenomenology who suggest that phenomenology is just another form of introspectionism.<sup>15</sup>

4. Even if there is no arbitrariness to Ross's list, these 'basic duties are still unconnected, and ... this is a weakness in his theory'.<sup>16</sup> McNaughton concedes that this might not be a persistent problem, however, since a general theory may be simple in its principles but offers greater complexity at a higher level. In light of the worry about a lack of connection across basic duties, it can be objected that this list is just a list of duties and that there is no connection whatsoever among them at all. This last worry is not taken very seriously since the duties offer much in common. Some duties, like fidelity, gratitude, and reparation depend upon relations with persons. Others, of course, do not.

Again, the basic problem presupposed in all of these concerns is that moral life and experience may lack necessary unification. That said, what might the contours of moral experience be that these duties would have such structure and unity?

McNaughton raises legitimate concerns about the experience of conflicting duties. If there is no connection among competing duties, then there's no way to tell which duty one ought to follow if they come into conflict with each other. Now, one response might be to insist that some duties are absolute. Ross rejects this outright, and thus denies what he calls 'out-and-out intuitionism'.<sup>17</sup> This rejection is consistent with Ross's account of *prima facie* duty. As I've explained, the demandingness of one duty may be defeated by another pressing duty. As such, we must decide which duty is more pressing and urgent in the situation in which we find ourselves. The lack of connection among the duties might lead us to accept that there is absolutely no commensurability whatsoever and, hence, no possibility to make a justified moral decision when faced with such a conflict. Accordingly, 'Ross is standardly interpreted as claiming a conflict between duties in a particular case can only be resolved by determining what weight those duties carry in that case; nothing in general can be said about the relative weight of different kinds of duties.'<sup>18</sup> McNaughton thinks this reading of Ross is counter to the text. He cites the following passage as evidence:

For the estimation of comparative stringency of these *prima facie* obligations no general rules can, so far as I can see, be laid down. We can only

say that a great deal of stringency belongs to the duties of ‘perfect obligation’—the duties of keeping our promises, of repairing wrongs we have done, and of returning the equivalent of services we have received. For the rest, ‘the decision rests with perception’.<sup>19</sup>

Here, Ross clearly advocates that some duties are more stringent or weightier than others, and McNaughton is right that Ross’s *The Right and the Good* furnishes us with examples of which are more stringent than others. However, the very relations among these duties and what ought to be remains unclear even if sometimes Ross gives specific examples: fidelity and non-maleficence are said to be more stringent than beneficence. Unfortunately, such textual passages only point to *some* circumstances in which Ross seems to be clearly addressing such objections. The standard objection is *still relevant* due to this lack of a substantive theory of the relations among duties, and McNaughton’s efforts to overcome this lack are ultimately unconvincing, even when later conceding that Ross’s deflationary picture of moral theory does ‘not offer any general guidance about what to do in a situation of moral conflict’.<sup>20</sup>

For McNaughton and Ross, action guidance is not the role of moral theory. Yet, it should be. In this way, McNaughton is half right. On the one hand, intuitionism can give us an accurate picture of moral thinking as he insists, but, on the other hand, it is irresponsible to think that moral theory should not make connections between general guidance—even in conflict—and ‘the general account of the nature of our duties (and goodness)’.<sup>21</sup> McNaughton does point to a worry about Ross’s moral intuitionism. But, without a clear way to make sense of these ‘intuitions’, the view itself is plagued by the charge McNaughton fails to overcome—that is, there is a dearth of unity among the relation of *prima facie* duties. What McNaughton should conclude from his efforts is that the impetus for a unifying character underlies the want of those textual incidents he finds in *The Right and the Good*, but the unifying character of moral experience cannot be demonstrated without a stronger view of moral experience itself and the intuitions on which the view relies.

## Scheler as a Phenomenological Resource for Ethical Intuitionism

In this section, I will introduce Scheler's notion of affective intentional structure and then the order of preferencing. With the addition of these two concepts from Scheler's phenomenology, we can tackle the charge of disunity and its two parts, and explain relations among values and duties themselves with the order of preferencing. Scheler's phenomenology can explain how best to understand this ethical intuitionism qua emotional intuitionism since it reveals layers of complexity lost on traditional intuitionists.

Scheler's phenomenology differs significantly from Husserl's regarding how each handles the conception of intuition. Unlike Husserl, Scheler thinks that phenomenological intuition doesn't need to rely on sensuous content (also another reason to interpret Scheler's ethics as a form of non-naturalism). For Scheler, the experience of a phenomenon (like value) is '*that* experience in which the self-givenness of an immanent object coincides with its *meaning*'. In other words, 'phenomenological intuition means that the self-givenness and the meaning of an immanent object are *congruent*'.<sup>22</sup> For values, Scheler ties the self-givenness of value to the immanent experience of feelings, acts, and the entire sphere of affective intentionality. It's within this affective intentionality that the contours of intuitions can be found since affective intentionality gives us the form of moral experience in general for all persons.<sup>23</sup> In seeing that these emotional acts intuit different forms of values, humans cannot help but encounter phenomena given *as valuable*, and such givenness can add more specificity to the role of intuition and moral perception in Ross.

Unlike Husserlian phenomenology, Scheler's phenomenology is not a *method* of description, but is best understood as an *attitude*. This attitude is described as a spiritual seeing. Within this spiritual seeing, the essences that are immanent to reality are disclosed to us as a result of bracketing the natural attitude. Scheler calls this level of human experience the 'person', and the way to discovering these essences is within the primordial contact between emotional life and the world. The act-object relation in which values are disclosed is called affective intentionality and the elements of this structure inform Scheler's phenomenological ethics. Scheler uses the term 'Spirit' (*Geist*) to refer to an irreducible level of experience at

which values are encountered. This point is important due to the fact that analytic terminology has generally used the term ‘non-natural’ to refer to the irreducible level of experience at which one encounters moral values. It is ultimately because of Scheler’s use of the notion of *Geist* in his later metaphysics as the causally inefficacious normative property that I am compelled to make the larger connection of this chapter.

Affective intentionality consists of two parts, or, better, two ‘sides’: intentional feeling and the value correlates. Let’s take the value side first. For Scheler, values have independent existence. Values are ‘*independent phenomena* that are comprehended independent of the peculiarity of content, as well as the being-real or the being-ideal and the non-being of their bearers’.<sup>24</sup> A bearer of a value is a deed, good of life (such as knowledge or friendship), or person. These things are all given to us as valuable, and values have an existence independent of the contents in the world that would realize them or not. Put more simply, values can be comprehended as to their oughtness whether or not they are factually present. Scheler gives the example of a competent minister to illustrate this point. That a minister *should be* competent rather than a hedonistic drunkard ought to be the case regardless of whether it *actually is* the case. Indeed, he presents a hierarchy of values from lowest to highest: sensible, vital, cultural, and Holy.

Sensible values are those that manifest in sensation in the body. They encompass whole regions. They are not complex, and at this level, they do not take an object and are caused by stimuli. Vital values occur at the level of the lived body. They can indicate values of life of the lived body in relation to the environing world, and they can signal threats and impending dangers as well. Unnecessarily climbing up a flagpole for an adolescent prank can be revealed as threatening or dangerous to the one climbing as well as being given as dangerous to others witnessing the prank. The algae bloom in the Western Lake Erie basin is considered as a threat to the residents of Southeast Michigan, Northwest Ohio, and Canadian residents. At a higher level, psychic feeling intends cultural values. These are the values of truth or falsehood, beauty or ugliness, and finally right or wrong. Finally, the Holy values embody the entire person. To be blissful is to be only that: blissful. These feelings fill out the entire person, and reveal the person as the source of acts in the fullest possibilities of human

life. To revisit the competent minister case, the choice to pursue a life of pleasure or devotion to one's office must recognize that the value of the Holy is above sensible value. Yet, even if the person in question thought it was morally wrong to pursue a life of pleasure at the expense of the promise made, it would still be wrong. In this way, one can see that these various levels of value rankings are intuited emotionally in the affective intentional structure because that's how life is lived. We cannot help but experience life as value-laden.

The order of preferencing presented here might be understood as a contrast to McNaughton's account. Rather than think that Ross cannot give relative weights between duties, we should think in terms of relative height. The order of preferencing arises from the various ways in which the phenomenological evidence of values is given with respect to each other. In keeping with the competent minister case, consider that this man's personal being can choose (for argument sake, assume that our fictional minister is in the stages before any addiction of alcohol could or would set in) between pursuing a life of pleasure afforded by alcohol or trying as best he can to excel at his office. Within this choice, there is a pull, an initial givenness between two values that affective intentionality opens up and discloses. *We feel attracted and pulled to prefer the higher value rather than the lower one.* The life of the hedonist is fleeting, less durable, and not as preferable as the enduring value of excelling at his vocation.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, one is more fulfilling in its depth than the other. In other words, the sensible values of pleasure are lower than the higher values of serving one's office. Scheler gives a phenomenological articulation of this act of preferring, and at the outset it is important to note that preferencing is neither a choice nor a willing, but a given quality detected in the emotional intuitions that flash forth within the affective intentional structure in intuitive immediacy.

Since we first and foremost encounter the world of objects within affective intentionality, all objects of experience exhibit value. As such, there is no value-neutral position of cognition, but instead, all objects of experience are given-as-valuable. They are felt, or given with value qualities at the very outset even before any cognitive awareness. In this way, Scheler's phenomenological description of value experience is pre-cognitive and pre-reflective. As such, this is why affective intentionality is a

material a priori structure. Whereas Kant locates the a priori nature of the categorical imperative in the universality of reason, such a concept is too abstract. Likewise the process of affective intentionality and the inherent ranking of the values with respect to each other in experience give rise to the situational and particular nature of ethics, but also capture the objectivity that Ross wanted about values. The painting on the wall is not just given in profiles in perceptual acts, but is given to us *as beautiful* or *as ugly*.<sup>26</sup> Historical relics are given to us *as valuable*. Another person is given to us as someone I could use or someone whose value exceeds all categories of use, which is the perspective of the Holy values of the person. A woman knocks on my door and she is cold, with child, and there is no phone for miles. My wife and I are at home, have soup on the stove, and have a phone she could use. This mother and her child are given to me as either an inconvenience to what would be an otherwise romantic dinner, or as someone in need. However, the woman and her child can never be an inconvenience. To be an inconvenience would mean that she would be as valuable as an object obstructing my path, and since the person is the source of intentional acts, she can never be an object or possess thing-value.<sup>27</sup> In all these cases, the affective intentional structure provides the content and the material for immediate recognition of values, and those values are disclosed to us and our involvements in the particular life-world in which they emerge.

Now that I have given some explanation of Scheler's account of the value side of affective intentionality, let's turn to the act side. First, intentional acts can never be objects, 'since their being consists solely in pursuance and being acted out'.<sup>28</sup> Affective intentionality consists of two types of feeling acts that relate to the value-ranking structure described above. These are feeling acts of love and acts of hate. This distinction provides a range of feeling types for possible acts reflecting the earlier parts discussed above. The lowest feelings are sensible feelings. These are sensations of pleasure and displeasure and they intend the values of agreeable and disagreeable. Vital feelings consist of the noble, strength, vulgar, health, fatigue, illness, and that which will enhance overall well-being of the lived body. Psychic feelings are fully intentional feelings and exhibit an ego quality: sorrow, sympathy, anger, and sadness. They can be felt and modified due to social interactions or free choice. In other words,



a person's social and cultural being is a product of psychic feeling. Even higher, spiritual feelings fill our entire being completely. These spiritual feelings resonate with the sphere of the Holy value of the person to which the value of the person's dignity is absolute.

## Tying the Strands Together

From both the affective intentional structure and the order of preferencing revealed in it, the ethical intuitionist is better off than she would be otherwise. Scheler provides the contours and form that moral experience possesses *tout court*. As such, Scheler can strengthen ethical intuitionism and provide resources to meet some common objections raised against it. As a way of concluding, let me suggest five ways in which Scheler is especially helpful for the metaethical considerations attending to ethical intuitionism.

Consider first that ethical intuitionists posit an untenable faculty of intuition and metaphysically extravagant moral properties. Usually, defenders of ethical intuitionism attempt to appeal to common-sense thought experiments, but even in such cases, it is crucial to get clear on the elements of experience, and invoking the phenomenological tradition to explain these elements is a promising strategy. Typically, ethical intuitionists embrace the fact that moral facts or properties exist as a *sui generis* property. They just are, and the criticism is that there's no real explanation as to why they exist as *sui generis* properties or why we should accept their existence at all. Importantly, though, the affective intentional structure demystifies the strange faculty objection and explains the origin of *sui generis* properties, though the 'property talk' will give way to talk of the self-givenness of values or value qualities rather than the moral facts or properties. Skeptics of intuitionism view it as metaphysically extravagant since they have not paid attention to phenomenology of moral experience.

Furthermore, the distinction between derived and foundational duties is misplaced. Ross has only articulated one small sliver of the possibility of value, and Scheler articulates the entire range of possibility of moral and non-moral values and varying degrees of intuitive

contents in feeling acts that often get conflated by ethical intuitionists. Moreover, Scheler's metaphor of height is better than the one of weight. The intuition of height already includes within it the possibility of commensurability. In Ross, the language of relative weightiness attempts to express sensitivity to the context of moral experience, and in this sense Scheler's phenomenological ethics is similar to Ross's in its commitment to particularism. The moral situations in which we encounter values are *relative* only to those who encounter those values. Promises might be disregarded because of more serious pressing duties, and the fact that some values are less fulfilling and enduring than others is disclosed to us as phenomenological evidence of two conflicting moral duties in which one duty defeats the other. This disclosure, while determined objectively by the rankings when we talk philosophically about them, is only for the one experiencing them. We can abstract and create situations to talk about, but there is really no decision procedure for determining the content for those who feel the pressingness of one value (higher) with respect to another (lower) value. For example, suppose that Melina is experiencing the call to Holiness in her life. There's no formulaic way to meet this call of value since Scheler (and Ross) will leave it open to the one experiencing value (or the relevant intuition by Ross's standards) for the person or persons involved. Melina may take up Holy orders, or engage in more systematic prayer. Only Melina can tell about her situation, and decide how to experience the call and value of Holiness in her life.

Third, the connection between the duties for Ross lies not in the one which is more basic, but in the basic constitutive nature of the material 'aprioricity' of experience itself. The fact that experience contains the possibility of commensurability means that knowledge of duties is but one example of values, and when we put that into context we also see that some moral philosophers have often made identifications of moral values to the other types of values on Scheler's value rankings. Such identifications have conflated moral values with other value qualities, and if ethicists are no longer confused as to the types of values they are talking about, then a Scheler/Ross synthesis can anticipate deeper problematic features of ethics in general and better explain the types of connections between all values.

Fourth, although Scheler allows for an ideal to be experienced, the lack of a clear prescribed ethics in Scheler undoubtedly conflicts with the decisive deontological pluralism in Ross. However, Scheler's openness to how values may be given and the openness to more than one moral principle in Ross approximate more than they differ. Admittedly, Scheler can be interpreted as offering the contours and structure that generate duties, and duty is by no means an alien concept to his moral phenomenology. Indeed, his phenomenological ethics could easily be interpreted to allow for more love in the world. Love, here, is understood as sacrificing one value for a higher one and thus ascending the value rankings and bringing more love and higher values into existence. I should mention this is not an optimistic calculation as utilitarians might claim, but realizing a value quality in one's words, deeds, and person. In this way, love is a movement in the person's act center of their very being and the emotional intuition is to allow us a glimpse of a higher and holier possibility over and against the more base, immediate, and flawed possibilities.

Fifth, there is tension between Ross's moral theory and Scheler's phenomenological ethics since Scheler's conception of human beings involves a deeply spiritual nature, but it's quite possible that a Rossian need not be committed to a spiritual conception of humanity. This is a larger commitment than I can speak about here, but the fact that the Holy values embody the absolute dignity of the person elevates personal dignity that often appears in other moral theories like Kant, for whom the absolute dignity of the person is because persons are the sources of their own reasons. In this way, Kant's moral theory is committed to a Holy but narrow conception of the person, and Scheler is influenced in part too. The person is the source of intentional acts and discovered meanings of objects. Therefore, the person ought never to be an object since, like Kant's person being the source of her own reasons, the person's absolute dignity follows from being the source of meaning itself. Insofar as other ethical theories embody the same reverence for personal dignity, there will be less tension between them and Scheler, and as such a Rossian and Schelerian synthesis is better off for that assumption than not making it at all.

Accordingly, a phenomenological supplement to ethical intuitionism provides important resources for phenomenological contributions to contemporary metaethics. In Scheler, the structure of how values are disclosed can better explain the relations among all values we experience,

and the structures of experience employed by Scheler unifies the values we experience. We can now see that the initial efforts of Ross to put us in touch with our intuitive contact with values make more sense when we understand the structures Ross's analysis did not disclose. It did not disclose the affective intentionality that undergirds all moral experience, and at the same time Ross's intuitionism can be read side by side with Scheler to bolster an intuitionist account of ethics.

In other words, in this chapter I have focused only on one particular engagement between Scheler and Ross, but future phenomenology can and should move more decidedly into other possible considerations in order that our moral theorizing be wedded to the lived aspects of moral experience. This is especially true when we consider the common move in analytic ethics when appeals to intuition are made in moral theory, not just about values. Ultimately, then, when appeals to intuition are made in the course of theorizing about various issues in metaethics, ethicists should first have an adequate grasp about the phenomenology of moral experience.

## Notes

1. I want to say at the outset that in this chapter I will assume a commitment to a non-natural interpretation of value and moral reality in general. However, I want to say that if phenomenology establishes anything, then it is the irreducibility of what is experienced. Phenomenology is, thus, ontologically neutral (allegedly) with respect to moral experience. I openly acknowledge this limitation, and, accordingly, I interpret Scheler as a non-natural moral realist. Also, Phillip Stratton-Lake reminds us that the standard and received view of Ross's ethics is a form of non-natural moral realism, but in all of Ross's writings, he is never truly explicit in this regard (see Phillip Stratton-Lake, 'Introduction' in W.D. Ross's *The Right and the Good*, ed. Phillip Stratton-Lake (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), ix–lviii, xxi).
2. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in intuitionism. The well-known libertarian Michael Huemer defends the case for ethical intuitionism in his *Ethical Intuitionism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). His principle of phenomenal conservatism is very similar to what Husserl calls 'the principle of all principles' in *Ideas I*. Philip Stratton-Lake has edited a wonderful anthology on intuitionism. See his *Ethical Intuitionism*:

*Re-evaluations* (Clarendon: Oxford University Press, 2003). Finally, Sabine Roeser's affectual intuitionism synthesizes a cognitive theory of the emotions and ethical intuitionism [see her *Moral Emotions and Intuitions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)]. In many ways, an analytic rendition of Scheler can be achieved straightaway from these texts.

3. With this claim, Ross agrees. W.D. Ross, *The Right and the Good* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 86. Hereafter, I will cite this as RG.
4. As far as the literature is concerned, Robert Audi has recently tried to understand the phenomenology of intuition in his 'Intuition and its Place in Ethics' *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 1, no. 1 (March 2015): 57–77. He understands phenomenology such that the *seeming character* of what-it's-like-to-have-an-intuition is very similar to what's-it-like-to-be-a-bat. In such a way, phenomenology is merely the descriptive seeming of what happens in the first-personal experience, but without the robust cognitive architecture to make sense of that level of intuitive experience and how consciousness intends the object in the richest sense possible (as provided by Husserl and Scheler, among others).
5. Ross, RG, p. 20.
6. William Frankena, *Ethics* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973), p. 103.
7. Ross, RG, p. 20.
8. Ross, RG, p. 21n1.
9. W.D. Ross, *The Foundations of Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), p. 190.
10. David McNaughton, 'An Unconnected Heap of Duties?' *The Philosophical Quarterly* 46, no. 185 (October 1996): 433–47. Here I am citing his summary (pp. 435–436) of Ross's, RG, pp. 21–3.
11. McNaughton, 'An Unconnected Heap of Duties?', p. 435.
12. This lack of systematicity also has another side that is well expressed by Alisdair MacIntyre: 'But all intuitionists suffer from one difficulty: they are, on their own view, telling us only about what we all know already. That they sometimes disagree about what it is that we all know already only makes them less boring at the cost of making them even less convincing' (*A Short History of Ethics*, (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 254).
13. McNaughton, 'An Unconnected Heap of Duties?', p. 440.
14. McNaughton, 'An Unconnected Heap of Duties?', p. 440.
15. For an excellent consideration of phenomenology's relation to analytic philosophy, see David Cerbone, David. 'Straight and Hetero,' in *A House*

- Divided: Comparing Analytic and Continental Philosophy*, ed. C.G. Prado (New York: Humanity Books, 2003), pp. 105–38.
16. McNaughton, 'An Unconnected Heap of Duties?', p. 440.
  17. Ross, *Fundamental*, p. 79. I'll come back to this later. The absolute value and dignity of the person *is* something both Scheler and I accept.
  18. McNaughton, 'An Unconnected Heap of Duties?', p. 442.
  19. Ross, RG, 41–42; as cited in McNaughton, p. 442. Ross's quotation above is given in the original Greek from Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1109b 23.
  20. McNaughton, 'An Unconnected Heap of Duties?', p. 446.
  21. McNaughton, 'An Unconnected Heap of Duties?', p. 446.
  22. Manfred Frings, *The Mind of Max Scheler* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), p. 124.
  23. This structure is relevant to an account like that provided by Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in his 'Is Moral Phenomenology Unified' *Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* 7 (2008): 85–97.
  24. Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Value: A New Attempt Toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism* trans. R. Funk and M. Frings (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 185. *Formalism* hereafter.
  25. Scheler, *Formalism*, pp. 86–90.
  26. Scheler, *Formalism*, p. 172.
  27. Scheler, *Formalism*, p. 85.
  28. Scheler, *Formalism*, p. 72.

# Part II

## Meaning and Critique

# 5

## Meaning, Being, and Time: The Phenomenological Significance of Dooyeweerd's Thought

Neal DeRoo

Herman Dooyeweerd has had an influence that is at the same time both notable and marginal. Within many Dutch-influenced communities in the Netherlands, South Africa, Australia, and North America, Dooyeweerd's influence extends far beyond the academy into many aspects of life, from elementary schools to labor unions to artist collectives. Outside those communities, however, Dooyeweerd has made virtually no impact; most academic philosophers would not recognize the name, let alone be familiar with his central teachings. Many who could profit from engaging with his insights—especially in regard to temporality, the so-called modal ontology, and the distinction between the religious impulse and various social institutions—are either entirely unfamiliar with his work or dismissive of its 'neo-Kantian' conceptions.

Unfortunately, many who are appreciative of Dooyeweerd also consider his work to be broadly neo-Kantian.<sup>1</sup> In reading his work this

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way, they are forced to ignore or significantly misunderstand some of his key teachings.<sup>2</sup> In order to address such misunderstandings, in this chapter I will suggest that Dooyeweerd is best understood as a phenomenologist, not a neo-Kantian. If we view the Amsterdam School as being closer to Freiburg than to Marburg, we can reexamine two central tenets of Dooyeweerd's work—meaning and temporality—in light of their phenomenological heritage and implications. Doing so will help demonstrate that Dooyeweerd offers a unique and significant response to Husserl and Heidegger, and as such not only offers us a new stream in the *history* of phenomenology, but more importantly offers a new wave for the *future* of phenomenology. That is, looking back to Dooyeweerd will help us plot a course for phenomenology in the twenty-first century that focuses on two essentially interrelated terms—supra-temporality and expression—that together form the underexamined nexus at the heart of phenomenological thought.

## Phenomenology and Neo-Kantianism

While Dooyeweerd is critical of phenomenology in several places, that criticism must be seen as an internal or immanent critique. His rejection of Husserlian phenomenology as a 'true foundation of philosophy' (NC I, 543)<sup>3</sup> is not a wholesale rejection of phenomenology as a philosophical system. Rather, it merely follows from his transcendental critique of theoretical thought,<sup>4</sup> which has sought to demonstrate that every philosophy necessarily has extra-philosophical (what he calls 'religious') suppositions that shape and influence it,<sup>5</sup> and hence no philosophy can be its own foundation. All philosophy is rejected as a true *foundation* for philosophy; phenomenology is not unique in this regard.

Rejecting phenomenology as a foundation for all philosophy, then, does not mean that phenomenology or its insights can be easily dismissed. Rather, those insights must be subjected to a 'radical transcendental critique' (NC I, 544),<sup>6</sup> which is precisely what Dooyeweerd's criticisms of phenomenology attempt to do—but they do so, in some significant respects, from within the space or discourse of phenomenology itself.

Dooyeweerd's critiques of Husserlian phenomenology tend to revolve around one central critique: that Husserl is still too much an 'idealist' (NC II, 27) because he puts too much emphasis on the transcendental ego as the foundation of all philosophic thought (NC I, 91). The fundamental problem with Husserl, for Dooyeweerd, is that he denies 'the transcendence of the ego in respect to ...transcendental (phenomenologically purified) consciousness' and hence 'the very transcendental Idea, pointing beyond and above itself to the pre-suppositions of philosophical thought, has no sense here' (NC I, 91).

But Husserl does not take the Ego as the ultimate foundation (in Dooyeweerd's sense) of philosophy. Indeed, in a work that Dooyeweerd did not have access to,<sup>7</sup> Husserl differentiates his work from Kant's on precisely this issue. In *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, Husserl states that, in the *First Critique*, 'unfortunately, [Kant] only had in mind the higher lying problem of the constitution of *Gegenstandlichkeit*'<sup>8</sup> (Hua XI, 126).<sup>9</sup> However, for Husserl 'lying deeper and essentially preceding [this problem] is the problem of ... the constitution of the subject's stream of lived-experience' (Hua XI, 126). So, while Kant is concerned with the *Gegenstandlichkeit* that enables us to make sense of the world in passive synthesis (on the second of the three levels of constitution in Husserlian thought),<sup>10</sup> Husserl laments the fact that Kant 'did not have at his disposal the phenomenological problematic and method' that would have allowed him, like Husserl, to be able to examine the more basic problem of constitution, namely, 'the genesis of a subjectivity' (Hua XI, 125).

For Husserl, then, the subject is not a foundational a priori, but is itself necessarily genetically constituted: the Ego is made, not found.<sup>11</sup> And if it is generated, then it cannot be its own autonomous foundation. Not only does this suggest that Dooyeweerd's criticisms of phenomenology are unfounded, but it also suggests that phenomenology itself is what opens the door to Dooyeweerd's very criticism: for Husserl, it is the 'phenomenological problematic and method' that opens the door for the examination of the self as something other than an a priori given. As such, given the nature of Dooyeweerd's critique, we can—and should—read it as a phenomenological critique, rather than as a critique of phenomenology.

The nature of this critique and its response helps us see what is at stake in viewing Dooyeweerd as a phenomenologist, rather than as a neo-Kantian. The Kantian question is ‘What kinds of syntheses must be carried out subjectively in order for things of nature to be able to appear, and thus a nature in general’ (Hua XI, 126). This is a question that remains premised on an a priori notion of subjectivity in which a subject can be understood according to structures that are what they are in themselves [*an sich*], outside the realm of temporal experience. For Kant, there are some structures that are atemporal and unchanging—they may be ‘filled in’ in various ways, depending on varying content, but the structures themselves remain what they are.<sup>12</sup> For Husserlian phenomenology, on the other hand, all structures are themselves constituted (*generated* is probably a better word) within temporal experience. This difference is significant, not just for how we understand Dooyeweerd but, through him, how we understand the project of phenomenology and the function of religion.

## Genesis, Meaning, Creation, and Temporality

At the root of the difference between neo-Kantianism and phenomenology, then, are the interrelated questions of temporality and the constitution of subjectivity. Given this difference, Husserl’s claim that subjectivity is ‘indeed only conceivable in genesis’ (Hua XI, 125) suggests that phenomenology cannot be divorced from the question of genesis. Jacques Derrida highlights the contradictory problematic inherent in the notion of starting with genesis:

Genesis...brings together two contradictory meanings in its concept: one of origin, one of becoming. On the one hand, indeed, genesis is birth, absolute emergence of an instant or of an ‘instance’ that cannot be reduced to the preceding instance, radicalness, creation, autonomy in relation to something other than itself... But at the same stage, there is no genesis except within a temporal and ontological totality which encloses it; every genetic product is produced by something other than itself...It only is, it only has its meaning, when it is inscribed in a context which on the one

hand is its own, that is to say, to which it belongs and in which it participates...but which, on the other hand, goes beyond, which envelopes it from all sides. Genesis is also an inclusion, and immanence. The existence of any genesis seems to have this tension between a transcendence and an immanence as its sense and direction. (PG, xxi)<sup>13</sup>

Derrida argues that this complex question of genesis is central to the entire phenomenological project that arose out of Husserl's work. To emphasize this, let us highlight a few key themes of genesis, which are contained *in nuce* in the quotation above and prove paradigmatic for phenomenology: (1) the sense of genesis is found in the tension between transcendence and immanence; (2) this 'sense' is not merely linguistic, objective, or object-like (*Gegenständlichkeit*), but is first and foremost a trajectory, a movement, a 'direction'; (3) this direction and sense of genesis makes ontology and hermeneutics, being and meaning, interchangeable in a certain sense ('It only is, it only has its meaning'); (4) this particular relationship of ontology and hermeneutics cannot be divorced from a particular temporality; and (5) the temporal, hermeneutic ontology of genesis suggests, but also problematizes, the relationship between creation and autonomy, between origin and becoming.

These elements of the problematic of genesis are also central to Dooyeweerd's work and the entire philosophical project that arises out of that work. While the terminology of 'genesis' is not invoked there in the same way, the entire spirit of the Dooyeweerdian corpus is animated by those elemental aspects of the problematic of genesis: a reexamination of the relationship between the transcendent and the immanent (through both the reexamination of the notion of Law and the invocation of the 'supra-'), sense as movement and trajectory (through the centrality of *dynamis* and of 'ground motives' that are other-than-merely-rational), and the complex interplay between temporality, ontology, and hermeneutics that complicates the relationship between creation and autonomy (through the notion that everything that exists is implicated in and by a 'creation order' that is necessarily a 'temporal order' and an order of meaning) are all central tenets of the Dooyeweerdian program that fit precisely the problematic of genesis laid out by Derrida—and which open it in new directions.

These central tenets crystallize in two significant Dooyeweerdian claims that have long proven vexing to Dooyeweerdian scholars: the notion of a ‘supra-temporal heart’ and the claim that ‘being is meaning’. For a long time, most Dooyeweerdian scholars emphasized and lauded the latter claim, while not being sure of what to do with the former claim. Recently, a new direction in Dooyeweerd scholarship has opened up that puts emphasis on the former claim, but thereby seems to pay less significance to the latter.<sup>14</sup> But in order to balance the two claims in a mutually reinforcing way, rather than choosing for one claim over the other, attention must be paid to the specifically phenomenological significance of Dooyeweerd’s thought.

## Meaning

Fundamental to Dooyeweerd’s entire philosophical project is his unique understanding of meaning as inseparable from ontology. Dooyeweerd begins the *New Critique* with a discussion of the various modal aspects that together determine the ‘how’ of our ‘theoretical view of reality’ (NC I, 3). Each modal aspect<sup>15</sup> ‘refers within and beyond itself to all the others’, and so provides a picture of the coherence of our reality, a coherence that is experienced directly in ‘naïve, pre-theoretical experience’, but which can be distinguished into the various modes by way of ‘theoretical analysis’ (NC I, 3).<sup>16</sup>

While each aspect can provide a particular way of looking at the world, each of those ways is senseless without recourse to the primary coherence.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, Dooyeweerd claims, the ‘coherence of all the modal aspects...finds its expression in each of them, and also points beyond its own limits towards a central totality, which in its turn is expressed in this coherence’ (NC I, 3–4). Our coherent experience of the world, then, is not merely (subjectively) experienced but expresses a deeper, underlying truth—an existent world, which Dooyeweerd refers to as a ‘totality’,<sup>18</sup> that is expressed in the coherence of the aspects in our experience of the world.

Expression and reference are therefore universal characteristics of everything that exists, for Dooyeweerd: everything *expresses* the coherence (and through that, ultimately, the totality) of reality by implicitly

*referring* to all the other constitutive aspects of reality in and through its very existence. Because the world is interdependently related, and hence possesses a ‘dependent, non-self-sufficient nature’ (NC I, 4), the whole of (created)<sup>19</sup> reality, in its very being, is stamped as meaning: ‘Meaning is the *being* of all that has been created’ (NC I, 3), or, alternatively, ‘Meaning is the being of creaturely beings’ (NC I, 4; translation modified).<sup>20</sup>

Such an audacious response to Heidegger intimately connects ontology with hermeneutics, but with the latter now understood not merely in linguistic or semiotic terms. For Dooyeweerd, this apparently Heideggerian gesture is in fact rooted in Husserl. The Dutch word translated here as ‘meaning’ [*zin*] can be translated into German as either *sinn* or *bedeutung*, and is used by Dooyeweerd in compound words like *zingeving* (normally translated into English as ‘meaning attribution’), which Dooyeweerd links explicitly to Husserl’s notion of *noesis* (RK, 37),<sup>21</sup> and implicitly to the phenomenological notion of *Sinngebung* (sense-bestowal).<sup>22</sup> This notion of *zingeving* is immensely significant for Dooyeweerd. Human knowledge requires attributing meaning to a ‘meaning-possessing object’ that he explicitly connects to the Husserlian *noema* (RK, 37). In a regular act of human knowing, ‘the meaning-possessing entity coheres completely with the meaning attribution [*zingeving*]...[they] stand within consciousness in an inseparable union of being [*wezensverband*]’ (RK, 37). The coherence of the noema and the noesis in consciousness is a staple of early Husserlian thought, and Dooyeweerd echoes it here—but with a twist that anticipates, I would argue, the later Heidegger. While the noesis and noema are able to cohere in consciousness, this is only because they are first situated in the primary context of creational meaning/sense, which itself is not merely ‘objectively given’, but is the result of a divine *zingeving*, a ‘divine noesis’ (RK, 52) that lawfully establishes the conditions in which new acts of *zingeving* can occur (RK, 38). Hence, human acts of meaning are primarily grounded in the meaningfulness of the totality and coherence of the world, which, in turn, necessarily points beyond the totality of the world to something that is made manifest only in and through the world.<sup>23</sup>

At this point, we can begin to see why Dooyeweerd claims that meaning is not only the being of all created reality, but is also ‘the nature even of our very selfhood’ (NC I, 4). For while the entirety of the world

and every creature within it express the meaning attributed to the world by the divine noesis, that meaning is found precisely in the totality and coherence of meaning and not in any one place within it: ‘Meaning is “ex origine” the convergence of all temporal aspects of existence into one’ focus or concentration point (NC II, 30). To make sense of the world, then, one has to find this ‘Archimedean point’ (NC I, 8) from which one can ‘observe’ or ‘take in’ that totality. And this point, ultimately, is found in the self itself. Philosophically speaking,<sup>24</sup> ‘in this whole system of modal functions of meaning, it is I who remain the central point of reference and the deeper unity above all modal diversity of the different aspects of my temporal existence’ (NC I, 5). And because the self is the central point of reference of the totality of meaning, any attempt to determine the meaning of anything within the world necessarily ‘acquire[s] the concentric direction towards an ultimate unity of consciousness which must lie at the root of all modal diversity of meaning’ (NC I, 51). This ‘concentric direction’ ultimately orients theoretical thought toward the self or the ego (NC I, 53), and so philosophy can never be possible without critical self-reflection (NC I, 5). On this, Kant, Husserl, and Dooyeweerd all seem to agree.

But this critical self-reflection is not self-founding, precisely because it is focused on the Idea (in the Kantian sense invoked by the later Husserl<sup>25</sup>) of the totality of meaning. That is to say, while the self, through self-reflection, can move in the direction of the concentration of meaning—necessary to access the totality of meaning from which each individual aspect of meaning takes its ultimate sense—it cannot ever achieve that goal fully without recourse to the ultimate point of focus or concentration of meaning: ‘the religious root of creation’ (NC II, 30), which Dooyeweerd calls the ‘supra-temporal heart’, in which all human being necessarily participates.

## The Supra-Temporal Heart

With this notion of a religious root of creation, the entwining of being and meaning is brought necessarily into connection with both temporality and a philosophy of religion. If the first three are to be expected,

given the problematic of genesis at the heart of the phenomenological project, the latter provides a uniquely Dooyeweerdian inflection that could have significant impact on our understanding of the nature, scope, and significance of phenomenology.<sup>26</sup>

The notion of a ‘supra-temporal’ center to humanity is immensely controversial in Dooyeweerd scholarship. It brings together his conception of time, being, and meaning, such that Dooyeweerd can say that ‘the idea of cosmic time constitutes the basis of the philosophical theory of reality in this book’ (NC I, 28).<sup>27</sup> All the modal aspects, taken together in their mutually referring and coherence-expressing totality, constitute the ‘temporal order’ in which all individual creatures are grounded (NC I, 29). As such, the ‘how’ of reality, the very weave from which the fabric of reality is made, is a uniquely *temporal* order, and ontology and temporality, being and time, are inherently interwoven.

But we have already seen that the coherence of the aspects refers to something beyond the reality constituted by those aspects. Hence, ‘not a single temporal structure of meaning exists in itself (an sich). That which makes it into meaning lies beyond the limit of time’ (NC II, 30). Hence, the true fullness of meaning lies beyond the scope of the temporal structure of reality, and therefore fundamentally beyond the scope of theoretical thought.

We see, then, that pursuing meaning in the concentric direction leads first to the self and then beyond the self to the totality of meaning concentrated in the ‘religious root’ of creation that is operative in and through the self. To speak of religion here, for Dooyeweerd, is to speak of ‘the innate impulse of human selfhood to direct itself toward the *true* or toward a *pretended* absolute Origin of all temporal diversity of meaning, which it finds focused concentrically in itself’ (NC I, 57). Religion, for Dooyeweerd, is primarily an ‘impulse’ and a directedness, a movement or a moving—a *dynamis*. This is why the ‘religious’ commitment that undergirds theoretical thought, including the very concentric direction or movement of theoretical thought itself, ‘cannot have a *theoretical* origin’ but instead ‘must spring *from* the ego as the individual center of human existence’ (NC I, 54; emphasis added). In this sense, religion is not what lies beyond temporal reality, but precisely the entire orientation of our reality, the directedness of our very living.



While the fullness of meaning is concentrated in the self and points to the Origin, the Origin itself is not found merely in the concentrated fullness of meaning, but in the totality of meaning. Hence, it can be pursued in and through any and every meaningful thing—which is to say, for Dooyeweerd, in and through every created thing, since ‘meaning is the being of created beings’. So, while the concentric direction of meaning helps us to discover the concentration of meaning in the religious center of humanity, it alone cannot account for that religious center. For that, we must appeal also to the expressive direction of meaning: while the totality of meaning is *concentrated* in the religious center of humanity, it is so only because all of temporal reality is itself *expressive* of that totality of meaning.<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately, this essential notion of the expressive direction of meaning is severely underdeveloped by Dooyeweerd. Rather than explicating it clearly and concisely, he appeals to a metaphor to make his point: just like a beam of light, when refracted through a prism, becomes the ‘seven well-known colors of the spectrum’ (NC I, 101), so too does the ‘time-transcending totality of meaning’ (NC I, 102) become all the various modal aspects of meaning after that totality has become refracted through the ‘prism’ of cosmic time.

If all the various aspects are concentrated in a unique way in the religious center of our existence (the human ‘heart’; NC I, 55), this is only because that center is uniquely where that which transcends time is ‘refracted’ in time, not merely individually, but communally (NC I, 60). The heart is the temporal ‘border’ that launches the project of human being in, through and as a religious community ‘maintained by a common spirit, which as a *dynamis*, as a central motive-power, is active in the concentration-point of human existence’ (NC I, 61). The religious center of humanity, then, is not a place or a site containing the fullness of meaning, but a primal conduit through which a religious spirit<sup>29</sup> flows, is refracted, and becomes manifest in all the various elements of human being. Some religious power (*dynamis*) is always at work in the human heart, driving every manifestation of human being.

This complicated relationship between religion, cosmic time, expression and the heart is captured in Dooyeweerd’s notion of ‘supra-temporality’. Again, this notion is underdeveloped by Dooyeweerd. He clearly wants to distinguish ‘supra-temporality’ from both ‘super-temporality’, in the sense of another temporal realm that lies outside or beyond the realm of ‘normal’

temporality, and from the ‘normal’ temporal order (NC I, 30-34; see also 31n.1). In this sense, supra-temporality is neither outside of normal temporality, nor can it be entirely confused with it. Rather, it is to temporality what the ‘supra-theoretical knowledge’ (NC I, 55) of the origin, coherence and totality of meaning are to theoretical knowledge: presuppositions, not in the sense of a foundationalist ground but as transcendental conditions. Supra-temporality, then, is a transcendental condition of the entire temporal order. It is, one could say, the ‘folding’ of the other-than-temporal within and as temporality, a temporality that is not beyond (and hence, not ‘super-’) but within without being identified with (‘supra-’) the regular function of temporality. It is a divine noesis that is not opposed to or other than human noesis, but instead provides the ‘lawfully established meaning’ that ‘can be the basis of a new *zingeving*’ (RK, 38).

The ‘supra-temporal heart’ is therefore not an element or part of human existence. Rather, it inscribes and shapes the entirety of human being as a communal (religious) expression. If the ‘entire temporal existence’ of humanity is concentrated ‘in the radical religious unity of an ego in which the totality of meaning of the temporal cosmos was to be focused upon its Origin’ (NC I, 55), this is only because of ‘the *ex-sistent* condition in which the ego is bound to its true or pretended’ Origin (NC I, 58). This *ex-sistent* character<sup>30</sup> manifests the fact that ‘the religious center of our existence...expresses itself in all modal aspects of time, but never can be exhausted by those’ (NC I, 58). Human being is thoroughly temporal—but it is not *merely* temporal. Rather, human temporality is unique within the temporal order of cosmic time: the *ex-sistent* nature of human being entails that there is always more at work in human being than the ‘human, all too human’, precisely because it is the nature of human being to be always already expressive of something else.<sup>31</sup>

## Moving Forward

There is much that still needs elaboration in Dooyeweerd’s philosophy. His definitions of expression and supra-temporality form the backbone of his thought, but each remains underdeveloped as a philosophical concept. Because of this, the precise nature of the complex interweaving of being, meaning, and temporality that is Dooyeweerd’s response, not

just to Heidegger's question of being, but to the entire problematic of genesis that lies at the center of the phenomenological project, can only for now be alluded to. While such allusivity is intriguing, it is philosophically unsatisfying; it begs for further elaboration.

Directly acknowledging Dooyeweerd's phenomenological influences opens us to potential new avenues for pursuing that elaboration. Given the influence of Husserl and Heidegger on his work, tracing the complex interplay of meaning and being from Husserl's logical works, through Heidegger's exploration of the same in *Phenomenology of Intuition and Expression*, to the philosophical project begun in *Being and Time* but not fully carried out until the 'later' Heidegger could prove useful to better understanding Dooyeweerd's work. More than that, such a move could also provide a thread of continuity that would tie together not only Heidegger's early and late work, but also Heidegger with Husserl and the broader phenomenological movement.

Dooyeweerd explicitly ties the interweaving of being, meaning, and temporality to the *expressive* character of human being. His invocation of the directedness of human being to something that is neither simply identified with normal temporal being nor transcends that being is highly suggestive of a new understanding of metaphysics, of divinity, and of a philosophy of religion. Rooting such an understanding in the notion of expression, as Dooyeweerd does, gives new scope and depth to Derrida's explorations of expression in *Voice and Phenomena*, while also suggesting a deeper phenomenological resonance with Gilles Deleuze (especially in *Logic of Sense* and *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*) than has perhaps been previously acknowledged. In doing so, it not only suggests that the issue of expression might be central to unraveling the problematic of genesis at the heart of the phenomenological project, but also implies that such a genetic phenomenology cannot help but be both dynamic and spiritual. If human action is inherently expressive, then human being always points beyond itself to something else—yet this 'something else' cannot be *wholly other*, or the action would cease to be expressive, and become merely referential. To embrace the Dooyeweerdian claim that 'the central sphere of human existence is in the full sense of the word a dynamic one' (NC I, 32),

phenomenology will have to examine its own operative understandings of essence, noesis, givenness, intuition, epoche, reduction, and so on; the entire phenomenological method is displaced in a manner that is both subtle and profound.

Drawing on some of Deleuze's insights into expression, one might then be able to elaborate more fully Dooyeweerd's notion of supra-temporality via the notion of an immanent (but not in the sense of non-transcendent) enfolding. Here, the recent phenomenological work emphasizing, for example, the eschatological, kairological, and futural as essential (and not merely secondary) elements of phenomenological temporality comes into contact with Deleuze's understanding of the fold<sup>32</sup> and Merleau-Ponty's and Derrida's accounts of 'invagination'.<sup>33</sup> In doing so, phenomenology is drawn methodologically into the religious, ethical, social, and linguistic matrix that human being generates, and in which human beings are generated. That is, phenomenology is opened to the spiritual nature of all human action, as every human action is expressive of something that transcends temporal reality without thereby being entirely distinct from that reality either.

This reinscription of transcendence and immanence forms the backbone of much that currently travels under the name of 'Continental' thought. The interplay between meaning and being at the heart of expressionism provides the theoretical basis for the cultural hermeneutics that flourish in psychoanalysis (at least in its Lacanian and Žižekian guises), cultural studies, oppression theory, and more. Yet the lack of clarity of that theoretical basis opens the door for fundamental ambiguities about the nature of concepts such as difference, coherence, sociality, and autonomy (the debate between Alain Badiou and Deleuze is suggestive here, though by no means determinative<sup>34</sup>). The inability to provide theoretical clarity on these issues has established interdependence, relationship, coherence-amid-diversity, and transcendence-within-immanence as some of the coming century's greatest challenges. In Dooyeweerd, we encounter all of these, inscribed within parameters of genesis and expression explored in systematic, phenomenological fashion. As such, Dooyeweerd offers a challenge that the last century, for the most part, failed to rise to. Will the next do any better?

## Notes

1. For example, R.D. Henderson, in his fine work on the origins of Dooyeweerd's thought *Illuminating Law: The Construction of Herman Dooyeweerd's Philosophy* (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 1994), claims that 'many of Dooyeweerd's readers have been struck by a kind of Kantian flavor or style to his thought' (p. 198). While Henderson tries to distance Dooyeweerd from the comparison, he does concede that Dooyeweerd's 'approach was Kantian' (p. 198). To the contrary, I think Dooyeweerd's work is much better understood if we view his approach as phenomenological, rather than as Kantian.
2. His conception of the supra-temporal heart, especially, seems to vex even his most ardent supporters, most of whom think this notion is confused at best, and downright contradictory at worst. Dooyeweerd acknowledges that 'some adherents' of his philosophy are 'unable to follow' him in this conception of the supra-temporal heart (NC I 31n.1), but this is clearly an understatement: in fact, many, perhaps most, of the main figures in Reformational philosophy were highly critical of Dooyeweerd on this point, including his closest collaborator, D.H. Th. Vollenhoven, as well as Van Peursen, Spier, K.J. Popma, Van Riessen, Hart, and Steen (to name a few). Some of the issues involved are explored in Willem J. Ouweneel, 'Supratemporality in the Transcendental Anthropology of Herman Dooyeweerd', *Philosophia Reformata* 58 (1993): 210–20, and Peter J. Steen, *The Structure of Herman Dooyeweerd's Thought* (Toronto: Wedge, 1983).
3. Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 4 Volumes; trans. David H. Freeman and William S. Young (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1953). Cited in text as NC, followed by volume number (I–IV) and page number.
4. Elaborating this critique is the fundamental project of the *New Critique*; the majority of the outline of this critique is laid out in volume 1. The critique is later presented in greatly summarized fashion in Dooyeweerd's *Transcendental Problems in Philosophic Thought: An Inquiry into the Transcendental Conditions of Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948).
5. For Dooyeweerd, these suppositions pertain to the coherence, totality, and origin of all meaning; taken together, these suppositions constitute the 'Transcendental Ground-Idea' of any philosophy (NC I, 68ff.).
6. It must be noted that both 'radical' and 'transcendental' are used in a particular sense here. Dooyeweerd uses 'radical' to refer to the deepest roots

- (*radix*) of an issue. In this sense, it is deep and probing, but not necessarily a revolutionary rejection or abandonment of a claim. ‘Transcendental’ is used here to indicate a critique that touches ‘the inner character and the immanent structure of the theoretical attitude of thought’ itself (NC I, 37).
7. Volume XI of the *Husserliana* series was not published until 1966; as such, it is highly unlikely that Dooyeweerd would have had access to it prior to the publication of the *New Critique* in either its first (Dutch) form in 1935–36 or its later form, reworked for English translation, in 1957. In the *New Critique*, the only works of Husserl that Dooyeweerd references are *Ideas I*, *Logical Investigations*, *Cartesian Meditations*, and the Paris lecture.
  8. Steinbock’s translation reads ‘a spatio-worldly object’ for *Gegenstandlichkeit*. Due to the variety of ways this word is translated, as well as its importance for Husserl, I leave the German for this term untranslated.
  9. Edmund Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic*, trans. Anthony J. Steinbock (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic, 2001). This work is a translation of *Husserliana* Volume XI, and is cited in text as Hua XI, followed by the page number of the *Husserliana* volume, given in the margin of Steinbock’s translation.
  10. For more on the unique role of *Gegenstandlichkeit* in Husserl, especially in regard to the different levels constituting consciousness, see Husserl’s *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*; see also Neal DeRoo, ‘Revisiting the Zahavi—Brough/Sokolowski Debate’, *Husserl Studies* 27, no. 1 (2011): 1–12.
  11. This oversimplifies things: there is a certain amount of self-givenness to the Ego, especially in regard to the most basic level of the constitution of internal time-consciousness. But this notion of self-givenness is itself significantly different from the Kantian a priori, and already involves the complex interplay between world and subject, and indeed the entire problematic of genesis that is so central to phenomenology.
  12. Given Dooyeweerd’s neo-Kantian reception, we should not be surprised if such a notion of atemporal structures is found to be at work in some of Dooyeweerd’s followers. Albert Wolters’ distinction between structure and direction in *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) could possibly be an example of such, depending on how it is understood and unpacked; see Neal DeRoo, ‘Culture Regained: On the Impossibility and Meaninglessness of Culture in (some) Calvinist thought’, *Kuyper Center Review* 3 (2012): 1–22.

13. Jacques Derrida, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*, trans. Marian Hobson (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003). Cited in text as PG.
14. This 'new' way of reading Dooyeweerd is laid out succinctly in J. Glenn Friesen, '95 Theses on Herman Dooyeweerd', *Philosophia Reformata* 74 (2009): 78–104. Friesen's (and his followers') continued invocation of a 'mystical' element to Dooyeweerd's thought suggests, through this very notion of mysticism, an importation of ultimate meaning from elsewhere that threatens to undermine the fundamental relation between being and meaning that Dooyeweerd proposes; see Friesen, 'The Mystical Dooyeweerd', *Ars Disputandi* 3, no. 1 (2003): 16–61; and Friesen, 'The Mystical Dooyeweerd Once Again: Kuiper's Use of Franz von Baader', *Ars Disputandi* 3, no. 1 (2003): 344–48.
15. Dooyeweerd provides a list of 15 modal aspects: the numerical, spatial, kinematic (movement), energetic, biotic (organic life), psychical, analytical-logical, historical, linguistic, social, economic, aesthetic, jural (juridical), moral, and the faith (NC I, 3).
16. This distinction between 'naïve' and 'theoretical' experience, like the distinction between the 'natural' and the 'phenomenological' attitudes in phenomenology, is not meant to suggest two different worlds, but rather different ways of experiencing or paying attention to the world in which we find ourselves. In this way, each modal aspect could be considered, perhaps, as a kind of possible 'reduction' (though, in such cases, the preceding epoche would be of a merely theoretical, rather than phenomenological, nature): the theoretical thinker is able to narrow his or her focus to one of the aspects, thereby bracketing off the 'indissoluble interrelation' (NC I, 3) with which we normally experience them. The relationship between reduction and givenness here could provide an interesting discussion partner for Jean-Luc Marion's accounts of the same, e.g., in *Reduction and Givenness: Investigations of Husserl, Heidegger and Phenomenology* trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998). It could also potentially provide interesting material for the discussions of new 'reductions' in the philosophy of religion, e.g., in John Panteleimon Manoussakis, 'Toward a Fourth Reduction?' in *After God: Richard Kearney and the Religious Turn in Continental Philosophy*, ed. John Panteleimon Manoussakis (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), pp. 21–33.
17. For the need to provide broader sense to the outcomes of theoretical and scientific investigation, see Husserl's *The Crisis of the European Sciences and*

*Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

18. Dooyeweerd is adamant that this world is not an ‘objective’ reality, because he is convinced that the traditional way of viewing subject and object is inherently flawed; see NC I, Chapter 1 §3. Dooyeweerd’s use of the ‘Gegenstand-relation’ seems to have some interesting parallels with the *Gegenstandlichkeit* at work in Husserl’s *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*. This strikes me as another potentially fruitful conversation to be had between mainstream phenomenology and Dooyeweerd’s work.
19. The adjective ‘created’ indicates, for Dooyeweerd, all that is not the Creator, i.e., everything that is not God.
20. The quote, taken from a subheading, reads (in Dutch): ‘De zin is het zijn van alle creatuurlijk zijnde’. As the Translators’ note: “‘Het zijn van het zijnde’ has no more an equivalent in English than Martin Heidegger’s “Das Sein des Seienden,” which is its German equivalent’ (NC I, 3n.3). Therefore, the heading could (I would argue *should*) be translated as ‘Meaning is the being of creaturely beings.’ This discussion of meaning, therefore, is Dooyeweerd’s response to the question of the meaning of being raised so forcefully by Heidegger in *Being and Time*. This would be another interesting line of research to pursue at the intersection of mainstream phenomenology and Dooyeweerd’s thought.
21. Dooyeweerd, ‘Roomsch-Katholieke en Anti-Revolutionaire Staatskunde’ (c. February 1923); cited in text as RK. This article can be found in the Dooyeweerd Archives at the VU University Amsterdam; I take the references from Henderson, *Illuminating Law*.
22. Henderson points out a possible reference to Dutch jurisprudence in Dooyeweerd’s use of *zingeping* (*Illuminating Law*, p. 105). While such a connection is possible, given Dooyeweerd’s training in law, the phenomenological resonance is more central to Dooyeweerd’s overall project. If that resonance can be definitively established—a project that lies outside our scope here—such a connection has the potential to recast Dooyeweerd’s entire notion of meaning in a more phenomenological fashion, rather than as some kind of realist response to neo-Kantianism.
23. The question of the relationship between Dooyeweerd’s use of the divine and Heidegger’s use of being, especially in his later work, could be very fruitful for understanding both projects: does Dooyeweerd offer a proto-Heideggerian reconception of traditional accounts of divinity, or does he



show a latent onto-theology at work even in Heidegger himself? Either horn of the dilemma would yield interesting results.

24. Here one must rigorously distinguish between philosophical and religious projects. As mentioned above, Dooyeweerd is adamant that philosophy is always grounded in religions presuppositions concerning the origin, coherence, and totality of meaning. That is, philosophy cannot answer where meaning comes from, or what the coherence and totality of meaning are; answering those questions is an explicitly religious task. Once answered, the task of philosophy is to 'direct the theoretical view of totality over our cosmos and, within the limits of its possibility, answer the question "Wie alles sich zum Ganzen webt" [How is everything woven together?]' (NC I, 4). But it can only answer how everything is woven together once it presumes answers to the question of whether there is a 'together' into which everything is woven, what nature that 'togetherness' might take, and so on.
25. See the translators' note from the *New Critique* which explains that Idea is 'used here in the technical sense of a "limiting concept" which refers to a totality not to be comprehended in the concept itself' (NC I, 8n.1). For more on this use of Idea in Husserl, see Derrida's *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, trans. John P. Leavey (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).
26. This would obviously speak to the entire issue of a 'theological turn' in French phenomenology first raised by Dominique Janicaud; see Janicaud et al., *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn": The French Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), pp. 16–103.
27. 'Cosmic time' is the umbrella term that describes the 'indissoluble correlation' of time-order and time-duration (NC I, 24). Time-order is the totality of the interrelated, interdependent relationships between the various modal aspects, some of which are 'earlier' than or are 'founded' on the other, 'later' aspects. This time-order (also at times called the temporal order) constitutes the structure of reality, the 'how' reality is stitched together. Time-duration, on the other hand, is the 'side' of time that is directly experienced by different individual beings or creatures. Time-duration 'differs with various individualities' (NC I, 28), while time-order holds equally for all creatures. The two taken together—the 'how' reality is stitched together, as well as the experience of duration undergone by creatures stitched together in the world—constitute the whole of cosmic time. For a more elaborate explanation of Dooyeweerd's conception of time, see Dooyeweerd, 'Het tijdsprobleem in de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee', *Philosophia Reformata* 5

- (1940): 160–92, 193–234; trans. J. Glenn Friesen as ‘The Problem of Time in the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea’; available online: <http://www.members.shaw.ca/hermandooyeweerd/Tijdsprobleem.pdf>
28. Given more time, we would have to look at the complex relationship between the two directions of meaning and the two directions of time (the foundational and the transcendental; NC II, 54) in order to more fully explicate the relationship between being, meaning, and temporality in Dooyeweerd.
  29. This spirit is given content ‘through a religious ground-motive [that] gives contents to the central mainspring of the entire attitude of life and thought’ (NC I, 61). Such a ground motive always takes on a particular historical form in a particular time and place, but ‘in its central religious meaning it transcends all historical form-giving’ (NC I, 61). For more on these ground motives, including the main ground motives that Dooyeweerd saw as having developed over the course of history in the West, see Dooyeweerd, *The Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular, and Christian Options*, trans. John Kraay, ed. Mark Vander Vennen and Bernard Zylstra (Toronto, ON: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1979).
  30. Dooyeweerd acknowledges taking this term from ‘modern existence-philosophy’ (NC I 58n.2). Though he does not explicitly name Heidegger as its source, the connection seems obvious.
  31. If all human action is inherently expressive, then phenomenology receives a new task: the (phenomenological) exploration of the ‘spirits of the age’, the inherent promises functioning at the heart of the various elements of human communal living, from the everyday (food, clothes) to the ‘popular’ (film, pop music) to the ‘esoteric’ (economic and academic specialization) to the neurotic (fetishes, xenophobias). For more on the relationship between phenomenology and these inherent promises, see Neal DeRoo, *Futurity in Phenomenology: Promise and Method in Husserl, Levinas and Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), especially chapter 10.
  32. Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
  33. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968); Jacques Derrida, ‘Living On. Borderlines’, trans. James Hulbert, in Bloom et al., in *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York, NY: Continuum, 1979).

34. Badiou criticizes Deleuze for being a 'philosopher of the One' rather than a philosopher of difference, in large part because Badiou claims that only mathematical set theory can provide the foundation for a genuine theory of multiplicity; see Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being* trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) and Badiou, *Being and Event* trans. Oliver Feltham (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2013). Badiou's criticisms have spurred a great deal of response from Deleuze scholars, who have both disagreed vociferously with Badiou's reading of Deleuze and recognized in Badiou a challenge for Deleuzians that is worth responding to; see Clayton Crockett, *Deleuze Beyond Badiou: Ontology, Multiplicity, and Event* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013) and Jon Roffe, *Badiou's Deleuze* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's, 2012) for two examples of this response.

# 6

## Mixing Fire and Water: A Critical Phenomenology

Eric J. Mohr

### Unlabeled Meanings

“Callow?” Callow is a label. “Lackluster?” That’s just a label. These are all labels. You just label everything.’ In a scene from the 2014 film *Birdman: The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance*, a desperate Riggan Thomson attempts to schmooze *New York Times* theater critic, Tabitha Dickinson, who plans to ‘destroy’ his play by her review. When Riggan realizes his attempt is futile, he begins mocking a review she’s writing. Then showing her a flower from the bar, he asks, ‘Do you know what this is? Do you *even* know what this is? You don’t! You know why? Because you can’t see this thing if you don’t know how to label it. You mistake those noises in your head for true knowledge.’<sup>1</sup>

Like Riggan accuses Tabitha of doing, we label things. Labels designate things narrowly and inadequately. The things they designate are always

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more than the designations themselves because formal concepts fail to maintain a connection with experience. There is an inevitable incongruence between the meaning of our lived experience and the concepts at our disposal for articulating those experiences. Can the concept of 'art', for example, live up to one's own experience of the magnificence of *this* Botticelli or the brilliance of *that* Matisse? Do the ideas of 'friendship' or 'family' capture the meaning in the experience of one's own friendships and family members? Does the meaning of 'love' as a notion reach the profound experiences of loving and being loved, by her? by him? Will the words 'happiness' or 'sadness' ever do justice to the joy and sorrow actually felt on this or that profound occasion in life? Words can only go so far in conveying an experience to someone who has not already experienced something similar enough to grasp the experiential reference of the words.<sup>2</sup> No doubt, these words I'm using now and the meaning I'm trying to convey with them, however inadequately, can only resonate with those who have had their own experience of the limitation of language.

Roger Foster writes in his book on Adorno: 'This experience that there is something we want to say, something we wish to express but which cannot be said with our concepts, is what philosophy as negative dialectic strives continually to reproduce.'<sup>3</sup> Adorno himself says that dialectic means nothing more 'than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder'.<sup>4</sup> Objects are always 'more' than the concepts employed to understand them. This 'remainder', for Adorno, is a historical one: concepts are a reflection of the historical sedimentation of objects, yet concepts fail to achieve the objective identity for which they strive. Adorno writes: 'The history locked in the object can only be delivered by a knowledge mindful of the historic positional value of the object in its relation to other objects.'<sup>5</sup> And since it is out of the historical process that concepts of things arise, it is possible to unlock, like a 'well-guarded safe-deposit box',<sup>6</sup> the accumulated historical meaning of the concept.

But the historical process also tends to diminish nonidentity. Over time, the 'remainder' scatters from the mind and conceptual representation wins out over the objective experience, making it easy to assume an identity where there is none. Immanent criticism criticizes concepts (and the reality they reflect) negatively, 'in the medium of conceptual reflection'. That is to say, the criticism is on account of the limitations those concepts

have in relation to their objects. Adorno aims to recover a *priority of the object* by means of an analysis of conceptual inadequacy. But how does conceptual analysis alone disclose that which is dialectically antagonistic to the concept? The assumption that we can arrive at the nonconceptual through the conceptual links concept and object with a degree of identity that Adorno doesn't permit. This view downplays the way lived experience of objects makes possible the ability to discern the inadequacy of concepts. It is not sufficiently explained how the nonconceptual enters the picture without an intuitive point of reference. The very possibility of losing sight of and substituting the object for the concept suggests that even if a concept at one point had a close objective connection, the *idea*, as the object's formal shell, can be carried on historically while the connection fades over a period of time. Or as Riggan puts it, we may come to mistake the noises in our head for knowledge. Concepts do not necessarily point beyond themselves as meaningfully as Adorno suggests.

The awareness of the nonidentity between concept and object is not itself brought about by conceptual analysis; it is brought to awareness intuitively, *given* in the experience of trying to say what's unsayable. Adorno incorrectly relies upon the concept to disclose its own inadequacy. Just like the flower that Riggan shows Tabitha, we must maintain the capability to *see* something without relying on the 'label' or concept; to have before us the experience, which the concept at best merely signifies, and to maintain an awareness of the signification. Riggan's comment is an apt starting point for understanding the critical project of phenomenology.

Just over a hundred years ago, phenomenology was taking on the force of an intellectual movement. In fact, it was almost exactly a century ago, in 1913/14, when Max Scheler, a central figure in the phenomenological circle in Munich and Göttingen, wrote an invited piece for the periodical *Die Geisteswissenschaften* about this burgeoning new kind of philosophy.<sup>7</sup> He said that phenomenology as a movement is not unified by a common set of theses, but only by a common attitude or intentional orientation (*Einstellung*), namely, an orientation toward 'the things themselves' in the way they show themselves in lived experience.<sup>8</sup> For Scheler, this meant going behind the back of static conceptual formulations for an intuitive retrieval of the phenomena that make such formulations possible. Philosophical concepts must be reawakened and enlivened, and this

happens by witnessing for oneself the *Sache* that concepts symbolize. Phenomenology is for the purpose of bringing someone 'to see that which...can only be "seen"'. That which is to be seen, Scheler writes, 'can never be present in any of the judgments, concepts, or definitions' themselves; these 'have simply the function of a "pointer," pointing to what is to be brought to sight'.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the 'seeing' of something is possible 'only in the *experiencing act itself*, in the very execution [*Vollzug*] of the act.'<sup>10</sup>

Of all the barriers between dialectics and phenomenology, it is the tension between intuition and mediation that seems most insurmountable. Indeed, this is one reason why Heidegger had once suggested that connecting phenomenology with dialectics 'is as if one wanted to mix fire and water'.<sup>11</sup> While Adorno made a lasting effort in reversing Kant's Copernican turn toward the subject, back to the object, he remains uncritically committed to Kant's assertion that *intuition without concepts is blind*. David Held explains that for Adorno, '[1] [w]ithout conceptuality we could not grasp [objects]. But [2] objects do not therefore dissolve into concepts.'<sup>12</sup> Meaning is mediated all the way down, and that mediation happens conceptually.

The phenomenologist, in contrast, challenges Kant on both of these counts: objects remain conceptually independent, and they do so *especially* because concepts are not the only way to account for knowing the meaning of objects. Phenomenology is hospitable to nonconceptual meaning because it is intentionality, not conceptuality, that primarily structures consciousness. The nonconceptual space for Adorno is ultimately a rather thin, indeterminate (and quite literally meaningless) placeholder, to which one has access only indirectly. The phenomenological view, in contrast, breaks this space wide open, for within it is its own domain of meaning and relative mode of knowing.<sup>13</sup>

The objection that the noetic-noematic identity that intuition relies upon evaporates the critical component is unconvincing. If all knowing is intuitive, or if intuition is the same as *conceptual* identity, this argument would work. But intuitive adequacy is not a conceptual identity. That which is given in intuition must necessarily be brought to cognition; 'necessity compels philosophy to operate with concepts'.<sup>14</sup> And since cognition cannot assimilate within its formal structures the full intuitive sense, then as long as the nonconceptual remainder is retained alongside the conceptual

scheme, intuition functions critically in maintaining a consistent sense of nonidentity between content and scheme. The phenomenologist is forced up against that which thought cannot contain since the intuitive content is constantly both calling for conceptual recognition and on the verge of falling into obscurity due to the failure of recognition.

Phenomenologists rarely use the word 'intuition' any longer, and there may be good reason; but its sense has not been forgotten.<sup>15</sup> The central aim of this chapter is to show that the original phenomenological view of intuition, insofar as it is nonconceptual, provides leverage for the disclosure of nonidentity, which can be brought to bear critically upon the formal expression of concepts and the tendency to prioritize conceptual identity into ideology.

Among the many ways phenomenology is still relevant for twenty-first-century philosophy, I suggest that its ability to reawaken and direct attention toward the nonformal meaning content is key. This feature allows philosophical insight to progress dynamically alongside new social situations as they occur. If phenomenology carries on more as a way of seeing than simply as a tradition of a determinate set of ideas, it can challenge the overreliance upon formal meaning structures which tend to make social thinking stagnant and ideological. I will make a case that part of phenomenology's social function is to be critical not only of what is prevalent (as Horkheimer suggests philosophy's social function to be)<sup>16</sup> but of turgid thinking that is really vapid and empty, including and starting with one's own thinking and attitude.

But what is critical phenomenology? Every phenomenology is an investigation into the contents of experience. As I already mentioned, the nonidentity between concept and intuition (*logos* and phenomenon) is itself a lived experience worth investigating phenomenologically, and it is this that I call *critical phenomenology*.<sup>17</sup> This kind of phenomenology urges that *ideas be determined by the meanings brought forth from the domain of lived experience, rather than determining the meaning of experience according to our conceptual interpretative framework*.

Michael Marder has recently made a magnificent contribution to critical phenomenology.<sup>18</sup> Marder claims that while all phenomenologists have focused on the mixture of phenomenon and *logos*, a critical tension between this dual composition is an essential missing component.



In his words, '[t]he disquietude of critique is the third term, which slips in between *logos* and phenomena, makes their interrelation possible and immediately falls into obscurity'.<sup>19</sup> This critical focal point that mediates their relation, he says, 'cannot be frozen in preexisting conceptual molds and definitions'.<sup>20</sup> Concepts will turn the meaning of experience into their own narrow image, perpetuating short-sightedness, narrow-mindedness, and social indifference to the situation of others. If the meaning of experience is not permitted to speak for itself, but is said to make sense only in achieving an identity with our preexisting conceptual meaning structures, then we cannot ever break down and improve the patterns of thinking we've already adopted, socially and individually. This dynamic deteriorates productive social and political discourse, especially in the context of partisan rivalry, where labels are often privileged over the experience causing an inability to see something without relying on the label, as Riggan warns.

## Participants or Spectators?

The 1948 Hitchcock thriller, *Rope*, illustrates how a single significant experience can prompt a critical reevaluation of one's own espoused ideas. Rupert Cadell had been prep school housemaster and mentor to two former students, Brandon Shaw and Phillip Morgan, who strangle to death a former classmate in their apartment. Immediately following the murder, the two serve a dinner party, which the victim's father and fiancé attend. They use an antique chest that secretly contains David's body as a table for the hors d'oeuvres. It becomes evident later on that Rupert heavily influenced the act by his ideas that murder is a privilege for intellectually and culturally superior individuals and that moral concepts of good and evil are relevant only for the average and inferior. So, by the end of the evening, when Rupert eventually discovers the body, Brandon insists that Rupert '*has to understand, don't you see*', because '[Phillip] and I have lived what you and I have talked!' Rupert is taken aback, but very collectively says to Brandon that '*you've thrown my own words right back in my face, and you have given [them] a meaning that I never dreamed of*'. Tonight you have made me ashamed of every concept that I have ever had of superior and inferior beings.'<sup>21</sup>

Rupert's naiveté about the kinds of actions these ideas could legitimately support is rather inexcusable, but without some intimacy with our own lived experience, concepts *do* have a kind of naiveté. Without the situations that give occasion to their reflection, perhaps we can't fully anticipate all that they could mean. Gazing upon the corpse of a former student and friend, and the realization of the way he died was an experience that reached so deep that, in a single moment, it transformed Rupert's entire worldview. Experiencing his ideas lived out gives him access to a sector of meaning that the ideas alone could not take on. Indeed, Rupert needs the situation as a vantage point in order to know what could only be seen in the situation. 'Until this moment,' Rupert says, 'this world and the people in it have always been dark and incomprehensible to me and I've tried to clear my way with logic and superior intellect. But now I know that we are each of us a separate human being, with the right to live and work and think as individuals.' The world was incomprehensible, he says, 'until now'. And '*now* I know!' The insight is *immediate*, it is intuitive in the moment, and, in contrast to inductive experiences, the knowledge requires only a single instance. But this immediacy only happens through direct participation, by being there.

Traditionally, the prime philosophical vantage point is from a distance, as a contemplative spectator, a disinterested onlooker. Pythagoras famously said that philosophers most resemble the group of people who attend an Olympic festival just to watch, 'who are interested in neither applause nor profit, but come merely for the sake of the spectacle'.<sup>22</sup> The philosopher, then, is like the one in the grandstands, who from this elevated position is better able to view the 'festival of life'. But, for Pythagoras, this 'position' indicates more than just location; it is also an internal disposition of being interested in things in the right way: the philosopher is not 'enslaved' by the prospect of acquiring certain rewards (applause or profit), but comes to see the spectacle *for its own sake*. In the *Phaedo*, Plato suggests a similarly detached and morally charged vantage point in espousing the separation of the soul from the body. The philosopher must 'practice dying' to achieve the purification required in order to *see* the immutable logic of existence. Plato considers philosophy to be a kind of life that *emancipates* the self (the soul) from the body's baser interests in tempting material trivialities.

Jürgen Habermas suggests that all philosophy has an 'emancipatory cognitive interest' that critical theory shares with philosophy.<sup>23</sup> However, the traditional attempt to separate the theoretical from the material, knowledge from human interests, is itself a cognitive interest that contradicts the very attempt. Classical theories have managed to maintain some connection with practical life because of the ideal value structure inherent to their metaphysics, and the importance placed on imitating the cosmic structure (mimesis). Habermas explains that theory, in the classical view, 'had educational and cultural implications not because it had freed knowledge from interest...[but] because it derived *pseudonormative power* from the *concealment of its actual interest*'.<sup>24</sup>

According to Habermas, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology has achieved the long-sought separation so perfectly that the practical efficacy he claims it has on account of the 'therapeutic power' of theoretical insight is unfounded.<sup>25</sup> Husserl conserves the theoretical attitude, but abandons the metaphysical contents that made *theoria*, in the classical view, 'capable of orienting human action'.<sup>26</sup>

If the phenomenological attitude remains theoretically self-enclosed, then Habermas is right, it will have little bearing on practical comportment. To be sure, the way consciousness is structured is the condition for the possibility of experience, but the attunement to experience was the condition for the possibility of seeing how consciousness is structured. While relying on Husserl's conclusions about consciousness, phenomenology since Husserl has maintained its intentional regard on simply what experience discloses as such. Far from being self-enclosed, phenomenology flourishes from contact with the world, in any and every facet of human pursuit. What art is, for example, is given most adequately to the artist, in the act of creating art. What religion is, likewise, is disclosed most purely to the one who performs religious acts. Love is seen by the one who loves; friendship is given to the friend.<sup>27</sup> Phenomenology has come to incorporate the kind of interest that Habermas claims has to be connected to knowing, and takes it beyond what even Habermas had in mind. It is only through one's interested engagement, by being a participant in the situations of the world, that one can come to see the 'essence' (i.e., intuitive expressive unity and meaning) of that which is given only by living through the situations.<sup>28</sup>

But isn't this also the phenomenological piece that has been influential for critical theory historically? With respect to labor movements, where critical theory traditionally has focused, the emancipatory restructuring of society had to move past the mere idea of alienation to the alienated experience, with respect to those in the relevant working situations. As such, a phenomenology of the experience is not an expendable part of critical theory. Likewise, the momentum of the feminist movement is contained in the feminine experience and women's 'different voice'.<sup>29</sup> Patriarchal societies are not one-sided simply because of a predominant male voice, but when this voice fails to equally respect a dimension of human experience that differs from its own. And, of course, running through the project of critical race theory is the significance of the experience of racial minorities, of which other, more culturally and historically prominent races are largely unaware.

So the practical efficacy of phenomenology is in its attunement to a variety of social experience and the meanings disclosed therein. One who has 'a deep and living familiarity' with certain spheres of life, social situations, and communities of people (such as Rupert at that dinner party) qualifies as 'immanently' positioned, phenomenologically speaking. An 'immanent' mode of givenness traditionally refers to the alignment between the conscious intention and the object given.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, anyone who stands outside, with no direct or immediate experience of such spheres or situations of life is improperly positioned to judge them adequately.<sup>31</sup> When one accepts the world simply in the way that it's already symbolized for us, without attention to intuition, then interpretation adapts to these symbols. As a result, theory becomes self-enclosed (the basic problem of 'traditional theory'), and the possible meaning of the world extends only as far as symbolic representations, obscuring the nonstandardized meanings that our experience could potentially yield. Suppose a European researcher makes a cultural assessment of, say, the Burmese people, whom she's never visited but only read about from previous research. Her assessment will obviously bear the inadequacies of a transcendent rather than an immanent mode of givenness. But say she does visit Burma, for a few days, a month, or even a year to conduct her research. Will her Western-oriented intentionality still prevent an 'inside look'? Does she still stand outside to some extent? It is

evident, in any case, that transcendence and immanence are on opposite poles of a continuum, and one rarely falls in either category purely.

Molecular biologist John Medina started a research project called 'Brain Rules' that allows parents to use the findings of neuroscience as an aid in raising their kids. The project seems excellent and quite successful. But suppose the researchers who framed the project are not themselves parents; what could scientists say to parents about parenting without a shared experiential context? It is the parent/child relationship that gives meaning to the project; the intuitive context grounds the relevance of the research. The fact that Medina *is* a parent and fellow participant in the relevant domain certainly adds to the project's credibility. Yet the importance of having a shared immanent experience has, in other domains, been traditionally downplayed. For example, clergy members who are considered authorities on sexuality and marriage and make proclamations about their meaning are themselves unmarried and celibate. Furthermore, their transcendence to the situation in which they claim to speak authoritatively is not even acknowledged as a point of deficiency. This is in part due to a long intellectual tradition, beginning perhaps with Plato, which suggests that a familiarity with ideas about being indicates a familiarity with being, that to know metaphysics (theoretically) is to know metaphysical things.

Habermas claimed that phenomenology is less capable of orienting human action because by bracketing cosmology it loses a connection with a natural order beyond its ideas.<sup>32</sup> But what else guarantees a connection between the world and ideas about the world more than the lived experience of the world?<sup>33</sup> Phenomenology brackets cosmological and metaphysical theories in order to be more attentive to the intuitive connection from which any metaphysics arises. This allows an even greater critical function within phenomenology since the attention to experience can provide an opening to critique the metaphysical systems that have traditionally held sway. The phenomenologist does not reject metaphysics as a viable philosophical enterprise, but demands that certain conceptual schemas prove again their validity by returning to the material in which they claim to be grounded. Metaphysical ideas must first be phenomenologically clarified, and repeated in every age.

Critical theory has become focused in part on raising social awareness of the experiences of culturally marginalized communities for others who are not participants in these communities, and especially for those whose actions are affecting their lives. In that case, phenomenology must

have an operative role in this enterprise. An immanent and immediate experience is the best position from which to critique strained social dynamics and contemptible public policy. The ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement in the USA is a contemporary example of the way social awareness is being sought. But it has been noted that 2016 American presidential candidates, who are ultimately so distant to these lives, are struggling with how to connect with them.<sup>34</sup> When activist DeRay Mckesson was invited to one of Hillary Clinton’s campaign events, he was unimpressed. ‘I heard a lot of things,’ he said, but ‘coded language won’t cut it.’ Detached labeling can quickly become ostracizing to the very communities and persons that one is trying to incorporate. While political dialogue is supposed to be about actual political situations, it often happens that hostility results from the political symbols and presupposed conceptual criteria deployed about the political situations themselves. Partisan thinking becomes ideological when symbols and concepts mediate the dialogue. There is a tendency then to have more interest in defending the symbols than in considering how the symbols inadequately identify the situations. With the refusal to let the idea speak for the experience, one is able to better encounter the person *as person*, ‘being *qua* being’. Accordingly, and in contrast, phenomenology brings us into the sphere of the personal.

However, the issue is not just about participation and involvement; it’s not just a matter of ‘being there’. More fundamentally than *where* we are is the *way* we are. One might be able to be in direct contact with people, but still be unable to *see* them or be appropriately attuned to their situation. As I remarked above, Pythagoras considered the philosophical position to be not just one of location, but of a moral attitude: to have interest in something for its own sake. The moral quality of one’s disposition and orientation, in the midst of participating, is crucial for the ability to see the situation we’re in. As Rupert says to Brandon, ‘there must have been something deep inside you from the very start that let you [murder your classmate]. But there’s always been something deep inside me that would never let me do it, and would never let me be a party to it now.’ Rupert’s ability to see the atrocity that took place, for the atrocity that it is, was not simply because he was involved, but because of a different moral attitude than Brandon’s. If Rupert’s was the same as Brandon’s, he would likely have seen it the same way as Brandon did.

## Ideology Rooted in Attitude

In her essay ‘The Idea of Perfection’,<sup>35</sup> Iris Murdoch uses a beautiful illustration to capture what it means to assume a different attitude with respect to one’s social context. A mother (M) finds her daughter-in-law (D) lacking in the dignity and refinement that she considers fitting for her son. ‘D is inclined to be pert and familiar, insufficiently ceremonious, sometimes positively rude, always tiresomely juvenile.’ M could settle down with ‘a hardened sense of grievance and a fixed picture of D’. Or she could reflect on whether the way D appears is negatively conditioned by her attitude. Now, ‘M is an intelligent and well-intentioned person, capable of self-criticism, capable of giving careful and just attention to an object which confronts her. M tells herself: “I am old-fashioned and conventional. I may be prejudiced and narrow-minded. I may be snobbish. I am certainly jealous. Let me look again.”’

Murdoch suggests that an internal mental effort can gradually alter M’s vision of D without there being any noticeable change in D’s behavior (this alteration could happen, she suggests, even if D is not present or even deceased). As a result, ‘D is discovered to be not vulgar but refreshingly simple, not undignified but spontaneous, not noisy but gay, not tiresomely juvenile but delightfully youthful.’ Some pages later, Murdoch delivers the punch line: ‘When M is just and loving, she sees D as she really is.’<sup>36</sup> In phenomenological terms, M’s attitudinal alteration causes a shift from a ‘transcendent’ (inadequate) to an ‘immanent’ (adequate) intuitive grasp; the shift happens not by means of a change in position, but through a change of heart. I say change of heart rather than change of mind since the altered vision comes about by M’s effort to bring love into her intentional relation with D; she puts away her resentful eye and sees D with a loving one. There’s something more emotive in the alteration than cognitive.

Phenomenologists who have worked toward establishing a moral phenomenology have traditionally done so by referring to ‘values’ (*Werte*) as the normative dimension of phenomena. In contrast to Habermas’s suggestion that phenomenology is value-free and normatively empty because of its success in separating the sources of knowledge from interests,<sup>37</sup> a whole host of early phenomenologists developed a phenomenologically

grounded theory of values. Among those contributors, Scheler perhaps most explicitly highlights the *exclusive* connection between value-giveness and a loving intentional attitude. Love, for Scheler, is not cognitive, but it is nevertheless epistemic. It is epistemic in two ways. First, knowledge is participation, and love is that which brings about 'the desire to *partake* in another being' that makes knowledge of it possible.<sup>38</sup> One's involvement in the world and participation within certain situations is on behalf of our overall conative comportment, which includes, as its intentional form, acts of loving.

Murdoch's suggestion that the change in the way M sees D comes about even in D's absence seems to me mistaken. While I grant that there does not need to be an external change in D's behavior for the internal change in M to occur, M's perspective would not have the occasion to improve unless there was an actual ongoing relationship between the two. D's value qualities that M does not initially see can only be demonstrated through the course of their encounters. For the loving attitude to be productive and alter perspective, D has to be there to create the occasion for her value qualities to be given. The change of intention requires participation in the relational situation that would invite such a change.

For Scheler, love is epistemic, secondly, because it makes possible the disclosure of value. While a distinctive mode of value is given on every level of human feeling, such modes are only able to be given, or given *as values*, on account of love.<sup>39</sup> Without love, the value world is intuitively off limits. Cultivating an attitude of love widens the possible disclosure of values and is the condition for valuing things properly. We only turn our attention and regard toward that which we take to be of value, and we are able to see the value of something by means of a loving attitude.

Following from Scheler's account, it would seem that any confusion we have concerning the moral life is not from a deficiency of the intellect but from a lack of love. The value-realm of being is closed off in proportion to the degree of one's hatred. Perfect hatred would make adequate value-judgment impossible and cause complete confusion about right living. A far more relatable source of value-confusion lies somewhere between perfect hatred and perfect love (as theoretical limit-terms) and is seen in the kinds of features that M notices as conditioning her own perspective: biases of tradition and convention, narrow-mindedness, snob-



bishness, jealousy and envy; in a word: resentment. I suggest that in M's self-criticism of the deficiencies of her own intentional orientation, bringing about an ability to see D as she really is, M performs a critique of her own ideological thinking. Ideology is a distortion of thinking, grounded in illusion. Concepts give the illusion of the world as nonantagonistic. Critical theory insists that we critique the concepts insofar as the identity they present is illusory. My analysis here attempts to push beyond this conceptual critique and move toward an intuitive and attitudinal level.

Illusion is different from error. Error is an incorrect inference on account of an accurate perception, but illusion is an inaccuracy on the perceptual level itself.<sup>40</sup> Error is a theoretical oversight, a problem of logic; illusion is an intuitive oversight, when we fail to see what is there, similar to how M cannot see D as she really is. Illusions can be far more pernicious than logical errors because they begin on the level of our intuitive reliefs of the world that we take to be adequately given, and so they tend to slip under the radar of our conscious awareness. And they will remain under the radar unless we achieve a sufficient level of critical self-awareness. A question commonly posed is 'how do we know that we know?' Classical philosophy suggests that if you can give a logically consistent account that holds up against Socratic interrogation, then you know that you know. But this presupposes that the perception of the object of investigation is accurate in the first place. Illusion is a deception that cannot be corrected by backtracking the logic or revising definitions. So how does one root out these deceptions? We might consider why M suspects that she sees D inaccurately. Through thorough self-reflection, she notices that she carries certain flaws in her character and intentional orientation that may be affecting her 'vision'. So she 'looks again', changing her position and orientation. This physical imagery of sight and position parallels metaphorically a deeper, moral stratum of our intuition, with respect to value-giveness.

I mentioned before how a nonparticipant (transcendent) position with respect to a domain of investigation diminishes the adequacy of grasping a meaning that pertains to the object. This is because the way one is intentionally oriented may cause the object to be given in a way that is not fitting to the object's meaning and value. This can happen in two ways: first, intention can exceed the object given, when we overreach

and wrongly consider an object to be of greater value than it is. This pertains to an *overvaluation*, which tends to happen upon an initial encounter or discovery (such as the divinization of nature in primitive religions) or the glorification of tradition (the ‘good old days’; the idealization of Greek culture during the Renaissance, or of the Middle Ages during the Romantic period).

A misalignment may also arise when a given object exceeds the intention. In this case, something is *devalued* when, in any given experience, something is greater in meaning and value than the way our intention admits. The meaning of the experience is reduced to our preexisting, familiar conceptual framework, unaware that our understanding does not move beyond itself. This is ultimately a moral problem, not a conceptual one because concepts only get in the way when we don’t intend to see beyond them and falsely suggest that our own experience couldn’t possibly give us any more than we already understand. This mindset hardens prejudicial thinking, where ideology flourishes.

Prejudices are not necessarily ideological. They are natural, automatic, initially unconscious sentiments of a particular social group on account of shared interests. Prejudices become ideological when they make their way to the level of conscious thinking, receiving widespread and deliberate justification, which often goes unquestioned. I argue that ideology is a theoretical overflow, on a conscious level, of inadequate patterns of valuation on an attitudinal level. Self-reflection has to be more than about the way we think, because the way we think is itself a reflection of a particular way of valuing. A critique of ideology, as a social critique, requires an awareness of systemic devaluation and overvaluation. Ideologies, then, are the intellectual derivative and counterpart of a *désordre du coeur*: delusion in social preferencing. Instrumental rationality, for example, is itself a reflection of the way members of capitalistic societies value things, intuitively. And individual attitudes reflect and mirror social attitudes. We are influenced cognitively by the ideas that are derived from the patterns of valuation prevalent in our own society.

It is the task of consciousness to recognize and objectify problematic preferencing as confused, rather than reinforcing that confusion as simply a recognition of the obvious. Some ways this is accomplished is, first, by becoming aware of the way one’s own attitudes are a reflection of the

wider social attitude or ethos. And, secondly, by being attuned to the way *one's own* individual intuitive experience discloses a set of meaning that is incongruent with socially privileged ideas and the standard way of interpreting according to prevailing patterns of valuation. In other words, being attentive to the times when we seem to see things differently than the prevalent, status quo perspective.

Society is structured according to the values it considers worth preserving. But this may in turn endanger the realization of other, even higher, values. Social inequality and exploitation is an outgrowth of improper valuing. One's involvement within such social conditions is a start in becoming sensitive to the values threatened in systemic injustices, but it's not enough; drawing on Scheler, one has to be involved *with an attitude of love*, for nothing dispels ideology more than love. A person who embodies these ideas can love the oppressed without hating the oppressor. But this does not diminish the resolve for the action necessary for social change. As Scheler rightly claims, '[L]ove forbids class hatred, but not an honest class struggle'.<sup>41</sup> The project of rationally organizing society is not, to start with, a project of reason. The attitude of love toward society is precisely that which allows us to see the values threatened within the way society is structured and enables responding to their call. But as important as social change is, we must be, after a change of hearts and cultivating an attitude of love in society, much like what M cultivates within herself in her own particular social situation. She can in turn become a model of love for others.

Although I consider critical theory in general a promising framework for social critique, and one to which phenomenology can contribute, I nevertheless consider phenomenology to be even more promising when considered as an alternative to the theoretical procedure of exclusively immanent critique as sometimes deployed by defenders of critical theory. Specifically, it is more *object-oriented*, better able to be *engaged* in the socio-historical situation, and is less prone to *inadequate valuation* than critical theory's approach to immanent critique. Phenomenology has the potential to be this way in part on account of the intuitive component that critical theory abandons. Critical phenomenology elucidates prior grounds for the possibility of emancipatory critique that is still immanent to the situation, but reflective about the importance of detaching oneself

from the often unacknowledged assumptions that frame our engagement with the world. Accordingly, as phenomenological research continues to intersect with social activism in the twenty-first century, a decidedly *critical* phenomenology will likely become a valuable resource for those who jointly seek truth and justice.

## Notes

1. *Birdman: The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance*, dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu (Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014), film.
2. This may seem to undermine the power of language. Great poetry is rather profound—it can evoke powerful emotional experiences. However, language can only resurface past experiences; it does not create new meaningful experiences that go beyond the propositional scope of meaning.
3. Roger Foster, *Adorno: The Recovery of Experience*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), p. 29.
4. Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1973), p. 5.
5. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 163.
6. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 163.
7. An incomplete version of Scheler's essay, *Phänomenologie und Erkenntnistheorie*, was published only posthumously (Max Scheler, *Schriften aus dem Nachlaß, Bd. 1: Zur Ethik und Erkenntnislehre*, in *Gesammelte Werke X*, ed. Maria Scheler (Bern: Franke Verlag, 1957), pp. 377–430) and translated as 'Phenomenology and the Theory of Cognition' by David Lachterman in Max Scheler, *Selected Philosophical Essays* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 136–201. Hereafter referred to as *SPE*.
8. Scheler, *SPE*, p. 137. A 'lived' or 'living' experience is a translation of *Erlebnis*, which is reserved for a nonempirical, phenomenological intuition, which differs from *Erfahrung*, or empirical intuition. Phenomenology is therefore a nonempiricist philosophy of experience.
9. Scheler, *SPE*, p. 153.
10. Scheler, *SPE*, p. 138. *GW X*, pp. 391–2.
11. Martin Heidegger, *Ontology—the Hermeneutics of Facticity*, trans. John van Buren (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999), p. 33.
12. David Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 213.

13. Namely, the intuitive mode of knowing. Whereas cognition is knowing with concepts, intuition is a nonconceptual mode of knowing. Phenomenological intuition is not only nonconceptual, but also nonempirical, where what is given intuitively is a nonformal meaning content (a meaningful integral whole or expressive unity) of a thing, such as the magnificence of a soaring bird. This is different from an empirical intuition that isolates parts of a thing, one at a time: the yellow of the beak, its beady eyes, the softness of its feather, the length of its wingspan, and so on.
14. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 11.
15. Tim Crane's essay 'The Given' is a good example of one who defends magnificently the nonpropositional sense of phenomenological content, without according it the status of 'intuition' (Tim Crane, 'The Given,' in *Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-World: The McDowell-Dreyfus Debate*, ed. Joseph Schear (New York: Routledge, 2013). This is likely the case because the phenomenological sense of intuition can be confused with Kant's sense of the term. But Hubert Dreyfus's phenomenological objection to artificial intelligence reemphasizes the importance of intuition.
16. Max Horkheimer, 'The Social Function of Philosophy,' in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, et al. (New York: Continuum, 2002), p. 264.
17. Earlier attempts at forging a similar thesis was more commonly called 'dialectical phenomenology'. There are two prominent attempts. (1) Herbert Marcuse, 'Contributions to a Phenomenology of Historical Materialism,' in *Heideggerian Marxism*, ed. Richard Wolin and John Abromeit (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), pp. 1–33. The fourth section is titled, 'Draft of a Dialectical Phenomenology.' (2) James L. Marsh, *Post-Cartesian Meditations: An Essay in Dialectical Phenomenology* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1988).
18. Michael Marder, *Phenomena—Critique—Logos: The Project of Critical Phenomenology* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014). My core thesis on the critical relation between intuition and thought is shown by Marder to be a consistent theme among prominent phenomenologists.
19. Marder, *Phenomena—Critique—Logos*, 2.
20. Marder, *Phenomena—Critique—Logos*, 2.
21. *Rope*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock (Warner Bros. Pictures, 1948), film.
22. As told by Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* (V, iii, 9).
23. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 310.
24. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, p. 306.

25. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, p. 305. The designation ‘therapeutic power’ to Husserl’s phenomenology is Habermas’s designation, not Husserl’s.
26. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, p. 306.
27. Cf. Scheler, ‘The Nature of Philosophy,’ in *On the Eternal in Man*, trans. Bernard Noble (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), pp. 70–1.
28. The idea of ‘essence’ is not a metaphysical category. It’s a feature of the phenomenon, not the noumenon, a distinction that phenomenology brackets.
29. Cf. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).
30. Husserl first spoke of ‘something immanent’ and ‘something transcendent’. Originally, this distinction was struck on the basis of adumbrated perceptual features that the intention of consciousness does not anticipate, in contrast to immanent or *internal* perception of mental objects.
31. Cf. Scheler, SPE, pp. 139–40.
32. In Habermas’s words, ‘Husserl cannot expect self-formative processes to originate in a phenomenology that, as transcendental philosophy, purifies the classical theory of its cosmological contents.’ Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, p. 306.
33. Husserl uses the idea of reality to gauge when something given is given as real. But the formal idea cannot ever match up with the givenness of reality, so he makes bracketing reality necessary for the sake of strict certainty. An early phenomenological debate suggests reality is only problematic under the auspices of consciousness. Things are given *as real* not consciously, but ecstatically, with respect to experiences of resistance.
34. Wesley Lowry and David Weigel, ‘Why Hillary Clinton and her rivals are struggling to grasp Black Lives Matter,’ *The Washington Post*, July 22, 2015.
35. Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 16–17.
36. Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, p. 36.
37. One of Habermas’s running theses in ‘Knowledge and Human Interests: A General Perspective’ is that a theory loses its normative influence on human affairs the more it’s freed from interests. And phenomenology is the first to accomplish the kind of value-neutrality that the positive sciences falsely claim for themselves.
38. Scheler, ‘The Forms of Knowledge and Culture,’ in *Philosophical Perspectives*, trans. Oscar Haac (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 40; Cf. Scheler, ‘*Ordo Amoris*,’ in SPE, p. 110.

39. Cf. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Nonformal Ethics of Values*, trans. Manfred Frings (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 253–64.
40. Cf. Scheler, 'The Idols of Self Knowledge,' in SPE, 12–17.
41. Scheler, *Ressentiment*, trans. Manfred Frings (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2003), p. 93.

# 7

## Phenomenological Jurisprudence: A Reinterpretation of Adolf Reinach's *Jahrbuch* Essay

Kimberly Baltzer-Jaray

### Reading Reinach Today

In 1913, the very first issue of *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Phänomenologische Forschung* was published, a project for which Adolf Reinach served as managing editor and contributor. In volume one of the first edition of *Jahrbuch* we find his monumental piece *Die apriorischen Grundlagen des bürgerlichen Rechtes*, or what is more commonly known in English as *The A Priori Foundations of Civil Law*. This article has been prized by phenomenology scholars for the theory of social acts contained in the sections on promising, claim, and obligation, as well as the brilliant description of the ontology of essences and a priori structures contained in such acts. However, the bigger picture of what Reinach is saying and doing here has not been properly understood and discussed, and this has disastrous consequences for a true grasp of his phenomenology and

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occludes the important contributions that his work can make to the future of phenomenological research. The misunderstandings and subsequent neglect are a direct result of two things: (1) the translation of the German word 'Recht' into English as 'law' or 'right', both of which are ambiguous and fail to capture the nature of the entity adequately, and (2) the lack of knowledge concerning German legal history, including the controversial 1900 German civil code (*Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*) that changed the European landscape, among phenomenologists and scholars working in the history of philosophy—such knowledge is implicitly assumed in his chapter. When these two issues are addressed, what becomes evident is that Reinach was making a philosophical, specifically phenomenological, argument for the return to and recognition of something similar to the old, natural law idea of justice (i.e., *ius, droit*). In particular, the notion that justice is the insight into a transcendent unity or harmony that subsisted in the world, an activity of thinking that allowed one insight into this unity, and not something achieved purely through codification (positive law—i.e., *lex, gesetz, loi*) and abiding by the humanly constructed laws. In other words, the article was Reinach's attempt at demonstrating that phenomenology, with its particular method and commitment to ontological realism, could aid in the restoration and renewal of the authority the essence of 'Recht' (as justice) once had, but in a new and more secure way. As such, I will suggest that in this essay Reinach was trying his hand at a *phenomenology of justice*.

In order to argue for this reading of his text, I will begin with a very brief account of German legal history, starting with Leibniz and working my way to the *Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch* (BGB; German Civil Code) of 1900, the law code with which Reinach and many other legal scholars of the time strongly disagreed. Next, I will discuss his *A Priori Foundations* article, first justifying my interpretation of 'Recht' by situating Reinach in the legal discussion of the time, and then demonstrating how he used this paper to speak out against the positive law movement. Finally, I will consider how his account of 'Recht' fits within his phenomenological realist ontology. Ultimately, by reconsidering Reinach's phenomenology of justice, we will be better able to situate his thought as a resource for future phenomenological work concerned not only with social and political existence, but also with social ontology in a post-Rawlsian context.

## On the Laws of the German Land, Old and New

Let me begin by attempting to iron out the central distinction operating in this chapter: the distinction between ‘Recht’ and ‘Gesetzt’. Both words are typically translated into English as ‘law’ but they are far from being equal in meaning. When translators fail to deal with this issue, the true sense of what is intended is lost and hermeneutic confusion arises. As I mentioned in the introduction, ‘Recht’, or *ius* (Latin)/*droit* (French), is best understood as a kind of natural law in that it subsists in the world around us. On this interpretation, law is an activity of thinking and justice is understood as a transcendent unity or harmony into which one has insight (for Reinach it is that of which one has an a priori understanding). It is essential to emphasize that ‘Recht’ is not created by, or does not depend on, human acknowledgment; ‘Recht’ is there to be intuited at any time and will be there after such recognition. ‘Gesetzt’, on the other hand, or *lex* (Latin)/*loi* (French), is law in the sense of the positive or codified law, where law is a socially produced rule book or structure. Accordingly, justice is the calculated outcome of following the rules. When the descriptor ‘positive law’ is used, the difference amounts to the visible (*Gesetzt*) and the invisible (*Recht*). This difference between them is crucial not only ontologically, but also concerning moral significance and authority. Roger Berkowitz explains this in *The Gift of Science: Leibniz and the Modern Legal Tradition*:

While blurring of the distinction in English between *ius* and *lex* may have the practical advantage of lending to law as *lex* the moral authority of law as *ius*, it has the distinctive disadvantage of concealing the significant fact that law is increasingly spoken of only in the sense of *lex*—the setting down of official rules governing behavior. This covering up of the declining significance of law as *ius*—that is, as a natural and accepted moral obligation—works to conceal the importance of what was once a meaningful part of law.<sup>1</sup>

To really understand the significance of this distinction, however, we need to travel through at least some of the landmark moments in German legal history.

The modern German legal code has its roots in the work of G.W. Leibniz: the father of what is often termed 'legal science'. The seventeenth century was one of great advancement and great turmoil, and one crisis central to both was that of authority (i.e., politics, religion, and philosophy equally). People saw themselves as free, rational, intelligent, and so on, and with that came moments where persons asserted themselves against the traditional ways of the church and the state. This challenge to established authorities posed problems for moral conduct and social order. Natural law, as articulated by civil and ecclesial authorities, no longer held an 'accepted' claim to authority over people, and so required rethinking if it was to remain a factor in social existence. For Leibniz, this crisis could be successfully overcome with enlightened reason and new science, as exemplified by Bacon, Descartes, Pascal, and himself. So, he began work on a legal code project, one that can be described as a scientific reform of the Roman law currently in use, and he called it the *Codex Leopoldus* (after Leopold I, the Emperor of the Austro-Hungarian empire). His goal was to create a document that would provide accurate knowledge of natural law using an approach like that found in natural science in order to revitalize and cement the law's authority and legitimacy.

Integral to this approach was his dependence on the *Principle of Sufficient Reason* (PSR), which generally stood as the central rule of Leibniz's metaphysics and theology. The implication of the PSR when applied to law was a substantive conception of justification. Namely, a *science* of law would insist that every law be justified, and that law is *only* justified when it has a reason for being. This marked a significant shift in the understanding and conception of law from one of knowing (and intuiting) law 'in and of itself', to one of knowing the grounds and justifications for it. Ironically, Leibniz's good intentions actually produced the opposite effect from what he had hoped. Instead of restoring natural law to its once grand authority, he made it a slave to the PSR and, thereby, a product of scientific inquiry, rather than the guide for such inquiry and social existence more broadly.<sup>2</sup> Leibniz kept at this project for his entire life. When he died in 1716 his legal code work lay open on his desk marked up with marginal notes, but it was never enacted and his lifelong dream never fulfilled.

After Leibniz, it wasn't until 1794 that the Prussian *Allgemeines Landrecht* (ALR) was officially introduced and implemented (especially in places where it did not conflict with local customs). The ALR was considered to be the first scientific legal code and marked a transition from premodern to modern law—economically and politically one could say it marked the start of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. It is now considered by legal scholars to be, for the time, the most consistent law and influential code, and it attempted to do what Leibniz so desperately wanted: a scientific and systematic reformulation of the existing Roman law codes into published form. With the ALR and the codes that followed, 'Recht' became 'posited Recht', on the path to becoming truly 'Gesetzt'. The ALR was composed and codified mainly by Carl Gottlieb Svarez and Ernst Ferdinand Klein. It was begun under Frederick the Great but was not adopted until the rule of Frederick II, and it had over 19,000 articles, covering everything from civil law to administrative law and family law. Its expansive content was aimed at addressing all legal situations without any need for additional judicial interpretation.

Contrary to Leibniz, the ALR writers did not agree with the notion that the transcendent insight into the will of God could be something known with absolute certainty, and so they denied the very thing that Leibniz felt would ground the knowledge of law and its domain. Instead, the will of God was substituted for the will of the sovereign legislator. But law as legal science has to justify itself, the legislator was tasked with establishing both the positive and the natural law. In doing this, the connection of law to a transcendent conception of justice was not only loosened, but inverted—'Gesetzt' now had ascended over 'Recht'.

The ALR turned out to be the world's first positivist legal system. With this move, its authors did not ground law in scientifically derived moral principles, but rather in ideas guided by political science that aimed to provide both legal and political security. These changes resulted in laws being designed more for the prevention of crime rather than for the enactment of punishment for immoral actions. In particular, torture was abolished, capital punishment abolished for many crimes, and so on, and yet political dissenters were very severely punished. Not long after its publication and enactment, the ALR proved to be unsuccessful. A few sections remained in effect until the 1830s, but overall it was a decisive failure in relation to the grand aims of its authors.

In 1814, after the war with Napoleon ended, there was a wave of nationalism and unity in Germany, but Germany at the time still lacked a true national legal code, one that would override the often-conflicting customs and codes of the individual states. Heidelberg law professor A.F.J. Thibaut called for the creation of a unified law code to be carried out immediately and quickly. Friedrich Carl von Savigny responded. Savigny also desired changes that would result in the ‘modernity of law’, but felt that a hastily written law code should be avoided at all costs because a law code could only be successful if it displayed a thorough and far-reaching understanding of the people and communities making up the national identity. Savigny is considered part of the German Romantic movement, which displays a strong appreciation of and connection to the past folk songs and myths, the origins of a community, the very ‘Volksgeist’ (national spirit) of a people. This ‘Volksgeist’ should form the underpinnings and development of law; law shouldn’t be simply a rational, formal legislative exercise, but should rather originate from the unique spirit of the people as expressed in customs and popular faith. Such a lived expression of identity is what Savigny thought should inform judges’ decisions since law itself has a social existence. Legal science, for Savigny, needed to be both historical *and* systematic such that a law code would demonstrate a clear inner coherence with the historical sources and preexisting laws on which it was based—mainly Roman law. While this does sound like a reduction of ‘Recht’ to ‘Gesetz’, Savigny did not give in to such a reduction. In his novel approach he developed a double-source thesis: the two sources of law must reflect the internal and external historical existence of law.<sup>3</sup> Savigny bridged the historical positive laws (the external, *Gesetz*) with the original transcendent foundations that informed and controlled the positive laws (the internal, *Recht*), and because the external are scientifically derived from the internal, they are necessary laws and not merely the arbitrary expression of a legislator or sovereign. The connection with the past serves as justification for the current existence of any law; in fact, Savigny argued that both ‘Recht’ and ‘Gesetz’ have their source in historically existing laws. The actual bridge between these sources was science, and so law had a double existence that was revealed, authorized, and constructed by a science of history.<sup>4</sup>

Although Savigny strove to invigorate the law with science, like Leibniz he ended up unintentionally furthering positive law:

Savigny shared with Leibniz the belief that the only possible way to re-enliven *Recht* was through science. Just as Leibniz' turn to science as a way of knowing *Recht* emerges from his sense that insight can no longer provide a certain knowing of *Recht*, so too does Savigny embrace legal science only once *Recht* has ceased to be knowable, either through reason or through common insight into the culture and tradition of a people.<sup>5</sup>

The call for legal science was Savigny's way of responding to the loss of a traditional idea, one with which he hoped to reconnect. Savigny died before the release of the BGB, and the science of law work happening in Germany aligned itself more with the positivist social sciences. But his ideas of scientific jurisprudence would provide a backbone for the BGB—in particular, his principle of abstraction and separation were to become extremely important.

A highly influential figure and precursor to the BGB was one of Savigny's greatest students, Rudolf von Jhering. He opposed his teacher and argued that the essence of law is not a historical becoming but rather a human act. The law is a product of human activity, and jurisprudence as a science must 'come clean with the facts and admit that *Recht*—in addition to *Gesetzt*—is a creation of man ... the first and original source of law lies in the human breast'.<sup>6</sup> *Recht* was now understood as a product of human action. Jhering argued that any higher justice is always only the creation of man, one that follows what he called 'the law of ends', or rather the super ultimate law of all social development.<sup>7</sup> Law is essentially now a means to an end, and once again with the guidance and application of Leibniz's PSR (Jhering cited Leibniz as his inspiration for the project), 'Recht' must have a reason for being and this reason must be scientifically grounded. 'Recht' as a transcendent, independent entity has, by this point, been entirely eclipsed. As such, future legal science seemed to require abandoning a search for an ethical ground of justice because it would be virtually unknowable, indemonstrable, and unempirical.

The BGB changed everything because it only sought the formal properties of law itself. As Jhering advocated, law had no content or place

outside of its role as a servant for the achievement of ends. These ends are the social and economic good of a society and hence law is a political project, not a metaphysical one. Thus, law was now pure scientific codification, devoid of connection with any kind of transcendent principle or ethical ground. Practically, law was now purely a technical instrument for the pursuit and achievement of social, economic, and political aims. You could say that the BGB represents the failure of science to save 'Recht' from being dissolved into 'Gesetz', which amounts to a complete failure to rejuvenate and reinvigorate the connection between law and justice (i.e., a failure to follow the spirit of Leibniz).

However, BGB didn't totally dispense with 'Recht', not completely—indeed, it couldn't. It required judges not only to apply the laws (*Gesetz*) it laid out, but also to interpret them in specific cases. This fact demonstrates that the codifiers knew they couldn't achieve a complete rendering of the law into systematic certainty; law couldn't be reduced simply to a written mechanical code that was so comprehensive and precise that judges need only to apply it. Legal interpretation was an integral part of the internal structure of the BGB and it was that aspect that actually addressed any insufficiency in the codified specifics. A trained jurist using the BGB technique would take a case, abstract and reduce it to its basic legal concepts, and then seek a resolution by recombining those basic concepts with the rules written in the code. These reduced legal concepts formed the alphabet of 'Recht' and thus judges were facilitating an understanding, mastery, and utilizing a valid 'Recht'.<sup>8</sup>

The first paragraph of the first draft of the BGB stated that if there were an instance where the law contains no rule to apply, then a judge should look to precedent, and if that does not exist, then the spirit of the legal order (*Rechtsordnung*) is what determines the ruling. It is important to note that this paragraph was eventually cut from the final version of the BGB. This legal order, according to Bernard Windscheid (a highly influential nineteenth-century author of a textbook on Roman Law that became an important source of inspiration for the BGB), was a second and higher source of law upon which any application of a legal code must depend. The particular laws of a code were themselves subordinate to the science of justice *as it existed in the legal order*.<sup>9</sup> But this legal order was not what Leibniz held dear, but was rather constructed

and willed by people and stood between the transcendent, unknowable ideal of justice and the posited law. It was also separate from the moral order of society because ‘Recht’ was fully divorced from any ethical grounding in the reason of men. For a person to act legally is not a natural possession but a power that is granted by the legal order. Ultimately, then, ‘Recht’ as conceived in the BGB conforms to the *posited will* of the legal order.

But could human-created scientific principles of justice successfully ground ‘Recht’ as something expressed in a willed and constructed legal order? For Reinach, the answer is ‘no’.

## The Reinachian Response: The A Priori Theory of ‘Recht’<sup>10</sup>

Reinach’s *Jahrbuch* paper is the culmination of ideas he began contemplating around 1905: elements are present in his dissertation, *Über den Ursachenbegriff im geltenden Strafrecht* (*On the Concept of Causality in the Criminal Code*) and become more apparent in discussions with other members of the Munich *Verein* group occurring from 1906 onward, in a seminar he gave titled ‘The Philosophy of Civil Law’ (SS 1912), and in rough notes on social acts dating around 1911. It seems that Reinach developed his response to the 1900 BGB over several years, formulating it using his unique background in jurisprudence, training in descriptive psychology under Theodor Lipps and phenomenology under Edmund Husserl.

As the title of this section indicates, I am arguing that Reinach’s *Jahrbuch* paper, titled *Die apriorischen Grundlagen des bürgerlichen Rechtes*, must be read as a response to the 1900 BGB. Aside from the statements contained in his introduction, which I will discuss shortly, what we see in his chapter title and content is an organized, rational, and *phenomenological* answer to positive law’s claim that without it nothing pertaining to social life and order would be secure and certain. Without the positive law, property could not be titled and maintained; without the positive law, contracts cannot be drafted and enforced; without the positive law, representation means absolutely nothing.<sup>11</sup>



Reinach's first response to the BGB comes about in his discussion of promise, claim, and obligation, which are known as social acts. The purpose of the first section of Reinach's paper is not only to discuss the ontology of speech acts and their objects, but also to demonstrate that speech acts like these have their basis in what Reinach will call the a priori theory of 'Recht': they are not social constructions, as their evidence allows them to be known with certainty, clarity, and by everyone. Social acts have a natural binding power outside of the positive law. Many instances of social relations do not enter into the realm of law, and many do not need a legal contract at all—such as the relation exhibited in the statement 'I promise I will buy you a lollypop.' Everyone knows what a promise entails and what it 'means' as far as it supposes a claim and obligation between people. Reinach also wants to prove that the positive law itself must assume the very idea of an a priori theory of 'Recht' in order to enact codes in the first place. In fact, he says that the a priori theory of 'Recht' underpins all forms of law. As he writes, '[i]n the following we limit ourselves to bringing out some of the a priori foundations of the civil "Recht." But we are convinced the other legal disciplines, especially penal law, public law, and administrative law, are capable of and in need of such foundation.'<sup>12</sup>

Reinach's response is also present in his discussion of rights and obligations of property (power, right, ownership, liens, transfer, multiple owning parties, economic value, etc.), and the nature of representation by proxy. Regarding such issues, he continues the same procedure as before: first, he demonstrates how these are actually part of the a priori theory of 'Recht' and how they have power or meaning outside the positive law, and then shows how the positive law actually assumes or relies on the a priori theory. It is here that we begin to see clearly that his paper is a response to the BGB. Reinach mentions specific articles and codes of the BGB, and critiques them mainly on the grounds that the BGB enactments cited conflict with or contradict what the insight into or the a priori theory of 'Recht' tell us. For example, when speaking about liens, he says that the BGB has contradictory provisions that lead one to deny principles that are available to insight with absolute evidence.<sup>13</sup> He finds similar contradictions with the transference of property,<sup>14</sup> representation by proxy,<sup>15</sup> and borrowing/loaning, renting, and other enactments of entitlement.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, his choice of which legal entities to discuss coincides with items of the BGB that were monumental moments of codification, due to economic and social changes that had arisen since the time of the ALR, for example, capitalism (total decline of feudal system), the emerging global trade markets, and the industrialization of Europe. Thus, there needed to be laws that governed all aspects of such issues and these laws must be applicable to problems of a new age of commerce and federation.

Other evidence that this paper is a response to the BGB lies in Reinach's criticisms for positive law, mainly for its temporal and ever-adapting nature: 'The positive law is caught up in constant flux and constant development. Legal systems arise and pass away and change ... What is decisive for the development of law are the given moral convictions and even more the constantly changing economic conditions and needs. And so the propositions found in the positive law are quite essentially different from the propositions proper to science.'<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, he continues, 'the fact that a creditor can transfer his claims without the consent of debtor belongs to our present-day law, but it had no validity in other legal periods. There is clearly no sense in speaking of truth and falsity as proper to this proposition as such. Certain economic exigencies have moved the makers of law to posit it. One can call it useful and in this sense "right" (*richtig*). But at other times the opposite proposition may have been "right" (*richtig*).'<sup>18</sup> This latter part of his critique indicates that while the code may be beneficial or practical from the economic perspective, it may not be so for parties involved: the gap between what is lawful and what is just grows larger when the law code in effect loses sight of the people for whom it applies. While this critique initially makes perfect sense, it becomes more poignant when taken into consideration with the highly abstracted language of the BGB, with its code written for lawyers and judges, not regular people, and its heavy emphasis on economic and social ends.

In light of these things, Reinach states what he sees as the positive law position: there are no such things as legal principles (*rechtliche Gesetze*) that stand independently and timelessly valid, like the kind observed in math. The law necessarily derives its content from the current times—economic, social, political, and so on—and it changes as the historical situation does. Legal concepts and propositions are the creations of lawmakers; it is meaningless to speak of concepts or structures existing independent of persons and the positive law. Further,

[i]n our law one speaks of weapons, and dangerous instruments, of state of mind, premeditation, error, etc. Here we have to do with extra-legal concepts, which the law has to take over. But as to specifically legal concepts such as property, claim, obligation, representation by proxy, etc., these have not been found and taken over by the law but have been produced and created by it.<sup>19</sup>

Once again, legal concepts such as these were created because of economic and social demands. With respect to property, without positive law an individual's property would not be secured from attacks or theft. The positive law created property laws, created what could be called a 'task of collectivity', meaning that the law demarcates and protects the 'sphere of dominion' of each individual. Essentially, then, the property itself and the norms that regulate property entitlement are creations of positive law. Reinach ends this description by reiterating the main positive law position: "The essential point, however, one which there is general agreement, is this: all legal propositions and concepts are creations of the lawmaking factors, and it makes no sense at all to talk about any being of theirs which would be independent of all positive law."<sup>20</sup> This conflicts directly with much of Jhering's work, and in fact Jhering is referenced in Reinach's article at this very point. This means Reinach's position opposes not only the BGB and the current positivist law trend, but also Jhering himself.

Thinking that this positive law position must be opposed, Reinach intends to demonstrate 'that the structures which one has generally called specifically "rechtliche" have a being of their own just as much as numbers, trees, or houses, that this being is independent of its being grasped by men, that it is in particular independent of the positive law'.<sup>21</sup> He will investigate the 'a priori theory of "Recht"', but put aside specific questions and issues of jurisprudence. The positive law may find 'Recht' but it by no means creates or produces it.

The first and most famous way that Reinach seeks to substantiate this argument is with an analysis of claim and obligation. Like trees and grass, claim and obligation have an independent being, but what makes them different is that when something is predicated of a particular legal entity, the predication refers to any entity of this kind, not just a specific individual.

He writes '[t]hat a claim lapses through being waived, is grounded in the essence of a claim as such and holds therefore necessarily and universally. A priori statements are valid for "rechtlichen" (legal) entities and structures.'<sup>22</sup> Thus, 'Recht' as an entity and structure has an a priori character, by the fact of this universality and necessity, and it is one of many in a vast realm, which Reinach says can be 'strictly formulated' according to evidence that enables them to be known clearly by insight. Entities like 'Recht' are independent of any mind that perceives them and, most importantly, independent of any positive law code. Reinach uses mathematics and numbers as an analogy: numbers have an existence independent from the calculations, equations, and so on of mathematicians. And just as mathematicians can manipulate and use numbers in various ways, so too can the positive law manipulate and transform 'Recht' as it requires; it can even deviate from 'Recht' entirely, but actions like this do not actually change them in and of themselves: 'The positive law can incorporate them into its sphere, it can also deviate from them. But even when it enacts the very opposite of them, it cannot touch their own proper being.'<sup>23</sup>

Reinach next explains his reason for going to all this effort to explore 'Recht' phenomenologically: simply put, it is for the sake of philosophy. With the creation and adoption of the BGB of 1900, 'Recht' was plucked from the sphere of the contemplating philosopher and placed firmly under the realm of legal science where it was reduced to dust as if in a mortar and pestle, and reformed to 'Gesetz'. In fact, the evolution of 'Gesetz' coincides with the complete seizure of 'Recht' from philosophy, the loss of a balance where 'Recht' was firmly situated in both the legal and philosophical camps (to be discussed and enjoyed, like the ideas associated with freedom). This reasoning indicates that Reinach has two main aims at work: (1) to revive and restore the importance of 'Recht', and (2) to take controlling interest back from the legal scientists and return the balance once again with philosophy, but in a new, fresh way.

Reinach argues that a philosophical approach like the phenomenological method is necessary for a clear understanding and apprehension of 'Recht'. As he explains,

If there are legal entities and structures which in this way exist in themselves, a new realm opens up here for philosophy. Insofar as philosophy is ontology or the a priori theory of objects, it has to do with the analysis of all possible kinds of objects as such. We shall see that philosophy here comes across objects of quite a new kind, objects which do not belong to nature in the proper sense, which are neither physical nor psychical and which are at the same time different from all ideal object[s] in virtue of their temporality. The laws, too, which hold for these objects are of the greatest philosophical interest.<sup>24</sup>

The ontology of the ‘objects’ entities, structures, and so on of ‘Recht’ is unique. If we take claim and obligation as an example, upon entering the world they are neither physical, nor purely psychical experiences, and they are more than simply words on a paper contract or uttered in a spoken agreement; they hold even in moments they aren’t acknowledged (e.g., in sleep); their temporality is grounded in the essence of the claim itself and the states of affairs involved reflect this; and the essential laws that govern are atemporal and ideal. He even admits that there are vast areas of social life that are untouched by the positive law, many of which could fall outside the application and scope of the positive law, and so there is the possibility for numerous kinds of ontological objects. ‘Recht’ has the potential to go beyond the real/ideal dichotomy with which philosophers are accustomed. Indeed, I contend that this is perhaps a central reason why Reinach’s account of ‘Recht’ has been so mistreated and misunderstood by subsequent philosophers.

Reinach speaks of a pure science of ‘Recht’, which consists of a priori synthetic propositions that serve as foundation for areas, like positive law, that are not a priori. In the case of positive law, Reinach argues that ‘Recht’ is in fact presupposed and used without acknowledgment. Positive law codes begin somewhere, and that starting point is ‘Recht’—the insight into transcendent unity of justice that everyone can come to apprehend and know. Positive law without ‘Recht’ only produces perplexities. Positive law has made a terrible mistake in attempting to do away with ‘Recht’ or in thinking of it as simply an out-of-date idea from antiquity that no longer applies to the modern world because ‘[t]he structure of the

positive law can only become intelligible through the structure of [the non-positive sphere of law].<sup>25</sup> Unlike Leibniz and the others before him, Reinach is fully convinced that the essence, entities, structures, and so on—all things obtaining or intentionally engaging ‘Recht’, are knowable with certainty and clarity using intuition, and do not require scientific method or anything other than phenomenological method (as Ideation) to demonstrate their being. In other papers he reiterates the same point: a priori knowledge is capable of irrefutable ‘Evidenz’, in that its content is intuitively given in the strongest possible sense.<sup>26</sup> In his paper, he is committed to the analysis of the essence of ‘Recht’ and argues that it is important for legal science (civil law, public law, etc.), but when appropriately located in a philosophical framework.

## ‘Recht’ and Natural Law

Unlike Berkowitz, who relates ‘Recht’ to natural law in contrast to positive law, Reinach sees ‘Recht’ as distinct from both the natural and positive laws. He writes that the a priori theory of ‘Recht’ has a distinctive character that,

lies precisely in the fact that it is independent of ALL law, from the law which is ‘in force’ not less than from some ‘valid’ law, or one which is thought of as valid. One has objected to natural law philosophers that they fill out the gaps in the positive law with the ‘ideal law’ or ‘rational law’ .... That they want to replace explicit positive enactments by this ‘higher’ law ... Such an objection would of course not apply to us. We do not speak of higher law, but of simple laws of being.<sup>27</sup>

Reinach further adds that, natural law philosophers were right in their search for legal structures outside of the state and positive enactments, but what they failed to see was that these structures amount to any ‘law’ at all: ‘They need never to have entered into consciousness. There has never been a state of things in which they and only they would have positive validity.’ In this way, natural law too finds fulfillment with the

a priori theory of 'Recht'. But it isn't just the ideas and mistakes of the natural law philosophers that present the problem; their name is also entirely inappropriate. The notion of 'nature' in the name is especially suspect: (1) essential laws derive their objectivity from 'being implanted by nature in all men', (2) these laws hold only for men or beings of a similar intellectual 'nature' (rational mind), and (3) these entities and structures are found in the sphere of nature, meaning they are physical and mental. Reinach admits that as much as the essential laws involved in 'Recht' are clear and present, perhaps even self-evident, it is false to say that they are actually recognized by all men—rather his point is simply that all people have equal possibility to recognize them. Essential laws also cannot and should never be grounded in the natural feelings of individuals or in the consensus of a community of people, as such social factors are absolutely irrelevant to the transcendent status of such laws.

## 'Recht' and Reinach's Ontology

What is 'Recht' for Reinach exactly? That's a question that may lack a complete answer because, like his list of characteristics of states of affairs,<sup>28</sup> Reinach admits that his account of 'Recht' is far from exhaustive. Also, Reinach held that one never begins philosophizing with definitions ready at hand, but arrives at descriptions after the fact, once the essence of something has been grasped and explored.<sup>29</sup>

The theory of 'Recht' fits into Reinach's realist ontology by way of the material (rather than formal) a priori sphere, a topic he explored in his work often. Knowledge of the material a priori requires essential insight, not logic or deductions, and this insight is into relationships or entities like colors, social acts, judgments, deliberation, and so on and also into things pertaining to law and 'Recht'. Once we have insight, then we can describe essential structures.

Let us take an example of Daubert promising Husserl some special tobacco for his birthday. In the act of promise there arises a claim and an obligation—we see the form of the promise and also the material content. Claim and obligation possess temporal states of affairs—arising at the moment of promise and ending at the moment

of fulfillment—and the claim and obligation themselves are not purely physical, or purely mental, and so on. When we immerse ourselves in the essence of these speech acts we come to see what holds for them as a matter of strict a priori law, we grasp the connections grounded in the essence of the claim and obligation as such. Through insight we grasp the bond of the claim and obligation between persons without any need of legal paperwork, or deductions. Insight grasps the necessity and universality of what constitutes the essential nature of Daubert's promise (the promise *as such*). Husserl understands by the spoken promise that Daubert will be giving him special tobacco on his birthday (Husserl has a claim) and Daubert understands that by the spoken promise he must keep it, he is obligated to do X—a relationship is thus created and understood as a strong binding union by both parties. If Daubert keeps the promise and brings Husserl the special tobacco for his birthday, we understand the essence of fulfillment (the promise kept). If Daubert breaks the promise, either he forgets to buy the tobacco or he couldn't get the exact kind he promised, we grasp by insight the "break" of the promise. Yes, a promise can be waived or postponed, one can grant these modifications; however, Husserl may choose to accept his birthday present later, or forgive Daubert's failure, or even accept a different kind of gift. We understand essentially what it means to keep or break a promise, and this is realized through the material a priori states of affairs at work. More importantly, we know this without necessarily having full knowledge of the positive law that governs contracts in a specific context.

Relatedly, for Reinach states of affairs are also the bearers of moral 'Recht' (justice) and persons are the bearers of moral value [*wertvoll*], and other values like intellectual and aesthetical. So, if Daubert successfully keeps his promise to Husserl, then one can say that the state of affairs that obtains is morally 'Recht' (just): it is good to keep your promises, and we look positively upon those who do. If Daubert breaks his promise, let's say he never intended to get Husserl any tobacco—perhaps he deliberated on their relationship and felt Husserl wasn't worth it—then we would say the state of affairs that obtained was morally 'Unrecht' (unjust) and also that Daubert should be punished or shunned because he intentionally made a false promise. Intentions count for a lot in jurisprudence and our



personal relationships. Moral value is firmly located in the human social world and we see it at work in social acts, whereas moral 'Recht' (justice) resides within states of affairs.

## Conclusion: A Phenomenology of Justice for the Twenty-First Century

In the introduction to his A Priori *Foundations* article, Reinach writes as follows:

If there could hitherto be no doubt as to the fact that Kant limited much too narrowly the sphere of these laws, there can be even less doubt after the discovery of the a priori theory of 'Recht'. Together with pure mathematics and pure natural science there is also a pure science of "Recht" [*reine Rechtswissenschaft*] which also consists in strictly a priori and synthetic propositions and which serves as the foundation for disciplines which are not a priori.<sup>30</sup>

His account here serves not only as a critique of Kant's synthetic a priori domains and of the inadequacies of both positive law and natural law, but also as a declaration of his intentions to pursue *phenomenologically* an investigation into the structures and essence of 'Recht'. Reinach was attempting in many ways a return to the idea of 'Recht' that Leibniz held, whereby justice is understood as insight into a transcendent unity or harmony, but he proposed to approach it utilizing the Munich phenomenological method and ontological realism rather than logic, the PSR, and traditional science. Only once we appreciate these important aspects of his approach can 'Recht' be apprehended appropriately after Reinach. This notion of 'Recht' now recognized as an independently subsisting entity that gives rise to any idea we have of justice, whether written or thought, deserves sustained attention in future phenomenological research since it provides a plausible theory of not only what justice might be, but also what it is to experience it as a lived reality in the social world.

## Notes

1. Roger Berkowitz, *The Gift of Science: Leibniz and the Modern Legal Tradition* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), p. xvii.
2. Leibniz is considered a natural law jurist: he held a belief that the ultimate ends of law are given by and within the perfect rational will of God, i.e., law is a product of theological science. So, this makes the science of law Leibniz proposed the science of the truth of God, and thus morality as well.
3. Berkowitz, *The Gift of Science*, p. 110.
4. Berkowitz, *The Gift of Science*, p. 111.
5. Berkowitz, *The Gift of Science*, p. 111.
6. Berkowitz, *The Gift of Science*, p. 138.
7. Berkowitz, *The Gift of Science*, p. 139.
8. Berkowitz, *The Gift of Science*, pp. 144–45.
9. Berkowitz, *The Gift of Science*, pp. 146–47.
10. Translation note: Because translating ‘Recht’ into English is not easy—words like ‘law’ and ‘right’ just don’t capture it—I will leave ‘Recht’ in German throughout the chapter.
11. Adolf Reinach, ‘The A Priori Foundations of Civil Law’, trans., J.F. Crosby, *Aletheia: An International Journal of Philosophy* 3 (1981): 50; cited hereafter as APF. Reinach says, ‘[i]t should by now be evident that a contract cannot be understood without the concept of social acts, that it is especially not composed of “expressions of intention,” and that it is in particular the conditional social acts which are important for its structure’ (p. 50 n26).
12. Reinach, APF, p. 48.
13. Reinach, APF, pp. 62–3. ‘Despite the possible variations of the right of lien in the wider sense, there is grounded in its idea a number of principles which are usually obvious to the jurist but which must interest the philosopher insofar as they are laws of an a priori nature.... The second principle which we put forward is that a lien on one’s own property is impossible. Only a right which one does not possess oneself, which can therefore be granted or transferred as something new, can provide the claimant with compensation for non-fulfillment and can therefore perform the function of securing, which is necessarily implied in the very concept of the right of lien. But as we know, the owner as owner already has all imaginable rights over the thing. We should not let ourselves be unsettled in this point by the apparently contradictory provisions of the positive law. Our civil law has an

“*Eigentümerhypothek*” (a mortgage registered in the name of the owner); it even speaks of a mortgage of this kind which lacks any claim which it secures. “If the claim is extinguished, the owner acquires the mortgage” (§ 1163, para. 1). Here in a single sentence *both* our a priori laws seem contradicted’.

14. Reinach, APF, pp. 77–9.

15. Reinach, APF, p. 97.

16. Reinach, APF, pp. 122–3.

While the enactments of the BGB may contradict what insight tells us, there is no real contradiction between the enactments and the essential laws that govern the a priori theory of ‘Recht’ and ‘Recht’ itself. Enactments aim at the realization of that which it posits as something that ought to be, and thus they can be valid or invalid, right or wrong, but never strictly true or false. Thus it cannot also be something a priori necessary or impossible. So, in the case of the common idea that ‘the ability of man to be subject to rights begins with the completion of his birth’ we are dealing with an enactment and not a statement or assertion of truth: *because* the Civil Code of the land enacts that the ability to be a subject of rights begins at birth, a jurist *can assert* that *in virtue of this enactment* things are really this way at the present time, in this land. So the contradictions and oddities of the BGB do not interfere with the sphere of ‘Recht’, they only confuse citizens.

17. Reinach, APF, p. 2.

18. Reinach, APF, p. 2.

19. Reinach, APF, p. 3.

20. Reinach, APF, p. 4.

21. Reinach, APF, p. 2.

22. Reinach, APF, p. 5.

23. Reinach, APF, p. 6.

24. Reinach, APF, p. 6.

25. Reinach, APF, p. 7.

26. Adolf Reinach, ‘Concerning Phenomenology,’ trans., Dallas Willard, *The Personalist* 50 (1969): 214–15.

27. Reinach, APF, pp. 134–35.

28. States of affairs being a priori in nature are capable of irrefutable evidence, meaning their content is intuitively given in the strongest sense. They are objective unities, some timeless and some temporal, that take on the form, ‘being-x of Y’, and are neither real nor ideal in nature. Characteristics of

states of affairs include that they stand in relation of ground or consequent; they take on modalities; they obtain rather than exist; they stand in a logically contradictory relationship (either the positive or the negative obtains); and they are what is apprehended (a seeing-that, a reading-off of the state of affairs from the perceived surface of reality, a special kind of intuition) rather than perceived.

29. There are three central elements to Reinach's style: (1) to philosophize phenomenologically, one must have openness to being, a commitment or faith in what is given in experience; (2) description of entities is key, that is, bringing to light the self-evident, rather than arguing or proposing; and (3) to look to the material sphere of the a priori, recognizing the distinction between the formal and then the material, which requires essential insight only (we apprehend the essential nature of entities or relationships) and this must be grounded in realist ontology.
30. Reinach, APE, p. 6.

# Part III

## Emotion and Revelation

# 8

## Emotion as the Animation of Value

Frances Bottenberg

### Beyond Percepts, Markers, and Signals

Contemporary integrative theories of emotion aim to provide adequate accounts of the relationship between emotional feeling and evaluative meaning. Central among these are perceptualist accounts and what might be termed ‘signalist’ accounts. Perceptualism in its weaker form demonstrates significant phenomenal and epistemic similarities between emotional and perceptual experience, and in its stronger form classifies emotion as a kind of perception, for instance as ‘a perception of value’.<sup>1</sup> The signalist viewpoint meanwhile promotes emotional life as a system of pre-established mechanisms that can be set off by appropriate eliciting conditions. Emotion in this reading is primarily representational, acting as a signal, sensor, marker, alarm, or beacon to alert the organism to conditions imminently affecting it.<sup>2</sup>

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Perceptualist and signalist theories produce valuable insights. On the one hand, the perceptualist view encourages the exploration of phenomena that operate largely pre-reflectively and nonlinguistically, opening up realms often dismissed as automatic and dumb to mainstream philosophical examination. Signalist approaches, on the other hand, make sense of emotion's normative content within a coherent biological, physiological, and neurological overview of the organism in whom it plays out. In so doing, they revive William James' insight regarding the intimate bond between the somatic and the evaluative in emotion.

Despite this, however, contemporary perceptualism and signalism fall short of providing a satisfying account of emotional life. In particular, perceptualist accounts tend to underplay the idiosyncratic 'feltness' of emotions and the link between a particular felt quality and the selection of particular actions, focusing instead on higher-up cognitive processing such as representation-based appraisals of goodness and badness. The puzzle concerning why pre-reflective 'gut reactions' possess the phenomenal qualities they do remains neglected. Signalist theories fare no better: they pay attention to the dynamic neurophysiology of emotional processing, yet fall back on a mechanistic and third-person picture of somatic life and emotional drive.

In light of the shortcomings of the two standard accounts, and in the attempt to envision where phenomenological debates concerning emotion might head in the coming decades, in this chapter, I will argue in defense of a third emerging approach to the puzzle of emotional feeling, an approach that I will term *animationist*. An animationist theory of emotion is one that assumes that emotional drive can be productively analyzed as the expression of the ongoing pre-reflective yet intelligent performance of the living, feeling, experiencing first-person body. What is meant here by the 'first-person body'? Certainly that which classic phenomenology calls *Leib* (lived body, body-as-subject) in contrast to *Körper* (physical body, body-as-object). *Leib* exerts a primal receptive and spontaneous agency—pre-reflectively and nonlinguistically executed by means of a subjective orientation that is motor, rather than reflective, in essence. The first-person body possesses intentionality because it behaves not as a mechanical body pre-equipped with a finite number of physical responses but rather as a skillful, adaptive, sense-making agency within

unpredictable situations. Beyond this classic meaning, the ‘first-person body’ takes shape within ‘mindful body’, a concept that Maxine Sheets-Johnstone defends as being more helpful to our understanding than ‘embodied mind’.<sup>3</sup>

An animationist approach to emotion, then, takes the mindful first-person body seriously and sees its potential to rescue the pre-reflective and nonlinguistic sphere of emotional feelings from unyielding notions of automaticity, simple reflex, and mechanism. The first-person body, animated by emotional feeling, is posited in such a theory as being at the center of generating both endogenous motivation and movement.<sup>4</sup>

## Emotional Kinetics and Existential Valuing

Imagine someone in the midst of experiencing intense, blood-boiling anger. Better yet, imagine that this particular someone is *you*. Are you more inclined to clench your fists, tighten your jaw, spit your words out, even shout and gesticulate wildly, or are you more inclined to relax your face, sit down or lie down, and perhaps close your eyes? More than likely, releasing outward-directed, explosive force will seem more fluidly and immediately available while in a condition of intense anger, than will quiet, inward-retreating actions such as lying down. Anger lends the former motor possibilities normative salience; they seem more right because they are vividly projected as live possibilities within the unfolding situation. Of course, they may feel less right as reflection kicks in and you choose to respect other considerations, such as social norms, moral principles, and reasons against interpreting the situation in just this light. However, the ensuing restraint comes after the initial fact of a vivid anticipation of explosive action, and will often not feel particularly right or good, despite the reflective victory.

Our actions are always constrained by normative parameters, even in the realm of pre-reflective experience. To say that our actions are constrained normatively is to say that the ‘I can’ is always subordinated to the ‘I should’ or ‘I shouldn’t’. Rosenbaum et al. speak of ‘soft constraints’,<sup>5</sup> Matthew Ratcliffe of ‘pragmatic concern’ and practical possibility: ‘The world is not configured solely in terms of what I can do with it. A sense



of how I might act is tied up with a sense of what might happen, what might be avoided and what cannot be avoided.<sup>6</sup> Worth noting here is that the 'I' of the 'I can' and the 'I should' needn't refer only to self-conscious ego, but simply to active agency, or a concerted and directed sense of effort and concern.

The 'I should' should also not be viewed independently of the 'I can'. Norms are shaped as much by capacities (i.e., the behavioral possibilities) as the other way around. Norms of right action are inextricably bound to what Sheets-Johnstone calls *animate form*: 'Whatever its specification ... this body clearly has certain distinctive behavioral possibilities and not others: certain sensory-kinetic powers are vouchsafe to it in virtue of the animate form it is.'<sup>7</sup> While my body can do many things, for effective action its capacities must be curtailed to suit the ends of a given context. For example, one's concept of power and ability to deploy that power are dependent on the kind of body one is.<sup>8</sup> A healthy child relative to a healthy adult can muster less physical strength, yet may be more nimble—the child's sense of somatic capacity will hence be defined by actual experiences of relative weakness and nimbleness, and his sense of possibilities for action will be delimited by his sense of capacity.<sup>9</sup>

Returning to the case of blood-boiling anger, we can ask about the role that its particular phenomenal qualities play in foregrounding certain behavioral expressions over others. When and where is the seeming *vividness* of one action option (shouting, clenching one's fists, for instance) and the seeming *obscurity* of the other (lying down, closing one's eyes) generated? How are these qualities harnessed to attractive or aversive valences? And why are these valences distributed the way they are, associating certain kinds of action with certain emotional currents? It seems insufficient to claim, in response to these questions, that emotions fall along a scale of pleasant, good feeling at one end and unpleasant, bad feeling at the other, and that an emotion's felt goodness or badness can be sourced back to its hedonic tone. Favoring this latter view, Bennett Helm thinks that 'emotions are essentially feelings of things as good or bad in a certain way, and it is because these things feel good or bad to us that we can understand emotions to be pleasant or painful'.<sup>10</sup> This solution might seem to solve the 'problem of emotionality from the outset', as Jan Slaby suggests it does.<sup>11</sup> Since pleasures and pains are consciously

felt states with hedonic character, they could convey 'a very direct sense of the fact that it is indeed the goodness or badness of something that is apprehended in emotional experiences', he writes.

This view seems inadequate, though, for two reasons. First, it assumes that it is possible to establish strict associations between proprioceptive sensations, hedonic tones, and eliciting objects in the case of emotional feelings. One might assume that all feelings are valenced in a certain way from the start, that is, that particular sensations are inherently assessed and felt as pleasant or painful. These pleasant or unpleasant sensations are then paired with anticipated events, which are marked as good or bad, depending on past exposures. However, while it's true that some bodily sensations feel good or bad in and of themselves (e.g., a muscle cramp or overextending a joint is always painful), these sensations do not map well onto emotional feelings. A stomach cramp feels awful and can appear in emotions such as dread or grief. However, not every experience of dread or grief comes with uncomfortable visceral tightness, and it might be that some overall positive emotions, such as excitement, produce visceral tightness. There are also many sensations that are neither painful nor pleasant on their own (e.g., the feeling of a quickening heartbeat), and will be felt as unpleasant or pleasant only upon contextualization. Even an emotional type cannot adequately cue how its token will be felt. Anger, for example, can feel liberating and self-enhancing when it is self-righteous, or discouraging and self-diminishing (or even self-destructive) when founded on recognized betrayal. The former case feels 'good', the latter not so, yet both can receive the label 'anger'. What both have in common, though, is that how they feel correlates to a certain sense of capacity and normative motivation: a sense that, in the first case, I can and should act out this anger, and in the second case, that I can't undo or retaliate against the injury or insult already rendered.

A second reason why accounting for emotional feeling by way of a valence/judgment pairing is unsatisfying is that doing so isolates emotions from their embeddedness within an unpredictably unfolding and demanding world. If the feelings involved in emotional experience are mainly or fundamentally the mere expression of an established repertoire of hedonic valences paired with judgments of goodness or badness, one wonders how it is that feelings switch from relating exclusively to things

happening in and to the body (nonemotional feelings) to relating to the agent's better or worse faring in the world (emotional feelings). More broadly perhaps, the assumption that bodily feelings must either be intracorporeally directed, that is, be about bodily states, or extracorporeally directed, that is, be about things outside the body, deserves serious re-examination. To be sure, some philosophers have called this assumption into question, claiming that to focus attention on the agent or the world is a matter of emphasis, not one of difference. Matthew Ratcliffe writes:

I may well be aware of my tiredness, my sickness or my fatigue as states of myself, but I might equally be aware of them as states of the world. The unengaging, distant world can be what solicits sleep when one is very tired; thirst may be most conspicuous as the perceptual salience of a running stream; and various perturbations in the way the world appears might partly constitute the experience of illness.<sup>12</sup>

Emotional feelings, just like nonemotional feelings (whose existence this thesis in fact puts into question), cannot do without this unifying perspectivalism. Feelings are always situated within the world as seen from the agent's perspective and are significant only in virtue of that perspective. Our feelings come out of the submersion of the extracorporeal in the sphere of the intracorporeal. As Ratcliffe puts it, '[w]orld-experience is not distinct from how one's body feels; the two are utterly inextricable.'<sup>13</sup> Emotional feelings express the dynamic, fluctuating relationship between the agent's exerted force on the world and the world's exerted force on the agent.

Key to the animationist project, then, is to develop a vocabulary with which to describe the dynamic nuances of this relationship. An early example of this effort is Ludwig Binswanger's consideration of the dynamics of disappointment. Within the feeling of disappointment, he urges, we lose our footing in a manner felt viscerally and not simply metaphorically or psychologically:

In such a moment our experience actually suffers, is torn from its position in the world and thrown upon its own resources. Until we can regain our equilibrium in the world, our whole existence moves within the meaning matrix of stumbling, sinking, and falling. If we call this general meaning matrix the 'form,' and the bitter disappointment the 'content,' we can see that in this case form and content are *one*.<sup>14</sup>

Unpacking the ‘meaning matrices’ of emotional feeling requires grasping that emotional feelings are intrinsically *performative* and *expressive* of the manner in which the agent is already and actually faring in the world. Along these lines, a more productive way of theorizing emotional feelings, yet one that has been insufficiently explored in the literature, requires examining emotional feelings’ *kinetic tone* in relation to the *relational or existential values* at play in a given situation—values such as threat, loss, gain, growth, decline, autonomy, vitality, viability, purposiveness, and efficacy. That emotional meaning connects to relational concerns having to do with the agent’s well-being and well-faring in the world is uncontroversial; as Martha Nussbaum puts it, emotions concern ‘the salience for our well-being of uncontrolled external objects’.<sup>15</sup> Yet how do the *felt* qualities of an emotion relate to the sensing of and responding to particular existential values? If we consider the question from the vantage point of kinetic tone, new interpretive possibilities emerge. Consider emotions as varied as hatred, jealousy, and frustration—these are typically felt through a kinetic tone of aggression, which prefers quick, explosive actions. One has the sense of bursting into and even through barriers. Defensive emotions afford deflective actions, and carry the sense of shrinking away and avoiding impact. Feelings of repose invite slower, relaxed actions, as does timidity, though it carries an additional sense of caution and self-diminishment. Outgoingness, joviality, and even *Wanderlust* play out into open, expansive, even self-transcending forward impulsion. Where aggressive emotions seem to carry a sense of breaking through barriers, and fearful ones of being pushed back, these happy emotions come with a sense of opening out into the environment, as if coming to embrace it or be absorbed into it.

In developing his analysis of affectivity within pre-reflective intentionality, Donn Welton rejects the cognitivist idea that we are affectively drawn to objects because of a prior appraisal, instead surmising that

our previous ‘felt’ involvement with [objects] establishes kinetic values giving them the enticing powers they have. What Husserl calls ‘affective force’ is in play. ... The body is not secondary to the affect, added either to account for its cause or its effect. Rather, the tendency to move in one way and not another is inherent in the being of the affect.<sup>16</sup>

Here, Welton isolates three features which he posits as key in the organization of affective intentionality: (1) a feeling that, like Dewey's 'pervasive quality', unifies the experience and gives it efficacy; (2) a motor tendency that renders the action animated by feeling its direction; and (3) a valence to the object, its 'soliciting feel'. These three together produce the *telos* of the emotion, Welton writes, 'whose *kinetic values* reflexively draw the action as a whole'.<sup>17</sup> In essence, when we are emotionally engaged in the world, we feel pulled toward certain objects or features of objects and pushed away from others—we are affectively propelled or, more simply, we are animated.

As Slaby proposes emotional feelings are a 'bodily sensitivity for what is significant in the world'.<sup>18</sup> From its inception, an organism acts upon and is sensitive to the environment it is distinct from. It defines both itself and the world it takes in by boundaries imposed through experience; these boundaries are physical and chemical, somatic and social, and in sophisticated organisms also conceptual, metaphorical, and (proto) linguistic. These boundaries are fluid and flexible, and thus require an intelligent sensitivity. Out of this intelligent sensitivity emerge the dynamics at play in emotional experience, what might be termed the dynamics of self-motivated somatic change, self-affectation or, more simply, animation. These dynamics somatically enact the fluctuating agent/world relationship, establishing or reinforcing Binswanger's meaning matrices in that interaction. These ideas manifest themselves in Slaby's rich description of fear and joy:

In fear, for example, we feel as if pushed down by a threatening external force—a bodily tendency that is even more clearly perceivable in states of shock or sudden surprise. The bodily dynamics in these cases can be described as a kind of sudden narrowing; we feel as if the volume of our body is shrinking as effected by the working of an external force. An opposing tendency in the dynamics of intentional bodily feelings is a characteristic widening experience that we have in states of extreme joy, well-being or pride. A good example is the feeling of satisfaction after one's work is done: Here, we might feel a kind of inner widening, an extension of our body volume, which is felt as something thoroughly positive and lets us feel quite 'at home' in our current surroundings. In cases like this, it is our grasp of our current positive situation that consists in part in this widening of the felt body.<sup>19</sup>

Slaby's rich example can be further mined. How does the experience of fear, for example, break down more precisely at the level of intracorporeal dynamics? An experience of fear begins with the interoceptively sensed narrowing of body volume, which comes in conjunction with the visualized (or otherwise externally sensed) object of threat. It is crucial to realize that both are needed to produce the kinetic tone that animates first-person somatic agency toward particular behavioral possibilities. What determines how this engagement unfolds, though, is the interaction between the two modes of value at play in emotional experience, the kinetic–somatic and the existential–relational. In a typical case of fear, an object of threat is seen, but its *impact* is felt through the body volume shrinking. The significance of the emotional object is fed into the first-person body's projections of possibilities for action. The essence of feeling threatened lies in it seeming as if the threatening object *has already begun* to assault the first-person body; the assault is *felt as occurring*, its presence already sensed as a real pressure or force bearing down upon and shaking up the perimeter that separates agency from world. From the perspective of the agent, this constitutes a violation of her autonomy and her desire for self-preservation. Against the felt narrowing and contracting of the body a counterforce thus arises, one that reaffirms and shields against continued violation. In our present example, we might assume the object continues to appear as threatening. The kinetic value animated in fear is not, as it would be in anger, one that affords lashing out at the object to force it to withdraw. Instead, the kinetic tone animated in the experience of fear affords hiding or withdrawal strategies (actions which remove the agent from the incursion of the threat object). In withdrawing, the agent's sensed body volume increases and the felt acuteness of her fear—in other terms, the kinetic tone grounding her fear—dissipates, gradually obscuring behavioral repertoires of self-diminishment and defense as live possibilities for action.

What can be concluded from this closer analysis of emotional drive in the experience of fear is that to speak of a singular register of valuing and being engaged in the world is misleading; in the case of emotional feeling, we are dealing with modes of valuing—the kinetic–somatic and the existential–relational. Yet, in another sense, we must speak of this engagement in the singular, since emotional feeling collapses these two distinctive valuing modes into one, what might be called a *kineso-existential* mode

of valuing. In the next section, I will further defend this mode as being at the heart of emotional drive and propose that any theory of emotion considering it primary to solving the puzzle of emotional feeling is fundamentally an *animationist* theory of emotion.

## Moving Forward with Animationist Theory

In the previous section, I argued that emotional drive is just the transposition of the world's existential impingement on or enhancement of the agent into a register of kinetic enactments. These kinetic enactments of relational concerns are the basis for a robust phenomenological conception of the first-person body as the continuous performer of self-animating motives and movements. To develop such a conception requires careful observation of the phenomenon of self-movement and the sensing of such movement. When attempting to appreciate the importance of the animationist theory for the future of phenomenology, it is crucial to note three recent trail-blazers in this venture along with their respective insights into the animative foundation of the first-person body. First, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's work has much to contribute, even though she is dealing more broadly with, as she says, 'thinking in movement', and has relatively little to say about emotional experience in particular. Sheets-Johnstone begins her analysis by observing that 'we perceive the *qualia* of our own movement; our bodily feelings of movement have a certain *qualitative character*'. We feel our movement as swift or slow, constricted or open, tense or loose, smooth or jerky, expansive or contractive, and so on. These *qualia* are not mental, but 'the product of animation'.<sup>20</sup> Sheets-Johnstone distills four primary vectors from the many qualitative possibilities of self-sensed movement: tensional, linear, amplitudinal, and projectional.<sup>21</sup> The tensional vector expresses the degree of effort felt in performing a movement, while the projectional vector captures how energy and force are released (e.g., hesitantly or ballistically). The amplitudinal vector has to do with the felt expansive or contractive dimension of a movement, also in terms of the larger space occupied. Finally, the linear vector captures the contour and path described by a movement. While amplitudinal and linear qualitative vectors chiefly describe the

spatial aspects of movement, tensional and projectional ones describe its temporal aspects. Sheets-Johnstone surmises that ‘complexity of affect may be tied to complexity of movement’.<sup>22</sup> We should draw on the four qualities of movement catalogued by Sheets-Johnstone to explore this promising idea and to generate more precise descriptions of the motor-kinetic elements of emotional animation.

A second trail-blazer is Daniel Stern, whose notion of *vitality affects* makes the connection between emotional, existential–relational, and kinetic value explicit. Vitality affects, as Stern defines them, are ‘qualities [of experience] that do not fit into our existing lexicon or taxonomy of affects [but that] are better captured by dynamic, kinetic terms, such as “surging,” “fading away,” “fleeting,” “explosive,” “crescendo,” “decrescendo,” “bursting,” “drawn out,” and so on.’<sup>23</sup> These qualities can be analyzed and classified using Sheets-Johnstone’s primary vectors, but here it is also worth recalling Binswanger’s comment on disappointment: he describes it as the sense of ‘our whole existence [moving] within the meaning matrix of stumbling, sinking, and falling’.<sup>24</sup> It is instructive to consider all emotional feelings as built on the interplay of dynamic pulses, but one of the challenges of such an approach is to find the language to describe this sophisticated intracorporeal performance of meaning. Stern’s metaphor-rich terminology complements Sheets-Johnstone’s vector-focused classifications.

To apply the qualities of sensed self-movement to emotional dynamics and meaning, it is important to consider the general kinds of action and behavior afforded by the diverse emotions. A trail-blazer in this regard is Jan Slaby, who isolates three categories of action occurring within and through emotion.<sup>25</sup> These are helpful in demonstrating the close bond between motor tendency, behavioral possibility, and the kinetic tones animated in emotion. First, what Slaby calls ‘full-blown action tendencies’, urge the performance of a particular action (often an interaction), such as running from a bear or kissing someone. Second, there are ‘tendencies towards expressions of emotions’, that is, actions which express emotion, such as clapping one’s hands in delight, shouting in anger, or crying in sadness. Third, there are what Slaby calls ‘impossible movement impulses’, such as (to use his examples) ‘wanting to sink into the ground in shame; wanting to “explode” in anger; wanting to “embrace the world” in intensive joy or euphoria; wanting to literally “melt” in affection.’<sup>26</sup>



Experiencing emotion as it unfolds is a matter not of sensing or perceiving, but of being animated to *do* something, even sometimes to do impossible things, like disappearing when we feel embarrassed. The urge to act out kineso-existential values is what unites these categories of emotion-driven action, or, more specifically, the emotion-driven *response* through action. And what is responded to in every instance are sensations, perceptions, and images touching on how the agent is faring in the world, as construed from within his or her vantage point. Stern's choice of the term *vitality* to qualify affect dynamics is well chosen—fundamentally emotional experience arises in the face of challenges to (or enhancements of) the agent's sense of his or her own vitality and viability.

I have argued in this chapter that the experience of emotion is made up of not only phenomenal and epistemological structures, but also performative ones, and that the transposition of existential value into the realm of the kinetic is at the heart of emotional agency and sense-making. The approach I have been defending can be called animationist, since its aim is to unite under one framework both the *self-movement* and the *self-motivation* of intelligent living systems (the common Latin root is *motus*, lit. a motion). It is an approach that has been pursued by others before me, as shown by examples above, and can be distinguished from perceptualist and signalist approaches to emotion by its emphasis on the crucial role of the pre-reflective, pre-linguistic first-person body in generating emotional drive. As noted at the outset, the 'self' involved in this may be quite primitive, something akin to the Gibsonian ecological self; the relevant distinction is between that which is animate and that which is inanimate. The inanimate is neither alive nor self-moving, and can be manipulated by external forces alone; it is determinate mechanism.

An animationist model of emotional feeling sheds light on a phenomenology of motivation and endogenous movement, and more broadly supports a conception of phenomenal awareness as essentially performative. As suggested previously, this is a difficult project because it is a challenge to verbalize. How well do terms such as 'force', 'effort', 'tone', 'value', and 'energy' capture dynamic tendencies, for example? Any phenomenological description of 'the inside' of emotional dynamics risks creating an impression of static content, or at best a call-and-response interaction between agent, object, and world. However, there can be nothing static

or unidirectional about the animation that is at the heart of emotional drive; it is nothing else but the continuous generation of movement (im) pulses in the midst of ongoing *melding* of agent and world.

Many questions remain for the future of phenomenological research in this area regarding the motivational awareness at play in emotional drive and the two modes of value that seem collapsed therein. Do the motor-kinetic qualities of emotional drive *follow from* or do they *generate* existential meanings? What is the relation of the performance of these qualities to reflective knowing and thinking? These are central questions that deserve further attention within the animationist program, which phenomenology in the new century stands poised to develop.

## Notes

1. M. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought. The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 1–2. Among those theorists who endorse weaker versions of perceptualism are Ronald de Sousa (1987), L.C. Charland, ‘Reconciling cognitive and perceptual theories of emotion: A representational proposal’. *Philosophy of Science* 64 (1997): 555–79; S. Döring, ‘Seeing what we do: Affective perception and rational motivation. *dialectica* 61 (2007): 363–94; C. Tappolet, *Emotions et valeurs* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2000); P. Goldie, ‘Emotion, feeling, and knowledge of the world,’ in *Thinking about feeling*, ed. R. C. Solomon (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 91–106; P. Goldie, ‘Getting feelings into emotional experience in the right way’, *Emotion Review* 3 (2009): 232–39; B.W. Helm, ‘Emotions as evaluative feelings’. *Emotion Review* 1 (2009): 248–55; M. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*; D. Achtenberg, ‘Emotions as perceptions of value’, in *Cognition of value in Aristotle’s ethics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), pp. 159–78; R.C. Roberts, *Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Michael Stocker, *Valuing Emotions* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and J.A. Deonna, ‘Emotion, perception, and perspective’, *dialectica* 60 (2006): 29–46. Döring and Tappolet, for instance, consider emotions to be instructively similar because both emotions and perceptions are noninferentially and perspectively structured and are, in their view,

nonrational. For other theorists, including Deonna and de Sousa, emotions present ‘evaluative facts’, which, like simply descriptive facts, track information about the agent–world relationship. While descriptive facts represent the world visually, tactilely, aurally, gustatorily, and olfactorily, evaluative facts reveal what we care about. Finally, some perceptualists, such as Goldie, Helm, and Stocker, emphasize phenomenological affinities between emotion and perception, more precisely, the inseparability of their intentional, perspectival, and qualitative content. Jesse Prinz adopts a stronger form of perceptualism, reducing emotion to a kind of perception (see J. Prinz, J. (2004) *Gut reactions: A perceptual theory of emotion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); ‘Is emotion a form of perception?’ in *The modularity of emotion*, eds. L. Faucher and C. Tappolet, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* supplementary vol. 32 (2007): 137–60). For Prinz, emotions are perceptions of bodily changes, which in turn signal so-called core relational themes, which concern agent and world relationships (e.g., the threat of harm). For a helpful survey and critique of perceptualism in contemporary emotion theory, see M. Salmela, ‘Can emotion be modelled on perception?’ *dialectica* 65, no. 1 (2011): 1–29.

2. The signalist assumption forms the basis of the emotion theories of Antonio Damasio and Jesse Prinz. Damasio’s somatic marker hypothesis, founded in neurology and anti-Cartesian sentiment, remains the most widely known contemporary attempt to shed light on the essential interaction (or even unity) of physical and mental in the case of emotional experience (A. Damasio, ‘The somatic marker hypothesis and the possible functions of the prefrontal cortex’, *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences* 351, no. 1346 (1996): 1413–20); *Descartes’ error: Emotion, reason and the human brain*. London: Vintage, 1996/2006). Philosopher Jesse Prinz’s theory of embodied appraisal (which is a strongly perceptualist theory) builds on Damasio’s ideas, adding an account of the intentionality of emotion.
3. M. Sheets-Johnstone, *The primacy of movement* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins, 1999), p. 487.
4. It is worth briefly noting the reach and history of the term ‘animation’. Conventionally, the term connotes, on the one hand, a sense of inspiration and encouragement, of liveliness of manner, vivacity, and the process by which something becomes lively or enlivened, and, on the other hand, a sense relating to life and action per se: ‘The action or process of imparting life, vitality, or (as a sign of life) motion; quickening, vitalizing’ (‘animation’,

in *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 2011, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/61249?rskey=vbmnZS&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> (accessed July 14, 2012), I.1-3 and II.4.a). These meanings are metaphysically neutral, that is, they need not be linked with a dualist or Judeo-Christian notion of animation as 'ensoulment', the imparting of life to otherwise lifeless matter through the soul (*anima*). Early phenomenologists also made use of the term. As central as the sense of self-capacity (what Husserl in *Ideas II* and *III* and later Merleau-Ponty label the 'I can') is to phenomenological accounts of the foundational structures of somatic experience, its early theorizers recognized that this sense in turn is dependent on even more basic capacities: that of self-movement and the sensing of self-movement. Husserl writes that '[a]nimation designates the way in which mind acquires a locality in the spatial world, its spatialization, as it were, and together with its corporeal support, acquires reality' (E. Husserl, *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy. Second book: Studies in the phenomenology of constitution* (Ideas II), ed. and trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer (Dordrecht: Springer, 1977), p. 101).

5. D.A. Rosenbaum, J. Vaughan, M.J. Jorgensen, H.J. Barns, and E. Stewart, 'Plans for object manipulation', in *Attention and Performance XIV: Synergies in Experimental Psychology, Artificial Intelligence, and Cognitive Neuroscience*, eds. D.E. Meyer and S. Kornblum (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993).
6. M. Ratcliffe, *Feelings of Being: Phenomenology, Psychiatry and the Sense of Reality* (London and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 127.
7. M. Sheets-Johnstone, *The roots of power: Animate form and gendered bodies* (Peru, IL: Open Court, 1994), p. 70.
8. Sheets-Johnstone, *The primacy of movement*, p. 156.
9. On the close neuroanatomical bond between the sense of capacity and sense of motivation, Antonio Damasio offers a fascinating anecdote concerning the condition of suspended animation, a condition that results from lesions in the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC). The ACC is neurally linked both to the prefrontal cortex (the center of executive functioning, such as planning and decision-making), the parietal cortex (where the somatosensory center of the human cortex, the postcentral gyrus, is located), the amygdala, the nucleus accumbens, and the hypothalamus and the anterior insula (the emotional and motivational processing centers). Thus, the ACC is a central go-between for both 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' stimuli and controls, and seems centrally implicated in the production

of that elusive energy known as 'effort' (cf. Damasio, *Descartes' error*, p. 71; J.E. LeDoux, *The emotional brain: the mysterious underpinnings of emotional life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998); J.M. Allman, A. Hakeem, J.M. Erwin, E. Nimchinsky, and P. Hof, 'The anterior cingulate cortex. The evolution of an interface between emotion and cognition', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 935, no. 1 (2001): 107–17). Damasio describes the case of Mrs. T, who, for months after a stroke damaged her ACC, lay nearly motionless, blank-faced, and almost speechless in bed. She would occasionally pull her bedsheet up higher (assumed by Damasio to be a purely reflexive, autonomically commanded action) or repeat her name, the names of loved ones or the name of her childhood town, but that was all. When she emerged from this mutism and akinesia a few months later, Mrs. T insisted she never felt her mind or her desires to be imprisoned by her immobility. She reports she simply felt no motivation to do anything other than she did: 'I really had nothing to say' (Damasio, *Descartes' error*, p. 73).

10. Helm, 'Emotions as evaluative feelings', p. 249.
11. J. Slaby, 'Affective intentionality and the feeling body', *Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* 7 (2008): 429–44, p. 433.
12. Ratcliffe, *Feelings of being*, p. 111.
13. Ratcliffe, *Feelings of being*, p. 1.
14. L. Binswanger, *Being-in-the-world: Selected papers* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 223.
15. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of thought*, p. 2.
16. D. Welton, 'The emergence of affectivity and action', presented at the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy annual meeting, Pittsburgh, PA, 2008 (unpublished manuscript), p. 19.
17. Welton, 'The emergence of affectivity and action', p. 13.
18. Slaby, 'Affective intentionality and the feeling body', p. 437.
19. Slaby, 'Affective intentionality and the feeling body', p. 436.
20. Sheets-Johnstone, *The primacy of movement*, pp. 56–7.
21. Cf. also Sheets-Johnstone 1999.
22. Sheets-Johnstone, *The primacy of movement*, p. 84n.16.
23. D. Stern, *Interpersonal world of the infant: A view from psychoanalysis and developmental psychology* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1985), p. 54.
24. Binswanger, *Being-in-the-world*, p. 223.
25. Slaby, 'Affective intentionality and the feeling body', p. 439.
26. Slaby, 'Affective intentionality and the feeling body', p. 439.

# 9

## Phenomenological Distinctions: Two Types of Envy and Their Difference from Covetousness

Michael R. Kelly

The title of my chapter takes its inspiration from the subtitle of an essay by Robert Sokolowski, ‘The Method of Philosophy: Making Distinctions’.<sup>1</sup> Just as phenomenology’s descriptive work doesn’t invalidate the natural attitude intentionalities but leads us back to them in a way that we can see them and their structure more clearly, philosophy doesn’t do anything ‘new’, so to speak. As Sokolowski remarks, ‘philosophy does bring to the fore things we already know and take for granted; however, ... it brings them forward in a way that illuminates ...tells us old stuff, but ... interesting and valuable old stuff’.<sup>2</sup> As the subtitle of my paper suggests, I hope in what follows to be working from and in and with this modest yet challenging vision of philosophy—which is a vision of phenomenology and of which I will say a bit more in conclusion<sup>3</sup>—for envy is an emotion on which more light could be shed for philosophy, phenomenology, phenomenological theology, and most importantly mundane experience.

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Some recent discussions of envy in moral psychology have defended two controversial claims: (1) envy occurs in two types, and (2) one of these types is benign.<sup>4</sup> Such views challenge the dominant view in Western philosophy that envy is always bad and entails distress over another's good fortune.<sup>5</sup> For different reasons, Robert Roberts and Gabrielle Taylor, for example, hold that envy is not always and all bad (but sometimes benign) because envy does not always begrudgingly regard the other. Roberts holds that there are two types of envy the ensuing behaviors of which are such that one 'attacks' the neighbor and another motivates the envier to improve himself through something like healthy, competitive strife. Gabrielle Taylor more directly articulates two types of envy, one that 'attacks' the neighbor and another wherein the envier focuses less on the neighbor and more on the good 'thing' possessed. Regardless, both thinkers rightly identify a mode of envy focused upon the envier and lacking that familiar characteristic of envy, namely, the hostile regard of the neighbor who occupies some superior status with respect to a thing, trait, or capacity of importance to the envier.

In what follows, I attempt to provide a phenomenological account of envy that preserves the two-type distinction—a traditional type that regards the neighbor with malice and a nontraditional type that effectively eats away at the envier—without requiring an appeal to the infelicitous notion of benign envy. More precisely, I want to claim that these two types of envy (one self- and another other-assessing) are founded upon envy's full intentional structure; before such objectifying regard, we should describe the first moment of envy as a pre-reflective and self-aware moment that correlatively accompanies the agent's objectifying realization of his neighbor's superior standing.<sup>6</sup> I shall look closely at Taylor's account, which expressly articulates two types of envy and only implicitly endorses a view of benign envy therein. Her view of emotive intentionality, however, precludes her from successfully developing envy's self- and other-assessing types and instead leads her to a view of envy wherein one of its two types is conflated with covetousness. *Phenomenologically*, what needs to be shown is that at the pre-reflective level of experience all envy is both self- and other-assessing before the envier's intentional 'focus' hones in on the self or the other as an object. And, whether directed to the other or the self, we cannot consider envy benign because (at the very least) it *incapacitates* the agent's ability to see the good and his own good.

To adopt an observation from Robert Sokolowski in anticipation of preserving the badness of even self-directed envy, ‘vice is self-destructive because even the vicious agent is striving for what is good, but he has made himself incapable of displaying the good to himself, and so as a “rational” agent he acts blindly and ruins himself’.<sup>7</sup>

I shall proceed in three steps. First, as a foundation for a view of two types of envy, I present an initial picture of envy as a self-assessing emotion in light of Gabrielle Taylor’s analysis of self-assessing emotions.<sup>8</sup> Second, I argue that while Taylor distinguishes two types of envy—‘state-envy’, which regards with hostility the status or state of the envied, and ‘object-envy’, which denotes an envying agent’s reaction to the object possessed by the envied and yet wherein the envied plays a minimal role—her description of object-envy paints the envied person out of the picture and thus presents a case of covetousness; her description of object-envy thus misses envy’s self-assessing dimension. In the third section, then, I propose a decidedly phenomenological development of Taylor’s position. I distinguish envy from covetousness, for unlike envy covetousness neither attacks the possessor of the coveted good nor the ‘status’ of the coveter for lacking that good. In conclusion and to better capture the bidirectionality of envy’s intentional structure, I propose to replace Taylor’s notion of state-envy with a notion of possessor-envy and her notion of object-envy with a notion of deficiency-envy. A phenomenological account of envy can accommodate Taylor’s insight that there are two types of envy without (1) running either type of envy into covetousness and (2) endorsing the perhaps indefensible view of a benign form of envy.

## Envy and Emotions of Self-Assessment

Envy is an essentially comparative emotive intentionality that we may preliminarily define as the (at least) begrudging and self-reproaching response to perceiving, or believing there exists, a disparity between me and another on the grounds that some proximal other (neighbor)<sup>9</sup> possesses a thing, trait, or capacity that I value, desire, and wish to possess, but lack. This emotional response presupposes that the envier (1) has evaluated and desires something as advantageous, (2) apprehended the other as possessing that thing of advantage, (3) apprehended oneself as lacking that thing, and thus



(4) is experiencing some kind of bidirectional begrudging feelings of distress.<sup>10</sup> One feels envious when one perceives, believes, or imagines another with something that one judges as desirable and important for oneself but which one lacks. Correlatively, the other's status appears enhanced, while one's own status appears diminished or deficient.

An adequate account of envy must include its moment of self-assessment, an account of how the envier feels, what he believes, wishes for, and so on in an episode of envy regarding himself and his neighbor. Yet envy remains omitted from lists of self-assessing emotions—perhaps because work on envy since Aristotle has tended to focus on envy's begrudging regard of the envied and the envier's potentially harmful actions directed toward the envied.

According to Taylor, we group emotions as other- or self-assessing according to the nature of the belief characteristic of certain emotions. Taylor includes within the group of self-assessing emotions those such as remorse, guilt, shame, humiliation, pride, and regret (PSG 1). Consistent with this grouping, philosophers such as Peter Hacker distinguish self-assessing emotions from 'paradigmatic emotions' or other-assessing emotions such as jealousy, envy, indignation, fear, love, and so on.<sup>11</sup> Taylor explains her criteria for self-assessing emotions as follows:

[I]n experiencing [self-assessing] emotions, the person concerned believes of herself that she has deviated from some norm and that in doing so she has altered her standing in the world. The self is the 'object' of these emotions, and what is believed amounts to an assessment of the self. (PSG 1)

To refer to the self as the 'object' of these emotions does not mean simply that the self is the intentional focus or object of the emotion. On the one hand, Taylor refers to that toward which the emotion is directed as an 'external object'. On the other hand, she argues that emotions also have 'an "internal object," constitutive of the emotion, which is expressed in propositions stating the agent's view of the given situation' (DV 14). For example, an agent's belief that his particular action is estimable or his particular gaffe is inestimable might constitute the emotion of pride or humiliation, respectively. The action or gaffe is the external object, while the self's propositional attitude regarding the act or gaffe is the internal object. The moral psychology of emotions of self-assessment is such that

[t]he experience of an emotion of self-assessment ... is a happening which changes ... the view the agent takes of himself. Starting from a set of beliefs or assumptions about himself, his conception of some event or state of affairs is such that he has to formulate beliefs about himself which conflict with the ones held initially ... The new situation, as seen by him, clashes with the world as he ... expected to find it, and as a result there is a change in his beliefs concerning this relationship to the world, and thereby also concerning himself. He now sees [the world] as quite different from what he took it to be, and this difference is reflected in his own standing. (PSG 15)

In emotions of self-assessment, the self assesses itself objectively or is the object of the emotion. The self as external object is the intentional content that meets or fills the proposition or belief (e.g., I desire to be but am not as rich as him or he is richer than me or than I desire to be). In the case of envy, however, a kind of self-assessment occurs wherein the self is intrinsically (pre-reflectively and nonobjectively) involved in the experience but is not the 'object of this emotion', as Taylor puts it.<sup>12</sup> What are we to say of Iago's implicit belief, which holds something like 'I am more capable a lieutenant than Cassio'? Indeed, Iago 'sees' a change in his standing in the world; but he is given to himself in this experience not as the object of this emotion but as the agent, the subject, assessing his inferior status.

Phenomenologically, we would say that Iago nonobjectively 'feels', that is, 'apprehends' his inferior standing just as he takes Cassio's appointment to raise Cassio's standing and correlatively lower his own. Envy is always a comparative emotion that is self- and other-assessing. And the pre-reflective self-assessment in this comparative emotion of envying can be characterized by *the nonobjectifying (lived-through) frustrated feeling that discloses and is disclosed by* being lowered just as Cassio is raised. Iago may have moments of reflection or rumination wherein he objectively evaluates and compares his qualifications and standing with that of Cassio's. But in the 'heat' of the emotion, in the envious moment, he pre-reflectively and nonobjectively takes Cassio as raised above himself. And when reflection sets in, the self may become the object of the emotion (the envious agent scrutinizing himself) or the envied other may become the object of the emotion (the envious agent stewing or raging over the disparity that puts him beneath his neighbor).

Why, then, has philosophy tended to exclude envy from the group of self-assessing emotions? There seems to be two major reasons. First, unlike the shamed, humiliated, or guilty person, we don't typically think the envious person becomes an object for himself. Rather than objectify himself, an envier typically takes the envied as the object of reproach. As such, we are wont to saying that enviers typically do not revise their beliefs about themselves; rather, enviers revise their beliefs about the world in something like a Sartrean 'magical' transformation wherein the distressed emotional agent changes his view about the world but this does not change the world itself. This device, however, is very much about the self-assessing dimension of envy. Nevertheless, we typically believe that the envier does not believe he has, as Taylor puts it, 'deviated from some norm', like Sartre's discovered voyeur who experiences shame. Indeed, the envier often attributes his condition to the other. But I think the experience of envy escapes both possible objections to its inclusion in the category of self-assessing emotions.

Concerning the second worry, Aristotle noted in passing, in his *Rhetoric* that we 'envy those whose possession of or success in a thing is *a reproach to us* ... for it is clear that *it is our own fault* we have missed the good thing in question'.<sup>13</sup> While Aristotle does not pursue this insight into the self-assessing dimension of envy—pre-reflective or objectifying—it implies that however perverted the envier's beliefs, however distorted the envier's assessments concerning the envied, the envier believes he has violated some norm. The envier believes he has deviated from the norm of what is deserving of a person of his standing in the world or status. Insofar as envy is always and essentially a comparative emotion, the envier deviates not from a moral norm of conduct but from a norm associated with social status. It does not matter if the envier's belief or emotional response is unjustified or unwarranted; it does not matter if the envier deserves or does not deserve the good in question. What matters is that the envier looks askance at himself and the envied insofar as that person's superior standing is 'a reproach to [him]', that is, the envier, upon perceiving a person of comparable social standing in possession of that which he lacks, already assesses himself vis-à-vis his neighbor.

This defense against the second worry, however, seemingly returns us to the first worry in labeling envy a self-assessing emotion, namely, that an envier typically does not become an object for himself. Envy is complicated

because it tends to conceal itself, often even from itself. Rare is the envier, we believe, who may change or critically assess his beliefs concerning his deservingness or the quality of his efforts to secure what he believes he deserves. Most enviers tend instead to change their beliefs about certain persons in the world thought responsible for the enviers' inferior status, to redirect their painful feelings of self-assessment outward to compensate for, explain, or excuse his apprehension of his 'altered ... standing in the world' In any event, according to a phenomenological notion of pre-reflective self-awareness (upon which Taylor's notion of self-assessing emotions would rest) we can say that the envier assesses himself even when he attempts to reinforce his opinion of himself in light of this perceived or believed disparity. Enviers who typically redirect or translate their envy into an approximate, more tolerable emotion (often indignation or resentment) must have first comparatively evaluated their shortcoming vis-à-vis the envied. And in the act of comparison the envier assesses himself at a pre-reflective level by measuring himself against the envied.

In an objectifying act, the envier may not necessarily isolate and focus on his shortcomings in the way that Taylor speaks of the self as an object in self-assessing emotions. But there is a pre-reflectively apprehended sense of self-assessment involved in the comparative act essential to the intentional structure of envy; indeed, in a moment of envy, the envier is constituted by the other in such a way that he will or will not permit into his worldview. The judgment at play in an interpersonal comparison of this sort says, 'I am inferior to him at least in this measure of importance.' If this experience grows to a focus on the other and her superior status because the self cannot admit this disparity into his world without rationalizing its presence, then I shall call this *possessor-envy*. But if this experience develops into a 'reproach to oneself' and one's inferior status, I shall call this *deficiency-envy*. The former is other-assessing in Taylor's sense and captures our conventional understanding of envy. The latter is self-assessing in Taylor's sense that the self takes itself as an object. But in either case, the original experience of envy stems from a pre-reflectively apprehended presentation of self-and-neighbor in a comparative intentionality that considers oneself as inferior to another with respect to a thing, trait, or capacity that the self deems important for its status and/or self-worth.

## Self-Assessing and Self- and Other-Assessing Emotions: Covetousness and Envy

In *Deadly Vices*, Taylor develops a subtle account of various types of envy built upon a distinction between state-envy and object-envy. State-envy recapitulates the standard view of envy as other-assessing and hostile toward the neighbor. Object-envy defends a view of that overshadowed (and I think more common) self-assessing type of envy that targets the envier's shortcomings. As I don't think Taylor's account of this fundamental distinction always works, I shall forgo her discussion of the more subtle types.

Object-envy denotes a desire for some good such that, as Taylor writes, 'its possessor plays a relatively minor role as being merely the occasion for the envious person's realization of her deficiencies' (DV 43).<sup>14</sup> In such a case, the envier's 'perception of the other's possession of the good turns her attention to irritating or even humiliating thoughts about her lack of it' (DV 43). The intentional focus of object-envy is a bit vague. But the humiliating thoughts are about 'her lack of [the good]' more than the other with her possession of the good that the envier values and desires but lacks. That the possessed good itself as lacked is, on Taylor's account, the focus in object-envy, becomes clear when we consider Taylor's notion of state-envy, which denotes 'the other's "state" of occupying some comparatively advantageous position; it is *their* possession of the good rather than the good itself' that bothers the state-envier (DV 44). The state-envier sees the other as 'somehow crucially involved in her finding herself in an inferior position'; it is the kind of envy Iago has for Cassio. The state-envier takes the envied as the 'cause' and object of his inferior self-standing. If the state-envier has a disagreeable view of himself, it is one he does not entertain precisely insofar as he reproaches the other and not himself (DV 45). Taylor thus concludes that 'it is object-envy that is not vicious' in the sense traditionally understood, 'for [object-envy] lacks what is often thought to be a crucial feature: a degree of hostility directed against those seen as the possessor of the desirable good' (DV 43-4).

But her account of object-envy doesn't capture its self-assessing dimension adequately. What Taylor calls object-envy is not yet self-assessing precisely insofar as it includes humiliating thoughts not about herself but about 'her lack of [the good]'; but the center of gravity in this experience

if it is to be envy—and not longing or covetousness—must be about the envier and his assessment of himself *as* inferior, diminished, and so on, insofar as he feels humiliated because he lacks the good in question. Three points of her view require further clarification.

First, we should note that Taylor's account of object-envy blurs into covetousness. Taylor's rather weak claim that 'in object-envy ... its possessor plays a relatively minor role' concedes this much. Her preliminary examination of envy, in fact, conditions this separation of the object from the possessor and runs envy into covetousness, for she maintains that 'by analogy with the distinction between the sin and the sinner, we should distinguish between the possessor of the good...and the good possessed'. With this distinction in place she maintains that in state-envy 'it is [the envied's] possession of the good rather than the good itself' that distresses the state-envier. Accordingly, what bothers the object-envier is 'the good itself' that she desires but lacks. Yet, if the object itself in its possessor's absences generates in me irritating or humiliating thoughts about myself, then we may have a case of covetousness and not envy.

Second, it does not strike me as plausible to say that any kind or type of envier is bothered by 'the good itself', for the very desire for the good that is presumably thought good for my social status or desired sense of self begets envy—it is its founding condition, the condition upon which envy is built and without which it cannot arise.

Lastly, her claim that object-envy 'is not vicious' is misleadingly incomplete. Object-envy may not be vicious in the sense that it is not hostile toward the other. One cannot hold that object-envy 'is not vicious' if by not vicious we mean benign; to hold that object-envy is benign is to continue to operate with the bias in philosophy that has inadequately viewed envy as only hostilely directed toward the other. Object-envy is not benign and is vicious insofar as it affects the envier in any number of negative ways. As Taylor herself concedes, such envy 'may not drastically harm the agent' (DV 43). Indeed, a close look at her account reveals that the object (the good something in question) motivates a turn to the self's deficiencies *disclosed in and by* those irritating or humiliating thoughts; these thoughts, moreover, are not about the envier's lack of the good something itself in question but his inferiority to his neighbor when he notes his lack of the desired and valued thing, trait, or capacity.

To develop Taylor's account, I want to suggest that the intentional structure of any type of envy essentially includes negative affects directed toward oneself and/or another on a comparative scale—a comparative intentionality of self- and other-assessment wherein the self is pre-reflectively given (nonobjectively) *as* inferior in the very encounter with the neighbor's status given (objectified) *as* superior. I live through the sense that I am lesser than him with respect to whatever thing, trait, or capacity that I value and desire but lack. That is, I objectively apprehend his superior status and nonobjectively apprehend my inferiority, which is implicated by and in the neighbor's superior status and thus is an intrinsic feature of this specific type of comparative assessment. A better distinction within envy seems to me to be one between deficiency-envy and possessor-envy. This distinction has at least three merits. First, it captures a feature of envy obscured by Taylor's fundamental distinction, namely, that both types of envy fundamentally and essentially are about status. Second, it avoids the infelicitous commitment to a benign type of envy. Third, it can accommodate Taylor's notions of object- and state-envy without separating the object from its possessor, which cannot happen in envy lest we conflate it with covetousness. I shall work backward from these claims, first distinguishing envy from covetousness.

Both envious and covetous persons value and wish for but lack something and accordingly feel distress over this lack. The intentional focus of envy differentiates it from covetousness; what the envier's belief and evaluation "focuses" on is not simply the lack of the valued and desired thing but the lack of that something *vis-à-vis* the one who possesses that something that the envier values and desires but lacks.

One likely will envy another only if he perceives the other to be socially proximal, an equal, or perhaps a rival; I may covet the position of royalty, for example, but it makes little sense to envy the queen of England for genealogical, social, and anatomical reasons. I may, however, envy my local city council woman if I actively wish to involve myself in lower-level politics. Here is a social space where envy and covetousness come closer together. What distinguishes them, however, is the envious person's distress over the other possessing the desired thing, or amount or quality of that thing, *for* possessing that desired thing while the envier lacks it (and by virtue of lacking it descends beneath the neighbor at least

with respect to that good something in question). The covetous person, unlike the envier, desires the object and is distressed over his unfulfilled desire that another has fulfilled. As such, the coveter is not necessarily distressed by the possessor of that something, that is, the coveter does not necessarily begrudge the possessor for possessing the desired thing, for the other is separated from the good possessed—like the sinner is separated from the sin in Taylor's analogy.

Although we often hear it said that one covets palatial estates, for example, if this coveter does not begrudge the other that capacity or thing because he lacks it, then he cannot also be said to envy the financially successful. This is not merely because the one possessing the coveted object is fungible, which indeed s/he is. But the coveter covets even when no one possesses the valued and desired object, for example, the coveter covets the Bentley or the Rolls on the showroom floor. In fact, the coveter sometimes doesn't even notice the possessor at all. As J.R.R. Tolkien's character of Gollum exemplifies, the coveter is often blinded by the object, and thus sees only the object of his desires—his 'precious'. The possessor thus appears more absent than fungible for the coveter, occupying a space on the margin of the experience. That the possessor is absent or fungible for the coveter seems quite close to the minimized possessor in Taylor's account of object-envy. The act of coveting, moreover, shares with envy only the desire for *something* that is an *object* not inherent to its possessor. Unlike covetousness, envy extends beyond a desire for *something* and sometimes desires a trait or capacity of the other (as when Iago envies the Moore's political savvy and/or Cassio's purported military acumen). Perhaps this is why biblical wisdom does not warn against coveting thy neighbor's good looks (trait) or quick wit (capacity).

What bothers the envier is another person who possesses the desired something, whereas the intentional focus of the coveter is on the thing itself, full stop. Both the envier and the coveter may feel pain in light of this perceived lack, but the envier's pain is both self- and other-assessing, whereas the coveter's pain remains only self-assessing. And yet the coveter's self-directed pain is very different from the envier's, for the coveter may feel the pain of longing for the desired object—the void left in himself by the absence of the object—but he need not take his lack of the coveted thing as a reproach to himself.



Dramatic depictions of covetousness or envy sometimes end the same way, namely, with the agent under the spell of the vice killing the other. I have a bit to say about this below, but for now, this brief eidetic analysis of the intentional focus of envy and coveting reveals that the coveter and the envier share at a superficial level only a distressing feeling in the self-assessing moment of this experience of lacking some desirable thing. Basically, covetousness and envy are not both bidirectional feelings, that is, not both self- and other-assessing. Hence we have a correlate to the claim that the coveter, without begrudging the possessor, 'loves' and desires the object and is only distressed over his lack of it and/or his failure to secure it. The coveter may feel inadequate or incomplete without this thing, but since coveting is not essentially comparative, he need not feel a sense of inferiority with respect to social status that the envier will—even if he believes his life and status would be enhanced by possessing that thing. As we have seen, Aristotle suggests that the envier reproves himself in light of his comparative assessment of the envied person's success. Coveting is not a comparative intentionality, and the coveter certainly does not see his neighbor as responsible for, or the cause of, his inferiority; that would amount to what Taylor termed state-envy and I term possessor-envy. In short, the envier in both senses is necessarily a coveter but the coveter is not necessarily an envier in either sense.

These distinctions are underscored by the way ordinary language itself expresses these emotions. Compare the sentences, 'I covet X' and 'I envy X.' When we let X be *you*, the sentences are grammatical and make sense, but the expression 'I envy you' could be one of those oddly welcomed but poorly expressed forms of flattery, while the expression 'I covet you' is peculiar, perhaps creepy, and surely unwelcome by the second person. If we let X be *your goods*, the sentences again are grammatical and make sense; yet it would be an odd use of envy insofar as envy intends persons. Finally, if we let X be *you your goods*, only the sentence where envy is the intentional act makes sense. The very syntax of the expression 'I covet you your oxen' is more than peculiar and looks like a category mistake because one covets objects, not their possessors.

## Two Types of Envy Both Self- and Other-Assessing

All envy begins for the envier in a pre-reflective, lived (through) experience of seeing a socially proximate equal having secured that which I value and desire but lack—an experience that entails the objective givenness of the other as superior and thus the implicit givenness of the self as inferior (at least with respect to that good something in question). These are the facts the affects evaluate as displeasing. Different types of envy, I believe, contain different intentional contents based on different enviers' beliefs. Let's take an example: A scholar leaves a talk by another scholar to whom the audience responded quite favorably, a talk for which this honored scholar deserved praise; our irritated scholar remarks to his companion, 'So-and-so's paper was pretentious, unclear and full of jargon.' How this agitated scholar experiences the unpleasant feelings that motivate this remark indicates important differences in the intentional structure of envy, its intentional content as conditioned by the agent's beliefs.

If the agitated scholar targets the honored scholar for possessing great talent or capacity in the way that Iago envied Cassio's genius, then he may be said to suffer from possessor-envy. This type of envy wishes inordinately to possess that thing, trait, or capacity in superior degree and/or exclusivity from the envied. Lacking that desirable thing, the possessor envier considers the envied responsible for, or the cause of, his lack of honor.<sup>15</sup> In the case of exclusivity, a possessor envier wishes to possess the desired something at the expense of his neighbor or rival enjoying that something. The distress experienced by the possessor envier in his inferiority couples with a hateful feeling directed toward the honored scholar who has the desired something exclusively or in superiority. The honored scholar in the possessor envier's view is the cause of the unremarkable scholar's hostility much like Taylor's person in the grip of state-envy. But Taylor's analysis of envy, which operates on an analogy of sin to sinner, implies that no self-assessment occurs in state-envy.

In the case of possessor-envy, it is easy to see how it is other-directed: the envier now hostilely sees the envied as someone who is the cause of, or responsible for, the envier's deprivation or not having some good. It matters not whether the envier is correct in this other-assessment. Were it not for

Cassio, Iago believes he would have the fame, attention, honor, and accolades that he at least thinks he deserves. In this case, however, it is difficult to see how possessor-envy is self-assessing. But possessor-envy is self-assessing, for the possessor envier assesses the disparity he perceives as displeasing precisely insofar as he believes he is at least as much if not more worthy and deserving of the desired good; in the comparative assessment he believes he is equal or superior to its possessor and because he feels aggrieved by his lack of the desired something he is hostile toward its possessor. Whether the envier subconsciously reproves himself or simply acknowledges an inequitable disparity, whether he believes himself even to be envious or not, is not essential to envy. What is important is that this envier assesses himself to be worthy and deserving of the good the envied possesses *and* apprehends his lack of that of which he believes himself worthy vis-à-vis his social proximal having it. The self-assessment of a possessor envier is hidden or self-deceived. The possessor envier does not take responsibility for this self-assessment but redirects the painful feelings of envy and inferiority into more proximate and appropriate emotions (e.g., a self-justifying sense of indignation or resentment).<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, possessor-envy remains a paradigmatic case of a self-assessing emotion in my alternative to Taylor's analysis. Accordingly, the possessor envier's view of his standing in the world may not change, but he changes his view of the world in a way that does not change the world itself—yet he does this because he first saw his changed standing in the world but could not accept it.

Let's return to our agitated scholar. If this scholar were to wish to possess that desirable something in equal quality to which the honored scholar possesses it—but neither at the expense of his neighbor having it nor even in superiority to the neighbor—then he may be said to suffer from deficiency-envy. Wishing to enjoy the desired something in equivalent degree renders the affective reaction to his perceived inferiority (at least with respect to the desirable something) more ambiguous. The distress experienced by this deficiency envier may couple with a begrudging feeling but not a sense of hostility directed toward the honored scholar. The deficiency envier unwillingly acknowledges the superiority of the envied but focuses on self-reprove rather than attacking the other, similar to Taylor's person in the grip of object-envy. Here, then, neither Iago nor Salieri qualifies as a deficiency envier; Iago attacks the other and Salieri does not attack himself for his inferiority.

Whereas in the case of possessor-envy it is easy to see how it is other-assessing but hard to see how it is self-assessing, in the case of deficiency-envy it is easy to see how it is self-assessing but difficult to see how it is other-assessing. My account of deficiency-envy, unlike Taylor's analysis of object-envy, suggests that deficiency-envy is other-assessing because the envied—with her possession—is essential to the feeling of envy insofar as the other and not the good itself is the painful reminder of one's lacking a certain desirable good. Taylor has noted this dimension of object-envy but only at the level of reflective regard, noting that the envier turns on himself because of his lack of the desired good. I think she is right about what I am calling the deficiency envier turning on himself, but her account obscures the way in which the deficiency-envy is as much about status as possessor-envy; these types of envy differ in how the envier handles their perception of their changed standing in the world that first occurred in the comparative moment.

Contra Taylor's theory of object-envy to which I am drawing a parallel in deficiency-envy, the other person is essential and is assessed because the deficiency envier believes that the envied has a good that the envier should have, and the 'should' here is spelled out as follows: given that the deficiency envier believes himself equal or superior to the envied with regard to the virtues/strengths and vices/weaknesses of the envied, the envier should have the good that the envied has but he does not. As with possessor-envy, the other is assessed necessarily because the deficiency envier measures what he should or should not have based his view upon of what an apparent equal does have. The envier is someone who believes this good is essential to his self-esteem or standing in the world vis-à-vis not just anyone who possesses that thing but is an apparent equal or rival who does.

What is unique about deficiency-envy, as Taylor intuited in her notion of object-envy but ambiguously articulated, is that the envied is not believed to be the cause of my lack and the envied is not perceived or believed to be an impediment to my attaining the good that I lack. Both conditions contribute to the fact that the deficiency envier may begrudge the envied but not direct hostility toward the envied. Since the envied did not cause the deficiency envier's predicament and does not block my efforts to resolve this predicament, she should not be the focus of this type of envy—but she should not be excluded or separated either.

What goes missing in Taylor's account that my view of deficiency-envy can capture is that while the other may recede to the margin of the experience, she first played a crucial role in my deficiency-envy insofar as her appearance as the superior (at least with respect to some desirable good) constitutes the self as deficiency envier in a robust way. The other is the cause of my recognizing and thus focusing on my deficiency, but she is not the object of my deficiency-envy, for the object of the focus of my deficiency-envy is me precisely in my deficiency—those irritating or humiliating thoughts Taylor rightly described. In this sense, then, deficiency-envy is not benign, for it harms—'rots of the bones' of, as Proverbs 14:30 warns—the envier even if it is not hostile toward the envied. The superior other in possessor-envy still constitutes the possessor envier in an even more robust way. The possessor envier apprehends the same disparity as the deficiency envier, but he cannot admit the facts of the disparity, for the self-examination would prove too painful, the psychic distress too great; he thus attacks the other to protect what little self-esteem he must remind himself he has (and this is why enviers don't often believe themselves inferior to their neighbor even when they admit their inferiority in that moment—an admission evidenced by the fact that we'd see no other reason for their agitation).

It is, of course, one thing to begrudge another her goods, traits, or capacities and quite another to malign her for them. In deficiency-envy, to begrudge or acknowledge something reluctantly, namely, that another has a thing, trait, or capacity that I desire but lack, can take the form of neither celebrating that good with her nor condemning her for that good, nor even condemning the good itself insofar as she possesses it and I do not. But possessor-envy takes the form of not celebrating that good, as well as condemning the other for possessing that good although it will not condemn the good itself in light of the fact that the other possesses it and I do not. The possessor envier does not simply look on the disparity between himself and the other with reluctant acknowledgment (begrudgingly). The possessor envier seeks to outstrip the good possessed by the envied or even to minimize the envier himself if he cannot secure the good in greater or exclusive measure. This is why possessor enviers often criticize the envied for reasons that go beyond the perception or that trigger envy as Iago looked askance at Cassio's martial, political, and moral qualifications, or lack thereof.<sup>17</sup>

The distinction between types of envy can forestall the possible objection of an overlooked convergence between envy and covetousness as found in Taylor's account of object-envy. As I mentioned above, a typical coveter simply wants the thing, does not begrudge its possessor, and need not reproach himself or feel inferior for lacking the thing; yet pathological covetousness, one may note, can grow to monstrous proportions and converge with possessor-envy where one hates or attacks the possessor. But even here, we find that the coveter and envier differ, at least insofar as the possessor envier would destroy the object to strike back against the envied who is not fungible, whereas in order to acquire the desired object the coveter would destroy the possessor who is fungible if not absent but never destroy the object, which is not fungible. Gollum would never destroy the object but might destroy its possessor, whereas the envier would destroy the object but not necessarily the person. And with respect to deficiency-envy and the coveter, the latter need not disparage himself for lacking that which he desires. Deficiency-envy may not be vicious in the sense we typically regard envy's viciousness, but it is vicious in the *eudaimonistic* sense, for it harms the agent by making him unhappy—or even incapable of seeing his unhappiness, for while he's conflated the relation between certain goods and the worth of persons, and while his 'inclinations overcome his better judgment, ... he does have better judgment and is full of regrets', teetering on psychic ruin.<sup>18</sup> Envy is an emotion that is always bad—even if it is not all bad; it is especially bad for the envier and only in rare instances bad for the envied.<sup>19</sup>

## Riding Waves, Making Waves

Starting from Sokolowski's account of the method of philosophy—and phenomenology—my dialogue with Gabrielle Taylor's (and more broadly the) moral psychology of envy was motivated by an interest in contributing to some growing but still marginal discussions in phenomenology. First, while phenomenology has been a crossing between analytical and continental worlds for some time, less has been written about ethical matters (including the study of emotions as 'an index to our character',<sup>20</sup> as Aristotle put it), and this seems a fruitful

path for phenomenological research.<sup>21</sup> Second, I try to follow Steven Crowell's suggestive remarks concerning the future of phenomenology. Crowell has wagered that phenomenology's future depends on the talent of those who take it up; but he especially meant, I think, that the future of phenomenology rests on the talent of those who practice phenomenology in the context of issue-oriented rather than merely historical research.<sup>22</sup> Correlatively, Crowell more recently proposed a view of a 'new existentialism' located largely in analytical philosophy (work by Bernard Williams, Kristine Koorsgaard, etc.) and extended by Crowell's revival of existentialism designed to 'performatively ... demonstrate the vitality of existentialist thought' by examining issues in existentialism 'philosophically pertinent' for contemporary philosophical research.<sup>23</sup>

I've attempted to present a chapter that broadens these three contexts by taking them together. My intent is to contribute to the ethical and existential discussion in phenomenology by doing phenomenology, which includes dialoguing with those ethical and existential themes that already permeate the work of moral psychologists (especially those working on emotions such as Taylor, Roberts, Peter Goldie, and Robert Solomon). I think such work is of value to both analytical and continental philosophers (for it's certainly valuable for (younger) phenomenologists to engage these analytic 'existentialists' and for (younger) analytical scholars interested in moral psychology to engage phenomenological and existential thinkers).

Continuing with my motivation to help expand the realm of phenomenological research into problem-oriented philosophy (rather than historical philosophy) it seems appropriate in this vein to claim that my contribution also may serve as a call for a 'new phenomenological theology'. This subdiscipline in phenomenology has tended toward metaphilosophy; it has asked about method, the availability of such experience for phenomenological description, and so on. But it has not availed itself of perhaps the most valuable avenue for research, namely, the phenomenological description of issues of theological/religious concerns such as envy and covetousness, the theological virtues, developments of Sokolowski's phenomenology of the presence and absence of the Eucharist, and so on.<sup>24</sup>

Regarding these several issues and more, I can still hear John Drummond's voice from my graduate days (not infrequently) saying 'there's a lot of good phenomenological work to be done'.<sup>25</sup> Phenomenology can ride these waves for some time. And with some combination of vision and talent, it can create new ones.

## Notes

1. R. Sokolowski, 'The Method of Philosophy: Making Distinctions', *Review of Metaphysics* 51 (1998): 515–32.
2. Sokolowski, 'The Method of Philosophy,' pp. 519–20.
3. Sokolowski, 'The Method of Philosophy,' p. 518. 'Now, what happens in philosophy is that we interrupt our focus on what is being said and we turn to the distinctions that permit the things and states of affairs we are concerned with to appear. We turn to what normally remains latent. We foreground what was in the background. These background distinctions had been made by us at some time in the past, but in all likelihood they would have been made only vaguely ... We had never made them truly our own. Now, in our philosophical reflection, we try to make these distinctions our own in a new and different way.'
4. R. Roberts, 'Emotions and the Canons of Evaluation', in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, ed. Peter Goldie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 575. G. Taylor, *Deadly Vices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 43. Henceforth cited parenthetically as DV.
5. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. R. McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 1386a ff. I. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. M. Gregor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 576/458.
6. I discuss the 'full' intentional structure of envy in 'A Glimpse of Envy and its Intentional Structure,' *New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* 10 (1) (2010): 283–302.
7. R. Sokolowski, 'Phenomenology of Friendship', *Review of Metaphysics* 55 (March 2002): 451–70, p. 466.
8. G. Taylor, *Pride, Shame, and Guilt: Emotions of Self-Assessment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). Henceforth cited parenthetically as PSG.
9. I will use 'neighbor' for short to convey this sense of a socially proximal other. Following Hume against the more dominant view in Western philosophy that envy stems from rivalry, it's social proximity and likeness



- between oneself and other (resemblance) from which envy stems. See G.J. Postema, “‘Cemented with Diseased Qualities’: Sympathy and Comparison in Hume’s Moral Psychology”, *Hume Studies* 31.2 (2005): 249–98, p. 287.
10. If we use the word ‘experience’ to suggest that in order to envy X one has to be conscious, then this is imprecise or even wrong. One can point to a sleeping person and truly say ‘He is very envious of X, you know.’ ‘Perceiving’ even is unclear. True, if ‘perceive’ means what it does in ‘he perceived that the car was heading toward him’, then perception requires consciousness. But if it means ‘knows’ or ‘realizes’ or something like that, then the point of the sleeping person comes in again. I want to thank Brian Davies for reminding me that this would be a point for further inquiry.
  11. P. Hacker, ‘The Conceptual Framework for the Investigation of the Emotions,’ in *Emotion and Understanding: Wittgensteinian Perspectives* (London: Palgrave, 2008), p. 47.
  12. This account of the intentional structure of emotions draws on John Drummond’s work on emotive intentionality and axiology: J. Drummond, ‘Phenomenology: Neither Auto- nor Hetero-Be’, *Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* 6 (2007): 57–74; ‘Moral Phenomenology and Moral Intentionality’, *Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* 7 (2008): 35–49; ‘Feeling, Emotion, and Truly Perceiving the Valuable’, *The Modern Schoolman* 86 (2009): 363–79.
  13. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1388a17.
  14. For a discussion of envy and emulation, see my ‘The Objects and Affects of Envy and Emulation,’ *Journal of Cultural and Religious Studies: Mashup Philosophy of Religion*, ed. J.A. Simmons 14.2 (2015): 386–401. Available at: <http://www.jcrt.org/archives/14.2/kelly.pdf>
  15. L. Purhouse, ‘Jealousy in Relation to Envy,’ 192–93.
  16. It is for this reason that I might argue against a classical example of possessor-envy, namely, Salieri and Mozart. What makes this Salieri/Mozart relation not one of envy or indignation but likely resentment is that Salieri sees Mozart *as* superior and himself *as* inferior. His anger and resentment stem from and are directed to a God who would bestow such skill and beauty on such a spiritually and morally unworthy and ungrateful buffoon.
  17. If the possessor envier begins to minimize or revalue that good if it cannot be gotten, if the possessor envier’s desire cannot be satisfied, and here possessor-envy veers toward *ressentiment*. See my Envy and Ressentiment, a Difference in Kind: A Critique and Renewal of Scheler’s Phenomenological

- Account,” in *Early Phenomenology: Metaphysics, Ethics, and Philosophy of Religion*, ed. B. Harding and M. Kelly (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2016).
18. R. Sokolowski, ‘Phenomenology of Friendship’, p. 466.
  19. R. Solomon, *True to Our Feelings: What Our Emotions Are Really Telling Us* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 148.
  20. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. W.D. Ross (New York: Oxford University Press).
  21. Robert Sokolowski and John Drummond present the best exceptions to these oversights. For example, R. Sokolowski, *Moral Action: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); J. Drummond, ‘Husserl’s Phenomenological Axiology and Aristotelian Virtue Ethics’, in *Aristotelianism and the Critique of Modernity*, ed. M. Tuominen, S. Heinamaa, V. Makin (Leiden: Brill, 2014) and J. Drummond, ‘Phenomenology, *Eudaimonia*, and the Virtues’, in *Phenomenology and Virtue Ethics*, ed. K. Hermberg and P. Gyllenhammer (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).
  22. S. Crowell, ‘Is there a Phenomenological Research Program’, *Synthese* 131, no. 3 (2002): 442.
  23. S. Crowell, *Cambridge Companion to Existentialism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 14.
  24. R. Sokolowski, ‘Phenomenology and the Eucharist’, *Theology Digest* 49:4 (2002): 347–58.
  25. In addition to John Drummond for his intellectual and personal generosity, I’d like to thank Christopher Arroyo, Brian Davies, John Drummond, Brian Harding, Jeff Hanson, Anne Ozar, and Anthony Steinbock for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter. The chapter’s deficiencies remain my responsibility and are surely fewer in number than before their thoughtful guidance.

# 10

## The Philosophy and Phenomenology of Revelation: A Primer on the Question

William C. Hackett

In *Modes of Thought*, Whitehead suggests that '[t]he first chapter in philosophical approach should consist in the free examination of some ultimate notions as they occur naturally in daily life'.<sup>1</sup> In light of his claim, let me begin by asking a question about one such ultimate notion: Is there a philosophy of revelation? This question, once posed, raises essential questions about the nature of philosophy itself, about its limits, purpose, and meaning, and even elevates them to the highest pitch. A thesis presents itself with force: the question of revelation is therefore, as far as philosophy is concerned, *the most philosophical question possible*.

Yet this observation only opens the door to answering the question, which presumably requires a demonstration of the logic and meaning of the thesis. The common-sense approach, which I desire to take here, proposes that whether or not philosophy is an *adequate* mode of approach to the data of revelation, it is evidently possible even if it fails, since posing

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the question raises such fundamentally philosophical questions: if it turns out that philosophy only ever corrupts or distorts (or whatever) the traditional 'object' of theology and faith, then the 'Philosophy of Revelation' (PR) is at least important to philosophy in its difference from theology.

The bare logic of what follows can be mapped in two simple steps: (1) a discussion of what Christianity means by 'the reality of revelation', from which the validity of the PR can be understood, followed by (2) an introduction of two conditions that revelation would seem to demand of any PR: first, the 'eschatologicity' of revelation and, second, the 'conditionlessness' of revelation. These two conditions explicate the basic features of PR in influential recent French phenomenology. I will elaborate this tradition, which I term Philosophy and Phenomenology of Revelation (PPR), with reference to its two central figures, Jean-Yves Lacoste and Jean-Luc Marion. With them, the thesis named above breaks open onto a new plane. The reader may take the approach represented by this statement as simultaneously the proposal of a lens of interpretation for understanding Lacoste and Marion, an expression of the significance of their 'school' of thought within the history of philosophy, and as an indication of the proper direction for philosophical work in their wake.

## The 'Reality of Revelation'

'With the reality of revelation, Christianity stands or falls.'<sup>2</sup> Herman Bavinck's claim here appears to be self-evident. Accordingly, initially I will allow it to stand without comment—for it provides a productive starting point for a path of questioning. This claim, on its own, does not provide any differentiation between the philosophical and theological. The revelation that is given alone matters, and, as such, gives rise to thought. There is only 'the Christian', his reason, and this reason's validity, deriving from what arises to be thought.<sup>3</sup> At this initial level of concern, then, labels such as *philosophy* and *theology*, therefore, are not (yet?) directly important. It is not impossible that, here, at a kind of absolute phenomenological beginning, one is doing both at once, or at least operating prior to the disciplinary distinction that can later be implemented. Such a possibility is not ruled out a priori. Perhaps, then, theologians and phi-

losophers might be able to agree on a general intellectual principle: what matters more than the disciplinary distinction is the questioning itself and the challenge of what is given to be thought for both disciplines.<sup>4</sup>

Opening up the quotation to comment, I first ask: What is ‘the *reality* of revelation’ that Bavinck says wholly determines Christianity? Fundamentally such a statement surely means that if what Christianity claims revelation to be is not true, then Christianity is not true. Christianity depends on and lives from, a word that comes from God the Creator, the ‘King’ and ‘Father’ of Israel, ‘the LORD’, the Master of the covenant and Lord of creation. A lot could be said here that is surely ‘theological’. I only make the partial, though fundamental, observation that—and whether I am speaking as a theologian or a philosopher God alone knows—the Christian revelation *is* a word, a *logos*, which, while being a word cast onto the vast, chaotic sea of human words and their history is at the same time unique and absolute in that it stands as the ‘word of God’, *logos tou theou* (only secondarily is it ‘about’ a word, an explication of the divine word, a ‘theology’). ‘Religion,’ says Jean-Luc Marion,

attains its highest figure only when it becomes established by and as a revelation, where an authority that is transcendent to experience nevertheless manifests itself experientially. Such an experience, effectively beyond (and outside of) the conditions of possibility of experience, is affirmed by words...rightly accessible to everyone.<sup>5</sup>

‘Revelation’ therefore, he continues, ‘speaks universally, yet without this word being able to ground itself in reason within the limits of the world’.<sup>6</sup> This *logos* is the divine word: the *logos-theos*, identified with the man Jesus of Nazareth is the universal *logos*, ‘sent’ from the common *Arché*, the origin or ‘beginning’ of everything, whom he called ‘Father’ and taught his followers to do the same.<sup>7</sup> Christianity stands or falls (to continue with the grammar of this classical linguistic universe) on this identification of the *logos* of faith, the ‘word of salvation’, with the *logos* of all things, the original, divine mediation of their common intelligibility, that which ultimately makes that which is a unity a ‘creation’—the *logos*: ‘through whom all things were made’.<sup>8</sup> The consensus Christian view in Latin and Greek, from St. Justin Martyr to St. Augustine,<sup>9</sup> is

that Christianity is first a matter of (a *revealed*) wisdom, and as such it proposes itself as the ‘true philosophy’.<sup>10</sup>

## The Twofold Path

Let me turn now, with reason, to a clarifying determination. There is a seamless tradition from Pythagoras (who coined the term ‘philosophy’) and Plato (who coined the term ‘theology’)—both of whom identified wisdom with the divinity that is its source no less strongly than the Christians—to Clement of Alexandria and Augustine. This question is, admittedly, difficult. The bracketing of such labels only brings this difficulty into clarity. It concerns the veracity of the words ‘philosophy’ and ‘revelation’ when brought together today, and the power by which they may or may not grip us: Does revelation matter to humanity *as such*? It proposes itself as being the absolute matter for humanity, which the original Christian conviction of the unity of the *logos*—a conviction grounded in its universal (and eschatological) soteriology—made an enduring justification.

At least since German Idealism, ‘revelation’ has become an important *philosophical* term in its own right. A PR (orthodox or otherwise, it does not matter here) is a feature of modern philosophy, and perhaps of ancient philosophy as well.<sup>11</sup> Certainly for Hegel and those working after him, revelation is a philosophical master concept.<sup>12</sup>

First named by B.H. Blasche, a disciple of Schelling, in 1829,<sup>13</sup> recent phenomenological thinkers such as Marion and Jean-Yves Lacoste have claimed that the explicit moments of the PR have often been entangled with intellectual trends and attitudes provided by Nietzsche and Heidegger (namely, death of God, nihilism, metaphysics, technological enframing).<sup>14</sup> Yet the PR that along with them I am driven to explicate from out of the plane of nihilation demands to be, *inasmuch as revelation is its matter*, proposed as a twofold path: (1) of overcoming ‘[the onto-theological tradition of] metaphysics’ (OTTM), enduring through the era of nihilism, and anticipating the ‘thinking’ tied to a [non]-experience of the coming God, as well as (2) of calling into question any rigid distinction between philosophical and theological disciplines in this

ultimate case in order to advance the very task at hand. (1) expresses the Heideggerian parameters of the PR of Marion and Lacoste, the PPR. (2) expresses precisely what is shared by Marion and Lacoste's positions 'after' Heidegger, which is analogous to Heidegger's own vis-à-vis Nietzsche.

To explain some crucial dimensions of this twofold path, one should remember the working definition of revelation outlined above: the logos of the Living God, the speech of the Almighty, Lord of the Covenant, Creator of all. Revelation partakes of an intelligibility that is absolute, as the word of the Absolute, and, as such, is terrifyingly free. *Mortal: know thyself*. My meta-concepts named above, eschatologicity and unconditionality, congeal around this working definition.

Perspective (1) on the path can be expressed in this way: if the *logos* sent by the Father is ultimately, because firstly, the very *logos* of the world, then the world's *logos* is subject to all the qualifications and intensifications provided by 'negative theology'.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, the doctrine of creation ex nihilo is brought into play, which is a 'contemplative' doctrine, an intellectual practice of seeing experience *before the possible*, thinking the world in light of the pre-possibility or impossibility of its being. This is the basis of classical Christian (and Jewish and Muslim) philosophy. The revelation of God in Christianity reveals that God transcends the totality of the cosmos in an absolute way, existing in excess of the distinctions basic to our knowledge of the world, albeit, alas, only knowable by way of them, which God is *not*. God, the form of ultimate intelligibility, and through the divine logos, the final paradigm of all intelligibility whatsoever, is more than merely absolutely free *from* this world, but is also therefore absolutely free *for* it. It is a higher freedom that must be considered here. The intelligibility of creation is based on its connection with the Creator, who creates 'through' the divine word, the divine *logos*. Though unnecessary, without (sufficient) reason and *ohne warum*, the creation is freely given to itself and finds its intelligibility inscribed in this freely bestowed word. To look to God in philosophy is therefore not to answer the philosophical question of revelation in advance, but rather—at least this is the case that revelation makes—to enter into the most profoundly open context for posing it: the horizon of absolute love, which is greater, *more absolute*, than the horizon of nothing at all. To reprise a word of the mystics: the love that gives being is a fertile nothing.

Why is this word appropriate here? Because the thinkable as unknowable Principle is a *Neant par excess*.<sup>16</sup>

But not only so. It is also because of the ancient ('Axial') breakthrough to the idea of the One as *beyond* multiplicity (the One is One) and as the unity *of* multiplicity (the One exists).<sup>17</sup> God as Principle is understood as the interval of bliss across which thought arrives to itself in the contemplation of the Divinity with which the world has 'no dual existence' (*advaita*)—as expressed (this is a monumental but not large claim) in the classical theistic philosophies of the Abrahamic and Hindu traditions.<sup>18</sup> Consider how this is evidenced in Hindu philosophy. The word of the mystics is above all appropriate in the PR because the idea of God as Principle is only the point where intellectual 'adoration' awakens to *bhakti*: the 'way of devotion' carries the philosopher's way onto new vistas of terra incognita. Is the shudder experienced at the edge of this vista the first tremor of one's annihilation or divinization? Only if one refuses to come to an end, to close the questioning, will one ever find out. The intellectual practice of the Divine Principle as creative Nothing (as *Brahman*, impersonal absolute) reaches its terminus in a desert of emptiness that is an unimaginably greater 'nihilism' than that of absolute finitude, where the soul, completely naked, shorn of every created support, finally arrives before the personal Lord, who, in his eternal Idea, loves the creature with the very love that constitutes the divine essence of his tri-hypostatic bliss.<sup>19</sup> 'For I am the base supporting Brahman,' says Krishna, the incarnate Vishnu, God Almighty.<sup>20</sup>

Here I think the wisdom of a classical programmatic distinction between *de Deo Uno* and *de Deo Trino* emerges as important: the essence of the One God is known (as Unknown) by the great monotheistic ('Axial') philosophies in the East and West; it is the tri-hypostatic enjoyment of the Essence that is unique to the Christian revelation (though Personality's 'transcendence' of the essence is shared among Hindu and Semitic spiritual attitudes as just witnessed). PR will enact here a new, expanded calibration for a *summa qum gentilium*.<sup>21</sup> From this new vista granted by this point of conjunction between Eastern and Western philosophy, one can begin to see the import of Schelling's PR, which can be summarized thus: *higher than possibility stands personality*.<sup>22</sup>



If Kant denied that ‘God could ever become the principle of science’ since God can only be an idea, the ‘highest idea’, the ‘end’ of reason that reason can only strive toward without ever reaching (a ‘regulative’ as opposed to ‘constitutive’ idea),<sup>23</sup> then Schelling wants to elucidate, in a new way that is appropriate after Kant’s ‘destruction’ of Scholastic metaphysics, the ‘principles that hold human life together’ of which the source, centerpiece, and crown are found in religion, namely, revelation<sup>24</sup>: ‘[A]ll real religion,’ Schelling claims, ‘can only relate to a real God, and indeed to him only as the lord of reality and...a being that is not this can never become the object of religion.’<sup>25</sup> The capacity to *think this that is contained in religion* is the first and last measure of a PR, and, says Schelling elsewhere, of any philosophy whatsoever.<sup>26</sup> For Kant, however, the God of religion, the lord of reality, is strictly unknowable (in a this-worldly and banal sense of the term). Schelling’s judgment on this front is clear: ‘real religion is...negated’, and philosophy fails its task.<sup>27</sup> For Kant, God is and *can only be*, merely, the ‘end’ of reason, which reason must presuppose but which at the same time necessarily knows nothing of the ‘real being’ of God. God can *never* appear, can never be God, and can never be, consequently, the ‘beginning’, the ‘constitutive principle’ of reason. Hence, as Schelling’s logic goes, *only* the lord of reality, the Living God, can, paradoxically, be the ‘end’ *and* the ‘beginning’, the Living Idea (as it were) most immanent to our reason and ‘science’ (*Wissenschaft*). According to such a conception, that which we reason about, is *unvordenklich*—‘unanticipated’—ever-greater than our reasoning, and, as such, initiates and guides our reasoning, expanding and transforming it.

Revelation, for Schelling, reveals God as the end and the beginning, and therefore as the *living heart* of all true metaphysics, beyond the tradition of Scholasticism, which for him achieves its consummation in Kant. A philosophical return to revelation, to ‘real religion’, alone allows philosophy to realize its aim of the elucidation of the *total mystery* of human experience. In this Schelling agrees with Thomas Aquinas, for whom ‘the last end is the first principle of being’.<sup>28</sup> Christ, the *logos tou theou*, ‘Alpha and Omega’ (Apoc 1:8)—the unity of intelligibility as such in God who reveals himself in history—is the meaning of the ‘overcoming’ of the OTTM for the PR.<sup>29</sup> The eschatology of reason is an eschatology *from the beginning* (and not as a Kingdom that can

never come because it has never made its historical appearance), which, for Christianity, is a 'kenotic' appearance: the disclosure of the truth of the 'nothing' of the divine essence by way of a self-showing of divine tri-hypostatic personality, a revelation in the flesh of history, under its conditions, but as a *sign* of their overcoming.<sup>30</sup>

With the introduction of the logic of the eschaton, therefore, I claim that we can find a (historical) principle of intelligibility *coming from revelation*. Such a logic supersedes the transcendental logic of modern OTTM.

Perspective (2) on the path is perhaps clearer, though it is drawn directly from the above and serves as a summary result.

For Heidegger, Nietzsche anticipates the way out of nihilism precisely by bringing to its consummation the era of the OTTM with his discovery and apotheosis of the will-to-power, a concept that unveils the hidden truth of the tradition. For Marion and Lacoste, Heidegger represents the very 'moment' before the exodus from nihilism may take place, because he names the essential—'nihilism'.<sup>31</sup> According to Marion, this particular overcoming involves a return to Husserl and an interpretation and elaboration of Husserl's most basic insights as providing a truly post-metaphysical, post-transcendental manner of proceeding.<sup>32</sup> Alternatively, according to Lacoste, this involves an advancement of the concept of 'thinking' through a profound conscription of Heidegger's own analysis and answer to the problematic of Western thought, life, and culture.<sup>33</sup> Both Lacoste and Marion agree, though, that this involves a recovery and advancement of a pre-Scholastic and Patristic model of the fidelity of human intelligence to its end—which requires, beyond Heidegger, a problematizing of the disciplinary distinction of the theological and philosophical inasmuch as the paradigm of 'conflict' (of the faculties) short-circuits reason's response to the intelligibility of the Living God.<sup>34</sup> For Marion the paradigmatic character of the disclosed intelligibility of the divine for human rationality demands an elucidation of the concept of 'revelation' that promises to 'save' the unity of reason; and for Lacoste the question of the concept of revelation does not enter the task of 're-blending thought and praise'.<sup>35</sup> Lacoste and Marion offer two ways of inhabiting the path.

In both thinkers the PPR calls into question any rigid distinction between philosophy and theology, since, if revelation can become an

object of philosophy, even if only as the final test for philosophy's own self-reflection, then philosophy and theology are revealed to be, at times and at worst, taken up as a priori categorizations that delimit the scope of revelation before it is given. According to Schelling, the PR is 'a question of the meaning of philosophy itself'.<sup>36</sup> In both the overcoming of metaphysics and also the calling into question of disciplinary distinctions, revelation is considered in itself and from itself, on the terms by which it presents itself—that is, phenomenologically. Moreover, it presents itself as a matter fundamental to humanity, and therefore of primary importance to human thought when it is concerned with the Unknown Essence of the One and ultimately with the tri-hypostatic excess.<sup>37</sup>

The justification of the PR, then, can be provided as follows:

1. Philosophy is the human 'science' par excellence inasmuch as it endeavors to articulate or grasp at least something of the essential, of the truth, of the meaning of the human as such; yet the humanity of the human is the most enigmatic of questions.<sup>38</sup>
2. Revelation is the revelation of humanity to itself precisely because it is the revelation of God—*humanity's* Alpha and Omega. The revelation of God, the living God, the Lord of Being, is the key that, in unlocking itself, unlocks the mystery of humanity as well.
3. Therefore the PR is the greatest intensification of the philosophical questioning and necessary for philosophy, its fundamental achievement.

These propositions and their conclusion are finally laid out, then, in the form of theses that amount to pledges or promises that the PPR may or may not be finally able to fill. Nonetheless, they are intrinsic to its proposal of a philosophy for which revelation is the central matter.

My observation about the origins of the modern distinction between 'philosophy' and 'theology' only shows the historical conditions for the possibility of writing something called a 'PR' (even if such an activity, as already in Schelling and Bavinck, is a means toward *transgressing* the academic and disciplinary distinction and showing its theoretical limitations), not its present possibility or meaning. That said, let me now

offer two proposed conditions that revelation would require of any philosophy of it.

I will distill the first condition for PR's deployment through an analysis of PR in a post-idealist interpreter, Franz Rosenzweig (but in dialogue with explicit practitioners, Schelling and Bavinck), and the second condition with analysis of the contemporary telos of PR, the PPR (resuming a generalized presentation of Marion and Lacoste).

## First Condition: The *Eschatologicity* of Thinking Revelation

I will reach Rosenzweig through an introduction to the modern history of the idea of revelation in its ecclesial and philosophical receptions.

How strange it is that revelation becomes a direct theme for *philosophical* reflection only in the modern criticism of it (and *subsequently* a theme for *theological* reflection on its heels).<sup>39</sup> Lacoste notes that it bears recalling that the concept of 'revelation', in fact, is a latecomer in theology—having for the first time only received direct treatment at a conciliar level at the First Vatican Council (1869–70) in the four terse paragraphs of the third chapter of *Dei Filius*. Not until the Second Vatican Council (1962–5) did revelation become the theme of a document in its own right (*Dei Verbum*), mostly in order to reorient the frankly epistemological and propositional character of Vatican I's treatment. The other modern council, the Council of Trent (1545–63), used the word only once, without any interest in the concept as such. Vatican I seems to have thought of revelation (which it never explicitly defines) primarily as a content of ideas *about* God and God's relation to all things, as *revelata*, in the communication of knowledge. For Vatican II, by contrast, revelation is *revelatio* proper, an activity of God in the first place, yet with (peculiar) intelligible content: the 'showing forth' and 'self-communication' of God and 'the eternal decisions of his will regarding the salvation of men' (§6). This double form of 'showing forth' is enacted through the 'realization' of God's hidden 'plan' for the salvation of the world. It is disclosed, specifically, 'through words and deeds' of God, which possess,

further, an 'inner unity'. On the one hand, there are the divine 'deeds' that guide history to this end (the fulfillment of the plan, or mystery). On the other hand, there are 'words', God's self-interpretation of his deeds through appointed human witnesses that 'proclaim and clarify the mystery contained' in them (and which take concrete form in, the text later says, Scripture and tradition, together 'one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church', §10). The play of divine words and deeds in history simply describes the character of the two parts of the content of revelation: God's self-communication and the communication of his will. These two dimensions are finally unified in Christ, 'who is both the mediator of revelation and its fullness' (§2), since in him the divine union with humanity is accomplished, a union that is in itself the consummation of the Creator's plan, which is none other than the complete self-communication of God to humanity and humanity to God (a description of what in Christology is termed the 'hypostatic union' of divine and human natures in the one identified as Jesus of Nazareth). Hence, as far as the intellectual content of revelation goes, *Dei Verbum* uses the words that the earlier *Dei Filius* applied to the trans-historical 'supernatural end of man' in relation to the historical revelation itself, describing the self-communication as participation in 'divine treasures which totally transcend the understanding of the human mind' (§6; cp. *Dei Filius* III.2).

For Vatican II the words and deeds of God bring within the horizon of history the supernatural end itself. Revelation transgresses the conditions of history, not by destroying or overcoming them, but by performing the impossible, using them to communicate trans-historical truth. This discloses the destiny of the entire created order for life in God, and manifests the final meaning of the enigma of history itself, its aim and purpose. The prior 'epistemological interpretation of revelation' (to use Marion's language in the first of his Gifford Lectures)<sup>40</sup> is wholly muted here and yet the intelligibility becomes more dramatic, more difficult, and more profound.

*Dei Verbum* is partially indebted to the Pauline language of the 'revelation of the mystery' *apocalypsis tou mysteriou*, which is the startling unveiling of the plan for the end of history in its middle (in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus) that serves as God's final (self-) 'justification'

(*dikaiosune*) and the answer to the basic question of Judaism of Paul's day (at least in his understanding): How is God going to bring to completion the promises found in the election of Israel, when the entire vocation of Israel seems to have failed (along with humanity in general) and to have fallen under God's judgment (*apocalypsis dikaiokrisias tou theou*)?<sup>41</sup> In other words, how will God remain faithful to the election of Israel and accomplish his universal intention through Israel for the salvation of the world? For St. Paul in his most intellectually ambitious—one can say (why not?) most 'philosophical'—letter, 'revelation' is the Creator's answer to this problem, *the* basic problem of human history. The *philosophia tou apocalypsis* involves the explication of the intelligibility of the words and deeds of God, an examination of the conditions of revelation, the discernment of the 'wisdom of God' under the appearance of the 'foolishness of man'. Following Harry Austryn Wolfson in his magisterial *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers vol. 1*, PR (though he doesn't use the term) is the construction of the intellectual scaffolding required to understand revelation, developed out of the intellectual horizon, the cultural instantiation of 'world', within which one lives and thinks.<sup>42</sup> PR, on this view, provides a hermeneutic of revelation, no more and no less, through the generation of doxological practices (what Christians used to call 'prayer') that give rise, finally, to concepts and theories with the aim of affording understanding of the divine self-showing and self-communication, which again, consummate doxologically from the intellectual immersion in the words and deeds of God.<sup>43</sup> This biblical and Pauline explication is the *common root* of the modern ecclesial and philosophical elaborations of the concept. There is therefore one PR even if it assumes two (one must say, impoverished) modes in the modern period ('sacred theology' and 'natural theology [of philosophy]').<sup>44</sup>

Moving from an ecclesial to a philosophical domain, one should realize that overlapping the modern development in the ecclesial sphere is a philosophical passage that begins with Fichte and Kant and runs to Schelling, Rosenzweig, and ultimately Marion and Lacoste. In a manner similar to early Schelling's disciple Blasche 30 years later, the young Fichte in his *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation* (1792) argues that God can reveal himself only within the strict limits of the moral law, or rather, the moral law itself *is* the universal content of revelation, which

can be fully known apart from any special revelation anyway. Fichte's task to 'pronounce judgment' on revelation from the philosophical point of view, that is, according to 'a priori principles', is accomplished specifically by, as he writes, 'abstracting completely from anything particular that might be possible in a given revelation; indeed, it will even ignore the question of whether any revelation is given, in order generally to establish principles valid for every revelation'.<sup>45</sup> Published the following year, Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793) offers an 'experiment' in what can only be called moral esotericism, which sets as its task the 'unification' of the 'Biblical theologian' with the 'philosophical theologian' (the rightful task, he says, of a 'philosophical researcher of religion') by means of separating revelation from that which is historical in it. Thereby, it 'lead[s] back' the data of 'revelation' to the 'pure rational system of religion', and shows, de facto, the intellectual coincidence of practical reason and positive revelation, and de jure, the latter's utter redundancy (except for the simple-minded, who need an external authority to guide them).<sup>46</sup>

Importantly, Schelling does explicitly attempt to offer a *positive* PR. *Philosophie der Offenbarung* is erected on the failure of speculative Idealism to grasp the divine through rational deduction ('negative philosophy') and rather takes as its starting point precisely the first matter that is given to think, namely, the condition of thought that thought cannot ground. Here there is not only Being, the very fact of existence, but the *Herr des Seins*, the 'Lord of Being' who gives himself to thought within historical existence and as the disruptor of every conceptualization: the 'abyss of reason'.<sup>47</sup> I have already suggested an analogy with the Vishishta Advaita Vedanta, the 'nondualism of the differentiated'. Importantly, the soul, *rationally* experiencing a union of identity, thus uncovering the ultimate ground of reality before which reason becomes speechless, awakens, in a volitional and empirical experience of radical facticity wherein its light refigures as 'dazzling darkness' to an irreducible encounter with the Absolute that is necessary for reason, but incomprehensible.<sup>48</sup>

Franz Rosenzweig is perhaps the greatest student of Schelling's thought. Not only does he continue the quest for a philosophical appropriation of revelation that does not reduce revelation to the scope of human thought, but, as the title of his essay 'The New Thinking' (1925) shows, he is

perhaps more aware than Schelling of the limits of an approach that still attends to revelation with a 'haughty' conception of reason. Crucially, for Schelling revelation is reduced to the content of a speculative *gnosis* such that reason plumbs the depths of the divine without remainder. As such, the divine is thoroughly laid bare through the outworking of the world process. For Rosenzweig by contrast, human language, the medium of revelation, is always immersed within a mythic-symbolic horizon that only reveals the shadow of God inasmuch as language itself is the transposition of the unassimilability of God, of humanity, and of the world, which are all 'absolute', and strictly unknowable. Because it is through the experience of humanity in the world that God is given, revelation, on Rosenzweig's account, is not a grasp of God by reason, but the disclosure of an infinite alterity, beyond the double alterity of humanity and the world, both narratively (into the pagan past) and ritually (into the Judeo-Christian future). Rosenzweig, thus, refuses Schelling's call for philosophy to speak a greater word of God than what revelation gives in the irreducible mode of symbol. In the first place, such symbols occur by refusing the demarcation, and then, the hierarchical arrangement, of philosophy and theology. In this way Rosenzweig opens up a 'new thinking', which is an authentic recovery of ancient ways of thought for which the theological and philosophical are inseparable, if not indistinct.<sup>49</sup> For this (renewed) tradition, what matters to philosophy is the 'absolute empiricism' for which the Absolute becomes possible for us—not *whether* it is possible, but *how* it happens when it happens.<sup>50</sup> Knowledge as knowledge of the whole is impossible—but through experience of this impossibility in the fragmentariness of experience as linguistic beings, the immense positivity of God presses into our world. Revelation, thus, demands a 'new thinking', Rosenzweig claims. Referencing 'the Pharisees of the Talmud and Saints of the Church', Rosenzweig suggests that 'Man's understanding reaches as far as his doings.'<sup>51</sup>

The PR, then, will only be based on the conviction that the eschatological orientation of thought, its orientation to the 'coming' or 'appearing' of God, faces the future by means of the past, by revelatory events of the future in the past, epiphanies of the eschatological future that form the narrative of sacred history, and its transformation from within by breakthroughs of the natural, hierophanic character of mythic



experience. The inquiry into the meaning of revelation *for* philosophy, the complete rethinking of thought by revelation, is precisely the place, as the historical constellation of thinkers gathered here shows, where the PR begins. The first principle is given as promised to come: this eschatological belief articulates the essential regarding the human predicament and its task, to think the impossible, to find anew and traverse its believability, namely, that a thing of this world is, provisionally but determinatively, *eschatologically* the absolute measure of it. One must try to think this thought under the sign of the provisional in order to attest with fidelity to the definitive.

## Second Condition: The *Conditionlessness* of Thinking Revelation

This leads me to a final observation from the history of philosophy, specifically from the most recent history, in relation to which Lacoste himself is a key witness. Here the distinction between philosophy and theology is more emphatically put in brackets, or at the very least found unstable and unidentifiable. As such, it is an important feature of contemporary *phenomenology* in particular for the PR. Phenomenology does not decide a priori about its content; it is by definition, as remarkably hard-won battles of the last generation have shown, open to *anything* that can appear. And here the articulation of what is possible only comes *after* the event of appearing,<sup>52</sup> which makes possible that which Marion calls, as far as God is concerned, the ‘impossible’. Such impossibility is due to the fact that God always transgresses the formal conditions for appearing that human perception cannot help but assume in relation to God’s appearance.<sup>53</sup> Ultimately then, we might say, with Lacoste, that ‘phenomenology is without limits’, even the limits that differentiate the philosophical and the theological, or, if you like, the natural and supernatural. Phenomenology, in return to what is given, ‘brackets every limit.’<sup>54</sup>

What is given therefore gives its own conditions, and this giving is an integral part of the phenomenon itself—in philosophy as much as theology, in revelation and all else. And here, in the PPR we find the principle of intelligibility common to philosophy and theology, and the condition

for the distinction between them. The distinction turns on that which revelation first introduced: between what is revealed and what is not. And yet, what about the principle of their unity? Importantly, the PR is not theology. Nevertheless, it is concerned with the theological, primarily the contribution of revelation to intelligibility as such: revelation gives to rationality its greatest test and is, at the same time, its unsurpassable paradigm. It is both of these because in order to be thought, it requires a radical *expansion* of the domain of rationality.<sup>55</sup> If Anselm's 'definition' of God has any merit, then such an expansion is precisely what it announces. As 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', God can be thought, but he can only be thought in a way that transcends thought. Intellection turns to love, and finds that love knows, and that knowing is either love or knows nothing.<sup>56</sup> Said phenomenologically, revelation is intelligible, but its contribution to intelligibility turns on its impossibility, its *difference* from every other intelligible thing and all other kinds of intelligibility. This difference, however, does not *isolate* God from everything else, but rather shows the *relevance* of God in everything given. God is not understood simply as the 'giver' of the given, but as the paradigm of the given. Revelation gives the greatest possible expansion to the rational by *proposing itself* as the paradigm or *absolute* case of the rational itself.<sup>57</sup> It is this expansion of the intelligible offered, even demanded, by revelation that the PPR attempts to understand. Revelation is the revelation of reason that cannot be superseded, for it reveals itself as ever-greater, as evermore intelligible.

Phenomenology shows that the PR cannot be what is normally practiced under the banner of 'philosophy of religion', or especially 'philosophical theology', which Lacoste calls a 'hideous compromise'. These academic disciplines approach the phenomenon of revelation from a realm that simply does not consider itself finally, and therefore firstly, wholly conditioned by revelation itself, that is, by the limitless—the frontier where the impossible reigns. Nonetheless, one faces a difficult issue regarding the mode of access to this frontier. According to Marion, the mode of access is charity. Lacoste agrees and insists that God is known through being loved.<sup>58</sup> Knowledge of God conveys that to know someone is to love someone and to love someone is to let oneself be—to give oneself to be—mastered by another.<sup>59</sup>

‘But by worship of love addressed to Me alone/Can I be known and seen/*In such a form as I really am*: [So can my lovers] enter into Me’<sup>60</sup> This aphorism toward a PR bears a poverty of expression that seems unavoidable. Here one might appeal to the conceptual apparatuses of Pascal or al-Ghazali in order to express the ‘higher’ knowledge of intuitive contact with another that transcends us through the pathway of the ‘heart’. However, I will draw upon Thomas Aquinas:

Love...even in this life tends primarily to God and from him passes on to other things; according to this, charity loves God directly but other things through the mediation of God. In knowledge, however, the converse is true, since we know God through other things, either as cause through effects or by way of eminence or negation.<sup>61</sup>

The ‘reasons of the heart’ appear within rationality under the form of incompleteness or even contradiction. Because they undergird rationality as a principle, they manifest a higher rationality that can only be grasped in partial and mutually irreconcilable ways without the ‘key’ of love, which ‘approaches nearer to God’ than reason.<sup>62</sup>

The PR must be frank about what is at stake for the human in knowing *God*. If God can be known by way of divine initiative in revelation, then the limitlessness of such knowledge will require the human to pursue it without placing on it in advance *any conditions* that God must first respect. If there is no possible place in PR for such radicality implied for philosophy by revelation, then I have to ask whether contemporary philosophy is philosophical enough (how well do we comprehend St. Augustine’s equation of the love of wisdom with the love of God?). Or, alternatively, I must ask whether Christian belief, as a ‘way of life’, is truly dead with the advent of postmodern nihilism. Moreover, must I be content to finish with myself *as I understand* myself in myself as a terminus, shorn of any possible ‘transcendent ground’, or can I continue here by seeing this as reaching the point of a new beginning? I am free to choose. ‘One could receive,’ says Marion in debate with Jean-Luc Nancy, ‘the “deconstruction of Christianity” as the introduction to what is finally appropriate to term Christianity.’<sup>63</sup> The radical affirmation of the ‘ontological difference’, to the point of its mystical erasure in the creative Nothing, is the threshold to a higher awakening.

## A Final Unity

The harsh first principle of eschatologicity—namely, that the very historicity of our history derives from an encounter of finitude with the infinitude beyond the order of finite contrasts, but through them and by (non-)contrast with it as a whole—refuses in advance any facile PR. ‘For a God’, Schelling already said, ‘who is merely an idea of reason does not allow an actual religion, or much less, an actual revelation to be conceived.’<sup>64</sup> The PR takes revelation, and even its authoritative interpretations from within the religious, cultic domain, as a given. It is not a *gnōsis* in the classical sense: the PR refuses the distinction between esoteric and exoteric levels of revelation, for which the latter is the domain of theology and the former is the domain of revelation’s ‘philosophy’ that somehow pierces to the core of reality that religion, as non-speculative practice, cannot.<sup>65</sup>

In the second lecture from the *Philosophy of Revelation*, Schelling responds ‘for the last time!’ to the misguided ‘pretence’ of some critics who consider that the undertaking of a ‘philosophy of revelation’ is ‘a religious one’ and think that he ‘wants simply to establish religion in the old sense—particularly positive religion—and so on’. By these words and the self-blinding attitude they express, he says, these critics ‘believe themselves to have already sufficiently discredited *this* aspiration’.<sup>66</sup> Schelling’s response to this unphilosophical accusation resounds like a refrain through his first lectures: The PR is not a matter of ‘establishing’ religion ‘in the old sense’ but is nevertheless ‘a very serious question ... it is a question of the meaning of philosophy itself’.<sup>67</sup>

What I have called the overcoming of OTTM in reference to the conditions for any PR, I now want to call *the salvation of philosophy by revelation*. Even if revelation is too much for philosophy, whether this is philosophy as it is, or as we take it to be, or even as whatever it may possibly become in the shadow of revelation—and whether it is finally, *eschatologically*, too much or not, God alone knows—does not negate the salvation of philosophy, but rather, enacts it. Hence I return to Rosenzweig’s claim that ‘man’s understanding reaches as far as his doings—apparently, to the honor of mankind.’<sup>68</sup>

It is tempting to see this remarkable claim as the culmination of the PR. Rosenzweig introduces this thought in his essay ‘The New Thinking’ with these words: ‘What the Pharisees of the Talmud and the Saints of the Church always knew deserves to be understood.’<sup>69</sup> If, as revelation’s eschatologicity requires, the covenant God is the Lord of all, including being and metaphysics, then the God of the philosophers, on the one hand, and of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, on the other, may very well be the same God. The test and criterion of this final unity is whether the philosopher as thinker, as *philosopher*, can be or become a *saint*, one whose word and deed aspire together in a philosophical life to be one in the truth of God.<sup>70</sup>

Though not clarified as an intellectual concept until recently (a clarification that is continuing), it is crucial to realize that revelation is an idea with the highest possible pedigree in Christianity. ‘Revelation’ is the disclosure of the *mysterion tou theou*—the ‘mystery of God’, the *apocalypsis*—and stands as the ‘revelation/disclosure/unveiling’ of the world’s last and therefore first truth. Its ‘reality’, though ‘kenotically’ hidden in history as a sign of history’s eschatological meaning, is of course taken for granted by religious faith as its content and reason for being. The question regarding *how* it is given and *how* it is lived, its intelligibility, marked by *eschatologicity*, given as promised, and by the *conditionlessness* of love, however, is the question of the PR, particularly in its present phenomenological form, which has ‘backtracked’ to rediscover an ancient and, hopefully, future philosophical path.<sup>71</sup>

## Notes

1. Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1966), p. 1.
2. Herman Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation: The Stone Lectures for 1908-1909, Princeton Theological Seminary* (New York: Longman, Greens and Co., 1909).
3. See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord, vol. 5: The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age*, trans. Oliver Davies et al. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1991), pp. 646–56. See also Jean-Yves Lacoste’s discussion of this

- text in the third lecture of *From Theology to Theological Thinking*, trans. W.C. Hackett (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2014).
4. See Lacoste, *From Theology to Theological Thinking*, p. 89.
  5. Jean-Luc Marion, 'The Possible and Revelation,' in *The Visible and the Revealed*, trans. Crina Gschwandtner et al. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), p. 2.
  6. Marion, 'The Possible and Revelation,' p. 2.
  7. Here I follow St. Augustine of Hippo's identification of the 'Beginning' with God the Father. See *Unfinished Literal Commentary on Genesis* 3.6: 'The beginning without beginning only the Father is; and that is why we believe that all things come from one beginning. The Son is however the beginning in such a way that he is coming from the Father' (*Saint Augustine on Genesis*, trans. Edmund Hill (O.P. Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 2006), p. 117).
  8. See Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation*, pp. 27–8.
  9. See, for example, Origen's remarkable statement in the preface to *De principiis*, paragraph 3: zealous study of the apostles, enacted by the "lover of wisdom" is a preparation for the true wisdom that is only a gift of the Holy Spirit; and St. Augustine, *De Trinitate* 14.4.15: worship is the highest act of the philosopher.
  10. See, for example, Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, I, 18, 90: 'The true philosophy is the one brought to us by the Son.'
  11. See Peter Koslowski, *Philosophien der Offenbarung: Antiker Gnostizismus, Franz von Baader, Schelling* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schoeningh, 2001).
  12. See Jean-François Courtine, 'Phenomenology and Hermeneutics of Religion,' trans. Jeffrey Kosky, in Dominique Janicaud et al., *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn"* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), pp. 121–6. Therein, Courtine claims, 'in Hegel and Schelling, the key concepts of all philosophy of religion (phenomenon, manifestation, revelation), concepts that phenomenological reflection is obliged to pass through, are determined in contrasting ways' (pp. 124–5).
  13. B.H. Blasche, *Philosophie der Offenbarung als Grundlage und Bedingung einer hoehern Ausbildung der Theologie* (Carl Glaeser Verlag, 1829).
  14. See Marion's comments in 'The Possible and Revelation,' p. 3, and Lacoste's, *Histoire de la théologie*, ed. Jean-Yves Lacoste (Paris: Seuil, 2010), pp. 370–3.
  15. The Christological expressions of divine wisdom at the apogee of the Pauline reflection (the philosophical 'hymns' of Ephesians, Colossians) are authoritative witnesses here.

16. See Stanislas Breton, *Du principe. Essai sur l'organisation du pensable* (Paris: Aubier, 1971).
17. See Jean Wahl's commentary on the first two theses of Plato's Parmenides in *Etude sur le Parménide de Platon* (Paris: F. Redier, 1926), an interpretation summarized in *Traité de Métaphysique* II.9.3 (Paris: Payot, 1953), pp. 642–49.
18. See David Bentley Hart, *The Experience of God: Being, Consciousness, Bliss* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013); the indications in David Burrell, *Towards a Jewish-Christian-Muslim Theology* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); and Sarah Grant, *Towards an Alternative Theology: Confessions of a Non-dualist Christian* (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1989/2002).
19. See St. John of the Cross, *Living Flame of Love*, 4.1-17, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, ed. Kieran Cavanaugh, OCD and Otilio Rodriguez, OCD (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 2001).
20. *Bhagavad Gita*, xiv. 27. In the *Gita*, says R.C. Zaehner, no longer is 'liberation' (*moksha*) sufficient. 'It is no longer regarded as the ultimate goal. Total detachment from the world is still rigorously insisted on, for this brings one to Nirvana of Brahman, but this is not enough' (R.C. Zaehner, 'Introduction' *Hindu Scriptures*, trans. R.C. Zaehner (New York, NY: Dent & Sons, 1966), p. xvii). The deeper word for which the entire Upanishadic philosophy is a preparation is 'Attach thy mind to Me' (*Bhagavad Gita*, vii.1). Compare Bavinck, 'Revelation is the disclosure of the *mysterion tou theou*. What neither nature nor history, neither mind nor heart, neither science nor art, can teach us, it makes known to us,—the fixed unalterable *will* of God... a will at variance with well-nigh the whole appearance of things. This will is the secret of revelation' (*Philosophy of Revelation*, p. 25), and the tenth-century Zoroastrian text, *Shkand-Gumanik Vichar* 10.37: 'It is not enough to know only that [God] exists, but one must know his nature and his will' (ed. P.J. de Menasce (O.P. Friebourg, 1945), p. 117).
21. I take Thomas Aquinas, of course as the reference point: *Summa contra gentiles* 1.3.2.
22. See Jean-Yves Lacoste, 'La frontière absente,' *La Phénoménalité de Dieu* (Paris : Cerf, 2008), p. 18: 'For Schelling revelation is not only an event that philosophy grasps in the same way as it grasps Greek history, but it entrusts to us the last words that a philosophy is able to speak: to think it is to think the most important thing.'
23. Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures*, trans. Bruce Matthews (New York, NY: SUNY Press, 2007), Lecture 2, pp. 120–1.

This text will be referenced subsequently simply by identifying the lecture number (e.g., Lecture 1) with reference to pagination in this translation.

24. Schelling, Lecture 1, p. 95.
25. Schelling, Lecture 1, p. 121.
26. Schelling, *Lectures on the History of Modern Philosophy*, trans. Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 132.
27. Schelling, *Lectures on the History of Modern Philosophy*, p. 132.
28. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 2.5 ad 3.
29. The ‘messianism’ of Jacques Derrida, governed as it is by the absolute structure of *différance* (a quasi-transcendental rule governing reason) that allows no exceptions—even (especially) God’s revelation (*Offenbarung*), inseparable from revealability (*Offenbarkeit*), which from this vantage must be seen as an extension of Heidegger’s ‘metaphysical’ (again, expressed in the modern sense) ontological difference—would fall under the same criticism outlined above. See Jacques Derrida, ‘Faith and Knowledge,’ in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 46–7. As far as this correlation is the case (and no farther) we can apply Marion’s proposal of the God of revelation in excess of Being—and its iron law, the ‘ontological difference’—to be also a passage outside of the text of Derrida. See Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being*, 2nd ed. trans. Thomas Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 235: ‘the onto-theo-logical frame of the ontological difference...itself thought in a metaphysical manner’.
30. In *Experience and the Absolute*, Jean-Yves Lacoste uses the term ‘symbol’ (defined as ‘the redistribution of the field of experience’; see esp. §§6–10.) to designate what I do here by ‘sign’ (following a common trope of the set of authoritative ecclesial documents from the Second Vatican Council: see *Gaudium et spes* §39: ‘On this earth the kingdom is already present in sign, when the Lord comes it will reach its completion.’).
31. See Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, vol. 1: The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins, 1979), p. 4: ‘If in Nietzsche’s thinking the prior tradition of Western thought is gathered and completed in a decisive respect, then the confrontation with Nietzsche becomes one with all Western thought hitherto.’ See also Marion: ‘Today, when nihilism marks our age’ *The Erotic Phenomenon*, trans. Stephen E. Lewis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 18.
32. See Marion: ‘Phenomenology opens the way of...leaving metaphysics to itself’ *Being Given*, trans. Jeffrey Kosky (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 4.



33. Lacoste, *From Theology to Theological Thinking*, lecture 3, pp. 63–90.
34. See Jean-Luc Marion, ‘On the Foundation of the Distinction between Theology and Philosophy,’ in *Philosophy, Religions and Transcendence*, ed. Philippe Capelle-Dumont. (Manila: Atelone University Press, 2010), pp. 47–76; Lacoste, *La Phénoménalité de Dieu*, pp. 9–11.
35. Marion, ‘Faith and Reason,’ *The Visible and the Revealed*, trans. Crina Gschwandtner et al. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), pp. 145–54; Lacoste, *From Theology to Theological Thinking*, p. 79.
36. Schelling, Lecture 2, p. 110.
37. I can now clarify a hypothesis of the PR to be determined later: the distinction between essence and person may make intelligible the far subsequent distinction between theology and philosophy.
38. ‘Thus, far from man and his endeavors making the world comprehensible, it is man himself that is the most incomprehensible. ... It is precisely man that drives me to the final desperate question: Why is there anything at all? Why is there not nothing?’ (Schelling, Lecture 1, p. 94).
39. For the following, see especially Jean-Yves Lacoste’s article, ‘Révélation,’ *Dictionnaire critique de théologie*, 3rd ed, ed. Jean-Yves Lacoste (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2007), pp. 1215–22.
40. Jean-Luc Marion, ‘Givenness and Revelation,’ The 2014 Gifford Lecture Series, Lecture 1: ‘The Aporia of Revelation: The Epistemological Interpretation,’ [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZg7vx6J9iJJCoce\\_ltuHDFH5K9w-ed5](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZg7vx6J9iJJCoce_ltuHDFH5K9w-ed5). Accessed September 11, 2015.
41. Se Ro 2.1-5 and chs. 9–11.
42. H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers, Vol. 1: Faith, Trinity, Incarnation*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).
43. See Ro 11.33-36: ‘O the depth of the riches and *sophias kai gnoseos theou*.’ See also Lacoste on St. Paul as ideal type for the passage from theology to theological thinking: *From Theology to Theological Thinking*, pp. 28–29.
44. It is worth noting that the gap between these two modes closes in the PPR of Marion and Lacoste.
45. Fichte, *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation*, §1, Introduction, (trans. Garrett Green (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge, 2012), p. 7).
46. See Kant’s Preface to the first and second editions for this reference (trans. Allen Wood and George Di Giovanni (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 33–9, 40–1). Compare Aristotle’s similar attitude in *Metaphysics* XII.8.

47. In his first chapter Bavinck notes that Hamann said somewhere that speculative rationalism has forgotten that God is a genius *who does not ask us* whether we find his word rational or irrational.
48. See Josef Sudbrack, *Trunken vom hell-lichten Dunkel des Absoluten: Dionysius der Areopagite und de Poesie der Gotteserfahrung* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 2001). Sudbrack opposes Buber and Levinas in particular to Hegel's idea of true infinity, which, desirous of overcoming the contrast between God and the world of 'bad infinity', collapses the opposition of alterity into a mysticism of identification wherein the infinite [freedom] alone is real. Schelling would be to Hegel as Ramanuja is to Shankara.
49. Franz Rosenzweig, 'The New Thinking', *Philosophical and Theological Writings*, trans. Paul W. Franks and Michael Morgan (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2000), pp. 109–39.
50. Rosenzweig, 'The New Thinking', p. 138; cp. 122.
51. Rosenzweig, 'The New Thinking', p. 110.
52. See László Tengelyi, 'New Phenomenology in France', *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 50 no. 2 (2012): 295–303. Tengelyi's essay is a précis of his landmark study (with H.-D. Gondek), *Neue Phänomenologie in Frankreich* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011). Here Tengelyi articulates the major outlines that set apart the 'third form of phenomenology', after Husserl's, founded on transcendental constitution, and then Heidegger's hermeneutical thinking. For this 'third form' the phenomenon as such is of central concern, which is understood as the *event* of spontaneous constitution for which the phenomenon can only be understood as self-establishing.
53. Jean-Luc Marion, *Certitudes négatives* (Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 2010), ch. 2.
54. Lacoste, *La phénoménalité de Dieu*, pp. 9–11.
55. See Jean-Luc Marion, *Certitudes négatives* §31, 'Eloge du paradoxe.' (Paris: Grasset, 2010), pp. 309–18.
56. St. Augustine, *Confessions* 7.10.18: 'He who knows the truth knows that [uncreated] light, and he knows the light knows eternity. Charity knows it.'
57. See Jean-Luc Marion's programmatic sketch, 'On the Foundations of the Distinction between Theology and Philosophy,' in *Philosophy, Religions and Transcendence*, ed. Philippe Capelle-Dumont (Manila: Atelone University Press, 2010), pp. 47–76.
58. See his essay translated as 'On Knowing God through Loving Him,' in *Christianity and Secular Reason*, ed. Jeffrey Bloechl (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2012), pp. 127–51.

59. Marion: 'Knowing signifies loving and love cannot be divided' ('Faith and Reason,' p. 154); Lacoste: 'In God...we are powerless to discern anything but a pure act of love' ('On Knowing God through Loving Him,' p. 133).
60. *Bhagavad Gita* xi. 54; emphasis added.
61. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II q. 27 a. 4 resp.
62. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II q. 26 a. 3 ad 4.
63. See Marion and Nancy, 'Débat,' *Dieu en tant que Dieu*, ed. Philippe Capelle-Dumont. (Paris: Cerf, 2010), pp. 278–79.
64. Schelling, *The Philosophy of Revelation*, lecture 7, p. 188.
65. See Jean Borella, *Guenonian Esotericism and Christian Mystery* (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2004), pp. 55–88.
66. Schelling, Lecture 2, p. 110, emphasis in original.
67. Schelling, Lecture 2, p. 110.
68. Rosenzweig, 'The New Thinking,' p. 110.
69. Rosenzweig, 'The New Thinking,' p. 110.
70. See Lacoste, *From Theology to Theological Thinking*, pp. 84–90.
71. On the notion of 'backtracking' see Lacoste, *From Theology to Theological Thinking*, p. 87.

# Part IV

## Embodiment and Affectivity

# 11

## The Integrity of Intentionality: Sketch for a Phenomenological Study

Matthew Ratcliffe

### Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to formulate a phenomenological question that I think is seldom considered, or at least seldom explicitly stated, and then to sketch the beginnings of an answer. That question is ‘what constitutes the sense that one is in one kind of intentional state, rather than another?’<sup>1</sup> In other words, in virtue of what do we experience ourselves as currently perceiving that *p* rather than, say, currently imagining or remembering that *p*? My discussion is exclusively phenomenological in emphasis. I am concerned with the *experience* of being in an intentional state, regardless of whether or not the relevant experience is taken to be necessary or sufficient for actually being in such a state. For the sake of simplicity, I will focus, for the most part, upon the categories ‘perceiving’, ‘imagining’, ‘remembering’, and ‘thinking’.

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These four modalities of intentionality are to be construed broadly; they encompass numerous subcategories that will need to be distinguished by a comprehensive phenomenological analysis. In the course of addressing my question, I also seek to indicate how a productive phenomenological research programme can be pursued by engaging with first-person accounts of anomalous experiences, such as those that arise in the context of psychiatric illness. The principal example I will consider here is ‘thought insertion’: somehow experiencing one’s own thoughts as someone else’s. I will also address the nature of certain so-called ‘hallucinations’.

One might wonder whether and how an enquiry that relies on interpreting the accounts of experience offered by other people still resembles classical, first-person phenomenology, as practised by Edmund Husserl and others. Despite adopting what might be termed a ‘hermeneutic, second-person phenomenological approach’, I retain a broad stance or attitude toward the study of experience, which preserves what I take to be the essence of the ‘phenomenological reduction’. I construe the reduction in a liberal way, as something common to phenomenology as practised by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martin Heidegger, and various others, rather than as something specific to Husserlian phenomenology.<sup>2</sup> Whenever we perceive that *p*, remember that *q*, think that *r*, or imagine that *s*, such attitudes arise in the context of an already given relationship with the world, something that is easily overlooked, even when one is reflecting philosophically upon the nature of experience. Performing the phenomenological reduction involves coming to recognize the ordinarily presupposed sense of belonging to a shared world as itself a phenomenological achievement, and striving to study its structure. As will become clear towards the end of this chapter, the question that I address here ultimately concerns this sense of belonging to a world, and cannot be adequately addressed if intentional states are conceived of in isolation from a wider phenomenological context. Indeed, the question provides us with a *way into* the phenomenological reduction; clarifying and then attempting to answer it involves a shift in perspective, whereby one comes to explicitly acknowledge phenomenological achievements that are more usually presupposed. In the next section, I will formulate my question as clearly as I can. Then I will

sketch a potentially fruitful way of responding to it, one that opens up a substantial subject matter for future phenomenological enquiry.

## The Sense of Being in a Type of Intentional State

I am currently looking out of the window at what appears to be a bird. I might well be mistaken about what I am looking at. Indeed, I have a degree of doubt concerning what I see. However, I have no doubt that I am seeing something or the other. Even though I am not sure what I see, the status of my experience as one of seeing is not in question. Furthermore, I do not have to explicitly infer that I am seeing; I have a pre-reflective, immediate, unproblematic appreciation of my experience as one of seeing. To be less specific, I take myself to be *perceiving* something, rather than—say—remembering it. Amongst other things, the experience of perceiving something through one or another modality involves a sense of its being ‘here’, ‘now’. In cases of externally directed perception, there is also a sense of its being distinct from and usually in close proximity to oneself.<sup>3</sup> Let us focus on this pre-reflective sense that something or other is both distinct from me and also ‘here’, ‘now’. Call it the sense of ‘presence’. This may not be sufficient for a sense of perceiving, and it is certainly not sufficient for the sense of perceiving something through one sensory modality rather than another, but presence is at least necessary for the unproblematic appreciation that one is in a perceptual state in relation to *p*. Granted, one might have an experience of *p* that is somehow ambiguous in this respect, and then infer from other sources of evidence that one perceives *p* rather than imagines it. However, we only resort to such inferences in cases of unusual experience, which lack something that more usually distinguishes an experience as one of perceiving.

An analogous point applies to other kinds of intentional state. In remembering rather than imagining or perceiving that *p*, we usually have an immediate, unproblematic sense of *p* as past, rather than present, imagined, or anticipated. And, in the case of imagining, there is a sense of *p* as neither past nor present. In some cases of imagining, *p* may be anticipated. In others, one recognizes *p* as counterfactual or even

impossible.<sup>4</sup> Our pre-reflective ability to distinguish the various kinds of intentionality thus implies a grasp of distinctions such as the following: ‘is here/is elsewhere’, ‘was here/was never here’, ‘never existed/has ceased to exist/does exist/will exist’, ‘might have existed/might exist now/might come to exist’. Were we wholly unreceptive to such distinctions, we would be unable to distinguish the various types of intentional states from each other. More specifically, if our *experience* were unreceptive to these distinctions, we would be unable to *experience* ourselves as in one intentional state and not another. Given that this is not the case, it is legitimate to ask what the relevant aspect of experience consists of: in virtue of what do I experience myself as perceiving, remembering, imagining, or anticipating that *p*, as opposed to encountering *p* in a different or less determinate way?<sup>5</sup>

To make the question clearer, a distinction can be drawn between (a) actually being in an intentional state of type *x*, (b) having an experience that is characteristic of being in an intentional state of type *x*, and (c) having the sense that one is in an intentional state of type *x*. It is plausible to maintain that we can be mistaken about the kind of intentional state we are in. On one interpretation of dreaming, we take ourselves to perceive that *p* and/or to believe that *p*, when we in fact dream that *p* or imagine that *p*. Certain kinds of emotional state provide less contentious examples. It is arguably commonplace to take oneself to be in an emotional state of type *x* towards *p* when one is actually in an emotional state of type *y*. I might take myself to be happy about B’s achieving *p* when I am actually resentful, or I might think that I am not angry with C and later come to realize that I was.<sup>6</sup>

How should such examples be interpreted? One option is to adopt a wholly non-phenomenological account of what it is to actually *be* in an intentional state of one or another type. On such an account, I could have an experience that is indistinguishable from one of perceiving, but not be in a perceptual state at all, or, conversely, be in a perceptual state without experiencing it as such. Thus (a) and (b) come apart. A complete divorce between intentional states and associated experiences would be contentious, raising the sceptical worry that our experiences of perceiving, remembering, or imagining that *p* does not give us grounds for thinking that we really are perceiving, remembering, or imagining that *p* (a concern that would apply



equally to one's experience of thinking sceptical thoughts). However, one could also allow for (b) in the absence of (a) by making the weaker claim that the phenomenology of perception is at least not *sufficient* for perception, given that a genuinely perceptual experience also requires relating to an object in an appropriate way. Alternatively, one could maintain that taking oneself to perceive *p* in the absence of *p* does not in fact involve having much the same experience but in the absence of an appropriate object. According to certain 'disjunctivist' approaches, the phenomenology of perception is partly or wholly constituted by actual properties of mind-independent objects that perception gives us access to. Hence, if one did not relate to an object in the required way, one could not have the relevant experience.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, this would not prohibit one's being mistaken about the kind of experience one is having. Such a scenario would involve (c) in the absence of (a) or (b).

In what follows, I want to bracket, to set aside, all non-phenomenological concerns, in order to focus exclusively upon the nature of (c). Even the disjunctivist can admit the possibility of having the same *sense of perceiving a table* both when table *p* is present and when table *p* is absent, so long as it is granted that other aspects of the experiences differ. Both experiences incorporate the sense of encountering something in a way that differs from imagining, remembering, and so forth. We can address the question of what this sense consists of, and talk in a non-committal way of 'perceptual experience', while remaining agnostic over what does and does not count as a genuine case of perception, and over whether veridical experiences necessarily differ in character from non-veridical ones.

So I have nothing to say about the hypothetical case where one has an unproblematic sense of encountering *p* as present even though *p* is not actually present. But I do want to consider another kind of case. Here, one does not have an unwavering, although mistaken, sense of being in intentional state *x*. Rather, there is an experienced lack of clarity over the nature of one's intentional state. Again, emotions provide us with a range of potential examples. It is not uncommon for people to say 'I don't know how I feel about *p*' or 'I don't know what I'm feeling right now'. Sometimes, the apparent indeterminacy can be explained away in terms of uncertainty over what one *should* feel in a given situation, rather than what one *does* feel. In others, it may turn out to be a matter of language:

the person struggles to describe her feelings. Other cases may involve ambivalence: two or more conflicting emotions are focused upon a common object. Nevertheless, it is plausible to maintain that there are at least some instances where a person has an emotional experience but is unsure what kind of emotional experience it is, whether she is in state  $x$  or state  $y$  with respect to  $p$ . Have I stopped caring about  $p$ , or am I just really tired? Am I angry with  $p$ , or upset about something else? Less common experiences of uncertainty regarding intentional state types involve wondering ‘am I dreaming this?’; ‘did that just happen?’; or ‘am I remembering something that actually happened?’

If it makes sense to ask ‘am I having an experience of a given type?’, then a distinction can be drawn between having a type of experience and having the sense that one is having a type of experience. I do not mean to suggest that the two can be neatly separated. That would be unlikely. Indeed, on some accounts of perception, it would be impossible. For instance, perception has been conceived of as an exploratory process that involves appearances unfolding in a structured fashion, in accord with one’s movements and associated expectations.<sup>8</sup> One would not act in ways characteristic of a perceptual process unless one took oneself to be perceiving, and how one acts shapes what one then experiences. Hence, if a sense of perceiving were absent from the experience, that experience could not be preserved intact. The point applies equally to other modalities of intentionality. So, for the sake of argument, let us grant that the sense of having a certain type of experience is integral to that experience, rather than separable from it. Thus, one could not have two identical perceptual experiences, one associated with a sense of perceiving and the other with a sense of imagining. Even so, there is more to the experience of a given type of intentional state than having the sense that one is in a state of that type. So we can continue to address our question, by asking what this specific *aspect* of the experience consists of. The answer, I will now suggest, is non-obvious.

## Perceiving Thoughts

On one account, my question has a very simple answer: types of experience are distinguished from each other by their characteristic contents. Indeed, one could insist that experiences of all kinds are ‘transparent’: in

reflecting upon any given experience, the only thing that can be discerned is its content. For instance, there is nothing more to an experience of seeing than what is seen.<sup>9</sup> On such a view, the sense of perceiving something, and doing so visually, would amount to no more than the having of an experience with a certain, characteristic type of content, one that is specific to visual perception and distinguishes it from, for instance, visual imagination and non-visual perception. The same goes for all other modalities of intentional experience: broad categories such as imagining, remembering, and thinking are distinguished from each other by their characteristic contents. If that is right, then the question, as I have set it up, is unnecessarily complicated. There is nothing more to an experience of type  $x$  than its content, and there is nothing more to the sense of having an experience of type  $x$  than an  $x$ -specific experiential content. So a 'type of experience' and the 'sense of having an experience of that type' are not, after all, distinguishable. Once we have dealt with the former, there is nothing left to say about the latter. On such a view, one could still accept the possibility of a case where content  $p$ , which is constitutive of a type  $x$  experience, is associated with the mistaken judgement or belief that one is having a type  $y$  experience, so long as the relevant cognition—whatever it consists of—is construed as wholly distinct from the relevant perceptual phenomenology, including any 'sense of perceiving' that might be integral to that phenomenology.

Perhaps this is one reason why my question is seldom formulated. But, as I will now show, it is not a good reason. It should instead be acknowledged that perceptual experience is much more complicated than some philosophers take it to be. Let us suppose that experiences are exhausted by their contents. That being the case, it is difficult to specify what aspect of the content is altered when a person complains that everything looks unreal or dreamlike, that a dream seemed especially real, or that a memory feels more like reliving an event in the present than recalling something past. This is especially so in certain cases of non-localized phenomenological changes. For instance, a person might report that everything she perceives looks exactly as it did before and yet—at the same time—profoundly different, strange, and unreal.<sup>10</sup> So, if erosion of the sense that one is in an intentional state of type  $x$  is to be accounted for in terms of  $x$ -specific contents, it should at least be acknowledged that the relevant contents are elusive.

However, I propose that certain kinds of anomalous experience are more obviously *incompatible* with a content-based approach. There can be a double dissociation between the sense of being in intentional state  $x$  and one's experiencing the characteristic content of  $x$ ; either can arise without the other. This is not to insist that experiential content can persist undisturbed, in isolation from the sense that one is in a kind of intentional state. As I have already acknowledged, it is unlikely that the two are neatly separable. But this admission is compatible with the view that the sense of being in an intentional state of type  $x$  is not *wholly* dictated by content. My position is as follows: one can have the sense of being in an intentional state of type  $x$  (or at least an intentional state that more closely resembles  $x$  than it does any other familiar state type of intentional state) while experiencing its content as more akin to that of a type  $y$  intentional state. A strange, chimerical experience thus arises, one that might be interpreted and described in a range of different ways. To illustrate this, I will offer a detailed example: the phenomenon of thought insertion.

Thought insertion involves experiencing thoughts while at the same time not experiencing them as one's own.<sup>11</sup> It is most often associated with schizophrenia, but is not exclusive to that diagnosis. Philosophical descriptions of the phenomenon are generally unclear over *what* exactly is experienced as inserted. On one interpretation, *thought contents* are experienced as having arisen from elsewhere, from someone else's act of thinking. On another interpretation, *the act of thinking* is itself experienced, but both thinking and thought content are attributed to another agency. Graham adopts the latter view: 'In thought insertion, thinking is experienced as an activity. However, although episodes of thinking are experienced as occurring in oneself (as subject), the activity itself is experienced as if conducted or engaged in by *someone else* (as the agent).'<sup>12</sup> But I think the content view is more plausible. We can make a case for it by starting from the frequently noted affinity between thought insertion and auditory verbal hallucination.<sup>13</sup> Given the misattributed-act-of-thinking view, the alleged similarity or even identity between the two is puzzling. While auditory verbal hallucination (AVH) is generally claimed to involve confusing one's own inner state (usually, one's own 'inner speech') with externally directed perception, and thus confusing

one type of intentionality with another, thought insertion (TI) involves correctly identifying a type of intentional state but wrongly attributing a state of that type to another person rather than oneself.

Now consider the content view. Suppose that the contents of our thoughts can be distinguished, at least to some degree, from the acts of thinking in the context of which they arise, in the way that seeing might be distinguished from what is seen, and an act of imagining from what is imagined. The phenomenology of 'thinking' therefore needs to be construed broadly, as encompassing more than just effortful, goal-directed thinking; TI is equally distinguishable from random and sometimes incongruous thoughts popping into one's mind, songs that one can't get out of one's head, and a range of other seemingly involuntary, effortless experiences of thought. According to the content view, TI involves experiencing thought content as present but also as originating from outside one's psychological boundaries. In other words, the experience differs from that of thinking, insofar as it incorporates something that is specific to, and also integral to, the phenomenology of externally directed perception: a sense of encountering something distinct from oneself as present. Hence TI could just as well be construed in terms of having a (not necessarily unproblematic, unambiguous) sense of being in a perceptual state, but one with an uncharacteristic content. The connection between TI and AVH thus becomes clear: both involve a perception-like experience of thought content.

It might be objected that AVH is unlike thought insertion, as it is specifically auditory in nature while inserted thoughts are not. However, AVHs are widely acknowledged to be heterogeneous in numerous respects, including their auditory character.<sup>14</sup> Some so-called auditory hallucinations are not so obviously auditory in nature. This is clear from first-person descriptions of AVHs that explicitly distinguish between two different kinds of experience: auditory experiences, which are more often taken to originate in the external environment, and perception-like experiences of thought content that more often seem to originate within one's bodily boundaries:

The voice inside my head sounds nothing like a real person talking to me, but rather like another person's thoughts in my head. The other voices are to me indistinguishable from actual people talking in the same room as me. (#1)

I feel like I have other people's thoughts in my head and also hear other people having conversations outside my head. (#3)

There are two kinds—one indistinguishable from actual voices or noises (I hear them like physical noises), and only the point of origin (for voices) or checking with other people who are present (for sounds) lets me know when they aren't actually real. The second is like hearing someone else's voice in my head, generally saying something that doesn't "sound" like my own thoughts or interior monologue. (#17)<sup>15</sup>

Non-auditory cases can involve an equally pronounced sense of the relevant content as something presently occurring and *non-self-produced*, even when the 'voice' is not experienced as emanating from a source outside of one's own body.<sup>16</sup> So, although a simple identification between AVH and TI is not plausible, it is, I think, plausible to maintain that some reports of TI and some reports of AVH amount to different descriptions of the same phenomenon: an anomalous, quasi-perceptual experience of thought content. This is perhaps most clearly illustrated by first-person accounts that describe the same experience in terms of both 'voices' and 'inserted thoughts', or blur the boundary between the two types of description:

The voice inside my head sounds nothing like a real person talking to me, but rather like another person's thoughts in my head. (#1)

The voices inside my head are like thoughts, only they are not my own. (#2)

[T]here are things I "hear" that aren't as much like truly hearing a voice or voices. [...] Instead, these are more like telepathy or hearing without hearing exactly, but knowing that content has been exchanged and feeling that happen. (#7)

[I]t definitely sounds like it is from inside my head. It's at some kind of border between thinking and hearing. (#18)

The voice is not strictly audible, does not turn my head toward a speaker, there is no real speaker, just a thinker who can make their thought known to me. I hear but I don't hear with my ears. (#30)

The best way to describe it is telepathy, in different grades of vividness, from bearable to intrusive. (#33)

Hence the same kind of anomalous experience can be described in terms of an audition-like, perceptual experience with an unfamiliar

content and/or a thought content that is experienced in an odd, perception-like way. Of course, there is the risk of misinterpretation here. This is inevitable when engaging with and seeking to make sense of first-person testimonies, especially those relating to unusual and hard-to-describe experiences. Nevertheless, all I need is a very weak claim: at least *some of those experiences* that are described in terms of either TI and/or AVH involve experiencing something thought-like in content, but in a perception-like way. If even that much is right, the simple view that we identify the type of experience we are having solely in virtue of its characteristic content is to be rejected. The sense of being in an intentional state that is similar to or indistinguishable from one of type  $x$  can be associated with a content that either resembles or is indistinguishable from that of a  $y$ -type intentional state, resulting in an intrinsically peculiar experience.<sup>17</sup> Where a content is more usually associated with  $y$ , it may well be altered to some degree by the sense that one is in an intentional state of type  $x$ , rather than  $y$ . Nevertheless, this sense of being in an  $x$ -type state does not fully constrain the content, which can remain more  $y$ -like than  $x$ -like. So we can, after all, distinguish the *sense* of being in an intentional state from a wider-ranging experience of being in an intentional state of that kind, where the latter also includes characteristic content.<sup>18</sup> By reflecting upon certain anomalous experiences, such as TI, we can thus come to better appreciate that there is indeed a phenomenological question to be addressed here, one that does not have an obvious answer. In the remainder of this chapter, I will sketch what I think the right answer should look like.

## Intentionality and Anticipation

How do we account for the sense of being in an intentional state of type  $x$ , despite experiencing a  $y$ -like content? The answer, I propose, is that the experience of being in a given intentional state with respect to  $p$  involves experiencing certain characteristic types of *possibility*. To develop this response, I think it is also helpful to consider certain kinds of ‘hallucination’, which are described as like perceiving  $p$  and yet—at the same time—quite different from perceiving  $p$ . For example,

in his first-person account of mescaline-induced hallucinations, the phenomenologist and psychiatrist J.H. van den Berg describes how, in one sense, he saw and heard nothing in addition to what he would more usually have seen or heard.<sup>19</sup> But, even so, he really was hallucinating. It was, he says, ‘as if the hallucination offered itself in the guise of perception so that it could be communicable’, adding that such hallucinations have a kind of intentionality that ‘distinguishes them from *perception* and also from *imagination*’. His account is consistent with a wider literature on delusions and hallucinations, which draws attention to a kind of ‘double-bookkeeping’, whereby the patient speaks and acts in ways that are—to some degree—consistent with believing or perceiving that *p* but also speaks and acts in other ways that distinguish her attitude towards *p* from her ordinary perceptions and beliefs.<sup>20</sup>

In my view, the most plausible way to make sense of such tensions involves appealing to what Husserl calls the *horizontal* structure of experience.<sup>21</sup> In brief, the claim is that our experience of a given entity incorporates a sense of the characteristic *possibilities* that it offers.<sup>22</sup> For instance, my perceptual experience of a toothbrush includes the possibility of picking it up and turning it around to reveal its hidden side, whereas my experience of a cloud does not. Now suppose that one’s perception of an entity, such as a chair, were associated with a horizontal structure more usually integral to the experience of a different entity or kind of entity, such as a hungry tiger. In one sense, the content of the experience would be unchanged. One would see a brown entity with four legs, a flat, horizontal surface, and a vertical back. At the same time, one would have the ‘feeling’ of encountering something different. The degree of tension becomes clearer if we extend Husserl’s account (in a way I think is phenomenologically accurate) by maintaining that the horizontal structure of an entity includes not only prescriptions for manipulating it in order to further advance a perceptual process, but also various kinds of significant, practical possibility. Thus, as one encounters the chair, one does not see something for sitting on, but something that offers threat, something to flee from, something menacing. It is debatable whether an anomalous horizontal structure could be sufficiently specific to constitute the sense that what one faces is a *tiger*. Perhaps some further imaginative/cognitive work is needed in order to arrive at such a narrow interpretation.



Nevertheless, one could at least get to the point of somehow experiencing a chair and, at the same time, *feeling* that one is faced with an animate, predatory, unpredictable, and imminent threat.<sup>23</sup>

Now, the difference between a mundane case of perceiving *p* and a horizontal hallucination of *p* does not involve a sense of being in two different kinds of intentional state with respect to *p*. Even in the hallucinatory case, one has the sense of being in a perceptual state, or at least a state that is more like a perceptual experience than any other familiar kind of experience. There are various possible scenarios to consider though. In the kind of case just described, one experiences the possibilities associated with *p*, but when one encounters *q*. One therefore has at least a partial sense of being in the presence of *p*, even though one can still see *q*. Alternatively, one might experience the possibilities associated with *p*, but without superimposing them on *q*. So, rather than seeing a chair as a tiger or somehow tiger-like, one would have a sense of *p* as present, while at the same time experiencing the scene as devoid of anything with the same physical properties as *p*. We can also distinguish between hallucinatory experiences of types and tokens: whether one senses the possibilities associated with a *particular* entity or agent, or those associated with a certain *type* of entity. Different degrees and kinds of 'horizontal hallucination', which depend on the extent to which an experience involves the full spectrum of possibilities associated with *p*, are also to be distinguished. For instance, one might sense the presence of a particular person, but without the inclusion of significant possibilities such as actually addressing her or turning round to see her. Where the relevant horizontal structure is incomplete, the experience could take various forms, depending on which kinds of possibility are present and which absent.<sup>24</sup> However, in addition to all of this, there is another kind of case to consider: one does not experience the possibilities associated with entity *p* in the absence of *p*, or in relation to *q* rather than *p*. Rather, in virtue of the possibilities that are associated with *p*, one takes oneself to be in an intentional state *x* towards *p*, rather than in an intentional state *y*.

But how should we conceive of these 'experienced possibilities'? One option would be to maintain that they are integral to entities as experienced and thus enrich experiential content. So there is, after all, no more to the sense of having a given kind of experience than its characteristic content.

The problem is just that we have understated the scope of content and failed to recognize the possibility of tension between two different types, or perhaps ‘aspects’, of content. It could be added that, when we set aside experiential content and seek out a wholly separate experience of the possible, there is nothing to be found—experience remains transparent. This way of thinking presupposes, from the outset, a separation between intentional attitude and content. We first split them off from each other. Then we describe experienced content. Then we set aside anything that is attributable to content, ask what is left of the attitude, and don’t find anything. However, the ‘sense of the possible’ that I am appealing to here does not respect an attitude/content distinction. As Husserl observes, the possibilities we experience as integral to entities in the surrounding environment are at the same time felt as bodily dispositions, as phenomenologically accessible movement tendencies of various kinds.<sup>25</sup> When an entity says ‘turn me around to reveal my hidden side’; we feel drawn towards it in a specific way. It is not that we experience the possibilities and also the bodily dispositions; they are one and the same thing. The relevant dispositions are not themselves objects of experience, at least not ordinarily. It is *through* certain bodily dispositions that we experience possibilities as inherent in things.<sup>26</sup> And my suggestion is that characteristic configurations of possibility contribute not only to *what* one experiences but also to the *way* in which one experiences it, the sense of what kind of intentional state one is in.

To be more specific, different kinds of intentionality are associated with different *anticipatory profiles*. Again, it is informative to draw upon Husserl, who, in *Experience and Judgment*, maintains that all intentionality presupposes a more primitive sense of rootedness in a world, something comprised—at least in part—of a distinctive *style* of anticipation. One ordinarily anticipates things in the mode of habitual confidence or certainty, and they generally unfold in line with one’s expectations, resulting in a largely coherent, dynamic interplay between anticipation and fulfilment. This is not to suggest that we anticipate exactly what we will see next or exactly what the immediate outcome of an action will be. Rather, we have a variably determinate sense of what is coming next, which becomes progressively clearer as it unfolds in line with anticipation. For example, ‘the other side of this cup will be smooth and have

one or another colour' is consistent with then finding that 'the other side of this cup is smooth and red'. Husserl maintains that it is only in the context of a habitual, practical, bodily sense of confidence or certainty that doubt and uncertainty become intelligible. Only against a backdrop of more general confidence can something appear potentially or actually anomalous—one might be uncertain over what it is, or harbour more concrete doubts over whether it is  $p$  or  $q$ . In addition, having an explicit sense that ' $p$  is the case' involves the restoration of certainty, and its intelligibility therefore depends upon the possibility of doubt. The same applies to negation, to any sense we might have that ' $p$  is not the case'. Hence the modalities of belief (uncertainty, doubt, negation, and affirmation), and thus the attitude of belief itself, presuppose a certain kind of anticipatory profile, a sense of confidence or certainty that is more primitive than any instance of believing that  $p$ .

I think it is right to maintain that the anticipatory structure of experience is essential to its integrity. Nevertheless, the relevant structure should not be thought of in terms of a singular, all-enveloping style of habitual, confident anticipation. Different kinds of intentionality have different kinds of anticipation-fulfilment profile. Indeed, to experience a characteristic type of anticipation-fulfilment profile *is* to have the sense of being in a certain kind of intentional state. Hence anticipatory profiles contribute to both (a) the sense that one is encountering a specific entity or type of entity and (b) the sense that one is experiencing that entity in one rather than another way. So far as I know, very little has been written on the anticipation-fulfilment profiles of different intentional states, and how they contribute to a sense of being in one or another kind of intentional state. One exception, though, is Straus, who maintains that some experiences, including certain hallucinations, '*originate in the medium of distorted modalities*'.<sup>27</sup> Different kinds of intentionality, he observes, have different temporal structures. For instance, '[i]n my recollection I can transport myself to past decades; in waking sensory experience I can only advance from present....into the future'. When it comes to imagination, 'I can cross the ocean in one leap; in sensory experience there are no leaps'. Hence a principal difference between perceptual experience of one's surroundings and dreaming or imagining is that the former involves a distinctive, more tightly structured pattern of anticipation and fulfilment: '[W]aking experience has its own peculiar order and

precision. Every moment is directed to the following one in a meaningful anticipation, and in the continuum of anticipation we grasp our wakefulness'. It is not *because* one experiences oneself as perceiving or imagining that experience has a certain kind of structure, involving the anticipation of some things and not others, as well as finding some things and not others anomalous. Rather, these patterns are constitutive of one's sense of what intentional state one is in. Thus, as Straus indicates, disturbances in this aspect of experience erode the experienced modalities of intentionality.

## Thought Insertion and Anticipation

The approach I have outlined, although admittedly schematic, is consistent with the phenomenology of TI (and the subset of AVHs that are equally describable in TI terms). There is a general emphasis in the TI literature on the lack of anticipation, construed phenomenologically and/or in terms of non-conscious mechanisms.<sup>28</sup> Shaun Gallagher proposes a phenomenological account of TI, which draws upon Husserl and appeals to the disruption of experience's anticipatory structure.<sup>29</sup> He takes, as a starting point, Husserl's account of the protentional–retentional structure of experience. In brief, experience of the present is permeated by a variably determinate anticipation of what is about to happen, something that usually involves a coherent pattern of anticipation and fulfilment. As one's anticipations are fulfilled, they continue to feature in one's current experience but as 'just past', as retentions.<sup>30</sup> Gallagher maintains that TI involves a disturbance of protention. Unruly emotions associated with certain thought contents disrupt anticipation, such that the thoughts arrive unannounced, as if from elsewhere.

However, there is an alternative option. Rather, than adopting the view that experience in general has a singular, uniform, anticipatory structure, we should take into account the possibility that different kinds of intentional states have different anticipatory profiles. Many people do anticipate the coming of their 'voices' or 'inserted thoughts': 'I can feel them coming on and find it hard to focus on what I'm doing' (#18); 'Sometimes, it's like a wave and then I hear them' (#22). Furthermore, even if one does not initially anticipate their coming, the relevant contents are often elaborate and thematically coherent. As one starts to 'hear' an

abusive ‘voice’ saying ‘you are a worthless piece of...’, one inevitably has a clear sense of what is coming next, which is arguably just as confident and determinate as one’s anticipation of thoughts that are not experienced as inserted.<sup>31</sup> So it is not that one fails to anticipate. Instead, I suggest, one anticipates in a way that more closely resembles the structure of perceptual experience than that of thought. As Straus puts it, ‘[t]he voices are heard, they are acoustic phenomena, but they are also quite different enough to contrast with all else that is audible. The mode of their reception is rather a being-affected, similar to hearing’.<sup>32</sup>

What could this ‘being-affected’ consist of, such that it is ‘similar to hearing’ in some respect? It is clear that hearing is not devoid of anticipation. Nevertheless, there may be certain styles of anticipation involved in perceptual experience, which are not ordinarily associated with the arrival of one’s own thought contents. One plausible candidate is anxious anticipation. Think of how one might hear a noise in the night and then wait in silence, anxiously anticipating further noises that might confirm the presence of an intruder. One anticipates the relevant events in a distinctive, affectively charged way. It is not usual to anticipate one’s own thought contents in this way. Granted, one might be anxious about a potential or actual situation that one is thinking about. But it is the state of affairs one thinks about that elicits the anxiety, rather than the ‘having of a thought about that state of affairs’. However, consider a scenario, not uncommon, where the ‘voices’ hurl abuse and feed a growing sense of inadequacy, shame, and/or guilt. In such a case, one might come to dread the arrival of thoughts with contents such as ‘you are a failure’ or ‘everyone hates you’, while sensing their coming. This, I propose, could constitute a quasi-perceptual experience of thought content (at least in some cases; I concede that the relevant phenomenon may turn out to be quite diverse). One anticipates one’s thoughts in an affectively charged and atypical way. This mode of anticipation is not essential to the sense that one is having a perceptual experience. All the same, it is more typical of perception, and contributes to a sense of one’s experience *as* perception-like rather than thought-like. Some first-person descriptions suggest something along just these lines:

Due to the murmuring voice experiences being so distressing with each successive occurrence however, I grew to dread ever more either whenever another experience would appear to possibly be forthcoming or, once in

the midst of an actual ongoing experience, what would come next; waiting for the next shoe to drop. (#31)

It's very difficult to describe the experience. Words seem to come into my mind from another source than through my own conscious effort. I find myself straining sometimes to make out the word or words, and my own anxiety about what I hear or many have heard makes it a fearful experience. I seem pulled into the experience and fear itself may shape some of the words I hear. (#32)

I have come to recognise the voices as expressions of anxiety, perhaps even a recognition of a fear I have about myself that I am not prepared to entertain as being part of my personality. (#34)<sup>33</sup>

The general approach may also apply to a range of other experiences. For instance, elsewhere, I have proposed that something similar may occur in the case of post-traumatic 'flashbacks', memories that are experienced as strangely perception-like, more akin to reliving an event in the present than recalling something that occurred in the past.<sup>34</sup> More usually, memories are embedded in the context of a life, in relation to other relevant events and also one's current projects, commitments, and concerns—where one is heading. One thus anticipates the arrival of occurrent, episodic memories in certain, coherent ways. However, traumatic events are sometimes not integrated into a coherent, purposive sense of one's life. So they are experienced as anomalous, unlike other memories in their anticipation-fulfilment profile.

## Intentionality, Self, and World

In this chapter, I have sketched a phenomenological project: that of describing the various modalities of intentionality and the interconnections between them in terms of their distinctive anticipation-fulfilment profiles. Reflecting upon certain anomalous experiences gives us some ground for thinking that this is a promising approach to take, in addressing the question of what it is to experience oneself as perceiving, imagining, remembering, and so forth. It should be added that the anticipatory profiles of an intentional state type will also include characteristic relations with other kinds of intentional states. Hence intentionality has

a singular, integrated structure, rather than consisting of however many circumscribed anticipation-fulfilment structures existing in isolation from each other. I take this structure to be inextricable from our most basic sense of self, from a sense of being a singular locus of experience, occupying a place in space and time, distinct from other subjects and also from its surroundings.<sup>35</sup> What would experience be like if one could not distinguish perceiving from imagining, remembering, anticipating, and various other kinds of intentional states? Insofar as one failed to distinguish perceiving from imagining, one would lack any sense of being spatially located, and an inability to discriminate between remembering and perceiving would amount to a loss of temporal location. If one could not identify one's own thinking as distinct from one's perception of others' thought contents, the distinction between self and other would be equally unsustainable. It is not clear what sense of self could remain.

Hence an account of the anticipation-fulfilment structure of intentionality turns out to concern our sense of self, world, and the relationship between them. Its subject matter ultimately coincides with what the phenomenological reduction seeks to make explicit: a coherent sense of belonging to the world that we take for granted whenever we have an unproblematic experience of perceiving that *p*, imagining that *q*, or remembering that *r*. A comprehensive analysis of the sense of being in a given type of intentional state will equally need to address the structure of temporal experience, the distinction between self and other, and the phenomenology of the body, insofar as bodily experience relates to one's sense of the possible. These are all familiar topics for phenomenological enquiry, but what I have tried to do here is to sketch a distinctive route that we might take in seeking to address them, one that starts from a beguilingly simple question.

## Notes

1. I use the term 'intentional state' to refer to types and tokens of intentional directedness, such as 'perceiving' and, more specifically, 'perceiving that *p*'. The term 'state' has certain 'static' connotations, which I wish to avoid. As employed here, it is a philosophically non-committal term of convenience.

- I could equally have used the term ‘attitude’. I similarly use the term ‘content’ in a non-committal way, where the *content* of an experience is synonymous with *what it is* that one perceives, remembers, or imagines.
2. M. Ratcliffe, *Experiences of Depression: a Study in Phenomenology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 21–3.
  3. The proximity claim is questionable in some cases, depending on what the content of perceptual experience is taken to consist of. If we can correctly be said to ‘hear something exploding’, then we can perceive some things through audition that are a considerable distance away. Similarly, if it is right to say that we can ‘see a star or galaxy’, rather than first seeing something and then conceiving of it in those terms, vision is not a proximity sense either. In the latter case, it can be added that what we perceive need not be present, given that the light has taken millions of years to reach us. However, even if that were allowed, we *experience* something as present, and it is this experience of perceptual presence that concerns me here.
  4. However, it is questionable whether our phenomenology is sensitive to more refined distinctions, such as that between physical, metaphysical, and logical possibility.
  5. Although I have phrased the question contrastively, the relevant achievement need not take that form. It could be that I take myself to be perceiving, pure and simple. That I am ‘not remembering’ is implied by this, rather than integral to it.
  6. For more general scepticism concerning the reliability of ‘introspective’ access to our own mental states, see E. Schwitzgebel, ‘The Unreliability of Naïve Introspection,’ *Philosophical Review* 117 (2008): 245–73.
  7. For example, see M.G.F. Martin, ‘The Transparency of Experience,’ *Mind & Language* 17 (2002): 376–425. For a very good summary of the disjunctivist position, see also F. Macpherson, ‘The Philosophy and Psychology of Hallucination: An Introduction’, in *Hallucination: Philosophy and Psychology*, eds. F. Macpherson and D. Platchias (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2013), pp. 1–38.
  8. For example, see E. Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, trans. J.S. Churchill and K. Ameriks (London: Routledge, 1948/1973); *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book*, trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1952/1989); A. Noë, *Action in Perception* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2004); and Ratcliffe, *Experiences of Depression*.
  9. See Martin, ‘The Transparency of Experience’; M. Tye, ‘Representationalism and the Transparency of Experience,’ *Noûs* 36 (2002): 137–51.



10. See M. Ratcliffe, *Feelings of Being: Phenomenology, Psychiatry, and the Sense of Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); and 'Delusional Atmosphere and the Sense of Unreality', in *One Century of Karl Jaspers' General Psychopathology*, eds. G. Stanghellini and T. Fuchs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 229–44.
11. For example, see G.L. Stephens and G. Graham, *When Self-consciousness Breaks: Alien Voices and Inserted Thoughts* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2000).
12. G. Graham, 'Self-ascription: Thought Insertion,' in *The Philosophy of Psychiatry: a Companion*, ed. J. Radden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp 89–105, p. 96.
13. See C. Frith, *The Cognitive Neuropsychology of Schizophrenia* (Hove: Psychology Press, 1992); Stephens and Graham, *When Self-consciousness Breaks*.
14. See T.H. Nayani and A.S. David, 'The Auditory Hallucination: a Phenomenological Survey,' *Psychological Medicine* 26 (1996): 177–89.
15. All numbered first-person testimonies quoted in this chapter, were obtained via a 2013 questionnaire study, which I conducted with several colleagues as part of the Wellcome Trust-funded project 'Hearing the Voice' (grant number WT098455). The study received ethical approval from the Durham University Philosophy Department Research Committee. The study design was closely based on earlier work addressing the phenomenology of depression (for details, see Ratcliffe, *Experiences of Depression*).
16. As observed by Hoffman et al., identification of a 'voice' as non-self-produced 'was more important in differentiating voices from thought than either loudness or clarity of sound images'. In other words, something can be experienced as alien from oneself, even if it lacks some of the characteristics associated with veridical auditory perceptual content (R.E. Hoffman, M. Varanko, J. Gilmore, and A.L. Mishara, 'Experiential Features used by Patients with Schizophrenia to differentiate "Voices" from Ordinary Verbal Thought,' *Psychological Medicine* 38 (2008): 1167–76, p. 1167.
17. For a more detailed defense of this view, see M. Ratcliffe and S. Wilkinson, 'What Is It to Experience One's Own Thoughts as Someone Else's?' *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 22/11-12 (2015): 246–269.
18. My interpretation of TI complements, in certain respects, an approach to delusions suggested in G. Currie, 'Imagination, Delusion and Hallucinations,' in *Pathologies of Belief*, eds. M. Coltheart and M. Davies (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 167–82; and G. Currie and J. Jureidini, 'Delusion, Rationality, Empathy: Commentary on Davies et al.,' *Philosophy, Psychiatry & Psychology*

- 8 (2001): 159–62. Delusions, they suggest, are not beliefs but imaginings that are mistaken for beliefs. One could similarly maintain that TI involves confusing thinking with perceiving. Nevertheless, it also needs to be acknowledged that what we have, phenomenologically, is an intrinsically strange experience, one that involves features of  $x$  and  $y$ , rather than a non-problematic sense of being in state  $y$  when one is actually in state  $x$ . Currie and Jureidini later suggest that the distinctions between intentional state types are non-categorical, thus allowing for in-between cases ('Narrative and Coherence,' *Mind & Language* 19 (2004): 409–27). If this applies equally to the relevant phenomenology, then it is more accurate, at least for the kinds of cases I consider here.
19. J.H. van den Berg, 'On Hallucinating: Critical-Historical Overview and Guidelines for Further Study,' in *Phenomenology and Psychiatry*, eds. A.J.J. Koning and F.A. Jenner (London: Academic Press, 1982), pp. 97–110, pp. 105–6.
  20. See, for example, L.A. Sass, *The Paradoxes of Delusion: Wittgenstein, Schreber, and the Schizophrenic Mind* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); and L. Bortolotti and M. Broome, 'Affective Dimensions of the Phenomenon of Double Bookkeeping in Delusions,' *Emotion Review* 12 (2012): 187–91.
  21. Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book*.
  22. For a detailed discussion of the horizontal structure of experience, see Ratcliffe, *Experiences of Depression*, Chapter 2.
  23. What I have suggested here complements, to some extent at least, Merleau-Ponty's remarks on hallucination in *Phenomenology of Perception* (*Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C. Smith (London: Routledge, 1945/1962), Part II, Chapter 3). Merleau-Ponty similarly maintains that a bodily sense of the possibilities associated with entity  $p$  can arise in the absence of  $p$ . For a detailed account of Merleau-Ponty on hallucination, see K. Romdenh-Romluc, 'Merleau-Ponty's Account of Hallucination,' *European Journal of Philosophy* 17 (2007): 76–90.
  24. I do not wish to maintain that all of those experiences labelled 'hallucinations' take the form of horizontal hallucinations. It is likely that there are other, very different kinds of 'hallucination', where one does experience something resembling  $p$  (in one or more modalities) in a situation where  $p$  is absent. In conjunction with this, the usual horizontal structure may be partly or wholly absent, resulting in an experience of  $p$  as somehow lacking. For example, Sacks describes hallucinatory experiences that are clearly different from the kinds of cases I am concerned with here and much more like veridical perceptions (O. Sacks, *Hallucinations* (London: Picador,

- 2012). Perhaps there are cases where the ‘hallucination’ is completely indistinguishable from a veridical experience. However, although philosophers routinely appeal to the in-principle possibility of these cases, I am doubtful of their psychological reality.
25. Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*.
  26. For a much more detailed discussion and defence of this point, see Ratcliffe, *Experiences of Depression*, chapters 2 and 3.
  27. E.W. Straus, ‘Aesthesiology and Hallucinations,’ in *Existence*, eds. R. May, E. Angel, and H.F. Ellenberger (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1958), pp. 139–69, pp. 162–4.
  28. See, for example, Frith, *The Cognitive Neuropsychology of Schizophrenia*; and J. Campbell, ‘Schizophrenia, the Space of Reasons, and Thinking as a Motor Process,’ *The Monist* 82 (1999): 609–25.
  29. S. Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Chapter 8.
  30. E. Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (1893-1917), trans. J.B. Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991).
  31. It may well be that some kind of non-conscious prediction or monitoring failure is implicated here. However, insofar as there is still conscious anticipation, and insofar as conscious processes are not entirely autonomous of brain processes, some kind of non-conscious prediction process must also remain in operation. Hence explanations that appeal to failure of predictive processes need to be more specific about which processes fail and which do not.
  32. Straus, ‘Aesthesiology and Hallucinations,’ p. 166.
  33. For a more detailed account of the relationship between verbal hallucination/thought insertion and anxiety, see also M. Ratcliffe and S. Wilkinson, ‘How Anxiety Induces Verbal Hallucinations,’ *Consciousness and Cognition* 39 (2016): 48–58.
  34. M. Ratcliffe, M. Ruddell, and B. Smith, ‘What Is a Sense of Foreshortened Future? A Phenomenological Study of Trauma, Trust and Time,’ *Frontiers in Psychology* 5 (Article 1026) (2014): 1–11.
  35. This sense of self is, it has been argued, not an additional content of experience; rather it is integral to the structure of experience, relating to the ‘distinct manner, or *how*, of experiencing’ (D. Zahavi, *Self and Other: Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 22). I am inclined to maintain that it simply *is* the integrity of intentionality, the sense of different kinds of intentional state as inter-related but distinct from each other (M. Ratcliffe, ‘Schizophrenia, Selfhood, and the Interpersonal Regulation of Experience’ (forthcoming)).

# 12

## Affective Incorporation

Giovanna Colombetti

### Introduction

Classic and more recent phenomenological works provide rich accounts of our experience of the body and of its relation to the world.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter I pull out one thread from this literature, focusing on the phenomenon of *incorporation*: literally, the capacity of the body to take something else into itself. As we will see, to date this phenomenon has been discussed primarily, if not exclusively, in relation to our sensorimotor capacities. The aim of this chapter is to show that not just the sensorimotor body (the perceiving and moving body) but the *affective* body too is subject to the process of incorporation.

To show this, I proceed as follows. In section ‘Incorporation into the Sensorimotor Body’ I introduce the phenomenon of incorporation, as described in particular by Merleau-Ponty and more recently by

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Ihde.<sup>2</sup> As I point out, Merleau-Ponty appears to use the term in two closely related but different ways: to refer, generally, to the acquisition of a variety of habitual bodily skills; and, more specifically, to refer to the integration of material objects into habitual bodily skills. To distinguish between these two senses of incorporation, I call the first phenomenon *habit-incorporation* and the second *object-incorporation*. In section ‘Incorporation into the Sensorimotor Body’ I also briefly refer to Ihde’s *Technics and Praxis* to characterize object-incorporation in more detail, and to introduce some terminology and notation that will be useful in the subsequent discussion. After these introductory considerations, I turn to affectivity and show how the notion of incorporation, in both its general and specific sense, applies to affective states. In section ‘Affective Habit-Incorporation’ I discuss the case of affective habit-incorporation. I do so rather swiftly because, as I point out, this phenomenon is ubiquitous and not particularly difficult to identify. The case of affective object-incorporation (the integration of material objects into the affective body), on the other hand, is less obvious and more challenging to characterize and recognize. In section ‘Affective Object-Incorporation’ I argue that this phenomenon however does exist, and provide two examples to illustrate it. In this way, we will see that a classical debate can be renewed and invigorated today such that new spaces might open up for the future of phenomenological research into affectivity and embodiment.

## Incorporation into the Sensorimotor Body

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty describes the phenomenon of incorporation as part of his discussion of the *body schema* (schéma corporel)<sup>3</sup> and the *habitual body*. The notion of the body schema refers to the body experienced not as an object but as a subject of awareness; the body schema, in other words, is the lived body, i.e., one’s own body experienced from the first-person perspective. While not itself an object of awareness, the lived body is the condition of possibility for our experience of objects in the world.<sup>4</sup> As Merleau-Ponty puts it, the body schema is the ‘zone of non-being *in front of which* precise beings, features, and points can appear’.<sup>5</sup> Because the body schema cannot be observed, it is also said to be ‘non-thematic’ or ‘non-positional’.

Merleau-Ponty explains this phenomenon as the outcome of a process of sedimentation during which we develop a habitual awareness of our limbs and their relation to the world.<sup>6</sup> This process is made apparent in neuropsychological conditions such as the phantom limb syndrome (occurring when people who undergo limb amputation retain awareness of the missing limb). Merleau-Ponty explains this phenomenon as the outcome of a process of sedimentation during which we develop a habitual awareness of our limbs and their relation to the world. When a limb is amputated, this habitual awareness does not suddenly change; the amputee retains a certain way of relating to the world and of knowing the world through her body.

The notion of sedimentation is closely related to the one of incorporation, in its most general sense. Incorporation is the acquisition, through a gradual process of sedimentation, of bodily habits and skills that, as such, are enacted spontaneously, without reflection. When one has acquired the capacity to walk down the stairs, for example, one does so spontaneously, without attending to one's legs or feet, and without thinking how to move each of them in turn. The body schema has taken into itself (incorporated) the ability to walk down the stairs, and just puts this ability into practice when needed. This is likewise the case for more complex skills that we might acquire later in life, such as dancing the waltz or climbing grade 7b (these are my examples). Although complex activities are rarely if ever performed entirely 'automatically', and always arguably involve a degree of conscious monitoring, they still necessarily depend on having acquired bodily habits that are then recruited during the activity (e.g., climbing grade 7b requires the ability to perform moves such as feet swapping, crimping, and flagging). Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that the incorporation of bodily habits is never a matter of acquiring customs or routines involving mechanical and inflexible responses to stimuli. Rather the habitual body always retains a degree of adaptivity, spontaneity, and freedom. Thus, once we have acquired the capacity to walk down the stairs, we can walk down stairs of different degrees of steepness and with differently sized steps (for example).

I call this general sense of incorporation *habit-incorporation*, to distinguish it from a more specific use that Merleau-Ponty makes of the same term. This more specific use refers to the *integration of material objects into the body schema*, and I thus call it *object-incorporation*. Merleau-Ponty introduces the phenomenon with the following examples:

Without any explicit calculation, a woman maintains a safe distance between the feather in her hat and objects that might damage it; she senses where the feather is, just as we sense where our hand is. If I possess the habit of driving a car, then I enter into a lane and see that 'I can pass' without comparing the width of the lane to that of the fender, just as I go through a door without comparing the width of the door to that of my body.<sup>7</sup>

Just like the body schema, the hat and the car in these examples are not objects of experience, but rather what enables a certain experience of the world: 'The hat and the automobile have ceased to be objects whose size and volume would be determined through a comparison with other objects. They have become voluminous powers.'<sup>8</sup> Similarly,

[t]he blind man's cane has ceased to be an object for him, it is no longer perceived for itself; rather, the cane's furthest point is transformed into a sensitive zone, it increases the scope and the radius of the act of touching and has become analogous to a gaze.<sup>9</sup>

Object-incorporation can be seen as a special form of habit-incorporation; it refers to cases in which our body schema has acquired specific habits by integrating material objects into itself.

As others have noted already,<sup>10</sup> the phenomenon of object-incorporation finds support in recent empirical evidence suggesting that tool use changes the way in which the brain responds to stimuli. We know, for example, that some neurons in the intraparietal cortex of Japanese macaques respond to visual stimuli applied on the hand, as well as near the hand. Once the macaque learns to pull food closer by using a rake, some of these neurons also respond when visual stimuli are presented near the rake. In the case of humans (where single-neuron recording is not possible), experimenters have found that wielding tools in a crossed position generates behavioral effects similar to those shown when the hands themselves are crossed. For example, judgments of the temporal order of vibrations applied to the far tip of crossed handheld sticks are disrupted to a similar degree to when the vibrations are applied to crossed hands.<sup>11</sup>

The phenomenon of object-incorporation has also been discussed and elaborated in the field now known as 'postphenomenology'. This term,

originally proposed by the philosopher of technology Don Ihde, refers broadly to the application of phenomenological methods and descriptions to the examination of our relations to technological artifacts.<sup>12</sup> Drawing on Merleau-Ponty (as well as Husserl and Heidegger), Ihde has described how technologies *mediate* our experience by modifying how we are intentionally related to the world.<sup>13</sup> In particular, his notion of *embodiment relations* corresponds to what I have called ‘object-incorporation’. In embodiment relations, artifacts are not thematized. When I write on a blackboard using a piece of chalk, for example, the chalk is not the intentional object of my awareness—it is not the ‘terminus’ of my experience.<sup>14</sup> Instead, the piece of chalk is experienced as *that through which* the blackboard is given to me in the way it is (e.g., as hard and smooth). Ihde also points out that in embodiment relations artifacts are characterized by *transparency* or *quasi-transparency*—namely, they are not the main focus of attention but they ‘withdraw’ from experience, partially if not entirely. Ihde captures this relation formally with the following notation:

$$(\text{human-artifact}) \rightarrow \text{world}$$

This notation indicates that the artifact is not itself the object of the intentional relation. Rather, the artifact is part of that which does the intending.

## Affective Habit-Incorporation

The preceding accounts describe incorporation (of some ability or object) within the sensorimotor body, i.e., the perceiving and moving body. In the remainder of this chapter I suggest that it is possible to talk of incorporation also in the *affective* domain, both in the general sense of habit-incorporation (this section) and in the more specific sense of object-incorporation (next section).

Before proceeding, I need to clarify what I mean by ‘affectivity’. I use the term in a general way to refer to the capacity as well as the condition of being affected (literally, ‘done something’) by something. Being affective, in this general sense, is incompatible with being indifferent,



deprived of any interest, concern, or care for one's existence and/or world. Paradigmatic affective states—states that most clearly display this lack of indifference—are emotions (happiness, sadness, fear, anger, guilty, shame, etc.), moods (feeling up or down, being cranky, grumpy, having the blues, etc.), and motivational states (fatigue, hunger, pain, etc.). Although there is no agreement among affective theorists on how to define these states, I think it is fair to say that it is not controversial to classify them all as 'affective'. Accordingly, in the rest of this chapter I discuss the possibility of incorporating skills and objects into affective states conceived in this broad way.<sup>15</sup>

Let us then consider, first, whether and how affective habits and skills can be incorporated. This case is fairly straightforward. Just think of the many bodily ways of expressing specific emotions that we acquire during our lifetime. We know from empirical research that some facial expressions of emotions appear very early in development.<sup>16</sup> As life progresses we acquire a repertoire of further facial expressions, as well as vocalizations and bodily gestures, that are dependent on our environment and culture. Cross-cultural studies of emotion expression have focused primarily on identifying pancultural facial expressions<sup>17</sup>; yet whoever has travelled in different countries will have noted that there are cultural variations in the way emotions are expressed in the face and the rest of the body. Just to give an example from my own experience, in my country of origin (Italy), but not in the country I live (the UK), spreading the arms and slightly tilting the neck backward and sideways expresses a form of exasperation (a typical vocalization and facial expression usually accompany the gesture as well).<sup>18</sup> We can talk here of the sedimentation of a certain *affective style*,<sup>19</sup> or the incorporation of an affective communicative gesture into one's habitual body. As was the case for Merleau-Ponty's sensorimotor skills (such as walking down the stairs), this bodily habit exhibits regularity and flexibility at the same time. It is 'activated' in certain contexts, but it is not just a reflex or conditioned response; I modulate it depending on whom I talk to—e.g., I might perform a more restrained version of the gesture in a relatively formal setting, and a more exaggerated version in an informal setting, especially one that invites emphasizing one's origins (when I interact with other Italians abroad, performing this and other culture-specific attitudes is sometimes a way of bodily making the point, by

exhibiting and sharing a gesture that is mutually understood, that we are now 'between us'). At the same time, the habit remains spontaneous; I do not first think 'now I will act exasperated' and then perform the gesture, rather I experience the social context as inviting or affording that gesture (in a restrained or exaggerated way), and I accordingly 'go with it', in a continuous stream of experience and action where there is no moment of 'deciding' distinct from and preceding the moment of 'doing'. Likewise, with the same spontaneity and lack of antecedent reflection, I do not perform that gesture when I interact with British people, because I usually do not experience those interactions as inviting that kind of behavior.

Incorporating an affective style in the sense just specified is, importantly, not only a matter of acquiring a way of performing a gesture but also of undergoing an affective experience while doing so. Indeed that is what warrants talking of an *affective* style in the first place. Performing the gesture of exasperation mentioned above comes with a specific feeling that is at the same time an affective feeling and a feeling of how the body is moving—indeed the two are not distinct, rather the way my body feels as I spread my arms and tilt my neck is part of how it feels to act exasperated. The point of these considerations is that affective habit-incorporation is not just a matter of taking into the body a certain way of outwardly expressing some emotion (for example), but also a matter of inwardly acquiring a bodily affective way of feeling. The acquisition of an affective style affects both how our body appears to others and how it is experienced in the first person.

Much more could be said about the incorporation of affective habits. For one, not only emotions but also moods and arguably motivational states come with characteristic bodily attitudes and experiences that appear to change and sediment over time. Indeed, the development of one's personality can be seen as including a process of affective incorporation, in the sense of the gradual acquisition of several dispositions to respond affectively in specific ways. And there is also the interesting phenomenon of how professional performers, such as actors and dancers, come to incorporate a variety of affective styles in their repertoire. The aim of this chapter, however, is only to begin sketching the phenomenon of affective incorporation, and to this end I now move on to the other, more specific sense of incorporation identified earlier: the one of object-incorporation.

## Affective Object-Incorporation

I now propose that it is possible to talk of the integration of material objects into bodily affective episodes. This phenomenon is less obvious than the one of affective habit-incorporation. To introduce it and characterize it in some detail, in this section I offer two examples.

### Example One: The Hikers

Central to the first example is the consideration that affectivity is not just a state of the body (a pattern of changes in the physiological body and/or in bodily feelings), but a way in which the *world*, or parts of it, are given or ‘show up’ in experience for the subject. Consider, for instance, how the world shows up in moods, which are often characterized as affective states that are not intentionally directed at anything in particular.<sup>20</sup> In spite of this lack of specificity of the intentional object, arguably moods remain ‘open’ to the world, in the sense that they involve a reference to something ‘other’. Different moods change the affective character of the world, i.e., how the world affects or strikes the subject. Using a term influential in psychology in the 1930s,<sup>21</sup> we can say that different moods change the ‘invitation’ or ‘demand’ character of the world, namely, the extent to which the world is experienced as repelling or attracting.<sup>22</sup> In a downward or depressed mood the world appears flat and invites little or no interaction, whereas in an energized mood, the world appears more inviting and enticing. There is no reason why this kind of analysis could not be applied to other affective episodes too, such as emotional and motivational ones. Unlike moods, emotional episodes are typically regarded as being about specific objects, events, or situations. Phenomenologically, we may say that emotion experiences are more focused, and whereas it is not ‘the world in general’ that affects or strikes the subject in a specific way during an emotional episode, we can still talk of parts of the world that show up in specific ways during an emotion, notably as inviting certain actions and deterring others. Thus in fear, the feared object may invite moving away from it; in anger, parts of the world may invite hitting and punching; in attraction, they may invite touching

and kissing, and so on.<sup>23</sup> Likewise for motivational states such as hunger, thirst, or pain. These states involve clear felt tendencies or urges toward or away from something, and correlatively influence how parts of the world are experienced.<sup>24</sup>

Importantly for present purposes, the ways in which the world is given in experience in all these affective states *depend in a constitutive way on one's bodily self-awareness*, such as awareness of the possibilities of action that are available to one's own body—or so I want to suggest. Consider, for example, how differently a steep ascending flight of stairs shows up for you depending on whether you are fatigued or energized. When you are fatigued, it looks daunting and uninviting; this look, I claim, depends on the experience you have of your body as fatigued and thus unable, or only able with significant effort, to climb up the stairs. On the other hand, when you are energized—perhaps you are out for a run and you feel full of strength—the stairs do not look so daunting, they might even look inviting and stimulating; again, it is the awareness you have of your body as strong, energized, and 'ready to go' that makes the stairs show up in experience in this way. In recent work, I have suggested the metaphor of looking at the world through a colored but still transparent window to capture this idea that it is through a certain experience of one's own body (the colored window) that we experience the world as affecting us in one way or the other.<sup>25</sup>

We can trace the idea that the affective character of the world depends constitutively on the character of the lived body in Merleau-Ponty's discussion of sexuality, which he regarded as falling squarely within the 'affective milieu'.<sup>26</sup> Merleau-Ponty argues that the sexual body (characterized as Freudian Eros or libido) is what constitutes the world as erotic, as offering sexual possibilities; it 'gives external stimuli a sexual value or signification'.<sup>27</sup> Erotic 'comprehension' is not intellectual understanding, but 'the power of projecting before [oneself] a sexual world'.<sup>28</sup> Patients who suffer from sexual inertia, who are not able to act upon their sexual desires and to follow through a sexual act, correlatively lack 'sexual intentionality', they fail to project or constitute people as erotic and as inviting sexual interactions.<sup>29</sup>

We are now in a position to introduce one way in which material objects can be incorporated into affective episodes. Consider the following example. Stevie and Frankie are two hikers with the same level of expertise,

health, and fitness. They are at the top of a mountain, at the beginning of a steep downhill path covered with small stones and gravel. Stevie is wearing sturdy hiking boots, whereas Frankie is wearing light tennis shoes with a flat sole. As they begin walking down and feeling the terrain with their feet, Stevie feels confident and safe, whereas Frankie feels insecure and afraid. As Frankie puts her feet down, she feels she can easily slip, and the path shows up for her as treacherous and dangerous. Stevie, on the other hand, feels he can walk down confidently, securely placing his feet on the ground, and the path appears safe and walkable to him. Neither of them, I contend, is attending to their shoes as they walk down (at least, this seems to me what happens when one climbs down a steep mountain path). Nor, however, are the shoes entirely absent from the hikers' awareness. Rather, it seems appropriate to characterize the shoes as quasi-transparent, i.e., as 'withdrawn' from experience (not attended, not taken as an intentional object) but still present in it as *that through which* the path shows up for the hikers in the way it does. Specifically, wearing sturdy boots compared to light flat shoes alters the implicit sense of one's possibilities of action in relation to the path. Borrowing a term from ecological psychology, we can say that wearing different shoes changes awareness of one's *effectivities*—the set of motor skills that one possesses and that correlate with awareness of what actions the world invites or affords.<sup>30</sup> In sum, I suggest that we have here a case where two different affective worlds are 'projected' by two subjects through the integration of different material objects into their body schema. The structure of this example is the same as the one of cases of object-incorporation in the sensorimotor domain, namely: (human-artifact) → world.

Before considering another example, let me respond to a possible objection or perplexity. One could argue that the example just given is one in which the shoes are incorporated into the hikers' perceptual (tactile) experience of the path, but not in their emotional state; the latter is simply a feeling (of fear, or of confidence) caused by the hikers' different perception of the qualities of the path. The problem with this account, in my view, is that it artificially isolates the perceptual component of the experience from the affective one, leaving the latter dangling, unanalyzed, at the end of a causal sequence of psychological states. As such, this account is not a description of affective experience. But such a description is precisely what I am after. In particular I aimed to pro-

vide a phenomenologically appropriate characterization of the affective experience of the hikers, and of how their body, the shoes, and the path feature in it. To retort that the affective experience is a mere feeling that comes after the perception of the path (as either slippery or not) fails to take into account that affective feelings maintain a connection to the world by influencing how the world is given in experience.

Likewise, redescribing the example of the hikers as one where two different emotions are caused by a cognitive evaluation (or appraisal) of the situation would not provide a satisfactory account of the experience of those emotions. Suppose one said that Frankie judges that it is dangerous to walk down with light flat shoes, and accordingly becomes worried or scared. Again, this account says nothing about Frankie's actual experience of worry or fear. It leaves this experience dangling at the end of a causal sequence of non-affective psychological processes (a perception, leading to an appraisal, leading to a feeling), and provides no description of how the body and the world feature in it.

## Example Two: The Instrumental Musician

Consider next the example of a professional instrumental musician, who sets out to play to regulate her affective state—e.g., she would like to calm down, or to feel more motivated and energized, or might want to 'vent' or give voice to a specific affective state, such as sadness or longing. For present purposes it does not matter whether or not the musician already feels something specific before playing, and whether and how playing changes this initial feeling. All that the example requires is that the musician engages in the activity of playing in order to influence (change, amplify, dampen, etc.) what she is feeling (including feeling nothing in particular).<sup>31</sup> We can also imagine that the musician either improvises or plays a piece composed by someone else. I am not a professional musician but I certainly sometimes play the piano to regulate my affective state. And apparently professional musicians do this too. Here is, for example, what the pianist Cristina Ortiz said of her relation to the piano:

Somebody took a piano from me, it would be my death, because I live through the piano. Whatever happens in my life—depression, pressure,

happiness, or the loss of mother or father ...—I go to the piano, and my soul comes through [the] pieces I choose to portray that emotion.<sup>32</sup>

The question of how affect and music relate to each other is notoriously a difficult and much-debated one (there is a whole handbook dedicated to the topic<sup>33</sup>). We know from empirical research that music influences the listener's affective state.<sup>34</sup> One way in which playing an instrument affects the performer's affective state is thus in virtue of the performer hearing the music he plays. Yet aside from this empirical fact it is hard to characterize the nature of the music-induced affective state. In particular, what is it about? Is it about anything at all? Is it about the music, about affect itself, about both, or about something else? For present purposes we can leave aside these complex philosophical questions,<sup>35</sup> and focus instead on the musician's first-personal experience of playing an instrument and of being affected in the act of playing—not just by the quality of the music he plays, but more generally by the act of engaging in a music-producing performance.

The question of interest here, then, is: how does the musician experience the instrument while playing? My suggestion is that the instrument is experienced as *that through which* a certain affective state is realized, created, or even better 'articulated' in the performance. In this process, the instrument is not taken as an intentional object, but neither is it incorporated only into the musician's sensorimotor schema. Undoubtedly, the skilled pianist does not pay attention to how distant the next key is from the one she is currently pressing, or to the location of the pedals; her body has incorporated a complex set of sensorimotor skills so that she can pre-reflectively reach for various parts of the instrument without having to focus on them. And yet, a musical performance is not just a sensorimotor activity; accordingly, I want to suggest, the instrument is not incorporated only into the sensorimotor schema. While performing (in the context delineated in the example), the musician is affectively touched by what she plays, and she is also motivated to play in a certain affective way (a way that will strike her as so or so). We can say that the musician's body has not just a motor intentionality, but an *affective intentionality* as well.<sup>36</sup> As the musician plays, she is striving to create, or articulate, a certain affective state. By 'articulating' an affective state I mean supporting how it unfolds in real time, by being receptive to it from moment to

moment, and by sustaining it with what and how one plays next. During this process of affective articulation, the musician experiences her body in complex ways: the lived body may alternate between being very much 'at the front' and conspicuous in awareness, and being inconspicuous and in the background.<sup>37</sup> It is unlikely that the instrument will be experienced in the same complex way. After all, unlike the body, the instrument is not traversed by a nervous system and thus cannot be the source of proprioceptive and kinesthetic sensations. So one cannot feel 'shivers down the instrument', for instance, like one feels shivers down the spine. Likewise, whereas one can feel one's own body as being the locus of a motor intention or urge to act, it does not seem possible to feel the instrument in this way. And yet, I suggest, there is a sense in which the instrument *is* experienced as the body is—namely, as that which makes the articulation and creation of an affective state possible. The instrument, like the body, is experienced as that through which the musician can let herself 'go through' a certain affective process.

One may retort at this point that this example does not fit the structure '(human-artifact) → world' because the complex '(human-instrument)', unlike instances of sensory perception, does not intend a specific aspect of the world. As mentioned earlier, it is indeed difficult to say what music is about; in addition, it is difficult to say what the musician's affective state while playing is about. One possibility might be that the musician's affective state is a mood that, as such, is not about anything in particular. I do not think this is the case, however, because when one is playing one's experience can be (and mostly is, I would say) directed at quite specific objects, such as the music one is playing, and (at least in the example given in this section) at how the music is affecting one. So I think that what makes it hard to see how the example fits the structure '(human-artifact) → world' is the complexity of the intentional object of the experience. This difficulty, however, does not pertain to the 'intending' side of the formula, namely to '(human-artifact) → ...'. What I argued above is that in the given example the instrument is not the intentional object of the experience (i.e., it is not the case that 'human → instrument'), but should be regarded as incorporated into the activity of intending something. The fact that this something is difficult to characterize and may be shifting does not affect the incorporated status of the instrument.



## Conclusion

In this chapter I aimed to delineate some of the ways in which the affective body can incorporate something else—from habits and skills to material objects. I did so by building upon existing discussions of incorporation in the sensorimotor domain, specifically by Merleau-Ponty and Ihde.

Much more remains to be said about the phenomenon of affective incorporation, both in the sense of acquisition of bodily affective habits and skills and in the sense of integration of material objects into the affective body. This is because affectivity is a complex and multifaceted domain, and the body enters in it in various ways. For reasons of space, I have not said anything here about, for example, the incorporation of objects into the ‘body image’, namely, into our conscious image of how our body appears to others.<sup>38</sup> I have not discussed either the possibility of incorporating objects (such as drugs) into the physiological dimension of affectivity. Habits, skills, and objects could also be incorporated into one’s personality, and even into one’s sense of self and personal identity. In spite of the preliminary nature of the present discussion, I hope to have demonstrated one way in which we can take classic phenomenological themes further into the twenty-first century.<sup>39</sup>

## Notes

1. See, for example, D. Welton, ed., *The Body: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 1999).
2. See, M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. D.A. Landes (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 1945/2012); D. Ihde, *Technics and Praxis* (Boston, MA: D. Reidel, 1979). I focus on these authors for reasons of space. Other phenomenologists, such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre, have also provided relevant accounts of incorporation or closely related phenomena.
3. Here and in the rest of the chapter I follow Landes’s recent translation of *Phenomenology of Perception*.
4. In other words, the body schema is a transcendental structure or process, along the lines of Kant’s ‘transcendental schema’ (see T. Carman, *Merleau-Ponty* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 105–106). The latter refers to a procedure by which concepts are provided with images. So the

transcendental schema is not itself an image in the sense of an object of awareness; rather it is that which enables and structures our awareness of objects. Merleau-Ponty's body schema is, similarly, a structure or process that enables our experience of objects.

5. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 103.
6. The geological metaphor of sedimentation comes from Husserl, where it refers to the gradual establishment of patterns of understanding and expectations in the history of knowledge. See E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. D. Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1954/1970). For a useful discussion of the habitual body in Merleau-Ponty and its relation to Bergson's notion of 'habit memory', see also E.S. Casey, 'Habitual Body and Memory in Merleau-Ponty,' *Man and World*, 17, no. 3–4 (1984): pp. 279–97.
7. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 144.
8. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 144.
9. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 144.
10. For example, see S. Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 32; H. De Preester, 'Technology and the Body: the (Im)Possibilities of Re-embodiment,' *Foundations of Science* 16, no. 2–3 (2011): pp. 119–37.
11. For these and related findings, see A. Maravita and A. Iriki, 'Tools for the Body (Schema),' *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 8, no. 2 (2004): pp. 79–86; L. Cardinali, F. Frassinetti, C. Brozzoli, C. Urquizar, A.C. Roy, and A. Farnè, 'Tool-use Induces Morphological Updating of the Body Schema,' *Current Biology* 19 (2009), R478–R479; A. Sposito, N. Bolognini, G. Vallar, and A. Maravita, 'Extension of Perceived Arm Length Following Tool-use: Clues to Plasticity of Body Metrics,' *Neuropsychologia* 50 (2012): pp. 2187–94; G. Ganesh, T. Yoshioka, R. Osu, and T. Ikegami, T., 'Immediate Tool Incorporation Processes Determine Human Motor Planning with Tools,' *Nature Communications* 5 (2014).
12. Unlike other intellectual movements that criticize approaches of which they are 'post' (e.g., posthumanism, postmodernism), postphenomenology is rather a continuation of classic phenomenology. For a discussion of the relation between phenomenology and postphenomenology, see H. De Preester, 'Postphenomenology, Embodiment and Technics: Don Ihde, Postphenomenology and Technoscience: The Peking University Lectures,' *Human Studies* 33, no. 2–3 (2010): pp. 339–45.

13. For example, see D. Ihde, *Technics and Praxis*; see also, D. Ihde, *Postphenomenology and Technoscience: The Peking University Lectures* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009).
14. Ihde, *Technics and Praxis*, p. 7.
15. In *The Feeling Body*, I argued that affectivity pervades the whole mind, and thus cognitive states as well are affective. For the purposes of this chapter, however, I only focus on those states that are more commonly viewed as affective. See G. Colombetti, *The Feeling Body: Affective Science Meets the Enactive Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014).
16. See, for example, M.W. Sullivan and M. Lewis, M., 'Emotional Expressions of Young Infants and Children: A Practitioner's Primer,' *Infants & Young Children* 16, no. 2 (2003): pp. 120–42; T. Chaplin and A. Aïdao, 'Gender Differences in Emotion Expression in Children: A Meta-analytic Review,' *Psychological Bulletin* 139, no. 4 (2013): pp. 735–65.
17. See D. Matsumoto and H.S. Hwang, 'Facial Expressions,' In *Nonverbal Communication: Science and Applications*, eds. D. Matsumoto, M.G. Frank, and H.S. Hwang (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2013), pp. 15–52.
18. For an extensive (if somewhat outdated) guide to gestures across different cultures, see also D. Morris, *Bodytalk: A World Guide to Gestures* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1994).
19. I owe the notion of 'affective style' to Joel Krueger (see G. Colombetti and J. Krueger, 'Scaffolding of the Affective Mind,' *Philosophical Psychology*, 28, no. 8 (2015): pp. 1157–1176. This notion is related to the one of 'somatic style' advanced by Shusterman, although he does not explicitly discuss affectivity and emotions, and rather focuses on various sensory dimensions of personal style (visual, sonic, tactile, etc.) (R. Shusterman, 'Somatic Style,' *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 69, no. 2 (2011): pp. 147–59). For a relevant analysis of the notion of style, habit, and institution in Husserl, see D. Meacham, 'What Goes Without Saying: Husserl's Concept of Style,' *Research in Phenomenology* 43, no. 1 (2013): pp. 3–26.
20. For example, P. Goldie, *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press., 2000).
21. See, for example, K. Koffka, *Principles of Gestalt Psychology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1935); K. Lewin, *A Dynamic Theory of Personality: Selected Papers*, trans. D.K. Adams and K.E. Zener (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1935).
22. The term used by Lewin in the original German text was *Aufforderungscharakter* (from *auffordern*, to stimulate, to solicit). Interestingly, this term was

- translated into English as ‘valence’. The latter is now a major construct in affective science, where it refers to the positive and negative character of emotions (G. Colombetti, ‘Appraising Valence,’ *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 12, no. 8–10 (2005): pp. 103–26). The notion of ‘invitation character’ influenced Merleau-Ponty himself, and later also Gibson’s theory of affordances (J.J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1979)). For a discussion of affordances and the ‘affective allure’ of the world, see also E. Rietveld, ‘Situated Normativity: The Normative Aspect of Embodied Cognition in Unreflective Action,’ *Mind* 117, no. 468 (2008): pp. 973–1001.
23. For the view that emotion experiences involve urges to act or ‘action tendencies’, see also N.H. Frijda, *The Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
  24. The distinction between emotions, moods, and motivational states should not be seen as set in stone. Emotional states, and arguably moods too, are themselves motivating, for example. The distinction is primarily meant to characterize different features of the affective domain, not to divide it into non-overlapping categories.
  25. G. Colombetti, *The Feeling Body*; and ‘Varieties of Pre-Reflective Self-Awareness: Foreground and Background Bodily Feelings in Emotion Experience,’ *Inquiry* 54, no. 3 (2011): pp. 293–313.
  26. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 156. The *Phenomenology of Perception* otherwise offers only some sparse considerations about affectivity and emotions. For an elaboration of Merleau-Ponty’s views on the topic, see K. Romdenh-Romluc, *Routledge Philosophy GuideBook to Merleau-Ponty and Phenomenology of Perception* (New Ed) (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 183–94.
  27. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 158.
  28. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 158.
  29. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 157–60.
  30. The notion of ‘effectivities’ was introduced by Turvey and colleagues to refer to properties of the animal to which affordances are relative (R. Shaw, M.T. Turvey, and W. Mace, ‘Ecological Psychology: The Consequence of a Commitment to Realism,’ in *Cognition and the Symbolic Processes vol 2*, eds. W. Weimer and D. Palermo (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1982), pp. 159–226). Again, I am using this notion to refer to the *experience* of one’s possibilities of action in the world.
  31. I am intentionally avoiding saying that the musician ‘expresses’ some emotion while playing, because expression is a multifaceted phenomenon that

- can refer to both how an audience perceives a performance and the subjective experience of expressing. The example of the self-regulating musician does not require her to play *expressively* (however one interprets this term).
32. BBC Radio 3. (Producer). (2012). Personal connections with the piano—Leeds International Piano Competition 2012. [Video webcast]. Available from [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v1/4HQurNBRu9m4&list1/4PL2kzIPyOVx7BCXM\\_rG\\_zy1HQPQEIVDIV8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v1/4HQurNBRu9m4&list1/4PL2kzIPyOVx7BCXM_rG_zy1HQPQEIVDIV8)
  33. P.N. Juslin and J.A. Sloboda, ed. *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Applications* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
  34. See, for example, P.N. Juslin, S. Liljeström, D. Västfjäll, and L.O. Lundqvist, ‘How does music evoke emotions? Exploring the underlying mechanisms,’ in *Handbook of Music and Emotion*, eds. Juslin and Sloboda, pp. 605–43.
  35. For overview and references, see A. Kania, ‘The Philosophy of Music,’ *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta 2007.
  36. We find a similar, albeit undeveloped, observation in Merleau-Ponty. He writes of an organist rehearsing a piece that his gestures ‘put forth affective vectors, they discover emotional sources’ (*Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 147).
  37. Colombetti, *The Feeling Body*, pp. 128–32.
  38. For some preliminary considerations, see Colombetti and Krueger, ‘Scaffoldings of the Affective Mind.’
  39. Many thanks to Tom Roberts, Adam Toon, Aaron Simmons, and audiences in Prague, Pilsen, and Sheffield for comments on earlier versions of this chapter.

# 13

## Embodiment and Affectivity in Moebius Syndrome and Schizophrenia: A Phenomenological Analysis

Joel Krueger and Mads Gram Henriksen

### Introduction

Moebius Syndrome (MS) and schizophrenia may initially seem to have little to do with one another. The former is a rare congenital neurological disorder primarily characterized by bilateral facial paralysis and lateral eye movement incapacity; the latter is a psychotic disorder, typically involving delusion or hallucination, with largely unknown etiology. However, closer examination of the *experience* of individuals with MS and schizophrenia, respectively, reveals some intriguing points of convergence—along with some important divergences, too. These convergences tend to revolve around the way individuals with MS and schizophrenia experience their embodiment and affectivity.

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In this comparative study, we examine such experiential manifestations in MS and schizophrenia. We suggest that using phenomenological resources to explore these experiences may help us better understand what it's like to live with these conditions and that such an understanding may have therapeutic value. Additionally, we suggest that this sort of phenomenologically informed comparative analysis of pathological conditions can shed light on the importance of embodiment and affectivity for the constitution of a sense of self and interpersonal relatedness in normal conditions. Such conclusions, we believe, offer important resources for continued research at the intersection of phenomenology and cognitive science in the twenty-first century.

## Phenomenological Structures of Embodiment and Affectivity

Phenomenologists argue that distinctively human forms of thought, perception, and affect are profoundly shaped by both the sort of bodies we have and the things they can do. The body (and its sensorimotor capacities) anchors us in our world and, as we shall see, acts as a mediator enabling the world to appear to us, experientially, in characteristic ways. Phenomenological approaches to the body are particularly interested in articulating the lived structures of embodiment; they are concerned with investigating how various dimensions of embodiment are *experienced*. This experiential orientation leads phenomenologists to famously distinguish between two dimensions or modes of embodiment: (1) the body through which we pre-reflectively live, that is, the body considered as a *subject* (*Leib*); and (2) the body thematically perceived by me and by others, that is, the body considered as an *object* (*Körper*).<sup>1</sup>

The body-as-subject refers to the way that embodiment is lived through from the first-person perspective. From this perspective, the body is not something explicitly perceived or reflected on—in the manner, for example, that we might critically scrutinize parts of our body and vow to get more exercise. In the latter case, where the body receives explicit thematic attention, we are concerned with the

body-as-object. By contrast, the body-as-subject is not really a content of experience but rather a tacit, pre-reflective structure that *organizes* experience. By 'pre-reflective', phenomenologists simply mean to characterize the manner in which the body is implicitly present as we perceive and act on the world, dynamically shaping both what we experience and how we experience it. In this sense, the body-as-subject, at least when functioning optimally, serves as the transparent medium for experience.<sup>2</sup>

For example, when we see and reach for a mug of coffee on our desk, we don't first consciously locate our arms in space and then intentionally adjust our posture and monitor our movements as we initiate and carry through with the reach. *We simply reach for the mug.* We're able to spontaneously do so because of the transparent background work of the body-as-subject. Due to ongoing information from proprioceptive and kinaesthetic processes (along with visual and tactile information), we are pre-reflectively aware of the location of our limbs without needing explicitly to attend to our body on a moment-to-moment basis. To use language that will be important later, we enjoy an immediate experiential *intimacy* with our body and its attendant capacities. Moreover, based upon our spatial position and bodily capacities, we are also aware of what sort of movements and actions are possible within a given space. The body is thus always tacitly present and poised for action. The lived body (or the body-as-subject) in this way serves as our anchored first-person perspective on the world, grounding our egocentric frame of spatial reference by which we are disclosed to ourselves as bodily subjects situated in the world.<sup>3</sup>

But the body-as-subject also shapes experience in another way. When we perceive the coffee mug, we don't simply see it in objective or recognitional terms, say, merely as a thing instantiating different properties such as color, shape, texture, and so on. Rather, the coffee mug is perceptually disclosed *as meaningful*. An important aspect of our experience is thus to perceive the mug as soliciting a range of potential actions (grasping, picking up, throwing, etc.), specified both by our body's sensorimotor capacities and by the context in which we encounter it (in the kitchen, on the desk in our study, in the dishwasher, etc.).<sup>4</sup> In this way, the body-as-subject functions as a transparent constraint on our experience of self



and world. Although it doesn't show up as an object like other objects in the world, the body-as-subject is nevertheless 'always near me, always there for me', as Merleau-Ponty observes; yet 'it is never really in front of me...it remains marginal to all my perceptions'.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Sartre writes that 'the body is present in every action although invisible...The body is *lived* and not *known*'.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, the body can, and often does, become an object of thematic attention. In contrast to the first-person perspective of the body-as-subject, we can adopt a third-person perspective on our body. For example, we can scrutinize individual body parts such as the hand we hold up in front of us or the flabby midsection we gaze at disdainfully in the mirror. Usually, the body-as-subject effaces itself within the fluid performance of world-directed actions—again, it remains in the background, 'marginal to all my perceptions', as Merleau-Ponty puts it—but if something breaks down or goes wrong, our body suddenly moves to the *foreground* of our attention: for example, if we feel lower back pain while reading at our desk or stumble while reaching for a passing shot during a tennis match. In these cases, we become abruptly aware of our body as a thing *impeding* our action. Rather than tacitly organizing and enabling experience, it now explicitly disrupts it; when the implicit body-as-subject becomes explicit (i.e., a thematic object), the usually inhabited or automated bodily processes characterizing the transparent functioning of the body-as-subject become disturbed.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to distinguishing these two modes of embodiment, phenomenologists argue that descriptions of embodied experience are incomplete without a consideration of the way they are mediated by various forms of *affect*: emotions, moods, and other feeling states. For example, we experience or relate to our body and its capacities differently when tired or anxious, say, in contrast to when we feel energetic or elated. Moreover, these affective dimensions of embodiment shape how the *world* shows up for us in our experience. Heidegger famously argues that moods are world-disclosing: '*The mood has already disclosed, in every case, Being-in-the-world as a whole, and makes it possible first of all to direct oneself toward something.*'<sup>8</sup> This phenomenological observation about the world-disclosing power of affect is supported by different empirical studies. In one series of studies, subjects were found to estimate the incline of a grade

to be steeper when wearing a heavy backpack as opposed to not wearing one, or feeling fatigued as opposed to refreshed.<sup>9</sup> Another study found that subjects' perception of grade incline is even shaped by psychosocial factors and their associated affects. Individuals judged hills steeper when alone than when in the presence of a supportive partner, or even when simply *imagining* the presence of a supportive partner.<sup>10</sup>

In sum, phenomenologists argue that basic structures of embodiment and affectivity modulate our experience of self, others, and the world; our bodily presence to self and world is mediated by affectivity.<sup>11</sup> How this is so—and how these bodily and affective structures, as well as their modulatory effects, may be altered in MS and schizophrenia—will be more apparent in the subsequent analysis. To be clear, in what follows, we do not posit that either the quality of the experience of diminished embodiment and affectivity or the nature of the underlying structural disruptions is identical in MS and schizophrenia. Rather, we suggest that the disruptions of embodiment and affectivity in MS and schizophrenia and their diverse experiential manifestations highlight the importance of these basic structures for the constitution of a sense of self and worldly relatedness also in normal conditions.

## Diminished Embodiment and Affectivity in MS and Schizophrenia

MS is a very rare form of congenital oculofacial paralysis, typically complete and bilateral, resulting from maldevelopment of the sixth and seventh cranial nerves; estimations suggest that MS affects approximately 0.0002–0.002% of births.<sup>12</sup> Along with oculofacial paralysis, which leads to atrophy and gives the face a smooth complexion with a slack half-open mouth, individuals with MS also exhibit other abnormalities: abnormal tongue, hypodontia [i.e., missing teeth due to developmental failure (tooth agenesis)], difficulty sucking and eating, limb defects [such as club foot or syndactyly (i.e., abnormal connection of fingers or toes)], and general problems with motor skills, coordination, and balance.<sup>13</sup> In light of these physical abnormalities, it may seem trivial to characterize MS as involving a disruption of embodiment. However, as we shall see,

there are subtle *phenomenological* alterations of embodiment, affectivity, and self-experience in MS that resist an exclusively neurophysiological characterization.

In the case of schizophrenia, phenomenologically informed psychopathologists have long argued that the generative disorder of schizophrenia is a disturbance of the self. This basic intuition was developed more or less explicitly in nearly all foundational texts on the concept of schizophrenia.<sup>14</sup> For example, Minkowski argued that schizophrenia ‘does not originate in the disorders of judgment, perception or will, but in a disturbance of the innermost structure of the self’.<sup>15</sup> Crucially, the ‘self’ disturbed in schizophrenia does not refer to complex linguistically or conceptually mediated levels of selfhood, such as narrative identity or personhood, but to what has been called the ‘minimal self’,<sup>16</sup> ‘core self’,<sup>17</sup> or ‘ipseity’.<sup>18</sup> Within the phenomenological tradition, *ipseity* refers to a fundamental configuration of consciousness, that is, its first-personal givenness; the concept of *ipseity* strives to capture the implicit sense of *coinciding* with oneself and one’s experiences at any given moment.<sup>19</sup>

For example, when we perceive or reflect upon something, we are implicitly or pre-reflectively aware that *we* are the ones who perceive or reflect; there is no distance between our experience and ourselves. To put it differently, the self, in this minimal sense (*ipseity*), is not something prior to or below the flux of experience, somehow linking it together, but a feature of the very manifestation of experience.<sup>20</sup> This self-presence or self-intimacy usually permeates all our experiential modalities and secures an elusive yet enduring and vital feeling of ‘I-me-myself’. In schizophrenia, however, this basic sense of self-intimacy is often threatened or rendered unstable. As Schneider puts it, ‘[certain] disturbances of self-experience show the greatest degree of schizophrenic specificity. Here we refer to those disturbances of first-personal givenness (*Ich-heit*) or “mineness” (*Meinhaftigkeit*)’.<sup>21</sup> In contemporary phenomenological psychopathology, the disturbance of the self in schizophrenia is most comprehensively articulated in the so-called *ipseity* disturbance model,<sup>22</sup> which involves two complementary distortions: diminished self-affection (i.e., attenuated sense of existing as a living subject of awareness and action) and hyper-reflexivity (i.e., exaggerated and alienating forms of self-consciousness).

During the last two decades, empirical research has consistently documented that certain anomalies of self-experience (i.e., ‘self-disorders’) aggregate significantly in schizophrenia spectrum disorders but not in other mental disorders.<sup>23</sup> In brief, self-disorders are non-psychotic, experiential anomalies. They exhibit a trait-like quality, typically date back to childhood or early adolescence, and they tend to persist after remission from a frank psychotic episode. As we shall see, some of these self-disorders reflect alterations in the basic sense of self-presence and embodiment.<sup>24</sup> Within the phenomenological literature, Stanghellini and Fuchs have argued that an essential feature of schizophrenia is a specific kind of *disembodiment*.<sup>25</sup> Stanghellini employs the terms of ‘disembodied spirits’ and ‘deanimated bodies’ to describe a peculiar kind of mechanization or objectification of the body-as-subject in schizophrenia.<sup>26</sup> Fuchs similarly describes a ‘disembodiment of the self’ in schizophrenia in which the lived body’s usual transparency becomes opaque and hinders the patient from inhabiting the body in the usual, unproblematic sense.<sup>27</sup> On both Stanghellini’s and Fuchs’s accounts, disembodiment in schizophrenia is intrinsically tied to the basic disturbance of *ipseity*.

## Experiential Manifestations of Diminished Embodiment and Affectivity

With these phenomenological concepts in place, we will now explore disruptions of embodiment and affectivity in MS and schizophrenia. First, we will consider MS before turning to schizophrenia. Although MS has received considerably less attention than schizophrenia—likely due to its rarity—there are nevertheless sources available that can help highlight experiential dimensions of this condition pertinent to the present discussion.

In a series of books and papers, Jonathan Cole has collected narratives of people living with MS—first-person insights into the subtle alterations of embodiment and affectivity distinctive of this condition.<sup>28</sup> For our purposes, it is noteworthy that many individuals with MS report persistently experiencing an attenuated sense of their body-as-*subject*; rather, they appear to predominantly experience their body in a markedly

impersonal, almost *object*-like way. This is an especially prominent feature of their early childhood experience. Cole and his co-author Henrietta Spalding (who has MS) seek to capture this type of bodily experience with their notion of the MS subject as ‘Cartesian child’,<sup>29</sup> emphasizing how a lack of bodily intimacy, which people with MS often report, may lead to a persistent sense of *detachment* or *alienation* from one’s own body. For example, James (now in his fifties), describes how this experience has been with him as long as he can remember: ‘I have a notion which has stayed with me over much of my life—that it is possible to live in your head; entirely in your head (...) I think there’s a lot of dissociation. But I think I get trapped in my mind or my head’.<sup>30</sup> Another individual, Celia, describes an even more articulated sense of disembodiment, which she claims shaped her fundamental sense of self from a very early age:

I never thought I was a person; I used to think I was a collection of bits. I thought I had all these different doctors looking after all the different bits... ‘Celia’ was not there; that was a name people called the collection of bits. I did not like my feet; I liked my spirit because I was strong as a child. I like my brain... Even though I was a collection of bits I always knew there was something strong inside that I had a mental dialogue with, but it was not the physical body; it was very separate from the physical.<sup>31</sup>

Celia describes here a profound lack of bodily self-intimacy; she regards herself not as a locus of agency and experience but almost as object-like, as a disparate ‘collection of bits’. This lack of self-intimacy meant that she never experienced herself as fully immersed in the spontaneous movements, play, and intersubjective *reciprocity* that are crucial parts of childhood development.<sup>32</sup> Although this lack of self-intimacy has diminished somewhat in adulthood, it nevertheless seems that Celia still does not have a robust sense of her body-as-subject. She does not experience her body as a fluidly integrated unity—a tacit, smoothly functioning system facilitating her interactions with the world and others. Instead, Celia reports consistently adopting a third-person perspective on her own body, including occasions (e.g., gesturing while speaking) when the body would normally recede transparently into the background.

All my gestures are voluntary, even now aged 46. *Everything I do, I think about...* All the things I am doing, whether turning my head or moving my hands, is all self-taught. I learnt from observation as an adult... When I was a child, I could not gesture, because I was a collection of bits. My body was not me, so expression in it, with it, would not be from me either. It was not a joined-up feeling. There was a huge bit missing; *with the lack of balance, mobility, and problems with coordination, you don't get a sense of self.*<sup>33</sup>

Bereft of an enduring sense of bodily self-intimacy and attendant sense of self, Celia thus adopts a hyper-reflective stance toward her body, gestures, and actions. She consciously monitors and pays attention to her body instead of pre-reflectively living *through* it (as we shall see below, this hyper-reflective stance is reminiscent of some patients with schizophrenia). Others with MS offer similar accounts. For example, James says he's only recently begun using his arms to gesture while speaking—but it continues to be a deliberate, effortful exercise.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Lydia says: 'Instead of facial expression I use my hands and shoulders, and my voice, both in its tone and what I say; I construct it all very carefully... I have to monitor these things all the time... None of this is automatic.'<sup>35</sup> She reports consciously studying how others gesture and express emotions and then, over time, deliberately incorporating these practices into her own repertoire.

To return to a concept introduced earlier, the phenomenological significance of these first-person accounts is that individuals with MS often feel as though they do not wholly coincide with their lived body, their body-as-subject. Instead, the body is typically related to, or experientially manifest, as an *object*. And this diminished sense of bodily self-intimacy may be associated with diminished affectivity. Some individuals with MS report feeling a qualitative 'absence' or diminishment in their emotional life. For example, Eleanor says:

[I]f I go back to my late teen years, I was not very embodied as a person and the physical nature of attraction was some way away... At this stage, I did not feel anything [i.e., romantic] physically; even though I had matured physically, I had no feeling. Like the other feelings it had not kicked in.<sup>36</sup>

Along the same lines, James reports that he *intellectualizes* feelings instead of living in and through them: 'I sort of think happy or I think

sad, not really saying or recognizing actually feeling happy or feeling sad.' This intellectualizing tendency even includes his experience of falling in love with his wife: 'I think initially I was thinking I was in love with her. It was some time later when I realized that I really felt love.'<sup>37</sup> With respect to his embodied and affective life, he further states: 'I've often thought of myself as a spectator rather than as a participant.'<sup>38</sup> Finally, Celia describes similar emotional experience dating back to childhood: 'I did not express emotion. I am not sure that I felt emotion, as a defined concept. At my birthday parties I did not get excited. There were people around excited, but I followed what they did.'<sup>39</sup> She continues: 'I don't think I was happy, or even had the concept of, happiness as a child. I was saddened by being in pain or having horrid things like a blood test.'<sup>40</sup> Surely Celia was capable of feeling *some* emotion. What these quotes appear to suggest, rather, is not an utter absence of emotion but more likely a restricted range of emotional sensitivity, responsivity, and expressivity.<sup>41</sup>

In sum, we have seen that individuals with MS often experience a diminished sense of embodiment, which is consequential of but, in our view, not reducible to their specific physiological abnormalities. In other words, the typically persistent and pervasive lack of bodily self-intimacy does not pertain exclusively to, as might be predicted, oculofacial paralysis but to a more general overall feeling of being disconnected and at a distance from one's body-as-subject. Invariably, this experiential distance entails a feeling of bodily self-alienation (variously reflected in complaints such as feeling 'trapped in my mind or my head', 'separation from the physical body', 'collection of bits', etc.) and, at least in the cases we have discussed, an interdependent, observational, or self-monitoring stance toward one's own body, agency, and gestures as *objects*, which may further increase feelings of alienation. This experiential distance can also affect the individuals' emotional life to the extent that emotions appear as if 'absent' (as in the case of Eleanor) or only accessible through reflection or 'intellectualization' (as in the case of James) rather than pre-reflectively felt and lived through. In our view, these forms of diminished embodiment and affectivity, which revolve around disruptions of the usually taken-for-granted and implicit processes of the body-as-subject are central to the experience of being disconnected from oneself in MS (reflected

in statements such as ‘being a spectator to rather than as a participant in one’s own life’, ‘not feeling like a person’, ‘lacking a sense of self’, etc.).

We now turn to schizophrenia. As we shall see, there are certain illuminating similarities between experiences of diminished embodiment and affectivity in MS and schizophrenia. However, when unraveling the phenomenological complexities of these experiences and their embeddedness in the underlying psychopathological Gestalt of schizophrenia, some crucial differences come to light, gravitating especially around disturbances of *ipseity*.

Many patients with schizophrenia spectrum disorders experience problems with their embodiment. For example, ‘K’, 25 years old, describes a complicated relationship with her own body:

I have always had a difficult relation to my body (...) It’s as if there is a distance between my body and my mind. It’s like my mind is a little puppeteer, sitting far away, controlling my body. It’s not like I see myself from above or something. But it’s like I’m not in my body or not attached to it. It’s like my body is an appendix that hangs below me. My body feels alien to me (...) I wish I could be free of it.<sup>42</sup>

Here, ‘K’ describes phenomena that in the clinical, self-disorders-oriented research literature are called ‘psycho-physical split’, referring to the experience *as if* the mind and the body somehow do not fit together or are disconnected, and ‘somatic depersonalization’, referring to the experience of perceiving one’s own body or parts of it as strange, alien, disconnected, and so on. When ‘K’ describes her mind as a ‘puppeteer’, she is not describing an out-of-body experience (‘It’s not like I see myself from above or something’). Rather, she is conveying an experience of not feeling truly present *in* her body and *alienated* from it (‘it’s like I’m not in my body or not attached to it’; ‘My body feels alien to me’). Such experiences are quite common in schizophrenia spectrum disorders, though their specific quality and articulation may vary—for example, ‘the body feels awkward as if it does not really fit. It feels like the body is not really me, as if it is rather a machine controlled by my brain’,<sup>43</sup> or ‘I feel strange, I am no longer in my body, it is someone else; I sense my body but it is far away, some other place.’<sup>44</sup> In schizophrenia, diminished embodiment



may take on an alien or quasi-mechanical character: 'I'm blessed with a bladder-emptier that I can turn on and off, and an anal expeller',<sup>45</sup> or 'I'm a psycho-machine'.<sup>46</sup> For Peter, 18 years old, his initial, non-psychotic experiences of psycho-physical split, somatic depersonalization, and loss of control of bodily movements evolved into vague ideas about external influence ('it sometimes feels as if someone else is performing my actions. It's as if it's not me. I feel like a puppet') and eventually into psychosis with delusions of control.<sup>47</sup>

Most importantly, the unstable self-presence or self-intimacy in schizophrenia is not restricted to the bodily domain but is also often pervasively manifest in other modalities of consciousness (thinking, perceiving, feeling, etc.). For example, Peter describes persistent feelings of not being fully present in the world: 'It's as if I'm inside a glass dome (...) everything seems so far away as if there is an invisible wall I cannot penetrate.'<sup>48</sup> Experiences of 'diminished presence', which also are manifestations of the disturbance of ipseity, often entail a felt distance toward the world and may involve a decreased capacity to become affected, touched, or moved by others or events and to emotionally respond to such stimulations. This is the case for Peter, who states: 'I don't truly feel the world, because I don't feel anything inside'; he refers to the world as a 'dream world' and himself as a 'zombie' or 'a shell devoid of emotions'.<sup>49</sup> Such experiences typically affect the spontaneous immersion in the shared social world and the ability to interact with others in a smooth, fluid, and context-sensitive manner. The failing sense of self-presence may also be associated with an experience of not being fully awake, as if the very luminosity of consciousness was somehow diminished—for example, 'I am only 70 % conscious'<sup>50</sup>; 'I feel a sort of emptiness in my head as if I am not awake. I feel detached or airy as if I am not present'<sup>51</sup>; 'My consciousness is not as whole as it should be'; 'I am half-awake.'<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, many patients with incipient schizophrenia describe a variety of interdependent cognitive disturbances. Some of these are worth highlighting here because they indicate important differences between schizophrenia and MS, which should not to be overlooked. For example, some (but not all) thoughts, typically with a neutral or trivial content, may appear somehow alien or anonymous to the patient as if he himself has not generated them ('my thoughts feel strange as if they aren't really

coming from me').<sup>53</sup> 'Thought pressure', that is, the experience of having many thematically unrelated thoughts or trains of thought occurring simultaneously or immediately after each other, with a loss of meaning, is another frequently found experience in schizophrenia spectrum disorders; one patient described this experience with the analogy of 'rockets shooting in all directions at once. It's one big chaos'.<sup>54</sup> 'Thought pressure' may be linked to 'spatialization' of thoughts, that is, an anomalous experience of thoughts not as subjectively lived through but rather as quasi-objective *things*, for example, localized to specific parts of the brain, physically moving around inside the head or pressing on the inside of the skull. Patients also often report listening to their own thoughts spoken aloud internally with their own voice or reading their own thoughts as if they were subtitles on a film. In brief, these various experiences testify to the fact that the unstable sense of self-presence or self-intimacy in schizophrenia transcends beyond the bodily and affective dimensions into other modalities of consciousness, which, by contrast, appear unaffected in MS (e.g., cognition, perception).

Finally, we will return to 'K' and briefly discuss some of the problems she encounters when interacting with others:

I always feel that it is like enormously feigned when I have some social interaction. It feels false, like I can't react naturally or sincerely like everyone else... I have the experience that there are two of me: the one that interacts with someone and then there is the real me, who sits there behind. For example, 'I sense that the one I'm talking to finds my statement a little transgressive, so I add a little humour here to establish an ironic distance. That may perhaps... yes, that worked well...' And I do it, like, simultaneously. I don't feel present at all.<sup>55</sup>

Here, 'K' describes hyper-reflectivity that takes the form of an excessive self-monitoring, operating alongside her social interaction and compromising her sense of being present in social situations. With regard to certain aspects (e.g., hyper-reflection, self-monitoring), her description may appear similar to those of patients with MS (e.g., Henrietta's and Lydia's similar reports of self-consciously monitoring every gesture and movement when interacting with others). However, we should not fail to notice the underlying schizophrenic vulnerability that is also indicated in

this vignette (e.g., ‘I have the experience that there are *two of me*’), which clearly distinguishes ‘K’s’ difficulties from those of patients with MS. Her feeling of social interactions being ‘false’ and of not being able to ‘react naturally or sincerely like everyone else’ is deeply rooted in her persistent feeling of not being truly human, which dates to early childhood—‘I feel like I’m not a natural human being or a proper human being or something like that.’<sup>56</sup> The unsettling feeling of being radically, yet often ineffably, different from others is very common in schizophrenia and typically at the very heart of the patient’s suffering.

In sum, we have discussed various clinical examples of diminished embodiment and affectivity in schizophrenia that gravitate around disruptions of the first-personal articulation of experience. As we have seen, the ipseity disturbance gives rise to a multiplicity of interconnected and mutually implicative anomalous self-experiences that threatens one’s most intimate, foundational sense of self and enables a radical form of self-alienation to grow from within the disturbed subjectivity, potentially resulting in psychotic experiences of being controlled by an external force, persecuted or addressed by a hallucinatory other.

## Conclusion

On a surface level, we found similarities among experiences of diminished embodiment and affectivity in MS and schizophrenia, respectively. These include hyper-reflection, self-monitoring, and profound bodily self-alienation, characterized by a pervasive tendency in both MS and schizophrenia to experience and relate to the lived body (i.e., body-as-subject) primarily as an object. In both MS and schizophrenia, the body-as-subject’s transparency—the tacit, mediating processes enabling it to function smoothly and unobtrusively in the world—appear disrupted. Although the origin and nature of these disruptions are very different in the two conditions, in both cases the body and its capacities are no longer simply inhabited or pre-reflectively lived through but rather explicated in a concrete, objectifying, and alienating manner. Notably, we also found crucial differences between experiences of diminished embodiment and

affectivity in MS and schizophrenia, reflecting the different underlying pathologies.

Our study lends support to phenomenologists' claims concerning the importance of embodiment, affectivity, and intercorporeity (or embodied intersubjectivity) for the constitution of a sense of self in abnormal as well as normal conditions. For phenomenologists, the fluid oscillation between the body-as-subject and the body-as-object highlights a 'bodily ambiguity' at the heart of our embodied experience: as embodied subjects, we are neither wholly subjects nor wholly objects, but somehow always both. Looking at cases where this ambiguity is disrupted, and the cascade of anomalous experiences such disruptions may entail, points to the constitutive role this bodily ambiguity plays in shaping our general way of inhabiting, experiencing, and engaging with the world.

Finally, we suggest that utilizing phenomenological resources to address experiences of diminished embodiment and affectivity in MS and schizophrenia may enable us to better understand what it sometimes is like to live with these conditions and potentially offer targets for future research and therapeutic intervention. As phenomenology and cognitive science continue to intersect in the twenty-first century, new interventions become possible in light of our research here. For example, interventions striving to enforce the individuals' experience of embodiment could easily be included as part of the treatment in both MS and schizophrenia. In the case of MS, interventions designed to help individuals with MS develop alternative embodied communication strategies (e.g., gestures) to compensate for their lack of facial expressivity seem relevant.<sup>57</sup> In the case of schizophrenia, interventions designed to strengthen the patient's unstable or wavering sense of self-presence or ipseity are strongly needed.

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# Part V

Pragmatism

# 14

## Vitalism, Pragmatism, and the Future of Phenomenology

Megan Craig

The essays collected in this volume are devoted to thinking about the future of phenomenology. It may not seem terribly forward-looking to consider phenomenology in light of Henri Bergson and William James, but part of what I claim here is that phenomenology has a chance to renew itself by looking at its own roots in light of two thinkers who have been largely neglected or forgotten by the tradition. Both Bergson and James influenced key forefathers of phenomenology and, as I argue, provide a groundwork for a form of phenomenology that has yet to be fully explored or practiced, one that values equally the aesthetic, ethical, and political dimensions of thought and that is committed to addressing urgent contemporary problems. In the opening section of this essay, I describe the historical and theoretical overlap between Bergson and James and their relationship to (and divergence from) the phenomenological tradition that was beginning to take shape in their own time.<sup>1</sup>

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In subsequent sections, I explain how retrieving key aspects of their thinking opens up the possibility of a newly pragmatic phenomenology. Such a phenomenology cannot be described as a singular school of thought or methodology, but here are three of its crucial features:

1. Pragmatic Phenomenology takes into account the myriad roots of its lineage, looking before and beyond the continental/analytic divide.
2. Pragmatic Phenomenology embraces and practices creative and experimental writing and methods of description in order to animate thinking beyond narrow conceptualization and to challenge the presumed boundaries of philosophical discourse.
3. Pragmatic Phenomenology is sensitized to the ethical and political implications of philosophy and its relationship to contemporary crises. It is poised to diagnose and respond to real-life problems, with an emphasis on the ever-changing horizons of lived experience and the psychophysical complexities of various modes of being.

James and Bergson show a way toward this slightly irreverent, massively creative kind of philosophy, which stresses the plural, the fallible, and the artistic/activist possibilities for thinking and for living.

## Historical Snapshot

Henri Bergson was a superstar philosopher in his time. His lecture courses were attended by nearly all of the rising stars in European philosophy in rooms overflowing with devoted students (in addition to poets like T.S. Elliot, visual artists, and a surprising number of women). William James (17 years older than Bergson and born in the same year as Edmund Husserl) enjoyed a similar international fame and the two men, one in Europe, the other in America, commanded the intellectual stage in the years leading up to the First World War. This period, from the 1907 publication of Bergson's wildly popular *Creative Evolution* until 1914, was known in France as 'le Bergson boom'.<sup>2</sup>

James and Bergson met for the first time in Paris in 1905, but they were aware of each other's thoughts since at least 1889, when Bergson

began reading James's essays on abnormal psychology, citing James's articles 'The Phenomenon of Effort' and 'What is an Emotion?' in the first chapter of *Time and Free Will*. James similarly cited Bergson's experiments with 'visual hyperaesthesia' in his 1890 publication of *The Principles of Psychology* in the chapter devoted to hypnotism. The two went on to write letters and serve as commentators on and ambassadors for each other's research, even as they both expressed reservations about conflating their work or completely adopting the other's view. Bergson, in particular, was adamant that the synchronism between his and James's philosophy was all the more meaningful given how independently and variably they had arrived at their own views. Their relationship (as documented in letters) seems characterized by unwavering, perhaps uncritical, affection and admiration. In 1903, for instance, Bergson wrote to James after receiving from him an early copy of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*: 'I have never passed up an opportunity to express the great sympathy I have for your ideas to my listeners. When I wrote my essay on *Les données de la conscience* [*Time and Free Will*], I still only knew of your essay on *Effort*, but I was led, through an analysis of the idea of time and reflecting on its role in mechanics, to a certain conception of psychological life which is entirely compatible with the one in your psychology.'<sup>3</sup> For his part, James wrote to Bergson after reading *Creative Evolution* in 1907: 'O my Bergson, you are a magician, and your book is a marvel, a real wonder in the history of philosophy....I feel that at bottom we are fighting the same fight, you as a commander, I in the ranks.'<sup>4</sup>

In spite of widespread fame in his own lifetime, Bergson's influence declined markedly in the inter- and postwar period. Aside from a measured but demanding rehabilitation via Gilles Deleuze's *Bergsonism* in 1966, he has remained a shadowy and mostly forgotten figure in postwar and contemporary philosophy, more so in the USA than elsewhere, but surprisingly so in Continental philosophy and contemporary Phenomenology (in spite of the profound influence of his thinking on Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Emmanuel Levinas).<sup>5</sup> As Michael Kelly writes, '[t]wentieth-century phenomenology in its relation to Bergson...ranges from the polite to the dismissive to the confrontational. But serious engagement never occurred.'<sup>6</sup> The same cannot be said for James, who retained his reputation as the founder of American

Psychology and one of the founding fathers of American Pragmatism. If not as central as he was in his own time, James was never abandoned or forgotten to the same degree. For this reason, my work here is primarily concerned with retrieving certain aspects of Bergson's thinking, while keeping in mind the broader aesthetic dimensions and ethos of Bergson and James together.

The neglect of Bergson is striking for several reasons. He lived at a historical and philosophical crossroads between two world wars. He wrote about (among other things) time, evolution, memory, freedom, creativity, intuition, religion, and war. He debated Einstein, helped to enlist the USA into the First World War and to found the League of Nations (which was replaced by the United Nations in 1946). In 1927 he was even awarded the Nobel Prize in literature. But by the time of his death in 1941 he was already a fading light in philosophical circles, eclipsed by Martin Heidegger and his followers in Germany, the rise of analytic philosophy in England and America, and the existential phenomenology of Jean-Paul Sartre and Merleau-Ponty in France. The publication of his last book, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1937), cemented his reputation among his critics as an irrational mystic and even baffled his defenders, who longed for a more purified, less socially or politically motivated Bergsonism.<sup>7</sup>

## Flux

Bergson's conception of psychological life included a stress on the durational, interpenetrating nature of psychic states. In the first chapter of *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (1889), he described the psycho-physical nature of various emotions (joy, sorrow, grace, pity), which change as they develop and are impossible to locate in any single state or experience. Writing about the feeling of motor effort that accompanies physical movements and the feeling of intensity in 'deep-seated psychic feeling', he explained that '[i]n both cases there is a qualitative progress and an increasing complexity, distinctly perceived. But consciousness, accustomed to think in terms of space and to translate its thought into words, will denote feeling by a single word and will

localize effort at the exact point where it yields a useful result.<sup>8</sup> The crux of this quotation is Bergson's overarching thesis that consciousness tends toward verbalization, spatialization, and utility (three words for the same tendency). *Time and Free Will* diagnoses the philosophical/historical suppression of time and the effects that suppression has on the life of the mind. In the second chapter he introduces the now famous notion of *durée*, insisting on the difference between a spatial, numerical multiplicity and a temporal, qualitative multiplicity that defies verbalization or conceptualization. We think and speak according to the first multiplicity, a multiplicity neatly delineated and laid out like a sorted tray of beads. But we feel, move, and live according to the second multiplicity, which never resolves into ordered, disparate parts but remains 'that heterogeneity which is the very ground of our experience' (TFW, p. 97). The problem Bergson posed was how to theorize this second, durational multiplicity without translating it into the deadened and abstracted spatial forms that thinking typically assumes. It was a question of how to make philosophy resonate with life.

Bergson's foundational idea of duration dovetails with James's early descriptions of the ever-moving 'stream of thought', described in the pivotal chapter of the first volume of *The Principles of Psychology*, where James explains: 'Consciousness...does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as "chain" or "train" do not describe it fitly...It is nothing jointed; it flows. A "river" or a "stream" are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described.'<sup>9</sup> Both James and Bergson sought to emphasize the fluid nature of thinking and of life, believing that an embrace of the 'despised sensible flux'<sup>10</sup> might dispel some of the most stubborn philosophical problems and save philosophy from mechanistic scientism.

A shared concern about scientism animated much of Bergson's and James's thinking in the early 1900s. Both of them worried about the social and ethical implications of Darwinism and reacted against the mechanistic philosophy of Herbert Spencer. Against increasingly technical philosophies of their age, they each advocated a style of philosophizing that privileged an artistic sensibility for their listener's/reader's personal affections. James talked openly about the importance of capturing an audience's attention through forging some emotional connection with

them. In 1908 he delivered a set of lectures on psychology to teachers, telling them that in order 'to keep [your students] where you have called them, you must make the subject too interesting for them to wander again'.<sup>11</sup> He continued: '[T]he genius of the interesting teacher consists in *sympathetic divination* of the sort of material with which the pupil's mind is likely to be already spontaneously engaged, and in the ingenuity which discovers paths of connection from that material to the matters to be newly learned' (TT, p. 70, my emphasis). As Bergson noted, '[f]or [James] those truths it is most important for us to know are truths which have been felt and experienced before being thought' (KW, p. 330). James's writings are full of aesthetic/rhetorical techniques for priming his audience for his work. These are not insignificant or arbitrary ornaments to his theory. Rather, they exemplify the open and creative spirit of his thinking and his commitment to a pluralism that entails devising infinite methods of appeal. There are many roads to the heart, and James sought to travel as many of them as he could imagine.

Bergson was less concerned with the particularity of his audience, but he, like James, privileged the incommunicable aspects of the personal, stressing the mysterious depths of personhood, of which one only ever glimpses the outer edge. In *Time and Free Will* he described a 'second self...which obscures the first, a self whose existence is made up of distinct moments, whose states are separated from one another and easily expressed in words' (TFW, p. 138). The second self masks an older 'fundamental self' that must be retrieved and appealed to through novel (nonlinguistic) means, by a 'vigorous effort of analysis' (TFW, p. 129). The 'fundamental self' remains inarticulate and immune to the defining powers of language, and Bergson is one of the earliest theorists of a post-structural subject who cannot be captured by any proper name.<sup>12</sup> Bergson's philosophy attempts a retrieval of the first self through the deployment of images and poetic and metaphorical passages, conjuring the surplus of life that resists direct examination or full disclosure.

The poetic/aesthetic aspects of Bergson's and James's philosophies troubled many critics. As one example, Judith Shklar, in her 1958 article on the social implication of Bergson's philosophy, critiqued his 'escapist motivations', called his work 'the last hope of a desperate age', and concluded that 'he was simply a poet in prose, heaping image upon image without

much philosophic meaning'.<sup>13</sup> James faced similar criticisms after the publication of *The Principles of Psychology*, with one reviewer calling him an 'impressionist in psychology', writing as follows: 'His portfolio contains sketches old and new, ethical, literary, scientific and metaphysical, some exquisite and charming in detail and even in color, others rough charcoal outlines.'<sup>14</sup> The very passages that exemplify the spirit of Bergson's and James's creative philosophies seemed to critics like proof that theirs was the work of quasi-religious, romantic mystics wed to irrationalism and destined to inspire weak-kneed relativism or vicious (even misogynist) individualism.<sup>15</sup> Yet to those inspired by them, the aesthetic components of their work stood as proof that philosophy could be something else than dry academicism and a game of wits. Both saw their own work as devoted to dispelling false philosophical problems, and they viewed themselves as motivators and protectors of genuine complexity. In this way, they were pioneers of a phenomenological impulse to examine life in its intricacy as it exceeds and overflows the bounds of abstract conceptualization.

## Images

What happens when philosophy embraces images? Phenomenology is sometimes criticized for being overly wedded to imagery and descriptions that lack critical edge. It is not hard to see links between phenomenology viewed in this way and rampant solipsism, subjectivism, or relativism—charges that James and Bergson also battled in their time. These concerns reflect a desire for philosophy to be something harder-hitting and more objective; something *ultimately* true. James's radical empiricism condemned any monist conception of 'The Truth' and replaced it with a more pluralistic, fallible sense of truth. In his pragmatic view, truth is always in the making and never fully made. 'In no case,' he argued, 'need truth consist in a relation between our experiences and something archetypal or trans-experiential.'<sup>16</sup> James preferred the language of the *real* to any notion of truth, since the sense of something being real entails a feeling of its animating 'warmth' or being alive. This meant that philosophy for James was a practice of kindling a feeling of reality in others in order to bring things that may have initially seemed mute or dead back to life.



James saw Bergson as a crucial ally in the quest to make philosophy a practice of revival and vivification. In his chapter devoted to Bergson in *The Pluralistic Universe*, he writes: '[A]ltho...concepts give us knowledge, and may be said to have some theoretic value (especially when the particular thing foretold is one in which we take no present practical interest); yet in the deeper sense of giving *insight* they have no theoretic value, for they quite fail to connect us with the inner life of the flux, or with the causes that govern its direction. Instead of being interpreters of reality, concepts negate the inwardness of reality altogether' (PU, p. 246). He commended Bergson for 'the lucidity of [his] way of putting things', adding that 'it seduces you and bribes you in advance to become his disciple. It is a miracle, and he a real magician' (PU, p. 227). In opposition to logically purified, conceptual philosophies, James and Bergson experimented with alternative methods of description, methods that gave images and imagery a central place.

Bergson goes farther than perhaps any other philosopher of his time in resuscitating the dignity of images and granting them a central, technical role in his own thinking. In *Matter and Memory*, he uses the term 'image' to denote all matter. He begins the book thus: 'Here I am in the presence of images, in the vaguest sense of the word, images perceived when my senses are open to them, unperceived when they are closed.'<sup>17</sup> We find that images are not the dim shadows of real things (as we learned from Plato). Instead, everything in the material world stands halfway between a *thing* (out there, objective, in the world), and a *representation* (internal, subjective, in one's mind). This puts us in the midst of a world that has lost the blunt solidity supposedly characteristic of matter as well as the ethereal translucence of a world reduced to ideas. The world Bergson describes shimmers and vibrates with matter of varying opacities and intensities. Late in *Matter and Memory* he admits that one consequence of a world recalibrated to the equilibrium of images is that 'the separation between a thing and its environment cannot be absolutely definite and clear-cut; there is a passage by insensible degree from the one to the other' (MM, p. 209). Reacting against the Kantian subject majestically perceiving objects, Bergson dethrones the ego of its unifying powers and strips matter of its impenetrable gravity. Descending from the heights of any transcendental ego, he

gives us a more horizontal plane of images perceiving other images—all of them pliable, porous, and intensely real.

In addition to the central role the word ‘image’ plays in *Matter and Memory*, there are countless images, or pictorial devices, in the text. In the first chapter, a compass and a kaleidoscope serve as metaphors for the way in which everything changes relative to the centrality of one’s own body and its turning toward or away from other bodies, while a ‘central telephonic exchange board’ illustrates Bergson’s view of the brain as an organ that facilitates or delays communication.<sup>18</sup> In subsequent chapters he includes diagrams to illustrate the progressive deepening and widening of perception (Fig. 1: drawn to look like a clam shell opened to reveal concentric circles radiating above and below a central object), the interpenetration of pure memory, memory image, and perception (Fig. 2: illustrated by a continuous horizontal line along which thought moves), the relationship of consciousness to time and space (Fig. 3: shown as a horizontal line intersected by a vertical line), and the relationship between perception, bodily memory, and pure memory (Figs. 4 and 5: an inverted cone with its fine point intersecting a plane). Added to these geometric diagrams are passages in which Bergson employs a variety of literary devices to help us picture things more vividly. These include narrative accounts of taking a walk in a new town, different ways of drawing, overhearing someone speaking a foreign language, and the hypothetical consciousness of an amoeba in a drop of water.<sup>19</sup> Lastly, the text is riddled with poetic and painterly descriptions, such as the image of the body as a series of threads ‘beautifully stretched from periphery to periphery’ (MM, p. 173) along which currents pass. The poetic interludes differ from the analogies with everyday objects so prevalent in Bergson’s work, as they ask us to imagine something that has no determinate name or precedent.

*Matter and Memory* is unique in the degree to which Bergson pursues multiple methods of image-making and visualization. Indeed, it is the only text in which he employs visual diagrams. Yet it is reflective of a methodology characteristic of all his thinking, which relies on analogy, metaphor, and poetry to animate language beyond its usual bounds. In *Creative Evolution*, he uses fireworks as an image for the explosive force of *élan vital* and a pond covered in leafy plants to describe the subject’s suspension between surface and depth. In *Time and Free Will* he uses a

sugar cube dissolving in a cup of tea to describe the elongated and visceral *durée* of lived experience. These images sometimes have the effect of locating us in definite times and places. At other times, they have the effect of spurring us on to other images connected with our own experiences (historical or imagined) of waiting, waking, dreaming, or swimming.

James also drew on multiple kinds of description and image-making in his own writings, often including whole blocks of poetry or prose, or guiding his audience through an intense visualization of a particular scene, as he did in the opening passage of 'On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings', recounting his trip through the mountains of North Carolina, or later quoting several pages of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Lantern Bearers*. For both Bergson and James, the literary and artistic dimensions of their thinking rendered their thought particularly vibrant, making their philosophies at once lucid and uniquely prone to exaggeration or caricature. As with beautifully illustrated books, one can be seduced by the pictures. Or as Ludwig Wittgenstein warned: 'An *image* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.'<sup>20</sup>

Bergson explicitly advocates for reading philosophy by finding and attending to the guiding image of a philosopher. In his view, this is the best way of getting to the animating spirit and enduring idea of a given thinker. In his 1911 lecture on 'Philosophical Intuition', he explained such an image as 'a phantom which haunts us while we turn about the doctrine and to which we must go in order to obtain decisive signal, the indication of the attitude to take and of the point from which to look'.<sup>21</sup> Discerning the image entails something more than reading a text, since reading alone (understood in a simplistic way) can only grapple with the words on the page. Deep reading would have to include reading between the lines, the interpretive efforts that H.G. Gadamer associates with 'authentic' reading in *Truth and Method*, and the erasure Jacques Derrida practices in deconstructive reading and writing.<sup>22</sup> This kind of reading demands something more from a person than just the comprehension of what is being said. It entails a subtle form of listening for the ghostlike undertones of prose, sensitivity to the imagistic quality of the writing, an informed historical sensibility, and an acute receptivity to the poetic dimensions of everyday speech. If there are (at least) two ways of reading,

one proceeds at close range by scrutiny and consumption, while the other proceeds at a distance by hesitation and uncertainty. These two forms relate to the different tensions of being Bergson describes across his work, one contracted to a point (perception/action) and the other widening out indefinitely (memory/dreams). Such are the poles of attention. But as Bergson stresses, the living of life (as well as a capacity for fluent reading) goes on largely between them at a middle speed, neither reckless consumption nor dreamy suspension.

It seems odd that Bergson would advocate finding *the* image of a philosopher (and in his lecture on intuition he in fact locates several images to explain Berkeley's thinking). Bergson's own work is so awash with images that one would be hard-pressed to isolate just one, though many have tried in their efforts to distill his thought.<sup>23</sup> But in advocating for the excavation of a guiding image, Bergson was not talking about the isolation of a singular picture, like a snapshot taken from an album. The image itself would be something complex (and not necessarily visible or visual).<sup>24</sup> It would be so enmeshed with other images that in trying to retrieve one, all the others would invariably glide along. Finding the image would also not be a matter of collecting and sorting discrete bits of language, as if the image only needs careful archeological excavation (reading as digging). The problem is that the image is there everywhere ('haunting' us), but it is nowhere to be found as such.

How can one locate a ghost? This is the question Bergson poses when he asks his audience to consider various methods for gleaning the animating, but invisible, spirit of a text. In Bergson's terminology the image has as much reality as anything else, even though it resists illumination and remains impossible to pin down. In fact, a whole realm of quasi-visible 'periphenomena' occupy a central place in Bergson's philosophy, introducing us or reminding us of a universe perforated with instability.<sup>25</sup> Such phenomena include images, ghosts, dreams, memory, hallucinations, and the unconscious, as well as seemingly more distinct phenomena such as ourselves, others, and the entirety of the material world. Once we accept the ubiquity of dark matter in the universe, everything begins to tremble. The resistance of 'periphenomena' to scrutiny makes it impossible to subject them to traditional (Husserlian) phenomenological reduction. But their resistance to scrutiny also signals the urgency of devising multisensory,

highly sensitized methods of inquiry (ones that go well beyond visual examination to include a radical, whole-bodied engagement). This is one reason that Bergson (like James) sees philosophy so closely aligned with art, since each of them has the potential to disrupt entrenched patterns of thinking and to usher us into wider, wilder margins of life.

## Intuition

Bergson and James, in their styles of writing and in their deployment of images, invite us to practice more experimental and creative registers of reading, which are linked to more experimental and creative registers of living. Put simply, the aesthetic dimensions of their thought cannot be dissociated from the ethical dimensions. Images, especially in the expanded way we are invited to understand them by Bergson, are ethically significant and uniquely motivational. But finding the image is never simple, and attention to images requires something more complicated than sensible perception alone.

‘The method of intuition’ is the name Bergson gives to the practice of reading and philosophizing he associates with finding an image. As with his description of finding *the* image of a philosopher, the use of the word ‘method’ has the unfortunate consequence of making it sound as if there is a singular and methodological way of intuiting.<sup>26</sup> Understood in this way, finding *the* method of intuition would be akin to learning the method of changing a tire or playing Suzuki piano. It then seems as if Bergson’s philosophy is a handbook to such a method, and by understanding Bergson one acquires intuition. Perhaps such a misunderstanding about intuition fed the fad of Bergsonism, which reached a frenzied pitch among those who thought Bergson himself held the key to life.

Instead of mastering any single method, intuition involves continual practice and invention. This is clear from Bergson’s myriad descriptions of intuition across his work, from the earliest intimation of it in *Time and Free Will*, where he describes ‘a simple and indivisible intuition of the mind’ (TFW, p. 80) through the explanation he provides in his ‘Introduction to Metaphysics’ of ‘the *sympathy* by which one is transported into the interior of an object in order to coincide with what

there is unique and consequently inexpressible in it' (CM, p. 135), and culminating in the elaborate treatment he gives in *Creative Evolution* of a 'painful effort which we can make suddenly, doing violence to our nature, but cannot sustain for more than a few moments.'<sup>27</sup> Indivisible, sympathetic, painful: in each case, intuition coincides with a unique and arduous act, an attunement to the singularity of something that cannot be repeated in another context and therefore can never be mastered once and for all.

Once activated, intuition facilitates a momentary and intense contact with life, one that has been sundered by the speculative, long-range gaze of intellect. In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson characterizes intellect as the evolutionary hallmark of human beings that has distanced them from the whole of life and oriented them toward 'the contemplation of inert matter' (CE, p. 104). The contact with duration facilitated by intuition serves as a jolting realignment, an unnerving and potentially dangerous intensification. Life is suddenly felt impinging in its moving complexity rather than contemplated from a distance in any static abstraction. Instead of opposing reason and emotion as so many have before him, Bergson posits intuition as a process of unclenching the tenacious grip of intellect in order to reanimate the sensible core and receptive range of the whole body. In this sense, intuition is at odds with thinking, since it short-circuits the mind's ability to survey from on high. Bertrand Russell railed against what he took to be a stark division between thinking and action in Bergson, identifying intuition with 'action for the sake of action' and complaining that 'all pure contemplation he calls "dreaming," and condemns by a whole series of uncomplimentary epithets: static, Platonic, mathematical, logical, intellectual'.<sup>28</sup> But in another sense, intuition is its own kind of thinking, a close-range thinking characterized by an immersion in the very object of thought to such a degree that the conceptual boundary between subject and object no longer holds. In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson describes intuition as a method of placing oneself back at the 'turn of experience', prior to the bifurcation of immediacy into the useful (which calls out for my action and answers my needs) and the useless (which, in failing to interest me, ceases to exist for me) (MM, p. 185). He associates intuition with the experience of a reality that is not reconstructed in thought but 'touched, penetrated, lived' (MM, p. 69).

Intuition entails activating a receptivity with ancient origins tied to instinct, to infancy, and to animal life, without thereby engendering a return to some previous state. In fact, intuition signals the growth and elaboration of a creature rather than its regression to or repetition of a previous evolutionary stage. This is clear in *Creative Evolution*, which details the dramatic bifurcation of life along two 'highways': plant and animal. Plants display instinct in its most intense modes, while animals develop capacities that allow for ever-greater mobility and delayed responsiveness to their physical surroundings. Along the animal line, human beings stand at the outer edge, emblematic of life's insinuation in material that has given it the most room for hesitation and creative play. Adaptations facilitating mobility reach their climax in human beings and the development of intellect, which allows for the formation of language, concepts, complex societies, and tools. As humans become more intellectual, their evolutionary line diverges from other forms of life. This has positive and negative consequences. The very capacity that Bergson claims distinguishes human beings and is a significant source of creative power has the potential to eclipse the instinctual sympathy originally shared with plant and animal life. Intellect, which seemed to be the root of creative freedom, can be a source of deadening immobility.

As much as humans might aspire to transcend their bodies or the material necessities of being flesh and blood, they remain bound in one degree or another to a physicality that perpetually delays or detours the possibility of a purely intellectual existence. This could be experienced as the interminable frustration of being at the mercy of one's own and other bodies, but it is also a potentially life-saving resurgence of humanity's ancient physicality, which gives rise to a sensibility for the surplus and precariousness of life. Although humans cannot recapture instinct in its original form, Bergson describes intuition as a distinctly human potential for suspending intellect's forward momentum by a sudden, painful awareness, a weakening of confidence. Bergsonian intuition is, therefore, something more risky and complex than the pedestrian understanding of intuition as a gut feeling, insight, or foreknowledge. It entails an active posture of hesitation on the part of a subject, who, not merely a passive receptacle to what George Santayana criticized as 'lyrical feeling', must athletically contort herself (psychically and physically) into an uncom-

fortable, ill-fitting form.<sup>29</sup> Claire Colebrook aptly writes that through intuition, ‘the intellect achieves a different relation between speed, expenditure, survival, and strategy’.<sup>30</sup> Intuition is immanent to the human, but it inaugurates a quasi-transcendent possibility by drawing a person out of herself and toward the world in a sudden awareness that one’s own duration is not the measure of all *durée*.<sup>31</sup> The spirituality in Bergson’s universe, a spirituality so many critics worried committed Bergson to mysticism and condemned intuition to a quasi-religious experience of grace, remains tied to an original porousness of matter—a seepage between things that frustrates every attempt to form a hermetically closed or self-sufficient system. Intuition is a radical form of openness to life’s multiple orders and intensities, which means that Bergson’s supposed ‘spiritualism’ must be understood not as a simplistic valorization of the nonphysical over the physical (one of several dualisms he contests), but through the Latin root of spiritual: *spirare* (breathe). Intuition enlivens a person to the wider world, giving her a second wind.

Brought into the context of Bergson’s last published work, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, the intellect can be seen as a force of encircling and closure—clamping down on things to better examine and work on them. Intuition is a force of erasure and widening. Intellect therefore relates to the first source of morality, to obligation and the utilitarian and biologically inscribed varieties of love Bergson describes in his opening chapter (those that facilitate survival and the perpetuation of social bonds and a species), while intuition relates to the second source of morality, the unbounded love that defies everything natural and deterministic in human nature. The first source of morality yields stable laws and general order, but the second source propels humanity beyond itself: ‘it is a forward thrust, a demand for movement; it is the very essence of mobility’.<sup>32</sup> Capacity for a love ‘that embraces all of humanity’ (TS, p. 38), a love ‘capable of transposing human life into another tone’ (TS, p. 99), is the emphatic feature of what Bergson describes as the ‘open soul’, exemplified by those exceptional figures (Socrates, Christ, Joan of Arc) who disrupt the category of the human and inspire new forms of life.<sup>33</sup>

Thinking about intuition on the model of the open soul brings it quite close to the descriptions of dreams and pure memory from *Matter and*



*Memory*, as its value lies in its distance from utilitarian needs and ends and its tendency toward a 'supra-intellectual' (TS, p. 44) depersonalization, dislocating an individual from herself and putting her in touch with a wider swathe of life. Bergson describes dreaming as an act of wandering amid incoherent images, but he also writes that '[t]o call up the past in the form of an image, we must be able to withdraw ourselves from the action of the moment, we must have the power to value the useless, we must have the will to dream' (MM, p. 83). Intuition would then not be coincident with instinctive, unthinking *action* (as Russell charged), but more akin to the hesitation or delay in automatic reflex action so central to Bergson's descriptions of consciousness, creativity, and freedom. Russell sensed a parallel between intuition and pure perception, and he was right insofar as intuition facilitates an urgent and pre-reflective contact with life. But intuition is not like pure perception insofar as it de-individualizes the subject and suspends her natural inclination to privilege the useful and the expedient. Instead, it more closely resembles the strangely impersonal realm of pure memory in which one can lose oneself among scattered images that fail to cohere. There is something utterly useless about intuition when it is viewed against the urgencies of clear-headed thinking and decisive action, since it *does* nothing but loosen one's hold on oneself and the world.

The openness of a creature to life is not a matter of doing more, but of doing less, of loosening or relaxing its anxious forward momentum in order to hesitate, listen, or attend. A repertoire of seemingly inactive actions frustrates the distinction between activity and passivity and alerts us to more subtle registers of intensity exhibited in passive activity (the whole realm of ethical action as Levinas conceived it). We exhibit freedom not only in exhibitions of power, but also in withholding power. Intuition cultivates the space necessary for creative action that might alter the very being of the organism, elongating it in new directions, expanding its reach. Of course, to put this in spatial terms is at odds with Bergson's well-known emphasis on time and duration. In temporal terms, then, intuition disrupts the chronology of a being. In making her ancient, it makes her anew. Intellect, even as it intensifies the human being's idiosyncratic potential for contemplative delay, usurps the human being's capacities for other modes of engagement or entangle-

ment with the wider world. Intuition puts her back in touch with the shifting, durational flux of life. It does this precisely by rendering her less equipped, less definitive and defining, more exposed and at risk of losing herself. Bergson in fact describes intuition as a rekindling of ‘this feeling of vulnerability’ (CE, p. 112).

## Blur

We might think about the difference between intellect and intuition as a difference between focus and blur. Intellect, like perception, seeks clarity and distinction. It is forever carving up life into manageable pieces. Intuition seeks contact with life in its durational flux, preferring the experience of the rush of the landscape passing outside the train window to the clarity of any snapshot, map, or description that would provide more detailed, usable information. What *is* useful about intuition is this bare contact with life’s variable speeds, a way of thinking and being that puts one in touch with rhythms and energies that do not originate with oneself. Bergson often reverts to musical examples to explain the way in which duration envelops us in an experience we find ourselves suddenly in the middle of, swept up. We lose the sense of the music as soon as we focus on a specific note or set of notes, just as we lose the sense of the poem when we get hung up on one word or line. The blur of sound or poetry is often difficult to follow or understand. But it is precisely the experience of being moved without understanding that Bergson argues is crucial to the creative mind and foundational for any supra-human capacity for transformational love.

There are many philosophers who will be unhappy with privileging blur. For them, blurriness equates with confusion and incoherence. It is the opposite of the Cartesian notion of ‘clear and distinct’ ideas, which have often been lauded as the hallmark of reasonable, rational thought. Yet phenomenology has always had a special relationship with blur and the attempt to examine meaningful yet incomplete or indistinct phenomena as they transpire (and without transforming or extinguishing them by scrutiny). In this arena, Bergsonian intuition coupled with a pragmatic sensibility for pluralism and fallibilism becomes terribly

important. Merleau-Ponty knew this and (despite early doubts) credited Bergson with posing all of the crucial phenomenological questions.<sup>34</sup> Bergson's examination of depth includes descriptions of how things appear obliquely, in movement or by virtue of being partially eclipsed, 'like a face in the reeds'.<sup>35</sup> Levinas knew this, and when he cited Bergson as the impetus to his thinking, he had in mind Bergson's sensitivity to phenomena that resist language and visualization. The face was just such a phenomenon for Levinas, one that never appears *as such*, but that can be felt or heard in the indistinct rustle of one body impinging on another with inarticulate but undeniable urgency.<sup>36</sup> Levinas gives us a phenomenology of dark matter, of things that never fully appear but that press upon us with inordinate weight and wrest us from narrow preoccupations with ourselves.

Intuition is not a matter of depersonalization and dilation for the sake of novel experiences of soft focus—for a more beautiful, impressionistic gloss on life. Intuition has ethical urgency, and this is something Levinas can help us to appreciate in Bergson, as well as something to be taken up more decisively by current and future phenomenologists. Intuition entails the active withholding of intellectual outreach that invariably seizes its material too soon and too hard. If we are talking about the effort to understand an architectural plan by a builder, it might be that we want such seizure, and the faster the better. We want them to get it right and to translate it as efficiently as possible into a material structure. But if we are talking about understanding a person, a painting, a poem, a disease, or an international crisis, we might want something else. In these cases, it is not that we don't aspire to understanding, but we need forms of understanding that remain open to revision and never pretend to have captured the whole. This entails a commitment to fallibility that is at the heart of James's radical empiricism. As Bergson writes, '[f]rom the point of view taken by James, which is that of pure experience or of 'radical empiricism', reality no longer appears as finite or infinite, but simply as indefinite' (KW, p. 268).

Intuition reminds us of the prevalence and value of blur, and Levinas reminds us of the necessarily blurry arena of ethics, an arena in which no single rule or universal law can determine in advance what must be done, and where no one description can capture the infinite plurality

of faces. Consistent with this trajectory, Simone de Beauvoir thought it was the task of existentialism to formulate an 'ethics of ambiguity', one that did 'not attempt to dispel the ambiguity of [man's] being but, on the contrary, accept[ed] the task of realizing it'.<sup>37</sup> Bergson acknowledges the 'difficulties which are considerable and ever recurrent [in any method of intuition], because it demands for the solution of each new problem an entirely new effort' (MM, p. 185). Similarly, James cautioned against any premade ethical theory, insisting that 'every real dilemma is in literal strictness a unique situation' (WWJ, p. 626). He continues, saying that 'books upon ethics, therefore, so far as they truly touch the moral life, must more and more ally themselves with literature which is confessedly tentative and suggestive rather than dogmatic' (WWJ, p. 626). Creativity is crucial to ethics, which stands in need of constant revision. It would be much easier, more definite and predictable, if ethics were a matter of memorizing rules and applying the right one in each case. But ethics entails the invention of a response in a situation that is singular and has (at best) an utterly abstract precedent. James and Bergson both saw this and argued for the possibility of novel, unprecedented action in addition to practicing methods of thinking and writing that tax the imagination and blur the lines between art and life.

## Contact

The relationship between Bergson and James, between intuition and radical empiricism (vitalism and pragmatism), may seem merely historically relevant, reflecting something about the *Zeitgeist* of an era. But it is more than historically relevant insofar as it provides a model for inclusive thinking that transcends national and disciplinary borders. It is more than historically relevant insofar as it reminds us of the value of methods for thinking that resist codification or classification. As one example, in a time when standardized testing has become the national metric of success and the norm for public school education in America, being reminded about the myriad ways in which thinking and learning transpire has practical implications. There are many ways of knowing things. Some of them cohere to expected models of exhibition

and quantification, but others challenge our readymade sense of what knowledge is or looks like. As a culture, we are too quick to dismiss alternative forms of knowing and relegate individuals (and particularly pre- or a-verbal children or those on the Autistic spectrum) to 'special education'. We remain resistant to learning from others whose modes and methods of engagement frustrate our expectations for clarity and lucidity. We forget that creativity is a necessary component of ethics, and that children who are not given latitude for self-expression and creative play will lack the flexibility crucial to their development of empathy and vulnerability. We educate the intuition out of them and then test them for their retention of repeatable facts.

In the realm of philosophy, phenomenology seems distinctively poised to counteract the deadening march of intellect as it eclipses the multidimensional potential for knowing and living available to human beings. Armed with an aesthetic sensibility and an attention to the opaque, transitory features of life, phenomenology can reorient us toward life's excessive surge. It does this by moving slowly, by descriptions that compound and analysis that is never finished. In its best registers, it also does this with literary grace and a sense of the practical urgency of its subject matter, a pragmatic sensibility of 'the difference that makes a difference', so that in analyzing the features of dependency, for instance, one finds oneself rethinking the parameters of mothering, of self-sufficiency, of embodiment, of ableness, of healthcare, and of systems of oppression (as Eva Kittay does in *Love's Labors*).<sup>38</sup> We stand in need of more forms and examples of pragmatic phenomenology: instances of deploying philosophy in its most intense aesthetic and practical dimensions.

## Medium

I began with some discussion of the imagistic quality of Bergson and James's philosophies. Let me end with a bit more about this aesthetic dimension of their thinking, as it is tied to the ethical implications of openness and the future of phenomenology. In his 'Introduction to Metaphysics', Bergson was careful to acknowledge the limitation of

any philosophy of images. No image can adequately capture life in its durational flux. Yet he argued that purely conceptual philosophies can do even less. The advantage of images is that, when proliferated, they have the ability to inspire a mind to more thought. He writes:

[T]he philosopher's sole aim should be to start up a certain effort which the utilitarian habits of mind of everyday life tend, in most men, to discourage. Now the image has at least the advantage of keeping us in the concrete. No image will replace the intuition of duration, but many different images, taken from quite different orders of things, will be able, through the convergence of their action, to direct the consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to seize on. (CM, p. 139)

Bergson reminds us that images are not simply ornamental; they are what animate and keep thought from congealing into a closed system. In addition to keeping us focused on concrete examples, they help spur a certain frame of mind characterized by intense receptivity. The goal of an imagistic philosophy is not to deliver knowledge or information, but to prime the mind for the reception of a multiplicity that exceeds articulation, orienting thought in a wholly new, and even unnatural, direction. The motivational methodology of Bergson's images is akin to what Pierre Hadot called 'spiritual exercises', exercises that widen consciousness and prime one for feeling more alert and alive.<sup>39</sup>

Later in the same essay, Bergson identifies his philosophy as a 'true empiricism', which he describes as 'one which purposes to keep as close to the original itself as possible, to probe more deeply into its life, and by a kind of spiritual *auscultation*, to feel its soul palpitate' (CM, p. 147). He continues: 'But an empiricism worthy of the name, an empiricism which works only according to measure, sees itself obliged to make an absolutely new effort for each new object it studies' (CM, p. 147). These lines suggest that 'true empiricism' is a spiritual form of listening for the living pulse of things, a form of listening that will need perpetual reinvention and that cannot be conducted via any readymade instrument or routine. Throughout the end of the essay he compares intuition to a process of sounding the ocean floor, emphasizing the acoustic/receptive dimensions of his philosophy. The upshot of Bergson's imagistic/

aural and radically empirical philosophy of attunement to the concrete and the singular is a surprisingly pluralistic sensibility for the variable durations of living matter: ‘contact with a whole continuity of durations which we should try to follow either downwardly or upwardly: in both cases we can dilate ourselves indefinitely by a more and more vigorous effort, in both cases transcend ourselves’ (CM, p. 158).

Importantly, the transcending of oneself that Bergson describes is a movement toward the world in its multiplicity and density. It is not the arrival at the essence, Truth, or the transcendental ego that characterizes traditional phenomenology. This is one reason why Bergson’s and James’s pluralistic philosophies remain wedded to a form of empiricism that refuses to get above the fray of lived experience in all its sorted singularity. As James cautions, ‘whether materialistically or spiritualistically minded, philosophers have always aimed at cleaning up the litter with which the world apparently is filled’ (PU, p. 45). In opposition to this impulse to organize and purge, James and Bergson remind us of the value of *being in the midst*.

Being-there is neither simple nor given. We are there all the time without being anywhere—especially today, when we are so often virtually present or available to one another, and so rarely face to face. Deleuze and Guattari seize on the value of the ‘middle’ in Bergson and the genuine complexity of finding the middle ground in life. Their thought is often associated with speed and risk, but they, like Bergson and James, are thinkers of *mediums* (in every sense of the word). ‘It is not easy’, they write, ‘to see things in the middle, rather than looking down on them from above or up at them from below, or from left to right or right to left; try it, you’ll see that everything changes’.<sup>40</sup> Overthink things, and we live at one outer extreme, forever gazing at material we fail to reach. Underthink things, and we live at another extreme, so bull-headed we never see the forest for the trees. Somewhere between these lies a band of optimal presence, an attention to life that is thoughtful and active, poised and intense. It requires physical proximity and real immersion, rather than long-distance speculation or virtual encounter. It is toward this engaged contact with life in multiple registers (and armed with images that challenge and spur the imagination) that I hope pragmatic phenomenology continues to move.

## Notes

1. On the relationship between James and Bergson, see Paola Marrati's essay 'James, Bergson, and the Open Universe', in *Bergson, Politics and Religion*, eds. Alexandre LeFebvre and Melanie White (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), pp. 299–312. For an account of their incommensurability, see Horace Meyer Kallen's *William James and Henri Bergson: A Study in Contrasting Theories of Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1914).
2. In 1913, three years after James's death, Bergson traveled to the states for a lecture tour that began at Columbia University, where he was hosted by John Dewey. The tour cemented his fame in America, even as it spurred criticisms against his intuitionist philosophy, vitalism, and the infective fad of 'Bergsonism'. His arrival is said to have caused the first documented traffic jam on Broadway. For an account of Bergson's reception in America, see Larry McGrath, 'Bergson Comes to America', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 74, no. 4 (October 2013): 599–620.
3. Henri Bergson, 'Villa Montmorency, Letter to William James, January 6, 1903,' in *Henri Bergson: Key Writings*, ed. Keith Ansell Pearson and John Ó Maoilearca (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014) p. 438. Hereafter referred to as KW.
4. William James, 'Letter to Henri Bergson, June 13, 1907,' in Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, Vol. 2 (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1935) p. 618.
5. This has changed somewhat in the past decade with work by Elizabeth Grosz, Leonard Lawlor, Keith Ansell-Pearson, and others, as well as two recent compilations devoted to Bergson: *Bergson and Phenomenology*, ed. Michael R. Kelly (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), and *Bergson, Politics, and Religion*, ed. Alexandre Lefebvre and Melanie White (Duham: Duke University Press, 2012).
6. Michael R. Kelly, 'Introduction: Bergson's Phenomenological Reception: the Spirit of a Dialogue of Self-Resistance', in *Bergson and Phenomenology*, p. 3.
7. Merleau-Ponty drew a helpful distinction between Bergson and Bergsonism, writing that 'Bergson was a contact with things; Bergsonism is a collection of accepted opinions'. He also emphasized the paradoxical fate of Bergsonism noting that '[t]his philosopher of freedom...had the radical party and the University against him; this enemy of Kant had the *action française* party against him; this friend of spiritual life had the religious



- party against him. Thus not only his natural enemies but the enemies of his enemies ranged against him.’ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, Trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964) p. 183 and p. 182.
8. Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F.L. Pogson, M.A. (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2001) p. 26. Hereafter referred to as TFW.
  9. William James, “*The Principles of Psychology, Volume I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981) p. 233. Hereafter referred to as PP:1.
  10. William James, “Bergson and Intellectualism,” in *A Pluralistic Universe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996) footnote 1 to p. 250, p. 339. Hereafter referred to as PU.
  11. William James, *Talks to Teachers and to Students on Some of Life’s Ideals* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983) p. 68. Hereafter referred to as TT.
  12. Bergson associates language with the spatializing powers of intellect, with sociality, and with a unique form of human mobility. His philosophy is pervaded with an interest in the emancipatory and binding powers of language. See, for example, TWE, pp. 128–39 and CE, pp. 102–6.
  13. See Judith Shklar, ‘Bergson and the Politics of Intuition’, *The Review of Politics* 20, no. 4, Twentieth Anniversary Issue: I (October 1958): 634–56, p. 635.
  14. G. Stanley Hall, quoted in Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Company, 1935) ,Vol. 2, pp. 108–109.
  15. This is particularly the case with James. See Charlene Haddock Seigfried’s *Chaos and Context: A Study in William James* (Ohio University Press, 1978); and *Feminist Interpretations of James*, ed. Erin C. Tarver and Shannon Sullivan (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015). On Bergson, see Dorothea O. Owlkowski, ‘The End of Phenomenology: Bergson’s Interval in Irigaray’, *Hypatia* 15 no. 3 (Summer 2000): 73–91.
  16. William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996) pp. 203–204. Hereafter referred to as ERE.
  17. Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1991) p. 17. Hereafter referred to as MM.
  18. See MM pp. 23, 25, 30, 197.
  19. See, MM, pp. 93, 97, 109, 159.
  20. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1968) p. 48e, ¶115.

21. Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Mabelle L. Adison (Mineola: Dover Publications) p. 97. Hereafter referred to as CM.
22. See Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 2000) pp. 389–395. Derrida writes: '[T]he philosophical text, although it is in fact always written, includes, precisely as its philosophical specificity, the project of effacing itself in the face of the signified content which it transports and in general teaches. Reading should be aware of this project.' Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997) p. 160.
23. Bachelard, for example, seizes on the image of a chest of drawers. See Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994) p. 74.
24. See Alia Al-Saji, 'Life as Vision: Bergson and the Future of Seeing Differently', in *Bergson and Phenomenology*, pp. 148–73.
25. 'Peri-phenomenology' is how Edward S. Casey describes 'a phenomenology of the *around*, a willingness to pursue the capillaries that animate the surface of things, places, and persons'. He describes *periphenomena* as 'appearances whose paradigm is neither perception (with its emphasis on the directly given and robustly materialized object) nor thought (a cognitive operation with tenuous ties to bodily expression)'. Edward S. Casey's term in *The World at a Glance* (Indiana University Press, 2007), p. 86 and p. 438.
26. Deleuze writes: 'Bergson saw intuition not as an appeal to the ineffable, a participation in a feeling or a lived identification, but as a true method' (Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), p. 115.
27. Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007) p. 153. Hereafter referred to as CE.
28. Bertrand Russell, 'The Philosophy of Bergson', *The Monist* 22, no. 3 (July, 1912): 321–47, p. 346. Russell mistakenly equates instinct and intuition in Bergson, adding the quip 'Intuition is at its best in bats, bees, and Bergson' (p. 323).
29. George Santayana, *Winds of Doctrine: Studies in Contemporary Opinion* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914) pp. 58–109.
30. Claire Colebrook, 'The Art of the Future', in *Bergson, Politics, and Religion*, pp. 75–95, p. 81.
31. Leonard Lawlor also stresses the immanence central to Bergson's thinking and writes: 'It seems to me if you prioritize language over intuition, you

- become a philosopher of transcendence, while if you prioritize intuition over language, you become a philosopher of immanence' (*The Challenge of Bergsonism* (New York: Continuum, 2003), p. 62).
32. Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977) p. 58. Hereafter referred to as TS.
  33. Bergson writes: '[I]t is the mystic souls who draw and will continue to draw civilized societies in their wake. The remembrance of what they have done, is enshrined in the memory of humanity. Each one of us can revive it, especially if he brings it in touch with the image, which abides ever living within him, of a particular person who shared in that mystic state and radiated around him some of its light' (TS, p. 84).
  34. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *In Praise of Philosophy*, trans. John Wilde, James Edie, and John O'Neill (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963) p. 9 ff.
  35. Merleau-Ponty, 'Eye and Mind', in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, ed. Galen A. Johnson and Michael B. Smith (Northwestern University Press, 1993), p. 140.
  36. For an account of the radical empiricism of Levinas's philosophy see Megan Craig, *Levinas and James: Towards a Pragmatic Phenomenology* (Indiana University Press, 2009).
  37. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Citadel Press, 1976) p. 13.
  38. Eva Kittay, *Love's Labors: Essays on Women, Equality and Dependency* (New York: Routledge, 1998).
  39. Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. Arnold Davidson (Wiley-Blackwell, 1995).
  40. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (New York: Continuum, 2004) p. 25. See also p. 323.

# 15

## Intellectual and Ethical Inhibition: A Meeting of Pragmatism and Phenomenology

Jason Bell

The first formal public meeting of the American pragmatic and German phenomenological methodologies within North America occurred in January 1902, in Josiah Royce's presidential address to the American Psychological Association (APA), 'Recent Logical Inquiries and their Psychological Bearings'. There, he became the first to discuss Edmund Husserl's phenomenology in the English language, and, apparently, among the first to call attention to Husserl's phenomenology in *any* language. A decade later, Husserl would be the first to direct a dissertation on Royce in the German language, specifically encouraging the topic of the relevance of Royce's epistemology to phenomenology.

A main focus of this present study will be a theme suggested by Royce, displaying a perhaps unexpected aspect of the centrality of pragmatic and phenomenological studies of functionality and intentionality as fundamentally related to a shared sense of *inhibition, self-limitation,*

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and *passivity* that precedes and makes possible functional activity. The concluding suggestion of Royce's APA address is that *inhibition* grounds human knowledge and indeed all human activity, as manifested in the *classification* begun by the ancient human practice of labeling something as taboo, but extending to psychology, logic, mathematics, and empirical classifications of phenomena. I will argue that here we can find fruitful relations to Husserl's concept of '*noema*' and '*eidós*', of meanings-as-such and essences as limits permitted by inhibitive *Hemmungen*, to the shared importance of intersubjectivity in pragmatism and phenomenology, and to the possibility of interdisciplinary conversation among such disciplines as mathematics, psychology, history, and anthropology. Following this reading of Royce's APA address and its phenomenological relevance, I will consider a sense in which the ethics of classification, first founded upon the concept of taboo but soon bearing consequences for all areas of human inquiry, makes possible the specific classifications marked by our meaning of 'being', 'logic', and 'epistemology'—a sense in which ethics as first philosophy characterizes the pragmatic and phenomenological movements from their origins.

Such an account will hopefully provide reasons for phenomenology in the twenty-first century to be more attentive to the pragmatic resources available for constructive work, while also calling our attention to resources in phenomenology for a more contemplative version of pragmatism.

## On the Early Relationship of Pragmatism and Phenomenology

Before entering into a direct study of Royce's APA remarks, it is worth noting that this meeting stands as just one important thread in a quilt of relations. For instance, Royce was a phenomenologist in his own right, having written on the subject from 1879, and Royce's thought would soon (later in the same year as his presidential address to the APA) come to be of considerable interest to Husserl, who entered into conversations with Royce's graduate student William Ernest Hocking on the relation of Royce's *The World and the Individual* to Husserl's *Logical Investigations*. A decade later, Husserl requested a dissertation on Royce from his first

North American doctoral student, Winthrop Bell, who had previously been Royce's Master's student at Harvard—and to Bell, Husserl insisted that Royce was an 'important thinker, [who] may only be treated as such'.<sup>1</sup>

Further, Royce and Husserl were influenced by many of the same thinkers, including C.S. Peirce, William James, and various mathematical thinkers who will be considered in this chapter. Royce and Husserl were both students of Wilhelm Wundt at Leipzig; both were scholarly residents of Göttingen; and both were considerably influenced by the great nineteenth-century Göttingen philosopher Hermann Lotze.

This 1902 meeting was far from the last encounter of Roycean-inspired American engagement with Husserl. Royce's Harvard became the first epicenter of American interest in Husserl, as, following Hocking and Bell, a stream of students, including Marvin Farber, Dorion Cairns, and Charles Hartshorne would soon come to study with Husserl, while Royce's other students like T.S. Eliot began to read Husserl after encountering his thought in Royce's seminars. Yet it should also be noted that Husserl's own appreciation of American philosophy preceded by some decades America's first public appreciation of Husserl's thought in 1902: Husserl had, for instance, certainly read both Peirce and James prior to the 1900 and 1901 publication of the two volumes of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*.<sup>2</sup>

Even though the story of the exchange of American and Continental phenomenological philosophy, and of the intertwining of pragmatism and phenomenology, does not then begin or end with Royce's APA address, this first American encounter with Husserl's thought gives us a valuable clue as to inner affinities of American and Continental philosophy. This may in turn help us to discover further modes of conceptual relations between American and Continental philosophy in the present day, when these modes of philosophy still express largely distinct concerns, even as a number of thinkers, including Jacquelyn Kegley, David Goicoechea, Seth Vannatta, Charles M. Sherover, Kenneth Stickers, David Vessey, and others have sought to explore relations between them, with a particular emphasis on the thought of Royce.<sup>3</sup>

We can begin to imagine the context of Royce's January 1902 address, which occurred at a time when Husserl was still little discussed even within Germany<sup>4</sup>—this was, for instance, prior to the 'Munich invasion' of Göttingen. No student of any nation had yet traveled for the purpose

of studying with Husserl, and he was the leader of no school of thought. Royce's reputational light at this moment far outshone Husserl's, who was still a minor figure in Germany, without a regular faculty position. On the other hand, Royce was the president of a major scholarly organization, one who would indeed be president of both APAs (the American Psychological Association and the American Philosophical Association), and would present in just several years the only English-language plenary address, and what amounted to the keynote lecture, to the World Congress of Philosophy in Heidelberg. Royce was in a position, in brief, not merely to comment on Husserl, but powerfully to recommend him to an influential audience.

And that Royce calls attention in the APA address to Husserl's *phenomenology* in particular, when this was present but subsumed as a 'buried lede' in the *Logical Investigations*, may indeed have played some important role in promoting phenomenology to the forefront of Husserl's thinking. It is noteworthy that Hocking, Royce's graduate student at Harvard who would be the first student of any nation to travel for the purpose of studying with Husserl, later in 1902, and who compared the thought of Royce and Husserl in personal conversation with Husserl, noted that Husserl only first began labeling his own position as 'phenomenological' some months later. It is very likely that Hocking knew of Royce's appreciative reading of Husserl prior to Hocking's arrival for studies with, and eventually friendship with, Husserl at Göttingen. In this case, it surely would stand to reason that the commentary of Royce on Husserl would have come to Husserl's attention via Hocking. It is, then, a matter of plausible supposition that the attention to Husserl of the internationally esteemed philosopher Royce at *just this point*—the point of phenomenology—may have played a role in turning Husserl's *own* attention to this point at which he was being publicly praised in so prominent a forum. But it seems even more certain that Royce, who had written on phenomenology for 25 years, was very pleased to have discovered a conversation partner in Husserl.

## The Comparative Morphology of Concepts

Royce's 1902 presidential address is valuable as the account of a personal witness by a prominent philosopher-psychologist to a growing divide between the two sciences of empirical psychology and philosophical

logic, as one who acknowledged the division yet sought in theoretical and practical ways to hold them together. It is this 'remarriage' effort of united yet distinct disciplinary individuals that is the central reason for Husserl's appearance as a hero of the cause, as we shall consider in a moment. Royce's appreciation for Husserl's phenomenology takes place within a context of a study of what Royce terms the 'comparative morphology of concepts', a proposed field linking the logical concerns of philosophy, psychology, mathematics, history, anthropology, and other disciplines. Let us consider this context before proceeding to Royce's direct commentary on Husserl.

Royce's address proceeds with a descriptive report of the current state of scientific investigation, pointing to two different and seemingly opposed tendencies: first, the division of one scientific discipline from another, and even the division of subspecialties of single disciplines from one another, as their concerns and specialized languages became increasingly remote from one another. This was exemplified in the growing division and strife between logic and psychology, which represented at once a fortunate sign of the growth of psychology as an empirical discipline, but also an unfortunate splitting of a partnership that had been unified since the origins of philosophy. The second was a shared tendency among disciplines to return to an investigation of the first principles of the respective sciences, as well as a growth of interest in the comparative logic of sciences.

Royce makes clear that he opposed the tendency of division, strife, and proud isolation, and that he supported the tendencies of investigation of first principles throughout the sciences and of comparative interdisciplinary logic. This positive tendency had in recent inquiry gained inspiration from Ernst Mach, Georg Cantor, Giuseppe Peano, Louis Couturat, Bertrand Russell, and the Göttingen mathematicians Richard Dedekind, Felix Klein, and David Hilbert. Here it is worth keeping in mind Husserl's close connections with the Göttingen mathematics department at this institution where he originated his phenomenological method. For Royce, this common spirit of inquiry had called forth the radical revisiting of fundamental concepts. No longer content with the merely assumed axioms that had supported mathematical inquiry in recent centuries, he observed a return to a critical spirit, indifferent to whether an axiom was dominant and long-



established, but concerned only if it was correct. This critical spirit, Royce urged, was ‘full of promise for the psychologist as well as for the logician’, and it was a positive countertendency to disciplinary division and isolation.

Here, then, were two opposed tendencies. On the one hand, in a practical sense, there was the growing isolation of the various sciences. Yet, on the theoretical side, there were common tendencies, interests, critical methodologies, and shared concepts of the various branches of science. To bridge this divide, Royce proposed a new science, the ‘comparative morphology of concepts’, an interdisciplinary science seeking for points of common methodological and conceptual interest among the sciences. For Royce:

This science will occupy a borderland position. In one respect, it will belong to philosophy ... for it will lead to advances in just that critical consideration of the foundations of knowledge which constitutes one principal division of philosophy. [On] the other hand, the new science will be an empirical as well as a reflective doctrine. It will include a critical examination of the history and evolution of the special sciences. And in this respect it will take its place as a contribution to the general history of culture, and will furnish material for the student of anthropology and of social psychology. ... [This science will] offer large ranges of what one may call neutral ground, where philosopher and psychologist, special student and general inquirer, historian and sociologist, may seek each his own, while a certain truce of God may reign there regarding those boundary feuds which these various types of students are prone to keep alive, whenever they discuss with one another the limits of their various territories, and the relative importance of their different tasks...[The] studies in the comparative logic of the sciences are at once...philosophical and empirical studies. They are logical researches regarding the foundations of knowledge. They are also historical reports regarding the way in which our human thinking processes have worked and are working in the world of live thinkers and of socially guided investigations.<sup>5</sup>

This science would be at once ideal and empirical. Accordingly, Royce’s position, like Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*, makes place for distinct but complementary realms of pure and empirical logic, and understands

that neither could be reduced to the other: neither German idealism nor British empiricism would triumph over the other, and both deductive and inductive logic had their permanent places of honor at the round table of human wisdom. And, with its respect for critical foundations and historical development, Royce's morphology forms a synthetic position between the historicist doctrine that the present is determined by the past, and idealist and existentialist doctrines of the pure freedom of ideas, thereby representing a middle position that identifies logical concepts that emerge in history but are thereafter recognized as having been valid possibilities prior to their discovery. Here the logical inquirer discovers the a priori within the a posteriori, a theme emergent in Royce's own phenomenological investigations over the previous two and a half decades.

Royce's morphological science would work between the primarily a priori or ideal sciences, such as logic and mathematics, and the primarily a posteriori sciences, like the natural and social sciences, while acknowledging for each type of science its own realm of investigation, not subsumable to the others, but yet deeply informed by the others. For instance, as we will see, the a priori discovery of formal essences as the intentional meaning of conscious activities and the discovery of forms of validity and invalidity both borrow from the actual experience and the historical development of formal meanings.

## Morphology in Psychology and Philosophy

In a concrete example of how the morphological science would proceed, Royce describes the conceptual dialogue of the disciplines of philosophy and psychology, first from a historical perspectives in view of concepts shared from their long shared history as a unified field, then in their present state of growing distinction and division, and finally in an exploration of conceptual commonalities capable of exploration in future studies in dialogue with other disciplines, such as mathematics and anthropology.

In the earlier historical unity of philosophy and psychology, philosophical psychology had traditionally favored the psychology of knowledge over such processes as the psychology of feelings and volitions consid-

ered as preconditions of knowledge; further, these earlier psychological–philosophical investigations primarily operated through linguistic analyses. By contrast, in the contemporary field of psychological inquiry, increased attention was being paid to quantifiably measurable psychological processes such as attention, discrimination, and memory. This came, however, at the cost of reduced attention to the earlier prominence of higher-order processes, such as conception, judgment, and reasoning, coupled with oftentimes crude reductions of higher-order processes to the simplistic descriptions based on lower-order processes.

The reason for the shift of predominant psychological attention from higher- to lower-order processes was clear, Royce suggests, given the numerous difficulties involved in experimentation of higher-order processes such as those involved in scientific inquiry itself. Many higher-order processes are irreducible to mere individuals operating in a strictly isolated way, and thus the study of isolated single individuals under experimental observation could not enable the higher-order processes involved in science to be brought under the figurative microscope. Yet research in this realm was not hopeless. Prior, however, to considering promising possible routes of psychological inquiry into such higher-order cognitive processes as judgment, Royce notes two major difficulties faced by psychology in investigating these phenomena. First, despite its newfound empirical attention to fundamental or lower-order processes of consciousness, psychology remained habitually linked to the linguistic analyses typical of philosophy, despite the fact that consciousness displays many nonlinguistic aspects as well. As a corrective, Royce suggests that psychology could greatly profit from the indirect study of human psychology through reliance on other types of analysis than that of dialogical philosophy, such as those operative in the disciplines of mathematics, logic, history, and anthropology—these disciplines certainly involved language, and yet the central processes studied involved ‘whatness’ and ‘thatness’, that is, essential definitions and concrete existences, that transcend the philosophy of language.

Second, even as the higher-order conscious processes were not yet adequately investigable by psychology, haphazard attempts to reduce them to the lower-order processes persisted—here in a particular manifestation was the threat of ‘psychologism’. While philosophy had

historically neglected component parts of higher-order thinking, calling forth what Royce understood to be a legitimate need for correction, the new psychologistic reductionism made assumptions about the nature of higher-order processes, but without adequate empirical support. Yet psychology saw itself as having a duty immediately to account for the habitual remainder of higher-order processes owing to psychology's inheritance from philosophy—and it was most convenient simply to reduce the higher to the lower, as if the higher was nothing but a sum of the lower.

At this fault line between philosophical psychology's nearly exclusive consideration of higher-order, intersubjective thought processes, involving supra-subjective logical-theoretical structures including but transcending individual psychologies and valid for all rational beings, and, on the other hand, the empirically investigable conscious phenomena as observable in individuals in laboratory experimentation, Royce observed a schism forming between logic and psychology. Here was the question at the heart of the strife between 'psychologism' and its opponents, who sought, respectively, to reduce logic to lower-order psychological processes on the one hand, and those who sought to defend a distinct realm of logical inquiry irreducible to human psychology on the other.

## Husserl's Contribution to Conceptual Morphology

It is during this civil war between previously united disciplines that Royce calls attention to the synthesizing hero Edmund Husserl, whose phenomenological researches indicated a way beyond the strife. What made Husserl's phenomenological research of interest to Royce was that Husserl recognized distinct realms of logical endeavor in both pure and empirical logic, practiced researches in both fields, and found places of common interest between them, even while insisting on the relative independence of pure logic against psychologism's attempts to subsume pure logic to psychological processes. As Royce explains:

[M]any students interested in the theory of the thinking process have tended, in more recent discussion, to choose one of two opposed directions.

Either they have been disposed to relieve themselves altogether of any responsibility for settling psychological problems, by drawing a technically sharp line between Logic and Psychology, by devoting themselves to the former, and by leaving out of the logical inquiry all consideration whatever of the descriptive psychology of thinking; or else, choosing rather the psychological road, they have attempted to reduce the problems in question to some shape such as would make possible a more exact introspection of the details of the thinking process by causing these to occur under experimental conditions. (RLI, p. 111)

Husserl engages in a synthesis of the logic and psychology, thus making him a true citizen of that neutral ground in which the interdisciplinary morphology of concepts could occur. Royce explicitly claims that

Husserl has vigorously protested against all *psychologisierende Logik*. Logic, he insists, must go its own way, yet Husserl, in his still unfinished and very attractive researches, yet lingers over the problems of what he now calls the 'phenomenological analysis' of the thinking process, and his farewell, as a logician, to psychology proves to be a very long one, wherein the parting is such sweet sorrow that the logician's escape from the presence of psychology is sure to lead to further psychological complications. As a fact, I cordially accept, for myself, the view that the central problems of the logician and of the psychologist are quite distinct, and that the logician is not responsible for, or logically dependent upon a psychological theory of the thinking process. Yet I am unable to doubt that every advance upon one of these two sides of the study of the intellectual life makes possible, under the conditions to which all our human progress is naturally subject, a new advance upon the other side. I believe in not confounding the tasks of these two types of inquiry. But I do believe that a mutual understanding between the workers will be of great importance; and I feel that we need not discuss at very great length, or insist with exaggerated strenuousness upon the mere separation of provinces in a world of inquiry wherein to-day there are rather too many Sunderings. (RLI, p. 111)

In Husserl, Royce saw a third way of understanding logic and psychology: sovereignty but relation. Here there was neither discrete metaphysical independence of two foreign powers with no communications between them nor the subsuming of a vassal state to an

imperial power. Instead, a metaphorical league of disciplinary nations begins to emerge.

To what advantage, though? Royce's surprising suggestion is that this morphological interpretation can help to overcome the limitations of the disciplines of philosophy and psychology considered either alone or together, a broadening of perspective beyond even that supplied by the original marriage of the two disciplines. Royce's suggestion for both fields is to turn toward data about psychological processes and critical inquiries into the foundations of knowledge offered by other academic disciplines. For instance, psychology's exploration of disciplines like history would provide access to psychological interests that transcend single persons, single ages, and single linguistic traditions, and thus exemplify, as in the historical description of technical ingenuity, and processes of cooperation. Likewise, Royce urges, while logical, social, and supra-subjective, the meaning of higher-order inquiry such as it is involved in mathematics is not exhausted by its own attention to its own phenomenal realm of investigation. Rather, these inquiries also 'inevitably possess a psychological bearing' (RLI, p. 119), thus exemplifying the work of individual consciousness as well as the processes of psychological life in communities of inquiry, and shine light upon the structures of consciousness involved in universal human thought processes such as counting, measuring, and comparing magnitudes. Supra-subjectivity implies in this case no strict independence from psychological subjectivity, but rather aims to discover 'fundamental intellectual interests in our world of experience' (RLI, p. 119), defining and uniting subjects speaking different tongues, and living in different ages.

This proposal for interdisciplinary logic may be strange to hear given that it is so far from disciplinary triumphalism. Yet Royce's suggestion is that philosophical and psychological investigations are partial expressions of the rational psyche; to attend to the studies of other disciplines is to gain a more complete portrait of human wisdom and human psychological processes and the world in which they are situated. Indeed, logic and psychology will respectively bring these inquiries under their own purview, asking what is essential to all questioning of rules of rational thinking, as such, and in the examination of human thinking, in particular.<sup>6</sup>

## Mathematical Morphology

Royce saw a particularly promising area of morphological interpretation in the logic of arithmetic in relation to general concepts of serial order, distinct from a focus on quantitative concepts that had predominated in previous generations of mathematical inquiry. In addition to the special mathematical value, research on serial order provided lessons in the psychology of conceptual processing that helped ‘to distinguish the activities through which we have formed the conception of any ordered series of facts from the processes whereby we have learned to apply this conception in certain important, but decidedly special, cases to the task of measuring magnitudes’ (RLI, p. 119), wherein the second task is a specialized application of the first, which is simpler and more primitive, but fundamental to the possibility of the second.

Another rich area of morphological data of great potential benefit to psychology was supplied by the emergent mathematical understanding of the logical ordering of *prior* and *derived* mathematical conceptions. Mathematics and the history of mathematics here communicate, paraphrasing Royce’s formulation, general facts of priority and derivation in the constitutions of those habits of our organism upon which our thoughts about order depend. Discovering the necessary dependence of latter ideas on predecessor ideas in the concept of order, as Royce writes, is indeed a logical, rather than psychological question, yet ‘to discover what is logically universal, as the basis of our exact ideas, is to find out a process that must be very widely represented in those organized modes of action of which our thoughts are an inner expression’ (RLI, p. 120).

In turn, understanding the inner expressions of logically organized practical actions in thought, such as activities of counting and of the comparison of magnitudes, presents an important problem for the psychologist—an explication of the psychology of the concept of order, a concept mutually involved in the ordered presentation of facts, and the weaving of these specific orders into scientific systems. Yet psychology had not noted important new mathematical concepts that clarified the organization of human thought, including crucially relevant topics like the space theory of the Göttingen mathematician Felix Klein, a friend of Husserl, which related visual and spatial geometry. Indeed for Royce it

was something of a scandal that psychological and mathematical theories of space had not been brought into explicit relation, given the overlapping object of interest in space itself, but also given their common theme of the thought that thinks space.

For Royce, the key for psychological science is not merely to discover what happens in my mind, considered as individual mind, for example, as when I judge that A is B, but rather to describe the serial order indicated by such judgments in general, describing psychological 'order in relation to quantity, space, and continuity in general' (RLI, p. 125). Here Royce commends to his psychological colleagues the work of Richard Dedekind and Georg Cantor (who was likewise a friend of Husserl's), particularly in crediting them for the development of the concept of classes of number, and the grades or dignities of infinite assemblages of objects; and likewise the work of Kempe, for showing how math is a science of exact classification, and in turn pointing to the insight that science itself is a system of classifications derived from fundamental mathematics.

Psychology could, in addition to receiving and synthesizing results from other disciplines, also conduct fruitful experimentation unique to its own methods: for instance, exploring, as Royce suggested, the basic but crucially foundational difference between 'yes' and 'no' in small differences and judging as involved in identifying and distinguishing differing objects and classifying objects in common sets (RLI, p. 126). Here was a kind of psychological inquiry that would in turn be useful to logic, as such a yes and no consciousness was foundational to both formal classification and empirical observation. Such affirmation and negation is also useful in the phenomenological sense of explicating the basic process by which a meaningfully organized field of phenomena emerges from the total field of experience in an active process of first-person and intersubjective attentive inquiry; as the essential 'meant-as-such' of phenomenology is specified within a field of experience as an individual part, recognized by certain general features, and as not containing other features.

For instance, this yes and no consciousness is involved in our respective attention to two geometrical objects, in different classes, when, with the aid of geometrical training, we make certain responses in reference to one 'perform[ing] certain deeds' which we would 'suppress, reject, inhibit, as unfitting, absurd, or untrue' in reference to the other object



(RLI, p. 126). In the presence of a circle, for example, such positive activities may include the present visual tracing of the circle with the eyes, and also the comparative recollection of this sense with 'names, memories, and aesthetic impressions'. This collective response in recognizing the shape of the circle is 'adapted to express what it means for us, and how it is related to the rest of our life' (RLI, p. 127). A triangle, by contrast, calls forth different physical and mental responses, and other attitudes of fittingness. More generally, the complex meaning built of a series of grouped processes, which enables the judgment of 'presented or remembered differences', and creating mutually distinct classes, is itself bound up with the 'yes and no consciousness' of simple binary judgments of what belongs and what doesn't belong to a form or class (RLI, p. 127). These grouped binary judgments are in turn synthetically combined in service of the performance of complex deeds of judgment.

Royce indicates the vast computational promise of synthetically organized binary logical processes as capable of building complex structures of meaning upon the foundation of systematically linked affirmations and denials. Yet this 'yes and no' consciousness, although fundamental to all types of judgments and concepts, had yet to be sufficiently considered by psychology, either in itself or in its role in our judgment of difference. Similarly we may read the importance of the binary 'yes and no' in Husserl's thought in the *Logical Investigations*, for instance, as transcending a simple disjunction, and in his critique of psychologist's reduction to subjectivity for its loss of the meaning of yes and no as a referent to the real indicated by but not reducible to the psyche.

However, we find the fundamental distinction of the yes and no classification still more extensively in Husserl's subsequent writings. For instance, in the *Ideas I*, phenomenology itself is understood to proceed through an understanding of the limiting function: the phenomena are given through an act of affirmative specification that depends on negation of everything else that lies beyond the meant-as-such, a negation that is not an elimination, or a skeptical denial, but rather a setting aside that requires in its own way a positive act; the limitation, then, is not equivalent to nothing or mere absence. In a similar way, Husserl's 'bracketing' of reality in the *Ideas I* is an expression of the fundamental power of negation—where 'negation' does not, again, skeptically *eliminate* reality

from existence, but rather ‘sets it out of consideration’ for the purposes of focusing on pure consciousness; in this way, phenomenology proceeds, fundamentally, through limitation.<sup>7</sup> And Husserl’s definition of the *noematic* as focusing on the ‘meant-as-such’, the ‘perception-as-such’, with the real correlate intended ‘beyond’ the ‘as-such’ suspended for the purposes of pure phenomenology (although not ultimately suspended as a human purpose), again specifies a positive intention of consciousness by negating everything other than the meant-as-such, including the reality or irreality of the intended ‘external’ or ‘real’ correlate of meaning or the actual or *wirklich* givenness of the external correlate of a perception. Such a focusing, as a limit, is an act of positive intellectual activity, as meaning and meant are otherwise typically thought together as a unity in natural consciousness.<sup>8</sup>

For Royce, in this broadened sense, mathematics was fundamental to all the academic disciplines, with an emphasis on mathematical *relation*, even as mathematical *quantity* was of greater importance to certain disciplines and of lesser importance to others. For instance, language and the special empirical sciences were fundamentally expressions of classificatory systems, each having in common, despite a vast range of other differences, the essence of ‘yes and no’ at their foundations. These binary functions bound together the meaning of a uniquely indicated class of designated phenomena as an essential unity of experiences of a general type, including but transcending all present tokens or specific representations of this type, and experienced in contradistinction to all other classes.

Royce’s confidence in the vast importance of classification, built of affirmation and negation, is indicated by his enthusiastic statement to the members of the APA: ‘[H]ow much is gained by exactly classifying the ranges, or domains, to which various principles can be said to apply. Even the single principles, taken by themselves, appear, when thus examined, to be simply classifications of facts’ (RLI, p. 129). Facts, by Royce’s account, are quite real, but not independently so; they are the result of highly ideal processes of intentional consciousness attending to certain groupings of phenomena and categorizations, while excluding others, in order to arrive at the sought individual specification that is in some sense predetermined at the vague beginning of an inquiry—a vague beginning

meant *to* achieve the ideally ‘meant-as-such’ specification in reality, as consciousness seeks in eventual judgment to accurately describe reality.

Reconciling the ideal and the empirical aspects of our attentive consciousness, the affirming and negating forms of ideas are understood as neither something apart from facticity nor facticity as apart from ideas. Rather facts—like principles, mathematical concepts, artistic creations, and other meaningful objectivities—are understood as various expressions of functional consciousness, grouping, building, tearing down, and modifying conceptions that are continually adjusted to an experience that remains the same in certain senses and variable in others, in contrast both to ‘closed’ absolutisms and ‘open’ relativisms.

This helps indicate why, for Royce, our classification is not creation *ex nihilo*, but rather, as for Hegel and Husserl, it is a mode of response to and creation within the world. While we indeed receive through our senses that which is given and not created by our subjective thought processes, yet we do not merely receive ‘the world’ through our senses. We construct the meaning of the ‘world’ through personal and inter-subjective inquiry. Importantly, science is a part of this descriptive endeavor. As Royce writes, ‘[s]harp classification is the goal as well as the beginning of the thought that gets embodied in the special sciences’. And the comparative consciousness of the scientist constantly poses the question of whether a specific object belongs ‘for this purpose to this collection of objects’ (RLI, p. 130). Facts and sciences are, in this way, expressions of interest in certain demarcated regions of the field of experience. Intentional purposes are ‘absolute’ in that these are exclusively directed toward meant ends as their correlate or ‘other’, and, in science, toward an other that is a rigorous classification of a demarcated region of experience, defined by no further relativity, since everything else other than just the meant is to be excluded from (and by) the meant classification. This absolute determination does not imply, however, that we can already describe all our scientific purposes and results, or even that we ever will. Instead, the purpose of consciousness to explain what consciousness is ‘of’ determines our scientific ideas from within, dictating where they must go in experience for their embodiment. As scientific inquiry is bound at every point by its own theoretical purpose to seek and classify the experiences relevant

to the goal of its inquiry, this conception is far from psychologistic subjectivism. The comparison of conceptual explanation to the meant phenomena themselves is, then, for Royce, ‘the first and last task in dealing with particular facts’ (RLI, p. 130). The special sciences by this account are each in their own determined spheres ‘descriptions of phenomena’, and it is these classifications that are the ends of science, while all specific descriptions within these sciences are purposes subservient to this founding and guiding end.

Yet for Royce the realm of yes and no enters into consciousness still more deeply, including but transcending scientific purposes. The decision of *better* and *worse* classificatory explanations of phenomena is another exhibition of the enormous systematic importance of what Royce terms the ‘yes and no consciousness’ (RLI, p. 126, 127, 131). And still further, Royce urges, we find this binary activity exemplified at the most basic levels of human activity, such as at the mind–body activity of motor actions, in which intentions to move cause us to ‘perform and inhibit certain deeds’ (RLI, p. 131), as when a reaching out to an object affirms one range of muscle groups and motions while inhibiting the rest. Here the performance of certain deeds, the ‘yes’ that moves our hands or eyes in a certain direction, depends also upon inhibitions of other motions.

In our maturity, too, for Royce, all ‘live thinking’, or thinking with genuine purposes, involves both suppression and affirmation. In the act of ‘suppressing certain possible motor acts’, we inevitably find ourselves ‘welcoming, emphasizing, or letting go of certain other acts’, and with the objects of our intentions regarded ‘in the light of the deeds that thus we welcome or suppress’ (RLI, p. 132). The pragmatic sense of practical activity is wed, in Royce’s thought, to the phenomenological sense of intentional actualization of possibilities given in phenomenal experience, together involving the *active* limitation of the conscious bracketing of possibilities in order to imagine the various practical results of various imagined choices. We may find commonality between Royce’s notion that affirmation is structured by negation and the thought of Husserl, for whom the way of phenomenology proceeds through the establishment of inhibitory limits. As Drummond writes on the relation of essence and limit in Husserl’s thought, ‘the shift of attention to the ideal limit as such apprehends what Husserl calls “exact essence”.’<sup>9</sup> So too for Royce the

quest for scientific exactitude always includes the negative principle as limit, separating what does not belong from what does belong to a meant phenomenal set as an essential ingredient of consciousness, which ‘is the constant accompaniment of all our higher, our organized, our thoughtful activities’, and the condition ‘which makes exact classification possible’ (RLI, p. 132).

## The Psychology of Inhibition and the Phenomenology of Taboo

This ‘constant accompaniment’ of intentional mental and bodily activity by limit and negation sets a promising problem for psychology, and one fit for empirical research: ‘In what way, to what extent, and under what conditions, do we become conscious of our inhibitions?’ (RLI, p. 132). Here we find a theme taken up by Freud, as for instance in his 1926 work *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* as an extension of psychopathology, but Royce suggests a field of study that includes but vastly transcends the psychopathological. While for Freud inhibition has a neutral to negative character, in the pragmatic-phenomenological account, inhibition (*Hemmung*) is crucial at diverse levels of human functioning, in the motor processes, the basic elements of thinking, the higher reasoning processes such as science, logic, and mathematics, and the discovery of ideal essences as meanings, theories, and regions of inquiry.

At the conclusion of his APA remarks, Royce turns to anthropological and ethical considerations, advancing the possibility that this limiting negation that precedes and accompanies affirmation is intimately linked to organized human thought and the origins of ethics. Here Royce makes the intriguing ethical suggestion that the primal negation involved in the act of labeling something *taboo* is the initial and foundational higher-order generalization and the basis for others. Primal taboo—an enduring fact even of advanced social life—categorizes, as an imperative, a universal group of possible actions under the heading *must not*. For Royce, ‘with taboo human thought about certain of the exact classifications, both of conduct and of truth, would seem to have begun’. (RLI, p. 132). It is not that inhibition was invented with the notion of taboo, since inhibition

is requisite even for basic animal motor processes, but rather that, in the idea of taboo, negation takes on a rigorously general and social character, governing the motor activities of a people within a general logical unity.

While it does not seem that there is precisely a phenomenology of taboo in Husserl's work, the 'contrast effect' of negation and affirmation is strongly felt in Husserl's philosophy, and is central to his theory of action and the receptivity that precedes it. For instance, Dorion Cairns records Husserl's remark, which goes thus: 'The sphere of activity is one of freedom and inhibition—the sphere where there is some sense in saying I can or I can't. Activity goes out from a certain passivity, a certain given... When the process goes further towards its goal, there is a *Hemmung* [inhibition].'<sup>10</sup> Further, Husserl's account of inhibition bears similarities to Peircean and Roycean pragmatism, which we can discern in Robert Welsh Jordan's description of Husserl's account, where he says that 'the consciousness of the problematic is presented by Husserl as the origin of all projects', citing Hua. 11, 44, where the 'conflict [*Widerstreit*] involves the splitting [*Spaltung*] of one consciousness into reciprocal inhibition [*Hemmung*].'<sup>11</sup> This could practically summarize the origins of pragmatism in the thought of Peirce. Similarly for Royce, positive activities are learned as

inhibitions of inhibitions, as tendencies to act by means of overcoming opposing considerations, and as assertions that are at once coordinate with, and opposed to, denials. Our abstract ideas are products of such an organized union of negative and positive tendencies. We can therefore understand the psychology of live thinking processes only in case we understand when, how far, and under what conditions, inhibition becomes a conscious process. (RLI, p. 132)

In Peirce's foundational pragmatic account, 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear' (1878), the problematic disturbs our ordinary rest in beliefs, and requires the effort to reconstruct, amid the discord of competing possible actions, a new balance of planned actions in the harmony of a new belief. In the Peircean account of pragmatism, influential to Royce's account—and perhaps also to Husserl's account—what might be termed bracketing, in a sense analogous to Husserl's, involves an inhibition of consciousness at the moment of doubt. This occurs in several senses. Immediate action itself is inhibited, and multiple possibilities of action are consid-

ered, each delimited from the others; while the inhibition of *immediate* or real practical action permits the ideal imagining of possibilities of the consequences of each respective choice. For Husserl, Jordan continues,

[s]ome or all of the possibilities which are thus unified through conflict must entail a requirement that it is to—i.e., ought to—become actual at the relevant anticipated time. The members of the group are meant alternatives. As they are anticipated, each can occur during the relevant phase of the flux of consciousness; yet for each of them, its becoming actual would preclude the others' becoming actual.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, in Peirce's foundational pragmatic account, the attainment of belief follows the choice of a practical action that *would* be actualized were the relevant experience to actually occur; this is first chosen from a field of ideal possibilities, each of which was likewise respectively imagined in terms of the practical consequences that *would* follow were it actualized. Much of the work of consciousness, then, takes place in the subjunctive mood. Even belief itself is framed by this mood, given that it indicates practical action *only if* the relevant situation seems to occur to the belief holder. Further, in philosophical or pragmatic analysis of belief itself, *vis-à-vis* the truth toward which it hopes to successfully orient itself, even belief and action are inhibited by the consideration of the essential nature of all belief and all action and by contemplation of the real truth itself which a belief can hit or miss: it is this hitting or missing of reality that was neglected, Peirce argues, by Descartes' confidence in 'clear and distinct' ideas, which can be very clear and very distinct, and also erroneous. Prior to the possibility of truth or error, though, is the description of the search for true belief among various possibilities.

Likewise for Husserl, Jordan explains,

inhibition still occurs even when the counter-possibilities are not awakened. Mutual inhibition and unity through conflict characterize all attractive possibilities, however manifold [*vielfältig*] the members of the conflict...Problematic (attractive) possibilities and only these possibilities arise with varied weights... Each of the conflicting possibilities attracts the ego to posit it; each requires that the ego take the position that it is the possibility which would be fulfilled...[if it were acted upon].<sup>13</sup>

This *if*, in analogy to pragmatism, may help us to correct the popular association of the meaning of pragmatism as simply meaning practical *action*, actual rather than contemplative doing. In Royce's explication, like in Peirce's, we may see how intelligent practical activity is preceded and permitted by rigorous contemplative inhibition. Intelligence involves entertaining possibilities, within brackets, and suppressing inferior possibilities of action in order to select just the ones that seem best in an ideal sense or most likely to succeed in a practical sense, but only *actually* instantiating a practical choice if the situation indicated by the belief is encountered in experience.

We do not need to be so restlessly active, then, as we would be without this inhibitory contemplation, were we, that is, blindly and immediately to follow the self-contradictory impulses of doing just whatever first comes to our mind, as it comes to our mind. For Peirce, it is through beliefs that we seek rest-in-truth, and it is only the perversion of thinking that seeks for incessant unsettled thinking activity. And as Royce noted in his early *Thought Diary* (1878–1880), in which he first explicates his 'New Phenomenology', the minimum activity sought by the labor-saving device of thought is not equivalent to doing nothing, but rather it is the choice of the simplest work that will account for all the relevant phenomena.<sup>14</sup>

Recalling the ought that seeks for the best among various possibilities, intelligence as manifested from the level of motor inhibition to higher-order forms in judgment and scientific investigation can already be understandable as a proto-ethical activity: searching among possible actions for the one or ones that *ought* to be actualized. Theoretical essences are landmarks that help us find our way among phenomenal experiences. Yet we may only see the rationally ethical emerging through a second inhibition, like Royce's principle of loyalty to loyalty which proposes an essential principle of critical intersubjectivity among accidental ethical principles.

For Royce's phenomenology, in contrast both to phenomenalism and to the philosophical mysticism that rigorously opposed itself to the 'merely' phenomenal in a direct quest for eternal essences, essences are achieved *through* the phenomena but are not reduced to the phenomena. This holds, too, in the ethical realm—and here it is worth noting that Royce's



phenomenology of loyalty found its way into the dissertation directed by Husserl on the subject of Royce's relevance to phenomenology. As Royce understood, we ought at once to think of the phenomenology of loyalty even as we also serve this or that specific loyalty as it appears in the phenomenal world.

## **Conclusion: Pragmatic Phenomenology for the Twenty-First Century**

I have attempted to argue that Royce's presidential address moves, then, from what seems to be a prescient but narrow point about the promise of interdisciplinary cooperation enabled by the self-limitation of the scientific disciplines, permitting attention to relevant analogies among disciplines, to a logical, ethical, and epistemological thesis about the way in which inhibition, as self-limitation and as the limitation even of a community of inquiry, is fundamental to the empowerment of human beings and the increase of the human good in its sought witness of truth. On his phenomenological model, we see a coherent way in which logic, ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology are linked not despite or in opposition to phenomenal perspectives, but precisely through those very phenomenal perspectives themselves. Royce and Husserl both suggest that inquiry will be best aided by a reliance upon both pure and applied logical sciences. Here we may think of the 'phenomenology of Göttingen', occurring at the university that proved so influential to the intellectual life of both Royce and also Husserl. In particular, consider the way in which Göttingen's university was founded and supported by those monarchs who were at once the Kings of England and the Duke Electors of Hannover. This university they founded was the place where German idealism and British empiricism could best find their shared intellectual home. Phenomenology may indeed be an honored child of this union.

Of course Royce's 1902 address cannot exhaust conceptual relations between pragmatism and phenomenology, between psychology and philosophy, between American and Continental philosophy, or between the American and European branches of phenomenology. Yet here is a narrow point between lands, and an ideal place to build a bridge between

them. Certainly the purpose is more than an intramural one, as it may help to bring forth a more fluent dialogue between philosophy and other academic disciplines, and between the academy and the world. Surely such aims are important if the future of phenomenology is to be as bright and constructive as possible, while remaining true to the empowering limits of its, and pragmatism's, contemplative roots.

## Notes

1. For further discussion of Winthrop Bell's dissertation, see 'The German Translation of Royce's Epistemology by Husserl's Student Winthrop Bell: A Neglected Bridge of Pragmatic-Phenomenological Interpretation?' *The Pluralist* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 46–62.
2. Husserl cites William James for being a key figure in helping him to overcome his own earlier psychologism; and, while I have not yet seen this noted in scholarship, I have seen direct evidence of Husserl's extensive notes on Peirce's logic at the Husserl Archives-Leuven.
3. See, for instance, Seth Vannatta, *Conservatism and Pragmatism: In Law, Politics, and Ethics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); David Goicoechea, 'Royce and the Reductions,' in *Phenomenological Perspectives: Historical and Systematic Essays in Honor of Herbert Spiegelberg*, ed. P.J. Bossert (The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975) pp. 31–46; David Vessey, 'Philosophical Hermeneutics,' in *A Companion to Pragmatism*, ed. John R. Shook and Joseph Margolis (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2006); Kenneth W. Stickers, 'Royce and Gadamer on Interpretation as the Constitution of Community,' *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 15, no. 1 (2001): 14–19; Jacquelyn Ann K. Kegley, 'Royce and Husserl: Some Parallels and Food for Thought,' *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 14, no. 3 (1978): 184–99; Jason Bell, 'On Four Originators of Transatlantic Phenomenology: Josiah Royce, Edmund Husserl, William Hocking, Winthrop Bell' in *The Relevance of Royce*, ed. Kelly A. Parker and Jason Bell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014): pp. 47–68; Charles M. Sherover, *From Kant and Royce to Heidegger: Essays in Modern Philosophy* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003).
4. See *The Phenomenological Movement*, third edition, ed. Herbert Spiegelberg and Karl Schuhmann, (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982), p. 161: 'How Royce, to be sure a former Göttingen student under Lotze, came to know about

Husserl so much earlier than most German philosophers has still to be explained. But these remarkably keen comments [i.e., his APA address] may well throw a light of Peirce's acquaintance with Husserl.'

5. All quotes by Royce within the main text of this chapter are from 'Recent Logical Inquiries and Their Psychological Bearings,' in *Psychological Review* 9, no. 2 (March 1902): 105–33. Hereafter this text will be cited parenthetically as RLI.
6. This philosophical hope for Royce leads eventually to the recovery of the metaphysical: the philosophical purpose is not merely to explicate the fact that language is predicative, but to explicate the logical leading to metaphysical sense—combining validity and soundness—in which certain predications 'fit' with the larger world of experiences, including both predicative experience and simple perceptual experiences, while others do not. The community of investigation, the community dedicated to a region of inquiry defined by *theoria*, does not merely explicate the current body of acknowledged truths, but also defines a plan of scientific and philosophical investigation that *means* to investigate the world, discovering new areas of investigation, intuiting truths, discovering the falsity of those beliefs now incorrectly acknowledged as true, and deepening the understanding of truths which do not admit of change. The meaning, founded upon an 'ought', is thus also essentially and ultimately ethical in its orientation. Here is the sense of phenomenology as 'absolutely faithful description of what is actually present', in Husserl's phrase in the *Ideas*, of loyalty to truth, in Royce's phrase in *The Philosophy of Loyalty*, and of the veracity that marks the essence of humanity—a veracity prior to and enabling the possibility of truth and falsity—as described by Robert Sokolowski in *Phenomenology of the Human Person* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
7. The concept of *limit* is central in Husserl's *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. See, for instance (citing from W.R. Boyce Gibson's translation), the way in which, for Husserl, the Cartesian *epoché*, the attempt at universal doubt, is to be limited: bracketing itself *is* the 'limiting consideration', wherein '*we put out of action the general thesis which belongs to the essence of the natural standpoint*, we place in brackets whatever it includes respecting the nature of Being' (§32). The first philosophy that stands at the headwaters of phenomenology is limited 'still further', to consciousness itself, the 'I think' (§34). It is the meant essence of pure consciousness, 'which is to fix the limits of the phenomenological field' (§39). Later Husserl clarifies that phenomenology proposes 'really to limit itself to

the region of pure experience', distinguishing this from all special sciences that are limited to regions *within* experience (§60). Yet phenomenology is a scientific method, taking deliberate steps in researching the region of pure experience, and 'permits of the practice of a limiting and improving criticism' (§65). Indeed for Husserl 'in epistemological reflexion the idea of God is a necessary limiting concept, or an indispensable point in the construction of certain limiting concepts, which even the philosophical atheist cannot dispense with' (§79). Limit appears prominently in Husserl's description of the field of experience, and in his description of time consciousness—which bears important similarities, as explored by Kegley, to Royce's concept of time consciousness and time itself in *The World and the Individual*—as in sections §82, §83, and §118 of the *Ideas*. See also the way that determination of the determinable 'X' is founded upon 'defining limits' (§142). Limit *prescribes* the complete givenness of X; and while this actual X is known to us as finite beings only in a continuum, only from a perspective, and only within the limits of time consciousness, yet attention may turn to the essence of the prescription itself, 'limitless in all directions' (§143, see also §151).

8. See, for instance, Part II, chapter III of the *Ideas*.
9. John J. Drummond, *Historical Dictionary of Husserl's Philosophy*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), p. 102, cf. Husserl's *Ideas I*, §74.
10. Dorion Cairns, *Conversations with Husserl and Fink* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), p. 5.
11. Robert Welsh Jordan, 'The Part Played by Value in the Modification of Open into Attractive Possibilities' in *Phenomenology of Values and Valuing*, ed. J.G. Hart, Lester Embree (Netherlands: Springer, 1997) pp. 81–94.
12. Jordan, 'The Part Played by Value,' p. 84.
13. Jordan, 'The Part Played by Value,' p. 85.
14. Unpublished manuscript. Harvard Archives, HUG 1755.

# Part VI

## Calling Phenomenology into Question

# 16

## Is 'Phenomenology' a Family Resemblance Term?

Tom Sparrow

Here I am in the basement of the Gumberg library, sitting at a table in the Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center on the campus of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I can see the alcoves holding the personal libraries of notable figures like Aron Gurwitsch, Stephan Strasser, Erwin Strauss, and Andre Schuwer. Not far from me is an archive of Husserl's papers. Before me sits a stack of books, some of which are the kind of introductory texts that a newcomer to phenomenology would check out in order to answer for themselves the question 'What is phenomenology?' Others are handbooks for conducting phenomenological research, written for readers outside of philosophy, mostly in the social sciences. My intention is to open these books as if I were a novice, as if I were someone who has not studied, discussed, written about, and reflected on the meaning and purpose of phenomenology. As if I could set aside what I already judge the meaning of phenomenology

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to be. I want to know what phenomenology is, and I want to know what it would mean to practice phenomenology, were I to consider using it as a method of research or were I to risk becoming a phenomenologist. It is assumed that phenomenologists have existed, that books of phenomenology have been written, and that it is still possible to become a phenomenologist today. Everyone accepts Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty as phenomenologists. *Cartesian Meditations*, *Being and Time*, *Being and Nothingness*, and *Phenomenology of Perception* are undisputable canonical works of phenomenology. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is not, but it is not clear why. Today almost no one would deny that Jean-Luc Marion, Edward Casey, Françoise Dastur, Havi Carel, Dan Zahavi, and Shaun Gallagher produce works of phenomenology.

So, what makes all of these books and all of these thinkers (among so many others) 'phenomenological'? To be sure, the term is sometimes used casually as a synonym for first-person testimony. Let us put that aside, however. What does it take to become a phenomenologist, to practice phenomenology, and to write a work of phenomenology? What qualifies a philosopher's ideas as phenomenological? This is what I hope to learn from the stack of books that sits in front of me today. I will present some of my findings here in this chapter, but I must first confess that my inquiry is motivated by a kind of Socratic sympathy. Which is to say, I do not intend to approach the books before me as someone who is actually naive about the meaning of phenomenology, for that would be disingenuous and impossible, but as someone who believes that to answer the question 'What is phenomenology?' it is necessary to do more than simply recommend some canonical works of phenomenology or some canonical phenomenologists. This would not only beg the question at hand, it would leave unresolved the question of phenomenology's essential features and the guidelines for aspiring practitioners. One must give a definition that coheres with the definitions given by others and that captures what is distinctive about phenomenology as a philosophical and methodological approach. These may seem like outdated theoretical worries, but I suggest that they are more than this: they point to inadequacies that bear directly on the integrity of the practice of phenomenology, which many disciplines outside of philosophy regard as a viable method of qualitative research.

A second confession: I do not intend to survey the totality of introductions to phenomenology currently on offer. There are quite a few and hopefully my sample is representative of the discrepancies between them. My primary aim is to isolate two tendencies of these introductions, which are (1) to give a negative presentation of phenomenology (to present it in terms of what it is *not*) and (2) to present phenomenology not as a unified method of inquiry, but as what Wittgenstein calls a 'family resemblance' term. The latter tendency casts phenomenology not as a singular project with a well-defined program, but as a loose plurality of perspectives that lend themselves to a similarly plural methodology. This is a problem, I suggest, because methods are supposed to constrain the bounds of inquiry, relatively speaking, not expand them. Otherwise, what is their purpose?

Where phenomenology is concerned, it is the lack of agreement at the definitional level that encourages the proliferation of approaches to phenomenological inquiry. Some interpreters do not see this lack of agreement as a problem, since, they argue, phenomenology's methodological pluralism is one of its chief virtues. What I see as a lack of coherence, they might say, is merely symptomatic of my outdated Socratic sympathy, which blinds me to the fact that phenomenology is a family of perspectives united by a fuzzy consistency, not some conservative philosophy with a fixed essence and rigid methodological strictures. It is not incoherent, it is anti-essentialist, they might say.

In what follows I will argue that this pluralistic, even pragmatic, presentation of phenomenology raises two important questions. First, can we give a nonarbitrary account of phenomenology without begging the question? In other words, can we identify what it takes to conduct phenomenological research without assuming that phenomenological research is just whatever Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and all the other self-identified phenomenologists are doing? Second, if there is so much inconsistency about what phenomenology is at the theoretical level, can it really present itself as a reliable research method, one with stable, well-grounded principles and guidelines for its practitioners? Given the uncertainty surrounding the first question, I am skeptical about answering the second in the affirmative. The implication here is that phenomenological researchers cannot know if their method yields



reliable, objective results because the very ground of the method is so disputed. If we regard phenomenology as a family resemblance term, it will not have the coherence necessary for prescribing methodological principles that researchers can put confidently into practice. We will find ourselves calling many practices 'phenomenological', but, as with games, each of these phenomenologies will have its own unique set of rules. And we will be left asking what is phenomenological about these practices, and wondering if any of them are more faithful to phenomenology than the others.

Let us turn with naive eyes, as it were, to some of the introductory books sitting before me in order to get a sense of their diversity. What is phenomenology and what does it take to practice it? The first book I pick up is Shaun Gallagher's *Phenomenology*, which offers readers a mix of historical background and discussions of phenomenology's contemporary relevance, especially for researchers in cognitive science, psychology, and embodied cognition theory.<sup>1</sup> Gallagher begins much as I am beginning here, giving a brief catalogue of the several definitions of phenomenology, before settling on his own. It is important first to note that phenomenology takes a first-person perspective, he says, but it is not an 'introspectionist' psychology that attempts to give an account of one's mental states. It is instead concerned with observing *consciousness*, which is our 'window' onto reality. It is only by first studying consciousness, which is our only means of observing reality, that we can begin to understand that which lies 'outside' of consciousness.<sup>2</sup> This is what phenomenology does.

To get at consciousness, it is necessary to clear away our theoretical prejudices, both scientific and metaphysical. This is part of the method of bracketing, originally advocated by Husserl. It seems necessary for entering the phenomenological attitude, although not all phenomenologists insist on it or admit to its possibility.<sup>3</sup> Once our theoretical prejudices are bracketed, we can assume what Husserl calls the 'transcendental attitude'. This involves turning one's attention to consciousness, specifically the way in which consciousness structures reality.<sup>4</sup> These are, for Husserl anyway, the first couple of steps in the phenomenological method. Indeed, as Gallagher points out, phenomenology is certainly a method for Husserl. More precisely, it is a method that is transcendental

after the manner of Kant. But already with Heidegger this understanding of phenomenology is complicated. 'More generally,' writes Gallagher, 'as different people engage in doing phenomenology, phenomenology itself undergoes some change.'<sup>5</sup> So, phenomenology is first presented by Husserl as a method with at least two clearly defined steps toward uncovering its object of study—consciousness and how it structures reality—but this definition is quickly contested by Husserl's most famous student, Heidegger. For his part, Gallagher largely abandons the quest to define phenomenology and suggests instead that phenomenology might be best understood as a plurality of views before giving us his history of phenomenology and its concepts.

David Detmer's *Phenomenology Explained* does not shy away from providing an explicit definition of phenomenology:

Phenomenology is the study of the essential structures of experience. It seeks to describe the objects of experience and the acts of consciousness (for example, thinking, perceiving, imagining, doubting, questioning, loving, hating, etc.) by and through which these objects are disclosed. Its aim is to focus on the world as given in experience, and to describe it with unprecedented care, rigor, subtlety, and completeness.<sup>6</sup>

Like Gallagher, Detmer agrees that phenomenology studies consciousness. He adds, however, that it is also the study of *experience* and the *objects of experience*. Granted, from the phenomenological perspective, which does not recognize a fundamental divide between consciousness and object, the study of consciousness just is the study of consciousness *and* the object of consciousness as a unit. This derives from the doctrine of intentionality. Perhaps this is what Detmer means when he says that phenomenology studies experience. But then why would he say that it is the study of the 'structures of experience' and the 'objects of experience'? It would seem then that phenomenology has at least three proper objects of study: the structures of experience, the objects of experience, and acts of consciousness. While this definition of phenomenology may apply nicely to Husserl, which makes sense given that nearly all of Detmer's introduction to phenomenology is devoted exclusively to Husserlian phenomenology, it already does not

aply describe the project of Heidegger, who is mostly unconcerned with consciousness and its acts, or the work of Merleau-Ponty, who prefers to investigate perception instead of consciousness.<sup>7</sup>

According to Detmer, phenomenology explores consciousness because it is the kind of thing that ‘cannot be studied by the methods of science’.<sup>8</sup> Presumably this is because consciousness is not an empirical phenomenon. Nevertheless, phenomenology ‘insist[s] on a scientific attitude—the idea that claims should be backed by a rigorous appeal to scientific evidence’.<sup>9</sup> Phenomenology, then, purports to be a science. It is not merely a subjective report; it has loftier aspirations. And, like other sciences, it is guided by a method. If the scientific method, as typically construed, intends to determine what counts as legitimate and illegitimate evidence about the natural world, its processes, and its laws, then it is safe to assume that phenomenology, insofar as it is scientific, entails certain methodological guidelines. These guidelines will ensure that genuine phenomenological investigations achieve the ‘unprecedented care, rigor, subtlety, and completeness’ that phenomenology aspires toward. What else could guarantee these ideals?

Detmer is very clear about the aims of phenomenology. He identifies seven of them, the most ambitious of which is to ‘serve as foundation of all specific sciences’.<sup>10</sup> So we see that phenomenology does not merely assume a scientific attitude, its goal is to *ground* all other sciences. In this respect it is a foundational science, at least in its Husserlian form.<sup>11</sup> This is another way of construing its transcendental character. How is this grounding achieved? Husserl presented answers to this question, and a variety of methodological clues, but famously he was never satisfied and did not bequeath to his followers the rigorous science of phenomenology that he once envisioned. And, moreover, many of his descendants, particularly the most influential, never tried seriously to complete this science because they did not regard phenomenology as a science, but more as a method (loosely understood) or ‘style’ of philosophy, in Merleau-Ponty’s formulation.<sup>12</sup> So, what Detmer gives us is for the most part an explanation of one person’s version of phenomenology, Husserl’s, and little account of how this phenomenology is practiced in the field. We are left with some clear ideas about what phenomenology wants to achieve, but not how exactly to achieve it.

Some introductions to phenomenology, like Michael Lewis and Tanja Staehler's *Phenomenology: An Introduction*, present phenomenology as the study of phenomena. 'What is phenomenology?' they ask. 'Phenomenology is, literally, a "science of the phenomenon," but not "phenomenon" in the usual sense of a brief, dazzling coruscation.'<sup>13</sup> Phenomenology studies *appearances*. It does not study objects, which is what metaphysics does, but the ways that objects manifest themselves. Lewis and Staehler concur with Detmer that phenomenology is committed to compiling complete descriptions of any and all phenomena as they are given, but they add that it is also charged with unpacking, at a more fundamental level, the very structure of 'appearance as such'.<sup>14</sup> If phenomenology can get at the 'how' of appearance on top of the 'what', then it will have achieved a level of certainty or truth about appearance, something more than subjective reportage. In principle, phenomenology is the science of appearances.<sup>15</sup>

Daniel Cerbone's *Understanding Phenomenology* opens by asserting that phenomenology has a 'generally agreed upon set of central figures' and a 'relatively well-defined history, commencing at the start of the twentieth century'.<sup>16</sup> This is intriguing because other texts, like Dermot Moran's *Introduction to Phenomenology*, begin their history of phenomenology with Brentano, specifically his 1874 *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* and his doctrine of intentionality. Beginning the history of phenomenology in the twentieth century, as Cerbone recommends, also excludes Hegel, who of course wrote a book with phenomenology in the title, as well as Kant and Nietzsche, who are sometimes cited as important forerunners of phenomenology and sometimes as phenomenologists themselves. In short, the history of phenomenology and its central figures seems more contested than well-defined. That said, there is a relatively consistent set of thinkers most often cited as canonical, including Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Marion, Henry, Stein, and many others. But why these thinkers? Because they identify as phenomenologists? That cannot be enough to be canonized. It must be something about their work that gains them inclusion in the canon. But what is it?

For his part, Cerbone identifies some aspects of phenomenology that might help us understand what the canonical figures are engaged in. First, phenomenologists attend to the 'character' and 'structure' of experi-

ences, not their causes, which is what natural science does. Put differently, phenomenology uncovers the 'essential structures of experience' in a way that is opposed to naturalism. These structures are what allow appearances to appear, and to that extent they are transcendental.<sup>17</sup> Second, phenomenology sees intentionality as central to consciousness, and therefore central to the study of experience. Third, as Gallagher also notes, it is not a form of introspection, although it operates in the first-personal mode.<sup>18</sup> On this interpretation it is easy to see how phenomenological explanations of appearances differ from scientific/causal explanations, but it is not clear how phenomenology differs from, for example, Kantianism. Indeed, it encourages us to include Kant within the phenomenological corpus, not just as a marginal figure, but as canonical. This does not square with Cerbone's narrative, however, and it leaves us wondering what is distinctive about twentieth-century phenomenology.

Finally, here is Robert Sokolowski's popular *Introduction to Phenomenology*.<sup>19</sup> Sokolowski's book is unique in that he introduces phenomenology by plunging the reader into its technical vocabulary, which encourages the reader to adopt the language of phenomenology while she learns how to conduct phenomenological analyses. Like Detmer, however, Sokolowski's is primarily an introduction to Husserlian phenomenology, so it does not adequately describe the practices of the many others who fly the flag of phenomenology. Sokolowski's definition runs like this: 'Phenomenology is the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experiences. It attempts to restore the sense of philosophy one finds in Plato.'<sup>20</sup> Sokolowski is not the only one to identify the study of experience and the *manifestation* of things as the proper focus of phenomenology. Consciousness, however, is conspicuously absent from his definition, while Plato is conspicuously present. What Sokolowski means to signal with Plato's name is the way in which phenomenology strives after the *truth* of things, otherwise referred to as the *essence* of things. This is not a term we came across in the other texts so far surveyed. It once again aligns phenomenology with foundationalism and the quest for certainty, if not a certain kind of objectivity. In any case, Sokolowski asserts that phenomenology aims to get at the whole (essence) of things behind their parts, or what is called their adumbrations or profiles.<sup>21</sup>

At the center of phenomenological study is what Sokolowski calls the 'problem of appearances'. This problem is generated because phenomenology, writes Sokolowski, 'insists that identity and intelligibility are available in things, and that we ourselves are defined as the ones to whom such identities and intelligibilities are given'.<sup>22</sup> He thus situates phenomenology in the tradition of what Quentin Meillassoux calls *correlationism* and tethers phenomenology to the Platonic-Hegelian faith in the rationality of the real.<sup>23</sup> The problem of appearances is the problem of how to *apply* the phenomenological method in such a way that it is capable of intuiting or otherwise adducing the truth of things, their essence, or the elusive 'things themselves'. Phenomenology is often ridiculed for believing that it can get at the essence of things, or for believing that things even have an essence. This is the kernel of the anti-foundationalist critique of phenomenology, leveled by Derrida and others.

Phenomenology, however, is not a unified project. Neither is Husserlian phenomenology. Any critique of phenomenology or of Husserl must assume that there exists a singular thing such as phenomenology itself or Husserlian phenomenology. Their existence, however, is what we have yet to establish. The problem with Sokolowski's introduction is, therefore, that it presents phenomenology as a well-defined position with clearly defined commitments and aspirations. But phenomenology as such does not 'insist' on anything, especially not that things have essences that only humans can intuit, for it is not a unified thing that can be isolated and interrogated. Given its protean identity, it may not be anything at all.

As J.N. Mohanty notes, Husserl may have begun his career with a 'program of describing essences', but he then became concerned with the 'meanings' of 'words and sentences' and 'of experiences, of perceptions, beliefs, hopes and desires, *in fine*, of intentional acts'.<sup>24</sup> Here we have two oft-cited preoccupations of phenomenology that we have not yet encountered in our survey of introductions: *meanings* and *intentional acts*. Are not all phenomenologists in search of the truth about these two things? Perhaps. Mohanty concludes that *noesis* and *noema*, the act of meaning in consciousness, are the 'proper theme for phenomenological investigation'.<sup>25</sup> This is what shifts phenomenology to the transcendental dimension, as Sokolowski also notes. It is what makes phenomenology more than 'empirical ethnology', according to Mohanty.

Phenomenology must, he says, ‘uncover the essential structures of the lifeworld’, or else it is only dealing with the mere contingencies of appearance, not their deepest truth.<sup>26</sup> ‘Phenomenology’, after all, ‘is the science that studies truth’.<sup>27</sup> Once again we must ask: What about those phenomenologists who do not speak of *noesis* and *noema*, who all but reject the technical discursive apparatus of Husserlian phenomenology? Must they give up on its transcendental conceit? Do they not give up precisely on what is distinctive about phenomenology? And, perhaps most importantly, if a phenomenologist does remain committed to the quest for the truth of things, *how* should this quest be conducted in order to gather reliable evidence? What is the proper method of phenomenology?

Depending on which introduction to phenomenology the newcomer gets her hands on, she may come away from it thinking that the proper object of phenomenology is consciousness or experience or the objects of experience or appearances or the structure of appearance or essences or meanings or truth or *noesis* and *noema*. Perhaps it is all of these things, although almost no phenomenologist is interested in all of them and many nonphenomenologists study these things, too. So what makes phenomenology different if it is not its subject matter? It seems to be something about the way its subject matter is approached, but precisely this is left ambiguous. D.W. Smith, for instance, cites no fewer than five methods of phenomenology, some of which are classical and others contemporary.<sup>28</sup> In short, there seems to be little agreement about what phenomenology is ultimately trying to accomplish and, consequently, what it takes to accomplish it.<sup>29</sup>

Some proponents of phenomenology do not see the lack of agreement about discipline and method as a problem. They, perhaps ironically, eschew my Socratic worry about the definition of phenomenology, about getting at the whole behind the parts or extracting the essence of phenomenology from all of its adumbrations, as it were. Does not phenomenology itself promise us the means to define phenomenology, among every other phenomenon? Since no such definition is forthcoming, and yet there seems to be at least a vague coherence to the plurality of views that are called phenomenological, perhaps it is best just to accept that phenomenology is a family resemblance term. This is the tactic deployed by François-David

Sebbah in *Testing the Limit* and, following Sebbah, J. Aaron Simmons and Bruce Ellis Benson in *The New Phenomenology*.<sup>30</sup>

In *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein famously concludes that there is no essence of, or necessary conditions for, a game. There are many types of games, but not all of them share the same features. Nor should we expect them to or despair when we cannot discern them. Despite their variability we nevertheless refer to all of them as games and get along perfectly fine doing so. Wittgenstein's solution to the problem of defining 'game' is a pragmatic one. He explains in the following words:

Consider for example the proceedings that we call "games". I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all? Don't say: "There *must* be something common, or they would not be called 'games'"—but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all.—For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that.<sup>31</sup>

These similarities are what Wittgenstein calls 'family resemblances'.<sup>32</sup> Just as members of a family do not all share common features, but typically bear certain similarities, 'sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail' that place them squarely in the family, so are games 'a complicated network of similarities, overlapping and criss-crossing'.<sup>33</sup> This model does not really resolve the problem of definition, but rather *dissolves* it. Whether or not the dissolution is satisfying depends on one's philosophical temperament and the degree to which one is sympathetic to Socratic generalities.

Sebbah, Simmons, and Benson find Wittgenstein's pragmatic resolution perfect for characterizing the nature of phenomenology, particularly the 'new phenomenology' that links diverse figures like Husserl, Heidegger, Derrida, Henry, Levinas, Marion, Chrétien, Lacoste, and Ricoeur. The discrepancy between Husserl and Heidegger is well documented, as is Derrida's deconstructive critique of phenomenology. Nevertheless, argue Simmons and Benson, we can see all of these figures as united *not* by a common method or doctrine, but by an imprecise 'collection of ideas, themes, and theoretical resonances'.<sup>34</sup> While the new



phenomenology is born in the classical phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger, much like a child it has its own aspirations and resources for examining the given. But, note Simmons and Benson, there is ‘no easily articulable claim upon which [new phenomenologists] will all agree’ and there is ‘not a rigid designator of a stable philosophical perspective’ that applies to each member of this family.<sup>35</sup> There is an ‘underlying connection and set of commitments’, including the commitment to work out ‘what phenomenology itself requires, assumes, and supposes’, while each member of the family bears a degree of resemblance to phenomenology’s ‘fragile center’.<sup>36</sup> It may be the case that phenomenology has no center or that the center cannot be worked out—that it is a mirage. If the center does not hold, how can anyone actually practice phenomenology? If no one yet knows what it requires, assumes, and supposes, how can it offer itself as a grounded, practicable philosophical approach to truth?

Simmons and Benson claim that phenomenology, like pragmatism, is a ‘living philosophy’, which is a fair enough claim. But unlike pragmatism, which is founded upon the rejection of essences and certainties, phenomenology is often said to endorse these ideals. It seems fair, then, to seek them out in our task of understanding what phenomenology is and what it aims to accomplish, not just for the sake of knowledge, but because there appears to be something more at stake, and not only for the number of new phenomenologists who have adopted phenomenology as a means of getting at such difficult notions as the divine, Justice, the Other, and the Call.

Researchers outside of philosophy, as well as within, look to phenomenology as a method, which can be understood, following Descartes, as ‘reliable rules which are easy to apply, and such that if one follows them exactly, one will never take what is false to be true or fruitlessly expend one’s mental efforts, but will gradually and constantly increase one’s knowledge till one arrives at a true understanding of everything within one’s capacity’.<sup>37</sup> If researchers are going to adopt phenomenology as a method, then it becomes imperative that (1) phenomenologists work out what phenomenology ‘requires, assumes, and supposes’, and that (2) a reliable, nonarbitrary set of rules is articulated for the sake of research.

Isolating the essential features of games or members of a family is a relatively low-stakes affair. Moreover, no one really assumes that families

have essences or perfectly general definitions, so resemblance seems the only way to characterize the commonality of, say, the Smiths or Jacksons or Joneses. By contrast, articulating the rules of a research method, so that the scientific community can evaluate its application and the results of research, is a higher-stakes affair. It is difficult, if not impossible, to judge the integrity of research if the very foundation of the research method is not only perpetually in question, but also never established by any kind of consensus. This foundation and its principles must be worked out ahead of time, even if it is admitted that the application of the method itself will have to adapt immanently to the theme of the research (whether meaning, essence, consciousness, structure of appearance, analytic description of intentionality in its a priori state, or what have you).<sup>38</sup>

Given what we have seen so far, this seems to be the state of phenomenology as a discipline and as a method. Part of the problem with regarding phenomenology as a family resemblance term is that it takes for granted that there is something called phenomenology, even though it has no shared 'set of beliefs' and does not prescribe any precise rules for practice.<sup>39</sup> It also assumes that there are phenomenologists who actually practice phenomenology. But why is this? Given the diverse interpretations of what phenomenology is, and the lack of definitive guidance about how to conduct phenomenological research, we cannot simply take someone's word for it when they claim to be a practicing phenomenologist. The proof must be in the practice. What happens, however, once we commit to the view that phenomenology is a family resemblance term and that phenomenology is simply a style of thinking or 'shared trajectory', or that the 'intrinsic haziness of the "family" frontier means that this frontier can be refigured relative to the specific stakes of one or another moment of reflection', is that the domain of phenomenology begins to expand to the point that the moniker becomes meaningless.<sup>40</sup> All of a sudden, many unexpected figures become phenomenologists.<sup>41</sup>

Potential future researchers need to know what is legitimately considered phenomenology and, more importantly, how to apply the method that is said to characterize it. This means that it cannot be cobbled together ad hoc by looking at what self-identified phenomenologists are up to in their work. As liberating as it sounds, the integrity of phenomenological method, if it aspires to be scientific, cannot be left to

evolve indefinitely as a 'network never integrally formalizable', as Sebbah puts it.<sup>42</sup> It is possible, I suppose, just to decide to follow the lead of one particular phenomenologist or one of the several kinds of phenomenological method. Many research handbooks take this path, often choosing to follow Husserl. Of the five methods cited by D.W. Smith not all are Husserlian in origin.<sup>43</sup> Mark D. Vagle catalogues a plethora of methodological approaches to phenomenology, including descriptive, interpretive (hermeneutic), heuristic, lifeworld, interpretive phenomenological analysis, critical narrative, and relational.<sup>44</sup> Setting aside the fact that Husserl himself never settled on a fixed set of principles and rules for applying phenomenology, which makes his methodological paternity at least ambiguous, what justification can be given for choosing one of these methods over another, other than the fact that each of them shares a shifting theoretical foundation? This is an important practical question.

The contested familial terrain of phenomenology has not resulted in a more rigorous, scientific methodology, but in its opposite: a proliferation of the meaning, purpose, and practice of phenomenology. It is not clear if this is an evolution of phenomenology in the Husserlian spirit or the establishment of many independent outposts, some of which claim Husserl as their progenitor while others do not. Moran, following Merleau-Ponty and anticipating Simmons and Benson, warns that we should not exaggerate the coherence of phenomenology as a method, but take it on as a radical style of philosophy. Would this require us to give up on phenomenology's scientific promise for the sake of its aesthetic potential?

Even after considering the handful of introductions that sit before me, I am left with a number of open questions. So I am surprised when I delve into the adjacent stack of handbooks for social science researchers, which present a host of concrete, step-by-step approaches to conducting phenomenological research. The diversity in their presentation of phenomenology parallels and ramifies what I find in the introductory texts. Mark D. Vagle says that phenomenology is an encounter, a craft, and a way of living.<sup>45</sup> Another text says that phenomenology is a 'philosophical approach to the study of experience'—not the structure of experience, but what experience 'is like'.<sup>46</sup> A third text insists that phenomenology must unearth structures of experience, or else it is no different than ethnography, grounded research, hermeneutics, and other qualitative research

methods. This squares with Mohanty's view. Essential to phenomenology, it claims, is the *epoché*, which is the maneuver that enters the phenomenologist into the transcendental mode, while intuition and imagination enable the researcher to discover the universal structures of experience she seeks.<sup>47</sup> A fourth handbook follows the lead of Amadeo Giorgi, an influential American psychologist and developer of the Husserl- and Merleau-Ponty-inspired, yet empirical, 'descriptive phenomenological method' in psychology. The handbook presents phenomenology as an 'ontologically revolutionary' method that 'accepts existence of things outside the mind that thinks about them'.<sup>48</sup> This acceptance seems to violate one of the rules we covered earlier, namely, that theoretical commitments (like the commitment to mind-independent things) must be put aside by the practicing phenomenologist. Nevertheless, we are told, getting at the truth of these things involves four key steps: description, reduction, search for essences, and intentionality.<sup>49</sup> It is not uncommon, of course, to find these handbooks prescribing determinate steps such as those prescribed by Giorgi. Indeed, that is their purpose. It is important to remain mindful, however, of the justification for these prescriptions and to take stock of the kinds of things they are and are not committed to: extramental objects, essences, structures of experience, meanings, meaning units, truth, *noesis* and *noema*, consciousness, the psychological attitude, the phenomenological attitude, intuitive seeing, and so forth.

I am not trying to suggest that phenomenology and phenomenological method are strictly incoherent or contradictory, only that there is a lot of tension and variety in the many ways that phenomenology and its practice are presented. There is no agreement about what precisely phenomenology is trying to illuminate, although universal structures of particular experiences and/or appearances, even appearance as such, seem like a good contender.<sup>50</sup> This does not resolve the crucial question of how, exactly, a phenomenological researcher goes about revealing these universal structures and, furthermore, how she goes about verifying that the structures are indeed universal. Many commentators agree that phenomenology can ground the empirical research of the human sciences. To do so, however, it needs coherence, consistency, and some degree of scientific rigor. It seems to me that phenomenology must become a more exclusive (scientific) community. If phenomenology is a

transcendental discipline, then it must do more than describe empirical properties, details, and statistics. It must devise a way to intuit or extract the meaning of phenomena. It will aim at generality. Not the kind of generality that is arrived at by inductive inference, but by examining the parts to get at the whole.

Of course, I have not here delved into the minutiae of phenomenological theory or its possible metaphysics. My purpose has been to consider how newcomers are introduced to phenomenology and, more specifically, how researchers outside of philosophy come to understand the practice of phenomenological method. If there is any plausibility to my claim that newcomers find themselves unwittingly in the middle of a contested, problematic, and highly ambiguous terrain, then the future of phenomenology requires some consolidation and clarification. It must, if possible, eliminate some of the ambiguity surrounding its definition and self-understanding. This will involve working out what phenomenology actually is as a philosophy; what are its metaphysical and methodological commitments; and determining who has actually written a work of phenomenology. To write a work of phenomenology, it is not enough to have studied under Husserl, worked alongside him, or written an early monograph or dissertation on him. Practicing phenomenology requires more, it seems to me, than identifying oneself as a phenomenologist or playing the 'strange game of sacralizing the reference to Husserl'.<sup>51</sup> When phenomenology is interpreted as a family resemblance term, its methodological integrity is rendered as vulnerable as its definition. Admittedly, it takes a Socratic sympathy to see this vulnerability as a problem that might be overcome instead of simply dissolved.

## Notes

1. Shaun Gallagher, *Phenomenology* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012). A more recent introduction that follows the lead of Gallagher, and seems to mark a trend in that it introduces phenomenology primarily with respect to its relevance to contemporary research in cognitive science, psychology, and philosophy of mind is Stephan Kaufer and Anthony Chemero, *Phenomenology: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015).

2. Gallagher, *Phenomenology*, pp. 7–9.
3. Merleau-Ponty famously denies it in the preface to *Phenomenology of Perception*.
4. Gallagher, *Phenomenology*, pp. 8–9.
5. Gallagher, *Phenomenology*, p. 10.
6. David Detmer, *Phenomenology Explained: From Experience to Insight* (Chicago: Open Court, 2013), p. 1.
7. As Charles Scott pointed out some decades ago, the term 'consciousness' does not even appear in *Being and Time*, but we can interpret the central Heideggerian concepts of 'understanding' and 'worldhood' as replacements for Husserl's 'consciousness'. See Charles Scott, 'Heidegger and Consciousness,' *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 4 (1970): 355–372.
8. Detmer, *Phenomenology Explained*, p. 6.
9. Detmer, *Phenomenology Explained*, p. 11.
10. Detmer, *Phenomenology Explained*, p. 22. For the list of seven aims, see pp. 18–22.
11. As Lyotard makes clear, it is Husserl's task, in the wake of crisis, to revalidate the ground of the human sciences in particular. See Jean-François Lyotard, *Phenomenology*, trans. Brian Beakley (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991).
12. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 1962), viii. On the history of phenomenology as the history of 'deviations from Husserl' and on the diversity of philosophers who 'identified' as phenomenologists, see Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 2–3.
13. Michael Lewis and Tanja Staehler, *Phenomenology: An Introduction* (London: Continuum, 2010), p. 1.
14. Lewis and Staehler, *Phenomenology: An Introduction*, pp. 1–2.
15. Lewis and Staehler, *Phenomenology: An Introduction*, p. 7.
16. Daniel Cerbone, *Understanding Phenomenology* (Stocksfield: Acumen, 2006), p. 1.
17. Cerbone, *Understanding Phenomenology*, pp. 4–5. If phenomenology is opposed to naturalism, then it must be asked how phenomenology can be naturalized, as some philosophers are attempting today. Perhaps it is only transcendental phenomenology that opposes naturalism, which means that there is a non-transcendental (empirical) form of phenomenology. Empirical phenomenology, however, sounds a bit too much like ethnography or the 'thick description' of Clifford Geertz.
18. Cerbone, *Understanding Phenomenology*, p. 4.

19. Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
20. Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p. 2.
21. Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, pp. 3–4. Moran, incidentally, also regards phenomenology as after the ‘truth of matters’, but he does not align it with Plato; instead he labels it a ‘radical, anti-traditional style of philosophising’ (*Introduction to Phenomenology*, p. 4).
22. Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p. 4.
23. Sokolowski says that ‘phenomenology is precisely this sort of understanding: *phenomenology is reason’s self-discovery in the presence of intelligible*’ (*Introduction to Phenomenology*, p. 4).
24. J.N. Mohanty, *Phenomenology: Between Essentialism and Transcendental Philosophy* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1997), p. 1.
25. Mohanty, *Phenomenology*, p. 2.
26. Mohanty, *Phenomenology*, p. 2.
27. Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p. 185.
28. D.W. Smith, ‘Phenomenology,’ *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/#2> Accessed July 4, 2015.
29. No doubt some of the ambiguity surrounding the identity of phenomenology is manufactured by the market demand for introductions and guidebooks for phenomenology. Nearly every academic publisher has one on the market because they sell copies, so authors are under some pressure to distinguish their respective volume from the rest of the pack. Naturally, they need to present a different spin on phenomenology in order to justify their existence on a shelf full of similar titles.
30. Francois-David Sebbah, *Testing the Limit: Derrida, Henry, Levinas, and the Phenomenological Tradition*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012). J. Aaron Simmons and Bruce Ellis Benson, *The New Phenomenology: A Philosophical Introduction* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).
31. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, third edition, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1958), §66.
32. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §67.
33. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §66.
34. Simmons and Benson, *The New Phenomenology*, pp. 1–2.
35. Simmons and Benson, *The New Phenomenology*, p. 4.
36. Simmons and Benson, *The New Phenomenology*, p. 4.
37. René Descartes, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 1, trans. John Cottingham et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 371.

38. See Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, trans. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), §§8–9, §11.
39. Simmons and Benson, *The New Phenomenology*, p. 6.
40. Simmons and Benson, *The New Phenomenology*, p. 6; Sebbah, *Testing the Limit*, p. 7.
41. For elaboration on this point, see Tom Sparrow, *The End of Phenomenology: Metaphysics and the New Realism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 5.
42. Sebbah, *Testing the Limit*, p. 7.
43. Smith, 'Phenomenology,' *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
44. Mark D. Vagle, *Crafting Phenomenological Research* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2014), p. 50.
45. Vagle, *Crafting Phenomenological Research*, pp. 11–12.
46. Jonathan A. Smith, Paul Flowers, and Michael Larkin, *Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009), p. 11.
47. Clark Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994), p. 22.
48. *Phenomenology and Human Science Research Today*, eds. Tarozzi Massimiliana and Luigiana Mortari (Bucharest: Zeta Books, 2010), p. 16. For more on the descriptive phenomenological method and its commitment to the possibility of a reduction to the 'psychological attitude' and the existence of 'invariant psychological meanings' (but not essences), see Vagle, *Crafting Phenomenological Research*, pp. 52–6. Also see Amadeo Giorgi, 'Sketch of a Psychological Phenomenological Method,' in *Phenomenology and Psychological Research*, ed. Amadeo Giorgi (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985). Giorgi is here reluctant to say how one assumes the 'psychological attitude', but he assures readers that it can be practiced in training (p. 12).
49. Massimiliana and Mortari, *Phenomenology and Human Science Research Today*, p. 11.
50. See, for example, Renaud Barbaras, *The Being of the Phenomenon: Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, trans. Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004) and the various discussions of the meaning of 'phenomenon' in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, *History of the Concept of Time*, and elsewhere.
51. Dominique Janicaud, *The Theological Turn of French Phenomenology*, trans. Bernard G. Prusak, in Janicaud et al., *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn": The French Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 21.



# 17

## The Slow Death of Phenomenology

Paul J. Ennis

### Phenomenology and Evidence

In this chapter I will first interrogate phenomenology in its most generic Husserlian form and take it to represent the culmination of Immanuel Kant's distinction between the phenomena and noumena in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.<sup>1</sup> Kant informs us that 'we can cognize of things a priori only what we have put ourselves into them'.<sup>2</sup> In this regard phenomenology is read as a form of transcendental idealism committed to the thesis of cognitive mediation of the post-Kantian tradition. To borrow from Lee Braver what Kant holds is that cognition 'actively organizes experience' and this, I hold, is true for phenomenology in its generic form.<sup>3</sup> Consider the epoché in its simplest form as developed by Edmund Husserl: I suspend the question of the existence of the world, as found in the natural attitude, in order to see it in a new way, but never in itself.<sup>4</sup>

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This is a ‘monism of the phenomenon’ plain and simple.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps even a ‘formidable idealism’.<sup>6</sup> None of this is especially surprising and each phenomenologist knows what they are getting into: broadly construed investigations concerning the appearance of the world to consciousness. The lesson we can draw from the epoché is that if the existence of the world can be doubted, as each of us in our own Cartesian encounter knows, then it is not fit as a philosophical foundation. This is a search for evidence and I will contend it is outdated, but first let us examine the nature of the original phenomenological project.

Let us begin, then, with Husserl’s respect for how the Cartesian project, which later evolves into a Kantian one, of a complete philosophical ground led to a turn ‘toward the subject himself’.<sup>7</sup> What cannot be doubted, as is well known, is that one is experiencing—no matter the nature of that experience since the *ego cogito* is all that has ‘absolutely indubitable existence’.<sup>8</sup> As such, René Descartes is credited with inaugurating ‘an entirely new kind of philosophy’ termed ‘transcendental subjectivism’.<sup>9</sup> From here it might then be possible to build upon this one piece of indubitable knowledge available to us that, considering Husserl’s general motivations, acts as a bulwark against ‘the lack of scientific genuineness’ that Husserl saw as operative in his times.<sup>10</sup> Husserl is led, albeit cautiously, to a ‘*first methodological principle*’ wherein one must not ‘go on accepting any judgement as scientific *that I have not derived from evidence*, from “experiences”’.<sup>11</sup> This is, in essence, to regress, meant here positively, to the most prior form of ‘evidences’.<sup>12</sup> This is where phenomenology will aim: to discover what is apodictic, indubitable, what can be said to be ‘first in themselves’.<sup>13</sup> There is an inverse exclusion here as Husserl warns us elsewhere: ‘Cognition is, after all, only human cognition, bound up with human intellectual forms, and unfit to reach the very nature of things, to reach the things in themselves.’<sup>14</sup> This is because, as Sparrow notes, one of the ‘minimal conditions’ of phenomenology is the suspension of the natural attitude and this entails a refusal to accept the existence, and hence, accessibility, of a mind-independent reality.<sup>15</sup>

What, then, constitutes the nature of things for us according to the Husserlian schematic? What is clear is that Husserl insists we remain within the ‘universe of “phenomena”’.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, what exists in this realm of ‘transcendental being’, prior to the natural world, is the

*ego cogito* (or transcendental ego) and her *cogitationes*.<sup>17</sup> Found in this realm is the wealth of 'transcendental experience'.<sup>18</sup> This is by no means a static realm and our encounter with the field of the transcendental realm, in its first stage, involves a '*simple devotion to the evidence inherent in the harmonious flow of such experience*'.<sup>19</sup> The second stage, involving the '*criticism of transcendental experience*' must be deferred until apodictic certainty is secured concerning the evidence found in the first.<sup>20</sup> The decisive shift from Descartes occurs when Husserl, with the epoché remaining in place, insists that we remain within the stream of the *ego cogito* and the *cogitationes* or, let us say it more directly, the ego and her experiences.<sup>21</sup> One must note that Husserl is at pains here to stress that '*psychological descriptions*' cannot be read a priori in the sense that transcendental phenomenology can.<sup>22</sup> Embedded in the not yet indubitable world of the natural sciences we cannot mistake the evidence found in psychology as properly philosophical, and this is a position to be sharply contested later in this chapter.

Now, to the membership of the *cogito* and the *cogitationes* we add the *cogitatum*, corresponding to what is '*meant*'.<sup>23</sup> The *cogito* and its stream of *cogitationes* include the property of intentionality: '[E]very conscious process is, in itself, consciousness of such and such.'<sup>24</sup> Here we begin to see a slide toward a form of meta-meta-reflection. Husserl is keen to distinguish '*transcendental-phenomenological reflection*' from 'natural reflection'.<sup>25</sup> In natural reflection we are interested parties in the non-bracketed world, but in transcendental-phenomenological reflection we become a '*disinterested onlooker*'.<sup>26</sup> Separated, even split, from the concerns of the world and our natural reflections, the phenomenological ego is interested only in 'being [able] to see and to describe adequately what he sees, purely as seen, as what is seen in such and such a manner'.<sup>27</sup> Our disinterested onlooker is focused only on the purity granted by abstaining from the natural attitude and natural reflection. Since the latter attitude and form of reflection are permeated by 'prejudice' we must remain strictly in the transcendental-phenomenological realm, which is the only source of the 'pure evidence' we have been seeking.<sup>28</sup> We will return to the *Cartesian Meditations*, but for now I must speak to my own form of 'bracketing'.

It is important not to miss either the valuable resources in the phenomenological tradition or, more importantly, how Husserl attempted,

through repeated self-correction, to discover a firm ground upon which to build his science. Husserl came to register that the Cartesian model was insufficient<sup>29</sup> and here it is assumed that the 'Fifth Meditation' is superseded by stronger analyses of intersubjectivity.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, how, for instance, Husserl masterfully weaves into his phenomenological analyses static and genetic modalities in a manner no other thinker has in such detail.<sup>31</sup> With these admissions in place, in this chapter, my contention is that although the revisions of method, or what counts as evidence, in the phenomenological tradition are impressive in their inventiveness, ultimately we have better models to work with today. Nonetheless it would be remiss not to mention Martin Heidegger's inventive ontological re-rendering of intentionality, Jean-Paul Sartre's blending of the best of Husserlian-Heideggerian insights (1958), and, leaving aside for reasons of economy many familiar names, Jacques Derrida's own 'internal' critique of transcendental reduction (1973).<sup>32</sup> With this caveat in place we turn now to non-phenomenological alternatives that best exemplify the spirit of inquiry for which Husserl was striving.

## The Broadest Possible Sense

Husserl would surely have agreed with the synoptic ambition of Wilfrid Sellars, when Sellars claimed that philosophers should aim 'to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term'.<sup>33</sup> This is another way of stating that philosophy, if it is to be worthy of the name, must be an all-encompassing discipline in the manner Husserl intended. Contra Sellars, Husserl, in the *Cartesian Meditations*, took a radical stance, but it is one Sellars would not have been opposed to in terms of respect for tradition, and they share a bond, in aspects beyond the scope of this chapter, in their mutual respect for Kant.<sup>34</sup> Where Sellars and Husserl most crucially differ is in regard to their views on the status of the natural sciences. For Sellars, ultimately, *ontologically* 'science is the measure of all things, of what is, that it is, and of what is not, that it is not'.<sup>35</sup> However, a closer point of contact is that Sellars's notion of normativity, the ability to make sense of scientific claims, can be read as a correlate of Husserlian intersubjective

consensus. The necessity of this normative structure, the manifest image of ourselves as precisely human, would also satisfy Husserl, and those who follow in his footsteps, for whom the natural sciences often appear as a threat to some ineliminable notion of humanity.<sup>36</sup> However, there is a further crucial distinction and it concerns the nature of what constitutes *evidence*.

Within the Sellarsian framework there is nothing akin to the indubitable or apodictic that could correspond to Husserl's conception of immediate evidence. In the words of Sellars: 'The essential point is that in characterizing an episode or a state as that of *knowing*, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says.'<sup>37</sup> Therefore, to begin, as Husserl does in the *Cartesian Meditations*, with a pure egology is a non-starter and falls prey to Sellars's attack on the myth of the given undertaken in *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*. As William deVries and Timm Triplett put it, '[t]he doctrine of the given requires that for any empirical knowledge that *p*, some epistemically independent knowledge *g* is epistemically efficacious with respect to *p*.'<sup>38</sup> Hence, whilst it may *seem* as if the immediacy of indubitable experience has the quality of something given directly, it cannot but occur without being interwoven with some epistemically efficacious piece of knowledge with which it is intertwined. Although the argument is clearly directed at empiricism, positions whereby sense-data are given without prejudice, one can easily transport the critique to the drive behind Husserl's desire to found transcendental phenomenology on the transparency of the experience of the transcendental-phenomenological ego alone.

Husserl clearly recognized the need to embed the transcendental-phenomenological ego into an intersubjective community as early as the *Cartesian Meditations*. However, the contortions Husserl is forced into due to his insistence on always 'starting from the ego' when relying on indubitable evidence persist right up into the *Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*.<sup>39</sup> The restrictions this imposes can be seen clearly in the *Cartesian Meditations*, where Husserl presents a rejoinder to the charge of phenomenology as entailing a 'transcendental solipsism'.<sup>40</sup> Here again is where the demand for apodictic evidence complicates matters. The transcendental ego grasps '*other transcendental*

*egos*, though they are given not originaliter, and in an unqualifiedly apodictic evidence, but only in the evidence belonging to “external experience”.<sup>41</sup> The ‘appresentatively mirrored’ Other is derived from a complicated explication.<sup>42</sup> They are a noematic transcendental clue encountered in an experiential ‘intersubjective world’.<sup>43</sup> Flowering from this we gain a ‘transcendental theory of experiencing someone else... of so-called “empathy”’.<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, remaining true to his ‘monadic’ sense of the concrete Ego as indubitable, others can, at best, be read as akin to mirrors or analogues and ‘alien’.<sup>45</sup> Considering the world as an ‘immanent transcendency’, this alien, external world might be an ‘ideality’, but it is ‘*still a determining part of my own concrete being*’ experientially and this includes Others.<sup>46</sup>

Thus the world is a shared one, a ‘community of monads’, the ‘Ego-community’, even if, rigorous as ever, Husserl can only consider them as merely presented or appearing.<sup>47</sup> The shared world is an ‘ideal correlate of an intersubjective...experience’ and it is co-constituted, in much the same manner that objects are.<sup>48</sup> Others are ‘co-present’<sup>49</sup> and when they are, at first, they are so as ‘an animate organism’, but there is recognition here, in terms of sense-bestowal, through an ‘*apperceptive transfer from my animate organism*’.<sup>50</sup> The similarity between myself and another acts as motivation for generating an analogy between us, albeit not inferentially, as Husserl notes.<sup>51</sup> Not inferential because the analogy arises from a ‘primal instituting’ of registering a similar type through primordial givenness.<sup>52</sup> We recognize the Other as us with an immediate and primal constitutiveness: a ‘pairing’.<sup>53</sup> The ‘clue’ that draws us to recognize the Other as another like ourself is ‘*behaviour*’ with the mark of the ‘psychic’.<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, Husserl places a relentless emphasis on the role of constitution such that the Other is always ‘appresentatively mirrored, not constituted as the original’.<sup>55</sup> Yet, despite Husserl’s cautiousness, he remains concerned that he has strayed from the apodictic, indeed with a certain ‘*naiveté of apodicticity*’.<sup>56</sup>

Toward the end of the *Cartesian Meditations* Husserl proclaims: ‘I must lose the world by epoché, in order to regain it by a universal self-examination.’<sup>57</sup> Throughout my reading of Husserl I have stressed the centrality of apodictic evidence given to the transcendental-phenomenological ego. The core critique here is Sellarsian in the most

direct sense. In his classic distinction between the two images of man [sic], namely the manifest and scientific images, Sellars provides us with a way out of the Husserlian solipsistic dilemma. Rather than reading others as mirrors *given* in phenomenological experience, Sellars latches on to conceptual normativity as a sufficient bond that allows us to ‘think of one another as sharing the community intentions which provides the ambience of principles and standards...within which we live our own individual lives’.<sup>58</sup> Since we exist within a mesh of normative understanding there is no ‘epistemically independent knowledge’, but rather a pre-existing historical accrument of epistemically informed experience.<sup>59</sup> Many readers will surely note that both Heidegger and especially Derrida made similar critiques of Husserl’s transcendental-phenomenological ego as ahistorical,<sup>60</sup> but Sellars’s model and the influence it has had, I will argue, is more efficient and, perhaps more importantly, more flexible in relation to the scientific image.

## Inverted Epoché

Many readers will no doubt respond that phenomenology has made considerable strides in its approach to the natural sciences, beginning with Sartre.<sup>61</sup> However, there is one issue where phenomenology, no matter how it engages the natural sciences, will not budge and that is the ineliminable ‘self’ *qua* transcendental subject. As Dan Zahavi claims:

To be conscious of oneself, is consequently not to capture a pure self that exists in separation from the stream of consciousness, rather it just entails being conscious of an experience in its first-personal mode of givenness. In short the self referred to is not something standing beyond or opposed to the stream of experiences, rather it is a feature or function of their givenness. It is the invariant dimension of first-personal givenness.<sup>62</sup>

It is the use of the word *invariant* here that speaks to both the persistence of transcendentalism in phenomenology and the use of *givenness*, a peculiar term found in phenomenology relating to immediate forms of evidence, which attests to the traditionalism of the tradition, so to speak.

Both are terms that remain tethered to the basic Husserlian commitment to epoché that distinguishes phenomenology from the deflationary account of intersubjectivity that could more easily be undergirded by the account of conceptual normativity in the work of Sellars. They are also, both, barriers to a more expansive investigation of consciousness that integrates the insights of the neurosciences since it intentionally distinguishes itself from ‘psychical interiority and physical exteriority’.<sup>63</sup> Nonetheless, granting that phenomenology can have an important role to play in the examination of experience, might it be possible to discover more about consciousness by performing an inverted epoché? If the result of the epoché is that one loses the world first in order to regain it, what happens if we lose the self first in order to regain it?

To perform this inverted epoché we turn to the work of the neurophilosopher Thomas Metzinger and his Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity (SMT). Metzinger’s theoretical approach is to rely on ‘constraint-satisfaction’ whereby his targets must meet certain minimal conditions that are efficacious in explaining what is under examination.<sup>64</sup> In Metzinger’s schema the road to the ‘ego’, or the first-person perspective, is a developmental one wherein a series of constraints first give rise to consciousness, then to the phenomenal self, and then to the first-person perspective.<sup>65</sup> Each time the picture gets more complicated as the *evolutionary* process proceeds. For instance, beginning with consciousness in the basic sense we find that ‘[p]henomenologically, minimal consciousness is described as *the presence of the world*’.<sup>66</sup> For this to occur three constraints are required. The first is globality or the manner with which certain biological entities can ‘generate an internal picture of parts of reality’.<sup>67</sup> In addition, a second constraint, presentationality, must be fulfilled, ‘the generation of an island of presence in the continuous flow of physical time’.<sup>68</sup> The third constraint on phenomenal consciousness is transparency *qua* ‘phenomenological concept’ and not an ‘epistemological one’, but which, all the same, refers to a ‘*lack of knowledge*’<sup>69</sup>:

[P]henomenal transparency means that something particular is not accessible for subjective experience, namely the representational nature of the contents of conscious experience. What makes a phenomenal representation transparent is the attentional unavailability of earlier processing stages in



the brain for introspection. The instruments of representation themselves cannot be represented as such, and hence the system making the experience, on this level and by conceptual necessity, is entangled in a naïve realism: In standard configurations, one's phenomenal experience has an untranscendably realistic character.<sup>70</sup>

Combining the minimal constraints of globality, presentationality, and transparency yields minimal consciousness, but of more significant import is the move toward the phenomenal self-model (PSM).<sup>71</sup> For Metzinger, taking into consideration the constraint of transparency, the PSM ought to be read precisely as a model. It is a 'very special form of representational content' comprising a model that does not know it is a model.<sup>72</sup> In other words, it is a simulation of selfhood: 'The phenomenal property selfhood as such is a representational construct: an internal and dynamic representation of the organism as a whole to which the transparency constraint applies.'<sup>73</sup> It is this last constraint that Metzinger is, ultimately, most fascinated by and, for our own concerns, it is the most pertinent since it implies that the minimal phenomenological unit, the ego, is a fiction: experienced, certainly, but 'not epistemically justified'.<sup>74</sup> Here, however, is where we begin to see how a phenomenologist might transition to Metzinger's position. For instance, what Metzinger calls the 'self-representatum' or the 'time-slice of the ongoing, physically realized process of representation' maps neatly onto the *cogitationes* one finds in traditional phenomenology.<sup>75</sup> Despite his naturalist approach Metzinger is broadly coming to the same experiential insights as phenomenology.

This self-representatum introduces into the model a 'self-world border' allowing for a richer experience of relationality between self and 'self-world, self-object, and more importantly, self-self and self-other relations'.<sup>76</sup> Note that Metzinger's account here includes what traditional phenomenology might recognize as self, intentionality, the noematic-noetic poles, the reflective ego, and also intersubjectivity. Where Metzinger pushes these familiar themes further is in updating our understanding of them to include further levels of analysis: phenomenological, representationalist, functionalist, and neurobiological.<sup>77</sup> Accepting that traditional phenomenology is masterful at describing, to state the obvious, phenomenological experience and representation (even when avoiding this term), it is

less committed, due to the epoché, to functional and neurobiological explanation. For instance, if we examine globality, in relation to consciousness, from a functionalist perspective we find the sense of worldhood to be an ‘informational/computational strategy’ with the specific task of the ‘reduction of ambiguity’.<sup>78</sup> It is precisely this process of reduction that generates the coherence world, what Metzinger calls ‘*highest-order binding*’.<sup>79</sup> Metzinger is cautious about the neurobiological correlates operative here, but does stress that ‘there may be many functional bundles... within a system, and typically there will be one single, largest island of maximal causal density underlying the current conscious model of the world’.<sup>80</sup>

Turning to presentationality, Metzinger makes explicit mention of Husserl: ‘The experience of presence coming with our phenomenal model of reality may be the central aspect that cannot be “bracketed” in a Husserlian sense: It, as it were, is the temporal immediacy of existence *as such*’.<sup>81</sup> It is ironic but the account of the phenomenological and representationalist descriptions of the self-model provided by Metzinger are familiar to Husserlian phenomenology (Metzinger’s distancing from Husserl aside).<sup>82</sup> There is a slight difference in that whilst Husserl and Metzinger might agree that time ‘does not involve knowledge about the current state of the actual world’ the stress placed by Metzinger on the simulational nature of internal-time consciousness reveals a schism.<sup>83</sup> Metzinger reads retention as ‘memory’ which, from the ‘third-person perspective’, is a ‘fiction’ since experiential time, the sense of being in a now and time moving forward, is a strictly conscious one.<sup>84</sup> Again, familiar. What Metzinger adds, and where we gain a deeper sense of the self-model is how this fiction is the result of a ‘decay function’ (functionalist) or ‘data-reduction’ (neurobiological) that allows us to experience temporal immediacy without the ‘fine-structure’ of the representational process of that experience coming into view.<sup>85</sup>

These last two components allow for Metzinger’s favoured constraint of transparency to once again come into view and here he provides a clear definition of what constitutes phenomenal transparency under the self-model theory:

Transparency holds if earlier processing stages are unavailable for attentional processing. Transparency results from a structural/functional of the

neural information-processing going on in our brains, which makes earlier processing stages attentionally unavailable.<sup>86</sup>

Phenomenologically, then, transparency leads to the immediacy with which we are all familiar, but Metzinger stresses that this immediacy is a complex process and one involving constant decay and reduction of various aspects of experience. In other words, we can safely rule out the ‘Cartesian notion of *epistemic transparency*’ as any kind of apodictic foundation since the kind of transparency it promises is, to be frank, illusory.<sup>87</sup> Moving toward transparency understood according to representationalist description, the point is harsher on phenomenology: ‘The representationalist carrier of your phenomenal experience is a certain process in your brain.’<sup>88</sup> One does not experience this process as ‘carrier’, one ‘sees’ right through it, and hence you are looking at ‘its’ representational ‘content.’<sup>89</sup> Strategically, then, transparency allows for a complex degree of experience without the burden of ‘seeing’ how it has been accomplished: ‘Subjective experience has not been developed in pursuing the old philosophical ideal of self-knowledge.’<sup>90</sup>

In functional terms transparent self-models are realist by constraint and exist in a reality that ‘cannot be transcended’ in a manner not dissimilar to how a traditional phenomenologist might argue the same case.<sup>91</sup> As an outcome, transparent self-models allow for the ‘representation of facticity’ in the sense of being able to deal with facts, with a reality containing actual information to be assessed, and not in the Heideggerian sense.<sup>92</sup> Metzinger also attributes the ‘appearance–reality distinction’ to the functional level since the possibility of *false* content also becomes apparent.<sup>93</sup> At this point additional constraints are added relating to higher-order forms of consciousness, but we will focus here on one: perspectivalness or the sense of having a first-person perspective. Metzinger considers, phenomenologically, ‘selfhood’ to be the ‘*origin* of the first-person perspective’.<sup>94</sup> It is the additional explanatory aspects that move us past the inflation of this as apodictic. The first-person perspective arises from a sense of selfhood, certainly, but what ‘*anchors* the human self-model’ is a link of ‘centredness’ *qua* functional process with neural underpinnings, such as ‘the activity of the vestibular organ, the spatial “matrix” of the body schema, visceral forms of self-representation and,

in particular, the input of a number of specific nuclei in the upper brain stem, engaged in the homeostatic regulation of the “internal milieu”.<sup>95</sup>

Being a self is a biological and not transcendental result, one that generates a first-person perspective. The desire to disassociate the sense of self and resulting ego from natural processes, to denaturalize, is just that, a *desire*. There is no transcendental ego except as a false promise of human specialness or a hangover from historical folk psychological attempts at self-understanding. What becomes indubitable, now, is paradoxical for a traditional phenomenologist. If a self-model is functional, the ‘prereflexive, preattentive experience of being someone directly results’ and it is experienced *as if* one were in ‘direct and immediate contact with itself’.<sup>96</sup> This is not contentious per se. Metzinger is simply emphasizing how, even when such insights do not ‘change the fundamental architecture of our phenomenal space’, there is an important intellectual advance occurring that is allowing us to conceive of ourselves along representationalist, functionalist, and neurobiological lines.<sup>97</sup> Let us take a pertinent example: if there is, as we now have, an ability to examine the mind as a model that generates a sense of self, then the self can become an object of examination from the third-person perspective—thereby eliding the need to rely *entirely* on ‘self-evidence’ or introspection. To paraphrase Husserl, these additional descriptors do not mean we lose the self, but, rather, that we begin to understand better what we truly are: self-models.

What is truly remarkable about Metzinger’s work is that it leaves us in almost the exact same position as phenomenology does in terms of certain insights but now with added information.<sup>98</sup> In fact, Metzinger proceeds to introduce his own model of intentionality, which he denotes as the ‘phenomenal model of the intentionality-relation’ (PMIR).<sup>99</sup> The PMIR generates the intimate sense of self we experience and through introspection one opens up the door to the social since it becomes possible to model others as agents, to internally simulate the PMIR processes of these others, and thus to secure a ‘*normative*’ bridge for intersubjective recognition of others as ‘persons’.<sup>100</sup> In other words, the phenomenal self-model is unique in that it allows us to recognize ourselves, so to speak, as having a first-person perspective and since we can ‘self-ascribe this property’ to ourselves, it is but a short cognitive leap to register other phenomenal models with this capacity as fellow persons.<sup>101</sup> Here, in contrast

to Sellars's deflationary model of normativity as the glue that binds us to the social, we have a more intricate account that offers more information about why it is that we recognize others both as having agency and thus as people. Rather than going down the road of so-called reductionism, where all is hollowed, and an apparently inescapable slide into losing what makes us human, we are confronted with the scientific realism of Sellars and the neurophilosophy of Metzinger, which both explain efficiently and without traditionalist inflation why intersubjectivity as a phenomenon works. Accordingly, phenomenology has less explanatory purchase on this *phenomenon* than either of these alternative options presented thus far.

## The Final Reduction

Leaving aside the pioneering work of Metzinger let us turn to a name more familiar to phenomenologists: Paul M. Churchland. Comparing the brain to an eye, Churchland notes that '[t]he learning brain, by contrast, very slowly constructs a representation...of the landscape or configuration of the *abstract universals*, the *temporal invariants*, and the *enduring symmetries* that structure the objective universe of its experience'.<sup>102</sup> Churchland is keen to stress that the brain represents the world utilizing *maps*.<sup>103</sup> This is Churchland's Prototype Vector Activation theory of cognition and it is has an important point to make.<sup>104</sup> Churchland stresses that, rather than language, 'the fundamental unit of cognition...is the *activation pattern* across a proprietary *population* of neurons'.<sup>105</sup> In a not dissimilar manner to traditional phenomenology Churchland provides us with a vision of the 'mind' featuring a 'relatively' invariant conceptual background, but one that is now the 'entire activation space for the relevant population of neurons' and within that space, through whatever form of excitation, an activation occurs contingent on the possibilities open to the brain based on that background.<sup>106</sup> With Churchland, I am perplexed that within certain traditions this kind of knowledge goes unacknowledged, dismissed, or overlooked in the contemporary literature.<sup>107</sup>

What Churchland finds is that the human brain operates at three levels: (1) a neurobiological '*conceptual framework*' slowly builds a pic-

ture of the world that is relatively 'complete' by adulthood; (2) a '*self-modulating*' the brain undertakes in response to current events, but nonetheless draws on the first level (e.g., perception, volition); and finally (3) communal '*evaluation*' akin to intersubjective consensus.<sup>108</sup> Perhaps the most interesting point here is that Churchland notes that many, including phenomenologists such as Hubert Dreyfus, have long spoken of 'Background' corresponding, roughly, to the Heideggerian sense of being-in-the-world.<sup>109</sup> There is nothing inherently wrong about describing this Background in phenomenological terms, but it is important that we recognize 'the neurocomputational *basis* of that Background' and see it as 'the overall configuration of synaptic weights that learning has produced in the brain'.<sup>110</sup> This realization is important because in pushing hard against 'reductionism', phenomenologists lose an *explanation* for a central concept of their own. No doubt Churchland's willingness to discuss the brain in neurocomputational terms scares off certain readers, but since neural networks are engaged in 'massively parallel distributed *coding*... and massively parallel distributed *processing*', it is difficult to think what would constitute a better comparison.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, we do not lose anything of philosophical interest in doing so.

Consider how, for Churchland, when it comes to the brain we are left with 'a map-*dependent* grip' on external reality.<sup>112</sup> Nonetheless, this map generates maximal experiential 'coherence' and can be further refined through scientific augmentation.<sup>113</sup> This places Churchland on a broadly antirealist plane, alongside most phenomenologists, where a 'Kantian Gulf' exists between our internal map of reality and what we have long called the things-in-themselves.<sup>114</sup> However, the stress for Churchland ought not to be placed on this gap, but rather on the struggle to develop better *maps* to, at least, gain a better homomorphic traction that reaches across the 'gulf' between us and the things-in-themselves since a pure vision of the things-in-themselves is a 'false and empty' goal.<sup>115</sup> For Churchland, then, it is not that we are trapped in our heads, but that the ongoing process of 'construction of ever-more accurate and comprehensive cognitive maps of the enduring structure of reality' is not only possible, but the 'proper aim of science'.<sup>116</sup> Rather than aiming for a universal science, Churchland stresses how the credibility of a theory is contingent upon its conforming to a network of related theories.

As an example, consider how creationism unfolds when placed within the nexus of evolutionary, geology, and biochemistry (and more besides) constituting a set of ‘coherent and interlocking family of conceptual maps’.<sup>117</sup>

In the age of the neurosciences can we faithfully say that phenomenology constitutes a theory that still hangs together? There is no doubt that phenomenology is a rich tradition. The question for the future, though, is whether it is *now* precisely a *tradition* within philosophy, rather than a contemporary theory that remains viable after the myth of the given (Sellars), or neurophilosophy (Metzinger), or the supersession of folk psychology (Churchland). If, as we have seen, Sellars, Metzinger, and Churchland explain phenomena without restricting themselves to the transcendental standpoint, then there is a real question for future generations about whether the baggage of the transcendental is worthwhile. Contemporary philosophy suggests that indubitable evidence is illusory. Evidence about the nature of the self is either accrued through a normative structure (Sellars) or is found in much wider areas than phenomenology allows (Metzinger and Churchland). Far too much evidence is needlessly set outside the border of the epoché. As such, the time for demystification within philosophy has, one hopes, perhaps arrived. We are biological agents with complex brains and mental states. There is nothing more to it than that. If phenomenology is to survive as a theory and move beyond being merely a historical curio, then it must embrace the natural sciences that it has so often insisted on keeping at bay. As present, though, for those hoping to understand the future of philosophy, books such as Husserl’s *Cartesian Meditations* will never offer an answer. The evidence, I am afraid to say, is stacked elsewhere.

## Notes

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30. See Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences*, p. 111; p. 143.
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  45. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 94; p. 95.
  46. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 106.
  47. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 107.
  48. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 108.
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  50. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 110.
  51. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 111.
  52. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 111.
  53. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 112.
  54. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 114.
  55. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 149.
  56. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 151.
  57. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 157.
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76. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 4.
77. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 4; p. 5.
78. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 6; see also Bernard J. Baars, *A Cognitive Theory of Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1988 and Bernard J. Baars, *In the Theater of Consciousness: The Workspace of the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1997.
79. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 7.
80. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 9.
81. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 9.
82. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 10.
83. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 10.
84. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 10.
85. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 10; see also Ernst Pöppel, "Temporal mechanisms in perception," *International Review of Neurobiology* 37 (1994): pp. 185–202.
86. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 11.
87. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 12.
88. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 13.
89. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 13.
90. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 14.
91. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 14.
92. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 14.
93. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 14.

94. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 7.
95. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 18.
96. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 22.
97. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 24.
98. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 26.
99. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 26.
100. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 30.
101. Metzinger, "Précis," p. 31.
102. Paul Churchland, *Plato's Camera: How the Physical Brain Captures a Landscape of Abstract Universals* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press), 2012, p. vii.
103. Churchland, *Plato's Camera*, p. viii.
104. See Paul Churchland, *Neurophilosophy at Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2007.
105. Churchland, *Plato's Camera*, p. 4.
106. Churchland, *Plato's Camera*, p. 6.
107. Churchland, *Plato's Camera*, p. 13.
108. Churchland, *Plato's Camera*, pp. 33–4.
109. Churchland, *Plato's Camera*, p. 50; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 107.
110. Churchland, *Plato's Camera*, p. 50.
111. Churchland, *Plato's Camera*, p. 69.
112. Churchland, *Plato's Camera*, p. 126.
113. Churchland, *Plato's Camera*, p. 126.
114. Churchland, *Plato's Camera*, p. 127.
115. Churchland, *Plato's Camera*, p. 129.
116. Churchland, *Plato's Camera*, p. 216.
117. Churchland, *Plato's Camera*, p. 220.

# 18

## Have Reports of Phenomenology's Death Been Greatly Exaggerated?

Bruce Ellis Benson

I am delighted to have been asked to respond to two thoughtful and stimulating chapters, one by Tom Sparrow titled 'Is "Phenomenology" a Family Resemblance Term?' and the other by Paul J. Ennis titled 'The Slow Death of Phenomenology'. Ostensibly, these chapters concern two different topics. The first has to do with the problematic definition of 'phenomenology'. Sparrow's contention is that, given that the term 'phenomenology' has been defined so variously (and this problem only gets worse as more and more philosophers are identified as 'phenomenologists'), the term ends up being either meaningless or simply too varied to be of any use. The second chapter concerns the way in which

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According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, the 'real' quotation goes thus: 'The report of my death was an exaggeration.' As is well known, the quote is from Mark Twain, responding to newspaper reports of his death. But, in my title, I am working off the most oft-cited version of the quotation.

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© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016  
J.A. Simmons, J.E. Hackett (eds.), *Phenomenology for the  
Twenty-First Century*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-55039-2\_18

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phenomenology has been essentially superseded by Sellars, Metzger, and Churchland, rendering it no longer 'necessary'.

Yet I think these two chapters go well together as a pair, for their authors argue that, in two different ways, phenomenology is 'over'. For Sparrow, the problem is that the term 'phenomenology' is simply too unfocused to name anything specific. For Ennis, the problem is that phenomenology has been surpassed by better methods. In both cases, then, phenomenology is no longer viable in the twenty-first century. It is a movement whose time has come and gone.

While these chapters raise some legitimate points (and I don't want to overlook or downplay that legitimacy), I think neither really shows us that phenomenology is over. At worst, the authors show us, on the one hand, that phenomenology is problematic and, on the other hand, that phenomenology is not the only game in town. But these two points I would readily concede. In fact, I quite agree with the authors on these points. Yet, having admitted the problematic nature of defining the term 'phenomenology' and also that phenomenology is one method among many, I wish to argue, first, that this inexactitude of what constitutes phenomenology is one of its great strengths. In other words, I think that the ability to accommodate various philosophers and projects that are not completely coherent with one another is one of the reasons why phenomenology has been such an influential movement in the twentieth century. To put that point very bluntly, had Husserl's definition of phenomenology gained complete hegemony, phenomenology after Husserl would have been finished as a movement. But Husserl found out (to his dismay) that he could not control what was done in the name of 'phenomenology'. Moreover, contrary to Ennis, I will contend that phenomenology has the potential to be every bit as influential in the twenty-first century and that reports of its death are premature.

## Is There an *Eidos* of Phenomenology?

Sparrow tells us that his 'inquiry is motivated by a kind of Socratic sympathy'. I think that's exactly correct. For he is not content to define phenomenology by 'simply recommend[ing] some canonical works of

phenomenology or some canonical phenomenologists'. That discontent seems well placed, at least to some extent. For merely listing some books or people labeled as phenomenologist probably wouldn't get us very far.

Instead, he begins by providing a sample of introductions to phenomenology and considering how each defines phenomenology. As he readily concedes, there are *many* such texts. A bit surprisingly, he does not go back to some of the 'classic' introductions, like Herbert Spiegelberg's *The Phenomenological Movement*, which for many years was the standard work on phenomenology. Instead, he begins with a much more recent text, Shaun Gallagher's *Phenomenology*. Paraphrasing Gallagher, Sparrow writes that phenomenology 'takes a first-person perspective' (but 'not an "introspectionist" psychology that attempts to give an account of one's mental states'). Instead, phenomenology is 'concerned with observing *consciousness*, which is our "window" onto reality'. Included in this examination of consciousness is the removal of 'theoretical prejudices, both scientific and metaphysical'. This is what is classically referred to as 'bracketing' (the *epoché*). What we arrive at, then, is the 'transcendental attitude'.

At this point, Sparrow turns to David Detmer's *Phenomenology Explained*, in which Detmer writes: 'Phenomenology is the study of the essential structures of experience. ... Its aim is to focus on the world as given in experience, and to describe it with unprecedented care, rigor, subtlety, and completeness.' Now, Sparrow thinks that Detmer's definition is not quite the same as that of Gallagher, for Detmer would seem to add that it is 'the study of *experience* [namely, what Gallagher says] and the *objects of experience* [what Gallagher does not say]'. But it is hard to imagine that Gallagher would *not* agree with this definition. For phenomenology since Husserl has *always* been about the 'objects of experience'. Since consciousness in phenomenology has always been inherently 'intentional' in nature, what consciousness 'intends' (its objects) has always been part and parcel of the study of experience. But here we come to what's really pertinent about Detmer's definition of phenomenology for Sparrow. Detmer wants to insist that phenomenology both does something that cannot be done by 'science' (exploring consciousness) and also is a science in its own right. What makes it scientific is that its goal is discovering what is universal about consciousness.

Not surprisingly, Sparrow then makes the point that 'phenomenology, insofar as it is scientific, entails certain methodological guidelines'. In fact, he points out that Detmer claims that phenomenology's goal is 'to *ground* all other sciences'. But Sparrow quite rightly points out that Husserl was constantly working on what *exactly* this science of phenomenology is. Sparrow then goes on to state that Husserl 'did not bequeath to his followers the rigorous science of phenomenology that he once envisioned'. Further, Husserl's followers did not take over this 'science' because they often saw it as a 'method' or a 'style' of philosophy. Sparrow concludes that there is not enough continuity in the phenomenological movement to identify it as distinct.

He continues his argument by pointing to the introduction by Michael Lewis and Tanja Staehler, who say that phenomenology studies phenomena. Sparrow points out that phenomenology 'does not study objects, which is what metaphysics does, but the ways that objects manifest themselves'. But here we run into a problem: for phenomenology, when it studies 'appearances', is actually studying 'objects'. The difference between metaphysics and phenomenology is that phenomenology is not making 'metaphysical' claims about those objects, a task left to metaphysics. This point is made by Cerbonne (whom Sparrow cites), that phenomenology is concerned with the 'essential structures of experience'. We come to know these by considering our *own* experience, but we assume that our experience has essential features of other people's experience. This is why a phenomenology can be shared with other people and they can either agree or disagree as to whether their experience is the same or similar.

There is one more aspect that Sparrow includes. It is that the actual list of those who count as 'phenomenologists' is not exact. Everyone agrees on Husserl and Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty; some would include, say, Levinas and Derrida; very few people would include Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche. So what does one have to 'believe' or 'practice' in order to 'count' as a phenomenologist? The problem for Sparrow is that 'phenomenology ... is not a unified project' and so 'it may not be anything at all'.

Much of what Sparrow says about phenomenology I simply admit is true. But the question is: just how 'unified' does something have to be to count as a 'project'? Here is where I think the nub of the issue lies. It is interesting that Sparrow points out that 'phenomenology is often

ridiculed for believing that it can get at the essence of things, or for believing that things even have an essence'. But it seems that Sparrow thinks that *phenomenology itself* needs to have something like an essence. Earlier, we noted that his 'inquiry is motivated by a Socratic sympathy'. I think this self-reflective comment is central to Sparrow's concern in his chapter. For it was Socrates who thought that something like 'holiness' (think of the *Euthyphro*) has an *eidōs*, an essence. Moreover, in order to understand holiness (or any abstract terms), Socrates insists that we must know and understand that *eidōs*. We don't *really* know what holiness is unless we know its *eidōs*. Although Sparrow doesn't spell out his concern about the meaning of phenomenology in exactly those terms, I think his Socratic sympathy implies something along these lines. In order to understand phenomenology—indeed, in order for it to count as a coherent 'science', it needs to have an *eidōs*. His strategy, then, is to show that both those writing the introductory books on phenomenology and those who are labeled 'phenomenologists' don't either have a grasp on or exhibit such an *eidōs*. In this respect, I think Sparrow is completely correct. I don't think phenomenology has an *eidōs*, but that's just fine with me. I am one of those phenomenologists who think that, while we might talk about 'essential features' of experience (features that figure into all experiences, at least of a certain type), we don't *need* an *eidōs* of phenomenology itself. Given the way the chapter is written, Sparrow implies that we *do*, even though he never says this in so many terms. Instead, he suggests that there needs to be a definition of phenomenology that fits all phenomenologists, making it possible to label them 'phenomenologists'. I don't think that's the case.

Yet, before I turn to what Sparrow rejects—the idea that phenomenology is composed of family resemblances—let me first argue that Sparrow fails to appreciate the continuity in phenomenology that actually *is* there. Consider his following claim:

Depending on which introduction to phenomenology the newcomer gets her hands on, she may come away from it thinking that the proper object of phenomenology is consciousness or experience or the objects of consciousness or appearances or the structure of appearance or essences or meanings or truth or *noesis* and *noema*. Perhaps it is all of these things,



although almost no phenomenologist is interested in all of them and many nonphenomenologists study these things too.

Let's begin with 'experience'. Phenomenologists are definitely interested in experience, whether it is the experience of music (on which I've written), or other persons, or even one's own self. But phenomenologists think that we *get at* that experience by way of looking at our 'consciousness', since we cannot simply examine 'experience' apart from examining *lived* experience. What else could experience *be*? But this means, of course, that in examining experience (since consciousness is *intentional*) we are likewise examining *objects* (whether pieces of music or ourselves). Given that objects *appear* to us (or else we wouldn't have any contact with them), we could also speak of studying 'appearance' as another way of studying objects. If we are considering the appearance of objects, then we are simultaneously studying the *structure* of appearance (*how* those objects appear to us). Since those appearances have 'meaning' to us, we are (naturally) studying *meanings*. Given that we take it that what appears to us is (at least for the most part) *true*, we are likewise studying *truth*. As to the use of *noesis* and *noema*, these terms are simply ways of distinguishing between the 'act' (*noesis*) of knowing and the thing known (*noema*). The one item that Sparrow adds—*essences*—may be what we are experiencing or may not be. On *that* point, there is a matter of disagreement between phenomenologists. But while the list of items that Sparrow provides might seem to be presenting different 'aims' of phenomenology, in fact it is simply providing different aspects of what phenomenological analysis entails. And these aspects are pretty universal to those who consider themselves phenomenologists, even if they would not necessarily all use the same terminology to express them. Heidegger simply wouldn't use the term 'consciousness', but that *doesn't* mean that he wouldn't agree with Husserl that there are certain structures that govern our experience. The difference is that these structures for Heidegger are not purely mental; instead, they are embodied.

From what I've said so far, it should be clear that I don't think the move that J. Aaron Simmons and I make, along with François-David Sebbah, of using the idea of family resemblances to explain the unity of phenomenology means that we think that there are *at best* a loose configuration

of similarities that tie the various phenomenologists together. Indeed, speaking here simply for myself, I find that the similarities between phenomenologists are rather striking. As I have argued, regarding these basic concerns, they are pretty much in agreement. In fact, even in the case of Jacques Derrida, who puts much of phenomenological orthodoxy into question, this is only possible because he *presumes* that there really is such an orthodoxy. How else can one explain his famous accusation against Jean-Luc Marion of being a phenomenological heretic?<sup>1</sup> Clearly, Derrida thinks that there is something like phenomenological *orthodoxy*, or else the charge of heresy would be meaningless. Sparrow claims that Simmons and I see these figures 'as united *not* by a common method or doctrine, but by an imprecise collection of ideas, themes, and theoretical resemblances'. But this is an inaccurate statement of what we argue. Instead, we think that there really *is* a common method. But it is true that both the 'classic' phenomenologists and the 'new' phenomenologists are working out what it *means* to claim that method.

The question that needs to be asked is, how *different* is phenomenology from any other movement? As it turns out, no movement in philosophy has ever had a pure, unbroken trajectory. Consider Platonism. While there are not many Platonists around today (though perhaps more than one might think), Plato's philosophy has had a very long and varied history that includes such incarnations as the 'neo-Platonism' of Plotinus and the Cambridge Platonists. Aristoteleanism has likewise taken many different forms, as has Thomism (which is itself a version of Aristoteleanism). Yet that lack of purity has hardly rendered philosophical movements void. Instead, it has been the way in which they have survived. A philosophical tradition that required absolute obedience to some particular set of doctrines is one that could only survive as a cult.

Here we come to the basic problem of what we mean by a 'method.' Sparrow cites Descartes, who thinks that a method provides 'reliable rules which are easy to apply, and such that if one follows them exactly, one will never take what is false to be true or fruitlessly expend one's mental efforts, but will gradually and constantly increase one's knowledge till one arrives at a true understanding of everything within one's capacity'. Yet doesn't Descartes sound rather naive here in light of where science is in the twenty-first century? This is a lovely statement of what at least

Descartes and perhaps many others thought about science in the seventeenth century. But it is hard to see this as reflecting the 'scientific method' today. And this is exactly the point. What one meant by the 'scientific method' in the seventeenth century is not exactly equivalent to what we mean by it today, even if there are certainly commonalities. Or, to put this another way, in the same way that phenomenologists for about a century have been *working out* the phenomenological method, for even more centuries scientists have been *working out* the scientific method. Sparrow accuses phenomenologists of cobbling together a 'method' based on what phenomenologists have been doing. But is this any different from what scientists have been doing ever since Descartes (or Bacon or whomever)?

In the end, both the phenomenological method and the scientific method are in the same situation. As much as Husserl and Descartes wanted to put forth *their* conceptions of what their 'method' was as the standard for everyone else to follow, the history of phenomenology and the natural sciences suggests that those who came after them were just as free to determine what the 'method' was as were Husserl and Descartes. Indeed, what could be more *antithetical* to the scientific method than the idea that some historic person has the *right* to set up *her* way of doing things as the way that everyone who follows must follow?

Of course, this cuts another way. *I* am hardly in a position to *dictate* what phenomenology either has been or should be. At best, I am a practitioner of phenomenology following in a long line of phenomenologists. And this gets us back to the problem of the 'introductions to phenomenology' with which Sparrow begins his chapter. *All of them* and *none of them* have the right to say 'this is what phenomenology is'. Some of the authors cited may be considered more authoritative than others. But even Husserl didn't have the right to say 'this is what phenomenology must be'. Of course, he certainly tried to do so—and was very disappointed when others didn't come along and follow his guidelines. No more emblematic of that disappointment was his frustration with his own 'student' Heidegger, who took what he found useful from Husserl and then went his own way. Husserl eventually had to disbar him from being a coauthor on the article on phenomenology in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

But I think the same frustration that Sparrow has about a coherent set of beliefs in phenomenology could be found in the natural sciences. I don't have the space here to provide a comparison of 'introductions to science' and the ways in which they define 'science', but I don't think it would be the case that we could consult a variety and discover that they all agree on specifics. Consider what the Wikipedia entry titled 'History of Scientific Method' says:

The development and elaboration of rules for scientific reasoning and investigation has not been straightforward; [scientific method](#) has been the subject of intense and recurring debate throughout the history of science, and many eminent natural philosophers and scientists have argued for the primacy of one or another approach to establishing scientific knowledge. Despite the many disagreements about primacy of one approach over another, there also have been many identifiable trends and historical markers in the several-millennia-long development of scientific method into present-day forms.

While I have questions about the authority of Wikipedia (and I cite it a bit tongue in cheek), I think it is simply stating a rather obvious fact about the scientific method. In other words, I don't think there is an *eidōs* of science either. No doubt, there are many common characteristics of the scientific method, enough so that people in biology and physics see themselves as doing something that has important resonances between them. But I think we would be hard-pressed to find anything like a stable *eidōs* of the scientific enterprise. And, as I suggested earlier, these differences would only be more profound the further back one looks for comparisons. Yet these differences are part of what has made for the *development of* science. After all, when Descartes was formulating his version of the scientific method (with its highly rationalistic rather than empiricist bent), the assumption was that science really *could* provide answers to all scientific questions. In contrast, scientists today are far less optimistic about what science can accomplish. Developments in physics, for instance, only seem to make the world a more mysterious place. That *doesn't* mean that science is incoherent or doesn't have any 'real' identity or has no value, but it does mean that we cannot take for granted that when we use terms like 'science' or 'scientific method' everyone means exactly the same thing.

So it shouldn't be any surprise that 'phenomenology' is no more clearly definable than is 'science' and that the definitions of both are constantly evolving.

## Has Phenomenology Been Superseded?

Responding to Ennis's claim about the death of phenomenology is both simpler and yet more complicated than responding to Sparrow's claim about the coherence of phenomenology. On the one hand, Ennis restricts his definition of phenomenology by limiting it to Husserl (there are passing references to Heidegger, Sartre, and Derrida, but these are not central to Ennis's investigation). What this implies is that, when he speaks of the 'slow death' of phenomenology, he is really talking only about Husserlian phenomenology. Whether Husserlian phenomenology is 'dead' is a claim that is contentious at best. On the other hand, since Ennis does not consider other phenomenological figures, the claim that 'phenomenology' has died fails to take into account the many *other* ways in which it lives on.

Ennis starts with a reading of Husserl in which Husserl turns out to be an idealist. To be sure, there are many readings of Husserl along these lines. Yet Husserl has been read as both a realist and an idealist. One way of putting this is that it all depends on what exactly one takes the status of *Ideas I* to be. There is first the problem that *Ideas I* is only one iteration of Husserl's thought and so must be read in connection to other things Husserl writes, many of which were once unpublished manuscripts. A second problem is that even *Ideas I* is not *necessarily* a statement of 'idealism'. More accurately, one would need to point out that Husserl tries to remain metaphysically neutral in terms of the actual status of objects of consciousness.<sup>2</sup> This explains why Husserl's status as a 'realist' or 'idealist' remains subject to dispute. To buttress his point, Ennis cites Sparrow, who claims that (and this is Ennis's paraphrase of Sparrow) that 'this entails a refusal to accept the existence; and hence, accessibility, of a mind-independent reality'. However, rather than being a 'refusal' to accept a 'mind-independent reality', Husserl simply passes on this question. Instead, phenomenology focuses on what appears to

us—phenomena. But what else *could* phenomenology focus on—phenomena as they do not appear or appear to someone else? It is hard to see what the opposition here could be.

Ennis quite rightly points out that Husserl's preoccupation is with arriving at *purity*. The goal is to become a '*disinterested onlooker*',<sup>3</sup> one who is unburdened by prejudice. Only by way of arriving at this point do we reach 'firm ground'. As far as I can tell, Ennis is more than happy to endorse this project. But he thinks that 'we have better models to work with today'. Here Ennis moves to the view of Wilfred Sellars, who claims that the goal of philosophers is 'to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term' (here Ennis is quoting Sellars). Ennis's gloss on this statement is that 'philosophy, if it is to be worthy of the name, must be an all-encompassing discipline in the manner Husserl intended'. Whether this is really the case, of course, is open to question. It all has to do with what we think philosophy *is*. But let me leave this point to the side. In any case, regarding this goal, Ennis sees Husserl and Sellars as on the same page. The difference between them, though, is that Husserl believes in immediate evidence and Sellars (according to Ennis) would see this as an example of the 'myth of the given'. While Sellars does not use the term, what he is really getting at is that all experience is *hermeneutical* in nature. Of course, what Ennis does *not* point out is that Husserl really is a hermeneutical thinker, even if not in so many terms. For Husserl recognizes that there is a *horizon* on which everything appears to us. We can debate the extent to which Husserl recognizes the hermeneutical nature of the horizon, but that aspect is clearly an important part of Husserl's thought. Moreover, Husserl is a profoundly *perspectival* thinker, for he believes that all of our perceptions are only perspectives. Despite this, Ennis rightly points out that Husserl's emphasis on the transcendental ego proves problematic, even when Husserl attempts to ground the transcendental ego in the intersubjective community. Indeed, the very attempt to ground it in intersubjectivity shows just how problematic the very notion of the transcendental ego really is. Although there are different ways to try to 'fix' this problem (and many would claim it's not a problem at all), I think Ennis is right that this remains, at the very least, a tension in Husserl's thought. Yet Ennis's criticism of Zahavi's use of

the term ‘invariant’ in the phrase ‘invariant dimension of first-personal givenness’ misses the point. Zahavi is simply noting that there is always something like a ‘me’ to which appearances are given (to be sure, the identity of this ‘me’ is open to debate).

At this point, Ennis proposes turning to Metzinger for an ‘inverted-epoché’, a suspension of the *self* rather than of the *world*. For Metzinger, this is an evolutionary process. Let me skip the details here and get to Ennis’s point. It is that Metzinger comes to ‘the same experiential insights as phenomenology’. The difference, claims Ennis, is that, while Metzinger arrives at the ‘self, intentionality, the noematic-noetic poles, the reflective ego and also intersubjectivity’, Metzinger is able to push these further, resulting in analysis that is ‘phenomenological, representationalist, functionalist and neurobiological’. Yet Ennis then goes on to show that much of this can be found in phenomenology. The main difference is that ‘being a self is a biological and not transcendental result, one that generates a first-person perspective’. Moreover, Ennis claims that ‘there is an important intellectual advance occurring that is allowing us to conceive of ourselves along representationalist, functionalist and neurobiological lines’. However, Ennis then concludes that ‘what is truly remarkable about Metzinger’s work is that it leaves us in almost the exact position as phenomenology in terms of certain insights with added information’. But now one is tempted to ask: so how does Metzinger’s account spell the death of phenomenology? It is hard to see that it does. Instead, Metzinger gives us *another* account, one that comes to many of the same conclusions as does phenomenology. So how is this really *different*? Or, more to the point, how is this *better*?

Ennis closes his chapter by turning to Paul M. Churchland. What distinguishes Churchland’s account of cognition is that he claims that ‘the fundamental unit of cognition ... is the *activation pattern* across a proprietary *population* of neurons’ (Ennis is quoting Churchland here). Ennis says that ‘in a not dissimilar manner to traditional phenomenology’ Churchland accounts for a “‘relatively” invariant conceptual background’ in neurocomputational terms. Ennis then claims that ‘this places Churchland on a broadly antirealist plane, alongside most phenomenologists, where as a “Kantian Gulf” exists between our internal map of reality and what we have long called the things-in-themselves’. Yet this claim is doubly problematic. On the one hand, there is—at the

very least—disagreement that phenomenologists are antirealists. One crucial problem here is that Ennis uses this term as if it is obvious, but 'antirealist' is far from obvious in terms of its meaning. On the other hand, phenomenology clearly distances itself from any sort of view in which there are things-in-themselves. Indeed, this is one of the most basic tenets of phenomenology.

Yet it is really toward the end of his chapter that Ennis makes what is the most important charge, posed as a rhetorical question: 'In the age of the neurosciences can we faithfully say phenomenology constitutes a theory that still holds?' Here one must ask: still holds in *what sense*? The implication (though Ennis doesn't really come out and say it) is that phenomenology has been displaced or 'one-upped' by neuroscience. But there is nothing in Ennis's account that provides support for such a view. He claims that 'the time for demystification has, one hopes, arrived. We are biological agents with complex brains and mental states. There is nothing more to it than that.' Again, Ennis states this merely as an assertion, he doesn't really provide an *argument* for this view. Moreover, one might well agree with Churchland and conclude that *this is simply one story or one way* of explaining the phenomena. The problem here is that there are *many* ways of talking about human cognition and it is very difficult to proclaim one of them to be the 'correct' one. Philosophers, psychologists, cognitive scientists, theologians, and many others have differing explanations for the phenomenon of human experience. One can, of course, simply proclaim one of these to be the 'correct' one. But this ends up being a disciplinary hubris that is impossible to justify. It might have been possible in modernity to assume that 'scientific answers' (I have put this in quotation marks because I think even what 'counts' as scientific is open to question) were superior to all other answers. Yet it is hard to make that assumption today. Or, if one does, one must admit that it is only 'an assumption', one that really cannot be justified.

Yet let us say that, for the sake of argument, Ennis is right. The question then becomes: to what extent does this mean that phenomenology is 'over'? Ennis seems to think that a neuroscientific viewpoint overcomes anything 'transcendental'. And he equates phenomenology with a transcendental viewpoint. Yet this is, at best, a criticism of Husserl (and I suspect that many Husserlians would take issue with this claim).



It doesn't mean that—*therefore*—phenomenology *simpliciter* has been overcome. Indeed, I think many phenomenologists (such as Heidegger) would have no problem with abandoning the 'transcendental' aspect of phenomenology.

And here it should be clear that we have come back to the topic of Sparrow's chapter—namely, that phenomenology is so varied as to be incoherent. Without rehearsing my arguments as to why I think such a view is incorrect, let me once again point out that phenomenology's ability to expand and *grow* is precisely what makes it something that has *not* been superseded by advances in cognitive science. Shaun Gallagher, who provides the preface for the present book, is one example of someone who is a phenomenologist who has shown that phenomenology and cognitive science are *not* incompatible. Yet, if phenomenological and neuroscientific accounts are not at odds with one another—and even can be seen as *reinforcing* one another—then phenomenology *isn't* dead. Instead, it is very much alive. Perhaps we can say that certain *forms* of phenomenology are now part of a '*tradition*' (and here Ennis means something of the past, something that has been superseded) rather than a 'contemporary theory'. But even this claim is open to serious debate, as the chapters in this book make manifestly clear.

As it turns out, the claims of phenomenology's demise have been greatly exaggerated. What that means in practice is that phenomenology—just like *science*—is a living, evolving entity that can adapt and change. The result is that phenomenology's future is robust.

## Notes

1. Jacques Derrida, Richard Kearney, and Jean-Luc Marion, 'On the Gift: A Discussion between Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion, in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, ed. John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), p. 66.
2. See Dan Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003) for a discussion of these complications, particularly chapter two.
3. This is a reference to Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorian Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), p. 72.

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