DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

MASTER OF ARTS-PHILOSOPHY

SEMESTER –III

PHENOMENOLOGY

SOFT-CORE 303

BLOCK-2

First Published in 2019

FOREWORD

The Self Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

PHENOMENOLOGY

BLOCK- 1

BLOCK -2

BLOCK 1 : PHENOMENOLOGY

Introduction to the Block

Unit 8 deals with pure consciousness we attempt to understand the transpersonal psychology of Aurobindo and how he understands the evolution of consciousness in his integral vision.

Unit 9 deals with Subjectivity and Lifeworld in Transcendental Phenomenology.

Unit 10 deals with Internationality of consciousness and although the words "conscious" and "conscience" are used quite differently today, it is likely that the Reformation emphasis on the latter as an inner source of truth played some role in the inward turn so characteristic of the modern reflective view of self.

Unit 11 deals with Heidegger are against the modern tradition of philosophical "aesthetics" because he is for the true "work of art" which, he argues, the aesthetic approach to art eclipses.

Unit 12 deals with Dasein (German pronunciation: [ˈdaːzaɪn]) is a German word that means "being there" or "presence" (German: da "there"; sein "being"), and is often translated into English with the word "existence".

Unit 13 deals with Life and Works of Marleau- Ponty; To discuss The Nature of Perception and The Structure of Behavior; To know about the Phenomenology of Perception.

Unit 14 deals with Sensation and Perception. Important philosophical problems derive from the epistemology of perception—how we can gain knowledge via perception—such as the question of the nature of qualia.

UNIT 8: PURE CONSCIOUSNESS

STRUCTURE

8.0   OBJECTIVES

After this unit, students can able to understand:

- To explore some basic insights of transpersonal psychology.
- To enable us to understand consciousness and its evolution.
- open the students to the possibility of evolution of their own consciousness.

8.1   INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we attempt to understand the transpersonal psychology of Aurobindo and how he understands the evolution of consciousness in his integral vision. This unit is based primarily on the excellent article of Arabinda Basu, an acknowledged Aurobindo scholar (Basu 2001).

The coherence of the concept

Many philosophers have argued that consciousness is a unitary concept that is understood intuitively by the majority of people in spite of the difficulty in defining it. Others, though, have argued that the level of disagreement about the meaning of the word indicates that it either means different things to different people (for instance, the objective versus subjective aspects of consciousness), or else it encompasses a variety of distinct meanings with no simple element in common.

Philosophers differ from non-philosophers in their intuitions about what consciousness is. While most people have a strong intuition for the existence of what they refer to as consciousness skeptics argue that this intuition is false, either because the concept of consciousness is intrinsically incoherent, or because our intuitions about it are based in illusions. Gilbert Ryle, for example, argued that traditional understanding of consciousness depends on a Cartesian dualist outlook that improperly distinguishes between mind and body, or between mind and world. He proposed that we speak not of minds, bodies, and the world, but of individuals, or persons, acting in the world. Thus, by speaking of "consciousness" we end up misleading ourselves by thinking that there is any sort of thing as consciousness separated from behavioral and linguistic understandings. More generally, many philosophers and scientists have been unhappy about the difficulty of producing a definition that does not involve circularity or fuzziness.

Types of consciousness

Ned Block proposed a distinction between two types of consciousness that he called phenomenal (P-consciousness) and access (A-consciousness). P-consciousness, according to Block, is simply raw experience: it is moving, colored forms, sounds, sensations, emotions and feelings with our bodies and responses at the center. These experiences, considered independently of any impact on behavior, are called qualia. A-consciousness, on the other hand, is the phenomenon whereby information in our minds is accessible for verbal report, reasoning, and the control of behavior. So, when we perceive,

information about what we perceive is access conscious; when we introspect, information about our thoughts is access conscious; when we remember, information about the past is access conscious, and so on. Although some philosophers, such as Daniel Dennett, have disputed the validity of this distinction, others have broadly accepted it. David Chalmers has argued that A-consciousness can in principle be understood in mechanistic terms, but that understanding P-consciousness is much more challenging: he calls this the hard problem of consciousness. Kong Derick has also stated that there are two type of consciousness which are; high level consciousness which he attributes to the mind and low level consciousness which he attributes to the submind.

Some philosophers believe that Block's two types of consciousness are not the end of the story. William Lycan, for example, argued in his book Consciousness and Experience that at least eight clearly distinct types of consciousness can be identified (organism consciousness; control consciousness; consciousness of; state/event consciousness; reportability; introspective consciousness; subjective consciousness; self-consciousness)—and that even this list omits several more obscure forms.

There is also debate over whether or not A-consciousness and P-consciousness always coexist or if they can exist separately. Although P-consciousness without A-consciousness is more widely accepted, there have been some hypothetical examples of A without P. Block for instance suggests the case of a "zombie" that is computationally identical to a person but without any subjectivity. However, he remains somewhat skeptical concluding "I don't know whether there are any actual cases of A-consciousness without P-consciousness, but I hope I have illustrated their conceptual possibility."

8.2 PURE CONSCIOUSNESS

The experience of joy and sorrow is common to all beings and has the same effect on them, though the cause may vary. Sastras call it vritti or a feeling that arises from individual likes and dislikes. So desire or hatred

in beings implies dependency on something or someone. When Arjuna becomes confused about his sense of duty, he experiences sorrow at the thought that he should fight his own kith and kin. Is this war necessary at all, he asks Krishna. What joy can come with killing one's own brothers, preceptors and elders?

Such pondering over issues is characteristic of every jivatma when one is deluded by the pulls of the world and is unable to sift the real from the unreal, pointed out Swami Omkarananda in a discourse. Krishna advises Arjuna to rise above the mundane aspects of life that centre on the concepts of "I" and "Mine." He begins to instruct Arjuna about the knowledge of the self or atma vidya, which alone can give a true perspective about the meaning of life to every jivatma. Realised souls are able to see the self within as something not connected with the physical gross body comprising the mind, intellect and senses. Nor can the subtle body constituted of impressions and vasanas be considered as the self. One's true identity is to be recognised as the essence of "pure consciousness" that is distinct from all else in this universe. It is synonymous with the self and always exists. It is unchanging while fully aware of all the changes in time and space that take place constantly in the universe.

The self is the only Reality, and is the great source of happiness By renouncing all attachment and by meditating on the self, one is sure to realise the Absolute Reality. Meditation on the self is the only valid means to true knowledge.

Mental processes (such as consciousness) and physical processes (such as brain events) seem to be correlated, however the specific nature of the connection is unknown.

The first influential philosopher to discuss this question specifically was Descartes, and the answer he gave is known as Cartesian dualism. Descartes proposed that consciousness resides within an immaterial domain he called res cogitans (the realm of thought), in contrast to the

domain of material things, which he called res extensa (the realm of extension).He suggested that the interaction between these two domains occurs inside the brain, perhaps in a small midline structure called the pineal gland.

Although it is widely accepted that Descartes explained the problem cogently, few later philosophers have been happy with his solution, and his ideas about the pineal gland have especially been ridiculed. However, no alternative solution has gained general acceptance. Proposed solutions can be divided broadly into two categories: dualist solutions that maintain Descartes' rigid distinction between the realm of consciousness and the realm of matter but give different answers for how the two realms relate to each other; and monist solutions that maintain that there is really only one realm of being, of which consciousness and matter are both aspects. Each of these categories itself contains numerous variants. The two main types of dualism are substance dualism (which holds that the mind is formed of a distinct type of substance not governed by the laws of physics) and property dualism (which holds that the laws of physics are universally valid but cannot be used to explain the mind). The three main types of monism are physicalism (which holds that the mind consists of matter organized in a particular way), idealism (which holds that only thought or experience truly exists, and matter is merely an illusion), and neutral monism (which holds that both mind and matter are aspects of a distinct essence that is itself identical to neither of them). There are also, however, a large number of idiosyncratic theories that cannot cleanly be assigned to any of these schools of thought.

Since the dawn of Newtonian science with its vision of simple mechanical principles governing the entire universe, some philosophers have been tempted by the idea that consciousness could be explained in purely physical terms. The first influential writer to propose such an idea explicitly was Julien Offray de La Mettrie, in his book Man a Machine (L'homme machine). His arguments, however, were very abstract. The most influential modern physical theories of consciousness are based on psychology and neuroscience. Theories proposed by neuroscientists such

as Gerald Edelman and Antonio Damasio, and by philosophers such as Daniel Dennett, seek to explain consciousness in terms of neural events occurring within the brain. Many other neuroscientists, such as Christof Koch, have explored the neural basis of consciousness without attempting to frame all-encompassing global theories. At the same time, computer scientists working in the field of artificial intelligence have pursued the goal of creating digital computer programs that can simulate or embody consciousness.

A few theoretical physicists have argued that classical physics is intrinsically incapable of explaining the holistic aspects of consciousness, but that quantum theory may provide the missing ingredients. Several theorists have therefore proposed quantum mind (QM) theories of consciousness. Notable theories falling into this category include the holonomic brain theory of Karl Pribram and David Bohm, and the Orch-OR theory formulated by Stuart Hameroff and Roger Penrose. Some of these QM theories offer descriptions of phenomenal consciousness, as well as QM interpretations of access consciousness. None of the quantum mechanical theories have been confirmed by experiment. Recent publications by G. Guerreshi, J. Cia, S. Popescu, and H. Briegel could falsify proposals such as those of Hameroff, which rely on quantum entanglement in protein. At the present time many scientists and philosophers consider the arguments for an important role of quantum phenomena to be unconvincing.

Apart from the general question of the "hard problem" of consciousness, roughly speaking, the question of how mental experience arises from a physical basis, a more specialized question is how to square the subjective notion that we are in control of our decisions (at least in some small measure) with the customary view of causality that subsequent events are caused by prior events. The topic of free will is the philosophical and scientific examination of this conundrum.

States of consciousness

A Buddhist monk meditating

There are some brain states in which consciousness seems to be absent, including dreamless sleep, coma, and death. There are also a variety of circumstances that can change the relationship between the mind and the world in less drastic ways, producing what are known as altered states of consciousness. Some altered states occur naturally; others can be produced by drugs or brain damage. Altered states can be accompanied by changes in thinking, disturbances in the sense of time, feelings of loss of control, changes in emotional expression, alternations in body image and changes in meaning or significance.

The two most widely accepted altered states are sleep and dreaming. Although dream sleep and non-dream sleep appear very similar to an outside observer, each is associated with a distinct pattern of brain activity, metabolic activity, and eye movement; each is also associated with a distinct pattern of experience and cognition. During ordinary non-dream sleep, people who are awakened report only vague and sketchy thoughts, and their experiences do not cohere into a continuous narrative. During dream sleep, in contrast, people who are awakened report rich and detailed experiences in which events form a continuous progression, which may however be interrupted by bizarre or fantastic intrusions. Thought processes during the dream state frequently show a high level of irrationality. Both dream and non-dream states are associated with severe disruption of memory: it usually disappears in seconds during the non-dream state, and in minutes after awakening from a dream unless actively refreshed.

Research conducted on the effects of partial epileptic seizures on consciousness found that patients who suffer from partial epileptic seizures experience altered states of consciousness. In partial epileptic seizures, consciousness is impaired or lost while some aspects of consciousness, often automated behaviors, remain intact. Studies found that when measuring the qualitative features during partial epileptic seizures, patients exhibited an increase in arousal and became absorbed

in the experience of the seizure, followed by difficulty in focusing and shifting attention.

A variety of psychoactive drugs, including alcohol, have notable effects on consciousness. These range from a simple dulling of awareness produced by sedatives, to increases in the intensity of sensory qualities produced by stimulants, cannabis, empathogens–entactogens such as MDMA ("Ecstasy"), or most notably by the class of drugs known as psychedelics. LSD, mescaline, psilocybin, Dimethyltryptamine, and others in this group can produce major distortions of perception, including hallucinations; some users even describe their drug-induced experiences as mystical or spiritual in quality. The brain mechanisms underlying these effects are not as well understood as those induced by use of alcohol, but there is substantial evidence that alterations in the brain system that uses the chemical neurotransmitter serotonin play an essential role.

There has been some research into physiological changes in yogis and people who practise various techniques of meditation. Some research with brain waves during meditation has reported differences between those corresponding to ordinary relaxation and those corresponding to meditation. It has been disputed, however, whether there is enough evidence to count these as physiologically distinct states of consciousness.

The most extensive study of the characteristics of altered states of consciousness was made by psychologist Charles Tart in the 1960s and 1970s. Tart analyzed a state of consciousness as made up of a number of component processes, including exteroception (sensing the external world); interoception (sensing the body); input-processing (seeing meaning); emotions; memory; time sense; sense of identity; evaluation and cognitive processing; motor output; and interaction with the environment. Each of these, in his view, could be altered in multiple ways by drugs or other manipulations. The components that Tart identified have not, however, been validated by empirical studies.

Research in this area has not yet reached firm conclusions, but a recent questionnaire-based study identified eleven significant factors contributing to drug-induced states of consciousness: experience of unity; spiritual experience; blissful state; insightfulness; disembodiment; impaired control and cognition; anxiety; complex imagery; elementary imagery; audio-visual synesthesia; and changed meaning of percepts.

8.3   SRI AUROBINDO'S PSYCHOLOGY

Sri Aurobindo was a yogi and a mystic. He has said that the materials of his spiritual philosophy were provided by experiences obtained by practice of yoga. This is equally, if not more, true of the system of his metaphysical psychology. Some people who have no or little idea of yoga may wonder what yoga has to do with psychology or at the most they may think that breath control, sitting or lying in particular ways or trying to make the mind quiet by meditation or other means is yoga. In fact, these are specialised methods of yoga but not its essence (Basu 2001).

According to Sri Aurobindo, yoga has the same relation with the inner being and nature of man as science has with the forces of external nature like steam or electricity. Yoga, he says, is scientific in that its methods are observation of and experiment with the states, forces, functions of our subjective, that is, inner being and nature. Yoga is both science and art. It is a science because it knows by experience what man is inwardly and it is an art because it can apply that knowledge to change man's inner being and nature. Yoga is known as a means of attaining spiritual liberation, mukti or moksha. While that is true, it must be clearly understood that by the practice of yoga, it is possible to know the essential nature of our being, our true self. And yoga discovers the nature of our real self as consciousness. And this is where yoga and psychology meet. Indeed yoga is according to Sri Aurobindo practical psychology (Basu 2001). It is also transpersonal psychology, since it goes beyond individual and focuses on the collective, integral growth of consciousness of the whole reality.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1) Explain the Pure consciousness.

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2) Discuss the Sri Aurobindo's Psychology.

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8.4 AUROBINDO AND CONSCIOUSNESS

In expounding his experience-concept of Consciousness, Sri Aurobindo in a letter first states what it is not. On this fundamental point of his psychological system, we would like to quote his own words because they are precise and yet carry a wealth of suggestions and their nuances are difficult to convey in other terms. "Consciousness", he writes, "is not to my experience, a phenomenon dependent on the reactions of personality to the forces of Nature and amounting to no more than a seeing or interpretation of these reactions. If that were so, then when the personality becomes silent and immobile and gives no reactions, as there would be no seeing or interpretative action, there would therefore be no consciousness. That contradicts some of the fundamental experiences of yoga, e.g. a silent and immobile consciousness infinitely spread out, not dependent on the personality but impersonal and universal, not seeing and interpreting contacts but motionlessly self-aware, not dependent on

the reactions, but persistent in itself even when no reactions take place. The subjective personality itself is only a formation of consciousness which is a power inherent, not in the activity of the temporary manifested personality, but in the being, the Self or Purusha" (Ghose, 1969). Several things stand out in this passage which need to be understood clearly. We can only see a few salient points which it is essential to grasp for the understanding of Sri Aurobindo's metaphysical psychology as is done by Arabinda Basu (2001). First, consciousness is not a phenomenon; it does not depend on the reactions of the personality to stimulus from outside or on mental activities. When the mind falls silent and ceases to function, consciousness abides. It is true that ordinary people cannot silence their minds. On the other hand, its experience is not very uncommon. Many people have the experience of a still mind though they do not fall into the state of unconsciousness. Secondly, consciousness is immobile, i.e., not in its essence activity. In the same letter from which a paragraph has been quoted above, Sri Aurobindo says that consciousness is not only a power of knowledge of self and things, it is or has a dynamic and creative energy. It is free to act or not to act and free in action and inaction.

Thirdly, it is universal, spread throughout the cosmos. It is difficult for ordinary people to conceive or imagine the nature of consciousness because it is mistakenly identified with the individual, which is only a formation of consciousness. Fourthly, consciousness is the Self, Atman, the Purusha, the cosmic Soul. Those who are familiar with Vedantic thought may wonder that the Self and the Soul are being mentioned in terms of consciousness. Sri Aurobindo has even said that God is a manifestation of Consciousness. Elaboration of this aspect of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy will take us into deep metaphysics. It is enough for us to say that consciousness, though indeterminable, has the power of self-determination, and its primary self-determinations are the Self, the Soul, God or the Lord. Thus consciousness is the ultimate Reality, it is inherent in existence, it is Existence or sat. Finally, consciousness is self-luminous, sva-prakasa. It is not revealed by anything other than itself; indeed it is in the Light of Consciousness that

everything is revealed and known. Consciousness is Conscious-Force. The Conscious Force hierarchically arranges itself on many levels, on each of which it appears progressively less conscious and less forceful. According to Sri Aurobindo, there are seven principal levels of which Matter is the lowest. He speaks of the Inconscient from which Matter is formed by the completely involved and hidden and to all intents and purposes lost conscious force in it. In Matter consciousness is physical which is the base of the vital and mental consciousness. Mind itself has more than one layer of which the subconscious is now recognised in psychology. The subliminal mind is another level of mind (of consciousness also). The difference between the subconscious and the subliminal is this that the former while conscious in essence is not actually so and hovers between the unconscious and the physical consciousness, the latter is conscious though not fully so. Though the subliminal has a good deal of knowledge in it, it is capable of errors and mistakes (Basu 2001).

8.5 SUBCONSCIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

Sri Aurobindo cites a remarkable example of the "subconscious consciousness". He used this paradoxical phrase for the subconscious to show the formation of consciousness though below our surface mind. An uneducated maidservant was employed in the household of a professor of Hebrew, of which she knew not a word. But as she went on doing her daily chores, she used to hear willy-nilly the ringing tones of the professor's recitation of Hebrew poetry. Slowly the servant could repeat Hebrew verses verbatim. How could she do it? Her conscious mind did not understand or remember a word of what she used to hear, besides, she was using her conscious mind to do her job as best as she could. The purpose of dealing with the subconscious and the subliminal is to show that they are levels of consciousness (Basu 2001). The fact that consciousness is not apparently present in the former and though the latter is conscious in itself, our mind does not know it is so, owing to one of the fundamental principles of the metaphysical psychology, viz., consciousness has the power to self-limit itself and appear as less conscious than it is in its essence.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Relate Aurobindo and Consciousness.

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2. Discuss about Subconscious Consciousness.

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8.6   METAPHYSICS AND PSYCHOLOGY

What is metaphysics and what is psychology? "Metaphysics", writes Sri Aurobindo, "deals with the ultimate cause of things and all that is behind the world of phenomena. As regards mind and consciousness, it asks what they are and how they come into existence, what is their relation to Matter, Life etc. Psychology deals with mind and consciousness and tries to find out not so much their ultimate nature and relations as their actual workings and the rule and law of these workings"(Ghose 1969). Further he says, "Psychology is the science of consciousness and its status and operations in Nature and, if that can be glimpsed or experienced, its status and operations beyond what we know as Nature."(Ghose 1994) This latter idea of psychology will push it to the borders of metaphysical or Vedantic or Yogic psychology. Sri Aurobindo quite clearly reserves the term psychology to the levels of mind and vital in contrast with what pertains to the spiritual soul for which he employs the term psychic. In The Human Cycle he has written that there is the beginning of a

perception that there are behind the economic motives and causes of social and historical development profound psychological, even perhaps soul factors, where also he distinguishes the psychological from the psychic (Ghose 1962). But it will be a mistake to think that because Sri Aurobindo has such a metaphysical experienceconcept of consciousness, he has neglected to deal with the phenomenal aspect of consciousness. He has dealt with human psychology in great detail. Not only that, the material theory of consciousness has engaged his close attention and he has given an objective, dispassionate critique of it. He has described that theory accurately, accepted what is true in it, but also shown where it falls short of accounting for the appearance of intelligence from non-intelligent matter. Needless to say, he rejects the identification of mind and brain which is the thesis of "physiological psychology", a phrase he has employed in his writings on psychology. Incidentally, it is both interesting and instructive to note that he acknowledges that if the brain is damaged, the operations of consciousness are hampered which uses the brain as an instrument. He says consciousness is involved in the brain and that is why conscious activities are accompanied by activities of the brain cells. The materialist hypothesis regarding consciousness, says Sri Aurobindo, is not enough. In fact, sense and reflex action become absurd if we try to explain by it thought and will, the imagination of the poet, the attention of the scientist, the reasoning of the philosopher. Call it mechanical cerebration, if you will, "but no mere mechanism of grey stuff of brain can explain these things; a gland cannot write Hamlet or pulp of brain work out a system of metaphysics." There is a gulf here that cannot be bridged by any mechanical explanation of consciousness. Sri Aurobindo further says that there may be connection of consciousness and an inconscient substance, there may be mutual interpretation, they may act on each other, "but they are and remain things opposite, incommensurate with each other, fundamentally diverse" (Basu 2001). To say that an observing and active consciousness emerges as a character of an eternal Inconscience is to indulge in a self-contradictory affirmation. In fact, Sri Aurobindo himself has not described his system of psychology as "integral psychology". He has employed the very suggestive phrase "complete psychology", which he

says "must be a complex of the science of mind, its operations and its relations to life and body with intuitive and experimental knowledge of the nature of mind and its relations to supermind and spirit" (Ghose 1964). We hold that "consciousness is itself found to be not essentially a process,—although in mind it appears as a process." By its very nature it is a self-existent being. Being or the Self of things can only be known by metaphysical—not necessarily intellectual— knowledge. This self-knowledge has two inseparable aspects, "a psychological knowledge of the process of Being, a metaphysical knowledge of its principles and essentiality" (Ghose 1964 and Basu 2001). Sri Aurobindo is clear that "Vedantic psychology explores the idea and intuition of a higher reality than mind" (Ghose 1994). Therefore for him, "Yogic psychology is an examination of the nature and movements of consciousness as they are revealed to us by the processes and results of Yoga" (Basu 2001). The metaphysical reality is not the subject matter of psychology. Let us be very clear that yoga is practised by something in our nature as human beings. It may discover in us unknown means of knowledge, action and enjoyment and instrument of the direct knowledge of the Self. Thus Vedantic psychology and yogic psychology are significant descriptions of Sri Aurobindo's psychological system in one aspect.

8.7 INTEGRAL YOGA AS APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY

Sri Aurobindo has said, as pointed out above, that metaphysics deals with the fundamental principles of existence and life and in the final analysis it aims at knowing the ultimate Reality. Since yoga is applied psychology aiming at connecting psychological truths with metaphysical principles, its final goal is the Divine. Sri Aurobindo never tires of pointing out that the Divine is the object of the yoga. It is not to become a superman or a great yogi. These aims may be realised in the course of yoga's progress towards the Divine. But what is to be noted especially is that Sri Aurobindo's view, shall we say vision, of the Divine is much more complex than is found in the earlier yogas. The reason is, these other visions are partial and the consequent realisations of God according to them are of one or more than one aspects of God but they do not have

the integral experience of the Supreme. Sri Aurobindo is definitely of the view that the realisations of the Divine obtained by the partial yogas are not integral owing to the fact that they are achieved by levels of consciousness which do not harbour the integral knowledge. This is why he insists that the seeker must arise to the level of vijnana, (the Supermind) because it is that level of consciousness which has inherent in it the integral knowledge. A brief review of the different yogas current in India for thousands of years can demonstrate the truth of Sri Aurobindo's contention regarding the partial character of those spiritual disciplines. Without trying to trace the history of yoga right from the time of the Veda, we refer to the five disciplines still current in India and widely practised. It is also noted that these yogas select one or the other of the principles of Nature instead of taking the whole of life which is the instrument of the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo (Basu 2001).

Hatha yoga for example takes the principle of life in the nervous system as its means. It may arrive at the knowledge of God but, in point of fact, its practices are so complicated and take such a long time and at the same time have to be disconnected with life in general, that it cannot be of any use directly to the goal of the yoga of Sri Aurobindo which is the radical transformation of all Nature down to the physical as a means of integral union with the Divine on all planes of existence. Raja yoga takes mind as the instrument of its discipline. It is a very effective practice and is consummated by the separation of unconscious Prakrti which evolves as the world and all that is in it from Purusa, the pure conscious Soul. Raja yoga does not know of an overall reality like Brahman of the Vedanta. Karma yoga takes the Will as its chief instrument of spiritual discipline. It starts with giving up the desire of fruits of action followed by the perception that the egoistic self is not the doer at all, combined with the perception that universal Nature is the real actor. It ends with surrender of fruits, actions, the ego, all of this to the Supreme Master of Will which brings about the closest possible union with the Divine, the Purushottama, visatetadanantaram.

Jnana yoga utilises the purified intelligence as the chief means for realisation of identity with Brahman which results in reducing the world into an utter unreality. This again is another great yoga the fruit of which, identity with Brahman, is one of the results that can be achieved by the integral yoga. Though Sri Aurobindo believes in the world as a self-manifestation of the dynamic Absolute, it is to be noted that he emphatically says that it is necessary for an integral yogin to have knowledge at a certain stage of the progress of yoga that the world is unreal. Otherwise, he says, there is great possibility that there would be some attachment to something in the world. Bhakti yoga's chief instrument is the heart, the emotional being, and it aims at turning all human emotions towards the Divine who is most prominently looked upon and experienced as the Beloved to whom complete adoration is due (Basu 2001). The integral yoga is integral because it has seen the possibility of a new self-discovery of the Divine in and as completely spiritualised Matter by the supramental Knowledge-Will. And Sri Aurobindo is emphatic that the actualisation of this possibility is inevitable. It is the express purpose "to make Matter aware of God" and to enable it "to remember God." (Basu 2001)

8.8 THE EVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

[In the following extract, written around 1930, we see what the Master himself writes on evolution of consciousness.] "All life here is a stage or a circumstance in an unfolding progressive evolution of a Spirit that has involved itself in Matter and is labouring to manifest itself in that reluctant substance. This is the whole secret of earthly existence." "But the key of that secret is not to be found in life itself or in the body; its hieroglyph is not in embryo or organism,—for these are only a physical means or base: the one significant mystery of this universe is the appearance and growth of consciousness in the vast mute unintelligence of Matter. The escape of Consciousness out of an apparent initial Inconscience,—but it was there all the time masked and latent, for the inconscience of Matter is itself only a hooded consciousness—its struggle to find itself, its reaching out to its own inherent completeness,

perfection, joy, light, strength, mastery, harmony, freedom, this is the prolonged miracle and yet the natural and all-explaining phenomenon of which we are at once the observers and a part, instrument and vehicle." "A Consciousness, a Being, a Power, a Joy was here from the beginning darkly imprisoned in this apparent denial of itself, this original night, this obscurity and nescience of material Nature. That which is and was forever, free, perfect, eternal and infinite, That which all is, That which we call God, Brahman, Spirit, has here shut itself up in its own self-created opposite. The Omniscient has plunged itself into Nescience, the All-Conscious into In conscience, the All-Wise into perpetual Ignorance.

The Omnipotent has formulated itself in a vast cosmic self-driven Inertia that by disintegration creates; the Infinite is self-expressed here in a boundless fragmentation; the All-Blissful has put on a huge insensibility out of which it struggles by pain and hunger and desire and sorrow. Elsewhere the Divine is; here in physical life, in this obscure material world, it would seem almost as if the Divine is not but is only becoming. This gradual becoming of the Divine out of its own phenomenal opposites is the meaning and purpose of the terrestrial evolution." "Evolution in its essence is not the development of a more and more organised body or a more and more efficient life—these are only its machinery and outward circumstance. Evolution is the strife of a Consciousness somnambulated in Matter to wake and be free and find and possess itself and all its possibilities to the very utmost and widest, to the very last and highest. Evolution is the emancipation of a self-revealing Soul secret in Form and Force, the slow becoming of a Godhead, the growth of a Spirit." "In this evolution mental man is not the goal and end, the completing value, the highest last significance; he is too small and imperfect to be the crown of all this travail of Nature. Man is not final, but a middle term only, a transitional being, an instrumental intermediate creature." "This character of evolution and this mediary position of man are not at first apparent; for to the outward eye it would seem as if evolution, the physical evolution at least were finished long ago leaving man behind as its poor best result and no new beings or superior creations were to be expected any longer. But this appears to us

only so long as we look at forms and outsides only and not at the inner significances of the whole process. Matter, body, life even are the first terms necessary for the work that had to be done. New living forms may no longer be appearing freely, but this is because it is not, or at least it is not primarily, new living forms that the Force of evolution is now busied with evolving, but new powers of consciousness. When Nature, the Divine Power, had formed a body erect and empowered to think, to devise, to inquire into itself and things and work consciously both on things and self, she had what she wanted for her secret aim; relegating all else to the sphere of secondary movements, she turned toward that longhidden aim her main highest forces. For all till then was a long strenuously slow preparation; but throughout it the development of consciousness in which the appearance of man was the crucial turning point had been kept wrapped within her as her ultimate business and true purpose."

"This slow preparation of Nature covered immense aeons of time and infinities of space in which they appeared to be her only business; the real business strikes on our view at least when we look with the outward eye of reason as if it came only as a fortuitous accident, in or near the end, for a span of time and in a speck and hardly noticeable corner of one of the smallest provinces of a possibly minor universe among these many boundless finites, these countless universes. If it were so, we could still reply that time and space matter not to the Infinite and Eternal; it is not a waste of labour for That—as it would be for our brief death-driven existences—to work for trillions of years in order to flower only for a moment. But that paradox too is only an appearance—for the history of this single earth is not all the story of evolution—other earths there are even now elsewhere, and even here many earth-cycles came before us, and many are those that will come hereafter."

"Nature laboured for innumerable millions of years to create a material universe of flaming suns and systems; for a lesser but still interminable series of millions she stooped to make this earth a habitable planet. For all that incalculable time she was or seemed busy only with the evolution

of Matter; life and mind were kept secret in an apparent non-existence. But the time came when life could manifest, a vibration in the metal, a growing and seeking, a drawing in and a feeling outward in the plant, an instinctive force and sense, a nexus of joy and pain and hunger and emotion and fear and struggle in the animal,—a first organised consciousness, the beginning of the long-planned miracle."

"Thence forward she was busy no more exclusively with matter for its own sake, but most with matter useful for the expression of life; the evolution of life was now her one intent purpose. And slowly too mind manifested in life, an intensely feeling, a crude thinking and planning vital mind in the animal, but in man the full organisation and apparatus, the developing if yet imperfect mental being, the Manu, the thinking, devising, aspiring, already self-conscient creature. And from that time onward the growth of mind rather than any radical change of life became her shining preoccupation, her wonderful wager. Body appeared to evolve no more; life itself evolved little or only so much in its cycles as would serve to express Mind heightening and widening itself in the living body; an unseen internal evolution was now Nature's great passion and purpose."

"And if Mind were all that consciousness could achieve, if Mind were the secret Godhead, if there were nothing higher, larger, [no] more miraculous ranges, man could be left to fulfil mind and complete his own being and there would or need be nothing here beyond him, carrying consciousness to its summits, extending it to its unwalled vastnesses, plunging with it into depths unfathomable; he would by perfecting himself consummate Nature. Evolution would end in a Man-God, crown of the earthly cycles." "But Mind is not all; for beyond mind is a greater consciousness; there is a supermind and spirit. As Nature laboured in the animal, the vital being, till she could manifest out of him man, the Manu, the thinker, so she is labouring in man, the mental being till she can manifest out of him a spiritual and supramental godhead, the truth conscious Seer, the knower by identity, the embodied Transcendental and Universal in the individual nature."

"From the clod and metal to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from the animal to man, so much has she completed of her journey; a huge stretch or a stupendous leap still remains before her. As from matter to life, from life to mind, so now she must pass from mind to supermind, from man to superman; this is the gulf that she has to bridge, the supreme miracle that she has to perform before she can rest from her struggle and discontent and stand in the radiance of that supreme consciousness, glorified, transmuted, satisfied with her labour." "The subhuman was once here supreme in her, the human replacing it walks now in the front of Time, but still, aim and goal of the future there waits the supramental, the superman, an unborn glory yet unachieved before her." [This is extracted with slight adaptation from an essay written in two pieces "Man and the Supermind" and "The Involved and Evolving Godhead", around 1930. It was first published in the Bulletin in November 1976 as the first of two separate pieces under the title "Evolution"]

Check Your Progress 3

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Discuss Metaphysics and Psychology.

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2. Discuss about Integral Yoga as Applied Psychology.

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3. Discuss the Evolution of Consciousness.

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8.9   LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have seen the basic understanding of transpersonal psychology, as advocated by Sri Aurobindo. We also related it to our collective search for integral development and the evolution of consciousness.

Consciousness at its simplest refers to "sentience or awareness of internal or external existence". Despite centuries of analyses, definitions, explanations and debates by philosophers and scientists, consciousness remains puzzling and controversial, being "at once the most familiar and most mysterious aspect of our lives". Perhaps the only widely agreed notion about the topic is the intuition that it exists. Opinions differ about what exactly needs to be studied and explained as consciousness. Sometimes it is synonymous with 'the mind', other times just an aspect of mind. In the past it was one's "inner life", the world of introspection, of private thought, imagination and volition. Today, with modern research into the brain it often includes any kind of experience, cognition, feeling or perception. It may be 'awareness', or 'awareness of awareness', or self-awareness. There might be different levels or "orders" of consciousness, or different kinds of consciousness, or just one kind with different features. Other questions include whether only humans are conscious or all animals or even the whole universe. The disparate range of research, notions and speculations raises doubts whether the right questions are being asked.

Examples of the range of descriptions, definitions or explanations are: simple wakefulness, one's sense of selfhood or soul explored by "looking

within", or "nothing at all"; being a metaphorical "stream" of contents, or being a mental state, mental event or mental process of the brain; having phanera or qualia and subjectivity; being the 'something that it is like' to 'have' or 'be' it; being the "inner theatre" or the executive control system of the mind.

8.10 KEY WORDS

Purusa: Purusa ("man") is the "self" which pervades the universe. It is one's true self, regarded as eternal and unaffected by external happenings.

Transpersonal psychology: It is a school of psychology that studies the transpersonal, selftranscendent or spiritual aspects of the human experience.

Consciousness: Consciousness at its simplest refers to "sentience or awareness of internal or external existence".

8.11 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How does Aurobindo understand psychic being of Human person.?
2. Explain the higher levels of consciousness.
3. Explain the Pure consciousness
4. Discuss the Sri Aurobindo's Psychology
5. Relate Aurobindo and Consciousness
6. Discuss about Subconscious Consciousness
7. Discuss Metaphysics and Psychology
8. Discuss about Integral Yoga as Applied Psychology
9. Discuss the Evolution of Consciousness

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8.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1`

1. See Section 8.2
2. See Section 8.3

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 8.4
2. See Section 8.5

Check Your Progress 3

1. See Section 8.6
2. See Section 8.7
3. See Section 8.8

UNIT 9: TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECTIVITY

STRUCTURE

9.0   OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- Subjectivity and Lifeworld in Transcendental Phenomenology
- Husserl and the Promise of Time: Subjectivity in Transcendental Phenomenology
- Appearances and Things in Themselves
- The Feder-Garve Review and Kant's Replies
- Kant as a Phenomenalist
- The "Dual Aspect" View

9.1   INTRODUCTION

In the Critique of Pure Reason Kant argues that space and time are merely formal features of how we perceive objects, not things in themselves that exist independently of us, or properties or relations among them. Objects in space and time are said to be "appearances", and he argues that we know nothing of substance about the things in themselves of which they are appearances. Kant calls this doctrine (or set of doctrines) "transcendental idealism", and ever since the publication of the first edition of the Critique of Pure Reason in 1781, Kant's readers have wondered, and debated, what exactly transcendental idealism is, and have developed quite different interpretations. Some, including many of Kant's contemporaries, interpret transcendental idealism as essentially a form of phenomenalism, similar in some respects to that of Berkeley, while others think that it is not a metaphysical or ontological theory at all. There is probably no major interpretive question in Kant's philosophy on which there is so little consensus. This entry provides an introduction to the most important Kantian texts, as well as the interpretive and philosophical issues surrounding them.

9.2 SUBJECTIVITY AND LIFEWORLD IN TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY

Any book about the work of Edmund Husserl will be a book about a certain Husserl. One fact about Husserl's work itself that certainly adds to the variety of approaches taken to his thinking is his huge manuscript output from more than forty years of shorthand-written investigations. The fifty-plus volumes of the Husserliana series of Husserl's writings, most of which are extensive selections from this manuscript output -- with some ten volumes being edited editions of works he himself published -- is itself a daunting wealth of material.[1] But it is made more difficult by the diverse character of so much of this manuscript material -- often inchoate, regularly on different stages or levels of inquiry, sometimes clear advances, sometime tentative efforts that get left aside, etc. They are the raw materials of actual investigations underway where, Husserl often remarked in his correspondence, his real work lay.

Luft knows this situation well, and his Introduction speaks of it. Indeed, he worked with these materials himself, editing one of the recent Husserliana volumes.[2]He is well aware, therefore, that his treatment is that of "a certain Husserl", that his interpretation of Husserl's life's work diverges from other treatments. Yet he hopes the case he makes will be treated seriously; it is very seriously meant and is indeed masterful in the organized assembly of points and texts to support his aim in the study.

As an interpretive synthesis of the books Husserl himself published and a judicious selection from the mountain of his manuscript studies, it is an example of what every scholar of Husserl's thinking is required to do. It tries to determine the interpretive framework that, drawn from the overarching principles -- both positive conceptions and critical methodological points -- actually commands the way Husserl's actual phenomenological investigations proceed in coherence and import up to Husserl's final retrospective on his life's work. In addition, any such interpretive framework has to take into account what those who came after Husserl developed in their own investigations as having some continuity in the same program of phenomenological inquiry. In other words, the framework has to be one that accurately defines phenomenology as a coherent undertaking, yet has sufficient flexibility to allow it to adapt to new insights without distorting or abandoning the defining principles of this program. This also is something Luft well understands, and commits himself to achieving.

Luft neatly summarizes his undertaking in his Introduction, recognizing all this and laying out his ambitious proposal. He is right on target to make the signal feature of Husserl's whole program what Luft terms "The One Structure" -- "in Husserl's terminology, nothing other than the correlational a priori, the essential relation between constituting subject and constituted world" (p. 12, Luft's italics). However, he soon announces what he takes to be "the final shape and ultimate shape of Husserl's phenomenology," namely, "a descriptive-hermeneutic-interpretive analysis of the correlation a priori between subjectivity and

lifeworld," with both these construed genetically and intersubjectively." Put another way, this means that subjectivity and lifeworld taken together "constitute[3] culture and the human being in the lifeworld as a cultural being" (p. 27, Luft's italics).

The plan of Luft's book displays how he carries this out. Part 1, "Husserl: The Outlines of the Transcendental-Phenomenological System," has six chapters: Chapter 1 is on "the natural attitude"; Chapter 2 is on the "phenomenological reduction," and some "methodological problems" are taken up in Chapter 3; Chapter 4 is on the "lifeworld," with Chapter 5 on "facticity and historicity" in the lifeworld; Part 1 ends with Chapter 6, a crucial "systematic of the phenomenological system," specifically what Luft terms "the dialectics of the absolute."

Part 2, "Husserl, Kant, and Neo-Kantianism: From Subjectivity to Lifeworld as a World of Culture," examines the philosophic context most germane to Husserl's phenomenology, in a most interesting set of treatments: Chapter 7 on the transcendental idealisms of Husserl and Paul Natorp; Chapter 8 on the method for treating transcendental subjectivity (principally "reconstruction" and "construction") in Natorp and Husserl; Chapter 9 on pursuing "hermeneutic" phenomenology within the conjunction of Husserl, Natorp, and Ernst Cassirer; and Chapter 10 a critical appraisal of Cassirer's "philosophy of symbolic forms."

Part 3, " Toward a Husserlian Hermenutics," has Luft in Chapter 11 integrating his findings regarding Husserl in interaction with NeoKantianism, but now melding Luft's understanding of Husserl on subjectivity with certain features of Hans-Georg Gadamer's theory of hermeneutics -- principally the latter's "effective history [Wirkungsgeschichte]," but also certain overlooked Husserlian elements in Gadamer's work. Chapter 12 is then a final summation on Husserl's "hermeneutical phenomenology as a philosophy of culture," the consummative form of his phenomenological trajectory.

Notes

The key elements to making Luft's proposal plausible, and persuasive, lie in how he treats the core operation of "constitution" as the defining "doing" on the part of "transcendental subjectivity" in its intrinsic inseparability from its constitutum, "the world," especially inasmuch as this constitutum -- disclosed via epochē-prepared and reduction-guided reflection -- is the world of human being's ever-operative, living experiential engagement, i.e., the lifeworld. I the human -- reflecting on this One Structure as the fundamental determinant of my own being (and, intersubjectively, our own being) in the genuine "phenomenological attitude" -- have toactually recognize the subject-relatedness of any object experienced in the world precisely as transcendentally effectuated in the world-bound experiencing life that is mine at every concretely actual moment. Indeed, this effectuation is the very "operation" that makes that experience of mine the actual grasp of a real object in the real world.

In this way, Husserl's phenomenology is able a) to define its distinction from NeoKantianism (its close cousin, as Luft explains in detail),[4] and b) to display theconcreteness of findings that is Gadamer's strength in his hermeneutical philosophy, as Luft interprets Gadamer. The only point to add here to represent Luft's synthesizing vision is that "the actual grasp of a real object in the real world" (as I just put it) must be fleshed out to be more than just finding a bare objective object. In everyday living it will always be an object not only rich in perceptual differentiations in this experience, but also rich in cultural meaning. Needless to say, also, our daily life is far more than just dealing with objects -- there are the people and our interchange with them. Our world is not just a bare natural world, but a multi-dimensional cultural world and a home world.

Luft elaborates this comprehensive conception in remarkable detail through the three parts of his book, artfully supporting his interpretation with quoted material, often from the recently published editions of Husserl's manuscript studies -- not to mention his comparing or contrasting the ideas of Husserl with those of Natorp or Cassirer or Gadamer through both interpretive analyses and deft quotations from

each of these thinkers. However, despite the elaborate layout, there remains ambiguity in two core features of this effort that I do not find quite adequately addressed.

The first ambiguity lies in the shift from a person's natural, world-bound reflection to a genuinely transcendental reflection. This shift to the transcendental, Luft emphasizes, does not take us out of the world, but enables us to "decenter" ourselves from naively taking the world for granted as simply there, and to take instead a view upon the world precisely as constituted by subjectivity. Yet it is a simple change of attitude from the naively "natural attitude" to the enlightened "transcendental attitude" (see pp. 13-16, 18-21, and 93-101). To put it another way, the world does not change in how we actually see it, in how we actually find it in perceptual experience, but in how we think about the world -- or, more accurately: it is a change from not thinking about it at all to actually thinking about it in terms of our transcendental relationship to it in experience, in the critical way phenomenology proposes.

Yet reflection on the transcendental cannot mean that we just form the concept of transcendental world-constituting "subjectivity," that we just turn to thinking about it. We are supposed to find that constitution and the "agency" that "effectuates" it in our own experiential situation as we now "look" at it; after all, we are to be doing phenomenology here, not speculation. But Luft argues that as Husserl advanced (and under probing engagement with Natorp), actually finding ultimate subjectivity in its constitutive genetic depths was not possible! The only way to characterize ultimate constituting subjectivity is through a method termed reconstruction (see pp. 240-253). This would avoid the danger of thinking that the working of my own subjectivity, in experiencing things in the world, was as such the concretely actual working of transcendental "doing" (see pp. 90-100 and 114-116; also pp. 20-21). The change to transcendental phenomenologizing would be to shift to having a genuine transcendental "operation" in reflective view.

Notes

The problem with this, however, is that the reconstruction had to be based upon the furthest depth to which phenomenological descriptive analysis could reach inactually finding structures within myself -- in this case the dynamic of temporalizing genetic process, Urzeitigung -- by reflecting upon my own experiencing -- in this case, upon the temporality of my living process of experience. So while Luft argues this gets us to the true transcendental agency of constitutive genesis, he also argues that it amounts to Husserl's no longer working in terms of intuitionally finding the genuinely transcendental, but by a transcendental reconstructive interpretation of what I am capable of finding. Phenomenology at this point becomes hermeneutical (p. 250) (and even speculative, p. 252). Nonetheless, as an interpretive construction based on what I find of temporal process in my own experiencing, the reconstruction is still based on the descriptive features found of my human experiential subjectivity (one form of this necessity is explained on pp. 91-100), except that the interpretative re-description of it "discloses" its transcendental character. However, one still has to ask by what terms the hermeneutical re-description transforms my experienced temporality into being transcendental. In short, whether reconstructive, or hermeneutical, there is obscurity and questionability in the actual disclosure of the true transcendental-that-constitutes.

A related issue is the second ambiguity I find in Luft's treatment, namely, in the way Husserl's lifeworld becomes the human cultural world. This is central to Luft's finding the lifeworld in possession of the hermeneutic diversity that he finds Gadamer so successful in treating. The difference introduced here is that now, in the melding of Husserl and Gadamer, the diversity of sense in different cultures has a transcendental subjective source, absent, Luft asserts, in Gadamer's work.

However, Luft here glosses over the distinction between essential structure and variant possibilities -- or, more fully put: between a) lifeworld as the ground of the experiential as such in The One Structure, in the primary sense-modal qualitative concreteness of experiential life, and b) the way the term lifeworld can also mean the concrete totality of a

cultural world: the historical ensemble of communal practices, traditions, institutions, and endowments of a particular people. To dissolvethis distinction allows Luft to build an interpretation of Husserl that enables Husserl's work to converge with Gadamer's, transforming Husserl's phenomenology thereby into a theory of the intrinsic hermeneutic character of all experience; every human experience becomes herewith a "taking of" something as this or that, seemingly placing differences between different peoples' experiences on a ground-level, in basic perceptual experience itself as such.

However, to elide the distinction between constituted fundamentals and variant contingent realizations is to remove from divergent cultural worlds that within them which enables the distinction between what is there and what is not there in being experienced -- along with such "dimensions" as spatial and temporal determinacies (in phenomenological terms: the horizonalities) holding (geltend) in what in actuality is experientially there.True, this basic distinction of the two senses of lifeworld is not always clear in Husserl's writings, published or unpublished, but it is nonetheless one that many see as implied and needed throughout his work. It seems to me, then, that rejecting the distinction to jettison one of the fundamental features in Husserl's whole program goes too far in accommodating Gadamer's work.

In short, while I find Luft's study to be both insightful and admirable, the "certain Husserl" whose work is represented there becomes somewhat less than the Husserl of his true consummate accomplishment. In addition, Luft opts for positive theoretical security over one of Husserl's primary features, namely, that in the end his work remains full of questioning and uncertainty. For such remaining questions, reiterated or newly emergent, are deeply illuminating. They necessitate beginning again in phenomenology, but at a stage of extraordinary advance and penetration into fundamentals on the basis of which further insights await being gained.

9.3 HUSSERL AND THE PROMISE OF TIME: SUBJECTIVITY IN TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY

Husserl and the Promise of Time: Subjectivity in Transcendental Phenomenology

Nicolas de Warren, Husserl and the Promise of Time: Subjectivity in Transcendental Phenomenology, Cambridge UP, 2009, 309pp., $90.00 (hbk), ISBN 9780521876797.

Reviewed byKenneth Knies, Husserl Archives, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

We are resending this review because the earlier version contained an editorial error that altered the reviewer's meaning in the first paragraph. We apologize for the error.

The topic of de Warren's study, inner-time consciousness, is hardly discussed in phenomenological circles without an invocation of its "notorious difficulty." Indeed, Husserl never ceased returning to what he himself often called the most difficult of all phenomenological problems. The difficulties of time-consciousness, moreover, do not concern a particularly vexing topic within a defined field and method of philosophical research. As de Warren's title indicates, the very promise of phenomenology as transcendental philosophy hinges upon its ability to describe the concrete experiencing in which all possible domains of transcendent being are displayed. This experiencing is itself temporal in its nature or "sense of being" (30). Coming to terms with the difficulties of time-consciousness is thus necessary if descriptions of phenomenologically defined themes are not to remain ignorant of the

most basic structures inherent in experience itself. This task that Husserl has bequeathed to his followers is complicated by the fact that his on-going efforts to understand time not only trace a course of self-criticism but also attain a dizzying level of abstraction and diagrammatic modeling. The danger is that engaging the analytic difficulties of Husserl's account will empty the time problem of its profundity. The question that was to lead phenomenological investigation into the most intimate core of subjectivity would instead occupy the mind with logical constructions and conceptual puzzles that fail to resonate with our unceasing sense of ourselves as living through time.

Phenomenologists, historians of modern philosophy, and philosophers of time should all benefit from de Warren's confrontation with the difficulties of time-consciousness. De Warren's study operates with an impressive density of insight at multiple levels. It explains the methodological importance of time-consciousness for Husserl's philosophical program. It clearly presents the historical developments in the questioning of time most relevant to Husserl's inheritance of the problem from Brentano. It identifies the special difficulties posed for phenomenology by the question of time, and traces one path along which Husserl made progress in resolving them. Finally, it indicates how Husserl's mature understanding of time contributes to an account of inter-subjectivity and genesis within a transcendental framework. In all of this, de Warren confronts the complexity of Husserl's descriptions without losing sight of the fact that they are meant to answer to and make comprehensible our rich awareness of being in time. This book is a bold traversal of territory scouted and surveyed by pioneers like Bernet, Brough, Held, Lohmar, Kortooms, Sokolowski and Zahavi. It is not simply an exercise in Husserl scholarship, but an original "take" on what Husserl was grappling with in thinking about time. Its lack of encyclopedic breadth in its treatment of Husserl is more than made up for in its direct articulation of a compelling, if contentious, philosophy of time.1

De Warren's most forceful presentation of the methodological importance of time-consciousness for phenomenology is based on Iso Kern's three-fold approach to the transcendental phenomenological reduction.2 Phenomenological investigation begins with the suspension of one's belief in the existence of a transcendent world as the context in which experience of the world takes place. This suspension, for Husserl, has the capacity to reveal my own experiencing as the dimension in which everything worldly, including myself taken as a psycho-physical organism, acquires whatever meaning and validity it has. As such, experience is shown to be transcendental or world-constituting rather than empirical or mundane. Husserl's basic epistemological conviction is that if it takes shape in a method appropriate to its subject matter, reflection on the eidetic structures of transcendental experience will progressively fulfill the highest goals of philosophy as a theory of knowledge and the universe of knowable being. Following Kern's approach, the reduction to transcendental subjectivity can be formulated in both Cartesian and Kantian registers. Construed as the fulfillment of a Cartesian impulse, the reduction reveals subjectivity as an indubitable foundation for knowledge. The inerrant statement "I am thinking" refers to a dimension of immanence whose self-possession and certainty remains uncompromised by every conceivable state of affairs. The broadly Kantian formulation focuses on the accomplishments of subjectivity as the condition for world-constitution. Here, the reduction discloses "how experience is at all possible for consciousness in the form of its possible intelligibility" (28-9). In other words, it allows us to view regions of being through the meaning-bestowing acts of consciousness to which they are necessarily correlative.

De Warren's basic claim here is that these two aspects of reduction, and everything that they promise regarding a transcendental theory of knowledge, depend upon a third dimension of the reduction, the accomplishment of which requires a novel insight into time. This third formulation is influenced by Brentano. It focuses on subjectivity as concrete, self-aware experiencing (29). The return to the cogito is not reducible to an axiom because it is rooted in my self-awareness in an act

of cogitating. Likewise, the conditioning of all domains of reality in the accomplishments of transcendental subjectivity does not provide rules that "legislate experience"; instead "experience is the performance, or accomplishment of consciousness" (32). To understand how subjectivity is a foundation and source of world-constitution, Husserl must capture the concrete way in which consciousness is "for itself" in its accomplishments. As de Warren points out, the being of consciousness, for Husserl, "is implicitly recognized as temporal through and through" (40); "consciousness is given to itself, or lived as an experience, in an intrinsically temporal manner" (44). In keeping with this appeal to an "implicit recognition," de Warren first advances his perspective without turning directly to the analysis of time-consciousness. Instead, he indicates the universal importance of temporality through a discussion of the synthetic and intentional character of consciousness (largely in terms of Ideas I and Cartesian Meditations). A transcendent being is displayed in an unfolding synthesis of actual and possible experiences in which an object's sense is continually enriched. The intentional and immanent synthesizing of consciousness allows us to catch sight of why time will provide the key to understanding the being of consciousness (30), as well as the "origin of the difference between … mind and world" (47). De Warren's approach to time through the reduction to concrete lived experience also suggests, from the beginning, that our perplexity about time is linked with our perplexity about who we are (3).

Throughout, de Warren's presentation of basic phenomenological concepts is rich in intuition and makes use of examples in a way that is fruitful, often creative, and never indulgent. The Husserl specialist will not feel subjected to a rehearsal of accepted doctrine, nor will those somewhat unfamiliar with phenomenology feel overwhelmed by a technical, empty jargon. That said, philosophers from perspectives outside the orbit of transcendental idealism will likely find that the book too easily assents to unlikely theses about the absolute nature of consciousness. De Warren does not introduce or advocate transcendental phenomenology via the problem of time, but rather addresses time as the fundamental problem of transcendental phenomenology. Having outlined

the methods and themes most relevant to phenomenology's epistemological aspirations, de Warren will show how Husserl's discovery of a "transcendental absolute" in the immanent being of consciousness remains a presentiment that only attains concrete confirmation in continual explorations of time (48).

De Warren prepares us to think along with Husserl by reviewing the historical considerations that shaped Brentano's orientation toward the problem of time. Husserl's 1904/1905 lectures "On Inner Time-Consciousness" (hereafter ITC) proceed through a direct engagement with Brentano's theory of proteraesthesis (perception of the earlier-than). It is thus important to understand the historical provenance of Brentano's theory and what he hoped to accomplish with it. De Warren's reflections here are meant to clarify what is original in Husserl's contribution vis-à-vis the tradition and to identify the motivations that led Brentano to approach the vast question of time through this particular entryway. The treatments of Aristotle, Locke and Brentano himself should be read with these aims in mind. They are not full-blown explorations of what these philosophers had to say about time.

Condensing de Warren's presentations, we conclude that the most significant outcomes of Brentano's critical understanding of Aristotle and Locke are the following: a) any psychology that presupposes a lapse of time as the basis for a distinction between perception of the present and recollection of the past is inadequate because the original constitution of specific temporal modes — lapse or succession itself — must be accounted for; likewise, the telling of time according to physical motions presupposes an experience of now, before and after that has to be explained as a conscious accomplishment; b) in the account of the experience of succession, it is not sufficient to appeal to a present retention of what was before conscious. One must describe the modification through which the past content is apprehended as not still present; additionally, c) one faces the problem that in reflection we clearly discover our experiencing itself as a temporal event. Because accounting for the consciousness of succession via the succession of

consciousness would lead to an infinite regress, it seems that the pre-reflective awareness of succession depends upon the relation of the earlier and the later in a single act of consciousness. On the basis of this critical historical understanding, Brentano tries to discover the origin of the concept of time in a form of sensibility in which the earlier-than is given along with the present (proteros + aisthesis).

Within the framework of intentional psychology and its phenomenological transformation, de Warren presents an analysis of the differences between Brentano's and Husserl's theories of proteraisthesis or "primary memory." More important to de Warren's own account, however, is that we recognize a perspective from which Brentano's theory and Husserl's critique share a common shortcoming. It is in working through this initial shortcoming that Husserl will develop what de Warren considers to be his mature position. This position, in turn, will motivate de Warren to considerations and emphases of his own.

The key here is how de Warren situates both Brentano and the Husserl of the ITC lectures in relation to William Stern's 1897 essay "Mental Presence-Time," which presents a critique of the "dogma of momentary consciousness" (91-6). On the one hand, Husserl explicitly makes use of Stern in critiquing Brentano. On the other, Husserl will only accept Stern's critique into the heart of his own analysis after "unwittingly" succumbing to the dogma himself (135). Put simply, the dogma of momentary consciousness is the assumption that the act of consciousness that displays succession must contain its contents simultaneously.

Brentano's theory of primary memory roots our sense of the just-past in a modification of what is authentically given in sensible presence. The modified content, e.g. the bang I have just heard, is produced by the imagination as a non-intuitive phantasm (as opposed to the intuitive reproductions of memory) through original association with the present perception along with which it is given. This modification is automatic, irrepressible, and affects the present sensation in all its qualities. Crucially, what is now perceived and the modified just-past necessarily

"form a single unity of consciousness" (86). Brentano's account of primary memory participates in the doctrine of momentary consciousness because the form of this unity is momentary simultaneity. As de Warren puts it, Brentano's is a theory of the "representation of succession in simultaneity" (91). For Brentano, "there is no perception of the present without an incidental grasp of the immediate past … but likewise … there is no perception of the immediate past, but only a perception of the momentary present" (86). In the immediacy of the perceptual now, I am aware of the just-past as a phantasm. Further, there is no original association attached to self-consciousness (86). Pre-reflective consciousness in no way experiences itself as a just-past phantasm: "the primary and secondary objects of time-consciousness — the now and the just-now — are encased within the simultaneity of one act of consciousness" (90).

Husserl's reaction to Brentano is presented by de Warren as an effort to attain what the neologism proteraesthesis implies. This entails recognizing that the just-past appears in perception and enjoys an "intuitive continuity with the actual now" (88). The just-past is not an imaginary reproduction that dwells like a shadow in the immediacy of the perceived present, but a modalization within the perception itself (132). Leading the reader through one of Husserl's famous diagrams of "running-off modes," de Warren introduces the three-fold intentionality (retention, primal impression, protention) by which perceptual acts constitute an unfolding time-object (as just-now, actually now, and almost-now). De Warren's analysis of this phenomenological staple is crisp and instructive. His focus is on how the co-operation of the three-fold apprehension accounts for the perception of an "in betweenness" without which musical structure, for instance, would be impossible (129). The now itself has a "transitional character," and is given "as it is running-off" (118). At any given now point, which de Warren emphasizes is a useful abstraction (122-3), just-past notes are retained (heard) as earlier in relation to the actual note. This relation of earlier and later in the unity of what is now and just-past is itself given as running

off into a past of continually further displaced pasts, each with its own temporal relata:

In every now-phase within the consciousness of a time-object we have a … consciousness of the succession of now-phases belonging to the time object … as well as a consciousness of the running-off continuity of each now phase, in relation to the actual now-phase of consciousness, but also in relative relation to each elapsing now-phase within the immediate past as a whole (125).

De Warren anticipates that this double continuity will be referred not only to the time-objects displayed in perceptual acts but also, "in some sense yet to be determined" (116), to perceptual acts themselves. It seems evident that my reading of a sentence not only constitutes a phased build-up of words that itself continually contracts and sinks away into the no-longer, but that the reading itself is experienced as somehow enduring and passing. By recognizing what Stern calls the "temporal distension" of acts as they disclose the "temporal extension" of objects, Husserl challenges the dogma of momentary consciousness. Yet, according to de Warren, even in his effort to avoid the infinite regress that this challenge precipitates, Husserl will at first reintroduce the dogma at the level of absolute consciousness.

In this connection, de Warren undertakes a critique of Husserl's early apprehension-content-object theory of intentionality. We can here only bluntly indicate the concerns driving it. The dogma of simultaneity continues to undercut the genuine transcendence of the past if the constitution of temporal modes occurs through the apprehension of contents that are themselves temporally neutral, or, by default, present (135). If acts and sensa as well as objects enjoy some form of pre-reflective temporal dispersal as unfolding unities, there must be a consciousness that displays this dispersal, and the problem reemerges on a second level. Is the displaying simultaneous with what it displays? De Warren will also object to any account that avoids treating time-constituting consciousness as itself a temporal process at the cost of

construing it as a non-dynamic, self-transparent, tripartite faculty of the soul (107). For de Warren, there is no static openness to time in which temporally determined unities would be constituted, but which itself would not flow — whatever "flowing" may turn out to mean here. In a pointed formulation, he writes that "the very self-givenness of consciousness is temporal and temporary" (168). It seems that if it is genuinely temporal, a consciousness of the now/just-past cannot be entirely present to itself and its immanent content. De Warren suggests that Husserl too would remain captive to dogma if pre-reflective acts are to be arrayed as quasi-objects before the disengaged spectatorship of a time-constituting consciousness that is without internal differentiation and senses itself non-ecstatically in a standing now.3

The turning point in the text consists in de Warren's effort to account for the non-simultaneity of time-consciousness through analogy with forms of experience in which consciousness is given for itself as non-present in the now. De Warren here looks to Husserl's analyses of image-consciousness, imagination and memory.4 The crucial insight is that in an act of imaginative seeing of X, for instance, the seeing of the imagined object as irreal is itself given as incompatible, discontinuous and non-simultaneous with my accompanying consciousness of actually imagining seeing X. De Warren speaks of a "double-consciousness" that is "contemporaneous without being simultaneous with itself" (158). I who "see" the imagined X and I who imagine I am seeing are one and the same, but are given through "the unity of consciousness as a distance within itself" (158). The quasi-seeing that is contemporaneous with my (absolute) consciousness of imagining, "is itself not present, or now, in immanent consciousness" (165). The reader will have to judge whether the careful analyses in these sections make comprehensible the paradoxical description "contemporaneous but not simultaneous."

De Warren next traces a current in Husserl's post-ITC development that admits an analogous form of non-coincidence into the core of inner time-consciousness and thus challenges "the previously unsuspected assumption that a consciousness of the past is itself present for itself"

(170). His focus remains the problem of retention. De Warren will argue that the way consciousness retends itself (lengthwise intentionality) in intending its object (transverse intentionality) justifies the characterization of absolute consciousness as temporal life without reducing the consciousness of succession to the succession of consciousness. In sum, his thesis is that prior to any reflection, recollection, or indeed any discrete act of consciousness, self-awareness is a kind of ur-event involving a retention of myself as absent. De Warren's discussions of self-retention consistently play up the emptying, absenting function of retention as opposed to its "holding on" to the just-past in the present: "rather than constitute givenness in terms of presence, retention constitutes an original givenness of absence" (247). In this sense, retention is an original constitution of the past as a not-now without basis in any actually present content. The retended perceptual consciousness, for de Warren, is "de-presentified" and yet together with the originating consciousness. In a smart expression, he writes that "retentional modification and original impression are given pairwise 'at the same time' but not as the same time" (183). The double intentionality of retention thus constitutes the temporality of perceptual consciousness itself, although "in a different manner" than the temporal object it brings into view. For de Warren, inner time-consciousness constitutes itself as this double differentiation: from its object displayed in the retentional field, and of itself as absented in retention (176, 290). Husserl's metaphor of an absolute "flow" is justified because flow is equivalent to self-transcendence and differentiation: "the term 'flow' means, therefore, not duration — something enduring or given over or in time — but the form of always becoming other than myself" (205). In the end, de Warren will have Husserl identify the "self-appearance" of consciousness along its lengthwise intentionality with its self de-presentification (256).

Retention is always described as "working counter" to an original impression, "the well-spring of the visibility and affective force of lived-experience" (171). De Warren rightfully insists that it would be nonsensical to speak of the retention as "negating" the impression from

the outside. The impression itself rather "irrupts in an interplay of retentional consciousness"; and decisively "the now is no longer than the retention of what no longer is" (171). If the retentional field is a comet's tail, there is no experience of the head as ahead. The abstract distinction between impression and retention, (actually inseparable moments in the logical sense), creates the dynamic image of a tension between a fullness of presence that is "inhibited from within" or "reversed in mid-stream" by a de-presencing inevitably occurring together with it (183). In his reading of the Bernau Manuscripts, de Warren will trace how "this tension between the poles of retentional modification and original presentation" is "displaced onto the poles of retention and protention" (199). Husserl now explicitly conceives the original impression as a fulfillment of protentional consciousness. Once impression is conceived as fulfillment, de Warren emphasizes the "absolute novelty" by virtue of which the arriving now "always surpasses our expectation." There is an "alterity of the new" that "interrupts from within … in such a manner that consciousness cannot recuperate itself entirely despite its own accomplishment in the folding and unfolding of temporality" (218). Indeed, de Warren's downplaying of fulfillment leads him to characterize absolute consciousness as my being retentionally too late for myself (already having escaped myself), surpassed by myself in the novelty of the now (surprising myself as origin), and protentionally too early for myself (expecting myself as what I am not) (255-8). This thoroughgoing self-transcending in time is "the movement of life itself, not the failure of consciousness to coincide with itself but rather the success of missing itself in such a way that consciousness remains open to itself and the world" (259).

Let us here introduce two critical considerations. First, briefly, de Warren's strong emphasis on the emptying, withholding and forgetting functions of retention would seem to cause difficulties in understanding its constitutive role in the disclosure of transcendent time-objects. The clarity and vivacity of an unfolding melody or sentence seems to take shape in the thickness of the retentional field itself. Perhaps this distinction is recognized in de Warren's constant warning that retention

does not retend its time-object "in the same manner" as it does immanent consciousness of that object. Second, and more generally, the reader may wonder whether de Warren gives a satisfactory account of why the original consciousness of inner-time should not entail an experience of ceaseless self-fulfillment or self-becoming as fundamentally as one of self-alteration and missing. As we saw above, de Warren interprets the self-accomplishment of consciousness in the folding and unfolding of time as the subordinate clause, the "despite" of time-consciousness. Why? And what is this folding and unfolding that would suggest self-possession? The key to posing this problem within Husserl's framework might lie in drawing out the consequences of protention's involvement in the self-constitution of the "flow" of absolute consciousness. As de Warren himself notes, in addition to foreshadowing the content of the almost-now on the basis of retentions, protention also protends the running-off modes as yet further sunken away as well as the abiding openness of the protentional horizon as such (197, 199). The necessity of retentional modification in consciousness is not a blind law, but itself given in the form of anticipated fulfillment. If it is legitimate to base existential conclusions about "myself" upon time as the most fundamental medium of my life, shouldn't this movement of "general fulfillment"5 motivate conclusions that would balance those de Warren gleans from the self-missing of time-consciousness?

In the final third of his text, de Warren cashes in his emphasis on the de-presentation at the heart of pre-reflective self-awareness in a number of ways. In a remarkably economic critique, he argues that the Derridian deconstruction of transcendental subjectivity in Husserl depends upon a basic misunderstanding of time-consciousness. Most crucially, Derrida construes retention as a restitution of presence (and in this sense similar to recollection) whereas we learn from de Warren that it is primarily a de-presentification that accompanies and reverses original presentation in "mid-stream." De Warren's argument against entertaining an external "threat" to the immanence of consciousness is essentially that it is already "broken from within" (268). Perhaps of more general interest will be the account of the transcendence of Others that de Warren's

treatment of time makes possible. The link between the problems of time and the Other is that they both engage the basic epistemic goals of phenomenology in regard to the problem of what is irreducible to self-presence. As with time, so with the Other: "the challenge is to understand the givenness of absence without undermining the phenomenological adherence to the original givenness of presence, or evidence, as the foundation for all constitution" (215). In an incisive reading of the fifth of the Cartesian Meditations, de Warren shows how the presence of alterity of the other is required by phenomenology's endeavor to account for the being of an objective world. The highlight here is his provocative suggestion that appresentation of the Other is best understood as exhibiting a "headless temporality" where retentions lack a "stabilizing center in the arc of my living presence" (248). Because such retentions were never originally present for me, they cannot bear a telos to fulfillment in recollection. Hence, "no demand is made on the Other to be given as itself and this restraint is a novel form of transcendence and constitution" (249). The book concludes by indicating how the study of time-consciousness, which clarifies the event of phenomenality at a level where "nothing yet happens," prepares the analysis of subjectivity in its concrete becoming as an egological monad (275). Topics here include the constitution of possibility and actuality, potentiality, and associative synthesis.

De Warren's text is a densely woven fabric that incorporates a broad range of phenomenological themes. Where it is not systematic, it is suggestive, and will serve as an invitation to further reflection.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Discuss Subjectivity and Lifeworld in Transcendental Phenomenology.

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2. Discuss Husserl and the Promise of Time: Subjectivity in Transcendental Phenomenology.

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3. Describe appearances and Things in Themselves.

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9.4 APPEARANCES AND THINGS IN THEMSELVES

In the first edition (A) of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, published in 1781, Kant argues for a surprising set of claims about space, time, and objects:

- Space and time are merely the forms of our sensible intuition of objects. They are not beings that exist independently of our intuition (things in themselves), nor are they properties of, nor relations among, such beings. (A26, A33)

- The objects we intuit in space and time are appearances, not objects that exist independently of our intuition (things in themselves). This is also true of the mental states we intuit in introspection; in "inner sense" (introspective awareness of my inner states) I intuit only how I appear to myself, not how I am "in myself". (A37–8, A42)

Notes

- We can only cognize objects that we can, in principle, intuit. Consequently, we can only cognize objects in space and time, appearances. We cannot cognize things in themselves. (A239)
- Nonetheless, we can think about things in themselves using the categories (A254).
- Things in themselves affect us, activating our sensible faculty (A190, A387).

In the "Fourth Paralogism" Kant defines "transcendental idealism":

I understand by the **transcendental idealism** of all appearances [*Erscheinungen*] the doctrine that they are all together to be regarded as mere representations and not as things in themselves [*nicht als Dinge an sich selbst ansehen*], and accordingly that space and time are only sensible forms of our intuition, but not determinations given for themselves or conditions of objects as things in themselves [*als Dinge an sich selbst*]. (A369; the *Critique* is quoted from the Guyer & Wood translation (1998))

Ever since 1781, the meaning and significance of Kant's "transcendental idealism" has been a subject of controversy. Kant's doctrines raise numerous interpretive questions, which cluster around three sets of issues:

- (a)*The nature of appearances.* Are they (as Kant sometimes suggests) identical to representations, i.e., states of our minds? If so, does Kant follow Berkeley in equating bodies (objects in space) with ideas (representations)? If not, what are they, and what relation do they have to our representations of them?
- (b)*The nature of things in themselves*. What can we say positively about them? What does it mean that they are not in space and time? How is this claim compatible with the doctrine that we cannot know anything about them? How is the claim that they affect us compatible with that doctrine? Is Kant committed to the *existence* of things in themselves, or is the concept of a "thing in itself" merely the concept of a way objects might be (for all we know)?

- (c)*The relation of things in themselves to appearances*. Is the appearance/thing in itself distinction an ontological one between two different kinds of objects? If not, is it a distinction between two aspects of one and the same kind of object? Or perhaps an adverbial distinction between two different ways of considering the same objects?

Sections 2–6 examine various influential interpretations of transcendental idealism, focusing on their consequences for (a)–(c). Section 7 is devoted more narrowly to the nature of things in themselves, topic (b), and the related Kantian notions: *noumena*, and the transcendental object. The primary focus will be the *Critique of Pure Reason* itself; while transcendental idealism, arguably, plays an equally crucial role in the other *Critiques*, discussing them would take us too far afield into Kant's ethics, aesthetics, and teleology. While transcendental idealism is a view both about space *and* time, and thus of objects of outer sense as well as inner sense (my own mental states), this entry will focus on Kant's views about space and outer objects. Kant's transcendental idealist theory of time is too intimately tied up with his theory of the self, and the argument of the transcendental deduction, to discuss here (see Falkenstein 1991; Van Cleve 1999: 52–61; and Dunlop 2009 for more on Kant's theory of time).

Before discussing the details of different interpretations, though, it will be helpful if readers have an overview of some relevant texts and some sense of their *prima facie* meaning. The interpretation of these texts offered in this section is provisional; later, we will see powerful reasons to question whether they are correct. Since some scholars claim there is a change in Kant's doctrine from the A edition of 1781 to the B edition of 1787, we will begin by restricting attention to the A edition. Here it is discusses what relevance the changes made in the B edition have for the interpretation of transcendental idealism. However, following standard scholarly practice, for passages present in both editions, the A page number followed by the B page number is given (e.g., A575/B603). Works other than the *Critique* are cited by volume in the "Academy" edition of Kant's work (Ak.), followed by the page number. At the end of

this article can be found a guide to all the editions and translations of Kant used in its preparation.

Transcendental Realism and Empirical Idealism

One promising place to begin understanding transcendental idealism is to look at the other philosophical positions from which Kant distinguishes it. In the "Fourth Paralogism", he distinguishes transcendental idealism from transcendental realism:

To this [transcendental] idealism is opposed transcendental realism, which regards space and time as something given in themselves (independent of our sensibility). The transcendental realist therefore represents outer appearances (if their reality is conceded) as things in themselves [*Dinge an sich selbst*], which would exist independently of us and our sensibility and thus would also be outside us according to pure concepts of the understanding. (A369)

Transcendental realism, according to this passage, is the view that objects in space and time exist independently of our experience of them, while transcendental idealism denies this. This point is reiterated later in the *Critique* when Kant writes:

We have sufficiently proved in the Transcendental Aesthetic that everything intuited in space or in time, hence all objects of an experience possible for us, are nothing but appearances, i.e., mere representations, which, as they are represented, as extended beings or series of alterations, have outside our thoughts no existence grounded in itself. This doctrine I call **transcendental idealism.** The realist, in the transcendental signification, makes these modifications of our sensibility into things subsisting in themselves, and hence makes mere **representations** into things in themselves [*Sachen an sich selbst*]. (A491/B519)

Appearances exist at least partly in virtue of our experience of them, while the existence of things in themselves is not grounded in our experience at all (cf. A369, A492/B521, A493/B522). Kant calls transcendental realism the "common prejudice" (A740/B768) and

describes it as a "common but fallacious presupposition" (A536/B564; cf. Allison 2004: 22). Transcendental realism is the commonsense pre-theoretic view that objects in space and time are "things in themselves", which Kant, of course, denies.

Kant also distinguishes transcendental idealism from another position he calls "empirical idealism":

One would also do us an injustice if one tried to ascribe to us that long-decried empirical idealism that, while assuming the proper reality of space, denies the existence of extended beings in it, or at least finds this existence doubtful, and so in this respect admits no satisfactorily provable distinction between dream and truth. As to the appearances of inner sense in time, it finds no difficulty in them as real things, indeed, it even asserts that this inner experience and it alone gives sufficient proof of the real existence of their object (in itself) along with all this time-determination. (A491/B519)

Empirical idealism, as Kant here characterizes it, is the view that all we know immediately (non-inferentially) is the existence of our own minds and our temporally ordered mental states, while we can only infer the existence of objects "outside" us in space. Since the inference from a known effect to an unknown cause is always uncertain, the empirical idealist concludes we cannot know that objects exist outside us in space. Kant typically distinguishes two varieties of empirical idealism: dogmatic idealism, which claims that objects in space do not exist, and problematic idealism, which claims that objects in space may exist, but we cannot know whether they do (see A377). Although he is never mentioned by name in the A Edition, Berkeley seems to be Kant's paradigm dogmatic idealist, while Descartes is named as the paradigm problematic idealist.

Transcendental idealism is a form of empirical realism because it entails that we have immediate (non-inferential) and certain knowledge of the existence of objects in space merely through self-consciousness:

[…] external objects (bodies) are merely appearances, hence also nothing other than a species of my representations, whose objects are something only through these representations, but are nothing separated from them. Thus external things exist as well as my self, and indeed both exist on the immediate testimony of my self-consciousness, only with this difference: the representation of my Self, as the thinking subject is related merely to inner sense, but the representations that designate extended beings are also related to outer sense. I am no more necessitated to draw inferences in respect of the reality of external objects than I am in regard to the reality of my inner sense (my thoughts), for in both cases they are nothing but representations, the immediate perception (consciousness) of which is at the same time a sufficient proof of their reality. (A370–1)

Merely through self-conscious introspection I can know that I have representations with certain contents and since appearances are "nothing other than a species of my representations" this constitutes immediate and certain knowledge of the existence of objects in space.

Understanding transcendental idealism requires understanding the precise sense in which things in themselves are, and appearances are not, "external to" or "independent" of the mind and Kant draws a helpful distinction between two senses in which objects can be "outside me":

But since the expression **outside us** carries with it an unavoidable ambiguity, since it sometimes signifies something that, as a thing in itself [*Ding an sich selbst*], exists distinct from us and sometimes merely that belongs to outer appearance, then in order to escape uncertainty and use this concept in the latter significance—in which it is taken in the proper psychological question about the reality of our outer intuition—we will distinguish **empirically external** objects from those that might be called "external" in the transcendental sense, by directly calling them "things that are to be encountered in space". (A373)

In the transcendental sense, an object is "outside me" when its existence does not depend (even partly) on my representations of it. The empirical sense of "outside me" depends upon the distinction between outer and inner sense. Inner sense is the sensible intuition of my inner states (which are themselves appearances); time is the form of inner sense, meaning

that all the states we intuit in inner sense are temporally ordered. Outer sense is the sensible intuition of objects that are not my inner states; space is the form of outer sense. In the empirical sense, "outer" simply refers to objects of outer sense, objects in space. Transcendental idealism is the view that objects in space are "outer" in the empirical sense but not in the transcendental sense. Things in themselves are transcendentally "outer" but appearances are not.

1.2 The Empirical Thing in Itself

Just as Kant distinguishes a transcendental from an empirical sense of "outer" he also distinguishes a transcendental version of the appearance/thing in itself distinction (the distinction we have been concerned with up to now) from an empirical version of that distinction. The key text here is A45–46/B62–63, which for reasons of brevity will not be quoted in full (cf. the discussion of the rose at A29–30/B45, as well as A257/B313).

In the empirical case, the distinction seems to be between the physical properties of an object and the sensory qualities it presents to differently situated human observers. This requires distinguishing between what is "valid for every human sense in general" and what "pertains to [objects] only contingently because [of] … a particular situation or organization of this or that sense" (A45/B62). The distinction seems to be that some properties of objects are represented in experience just in virtue of the *a priori* forms of experience, and thus have inter-subjective validity for all cognitive subjects, while some properties depend upon the particular constitution of our sense organs (cf. A226/B273). The "empirical thing in itself" is the empirical object *qua* bearer of the former set of properties, while the "empirical appearance" is the empirical object *qua* bearer of all of its properties, including the latter. For instance, the empirical "rainbow in itself" is a collection of water droplets with particular sizes and shapes and spatial relations, while the empirical "rainbow appearance" is the colorful band we see in the sky.[5]

For our purposes, the importance of this distinction is two-fold. Firstly, the (transcendental) distinction is not the ordinary distinction between how objects appear to us in sense perception and the properties they actually have. Kantian appearances are not the objects of ordinary sense

perception, for Kant holds that appearances *in themselves* (things in themselves, in the empirical sense) lack sensory qualities like color, taste, texture, etc. In scientific research, we may discover how appearances are *in themselves* (in the empirical sense) but in so doing all we discover is more appearance (in the transcendental sense); scientific investigation into the ultimate constituents or causal determinants of objects only reveals more appearance, not things in themselves. Secondly, there is an appearance/reality distinction *at the level of appearances*. This provides a further sense in which Kant is an "empirical realist": appearances in themselves have properties quite different than they seem to have in sense perception.

Kant's empirical realism—not in his technical sense, but in the broader sense that he accepts an appearance/reality distinction at the level of appearances (see Abela 2002)—is further deepened by his scientific realism: he accepts the existence of unobservable entities posited by our best scientific theories and holds that these entities are appearances (because they are in space).[6] Earlier, we saw texts whose *prima facie* meaning is that appearances exist, at least partly, in virtue of the contents of our representations of them. But it is clear that Kant cannot hold that the existence of an object in space is grounded in our direct perception of that object, for that would be incompatible with the existence of unperceived spatial objects.

9.5 THE FEDER-GARVE REVIEW AND KANT'S REPLIES

The first published review of the Critique of Pure Reason, by Feder and Garve (1782), accuses Kant of holding a basically Berkeleyan phenomenalist conception of objects in space. Feder and Garve were not the only ones to read Kant as a phenomenalist. The phenomenalist reading was so widespread and influential that it became the default interpretation for generations after the publication of the Critique. In fact, many of the key figures in German philosophy in 1781 and after (e.g., Mendelssohn, Eberhard, Hamann, Jacobi, Fichte, Schelling) take the phenomenalist or "subjectivist" reading of Kant for granted and think

this is precisely why Kant must be "overcome". The assumption that Kant is a subjectivist about appearances is a major impetus in the development of German idealism.

However, the phenomenalist reading of transcendental idealism has been challenged on many fronts, both as an interpretation of Kant and (often on the assumption that it is Kant's view) on its own philosophical merits. This section explores the origin of the phenomenalist reading in the Feder-Garve review and its basis in the text of the Critique. The next section provides some reasons to think that the phenomenalist reading is more defensible as an interpretation of Kant than is sometimes appreciated. Section 3.4 explores influential objections by Kant's contemporaries to transcendental idealism, on the assumption that the phenomenalist interpretation of that doctrine is correct, which were later taken up as criticisms of the phenomenalist interpretation itself.

9.6   KANT AS A PHENOMENALIST

So far, we have seen the prima facie evidence for the phenomenalist interpretation of Kant, made famous by Feder-Garve, and Kant's own attempts to distance himself from their accusations. However, we also distinguished three different kinds of phenomenalism: identity phenomenalism, strong phenomenalism, and qualified phenomenalism. This section explores the interpretation of Kant as qualified phenomenalist, and argue that this interpretation can answer many of the standard objections to the phenomenalist reading.

9.7   THE "DUAL ASPECT" VIEW

Because the phenomenalist interpretation of transcendental idealism held such sway, not only among Kant's contemporaries, but for generations of German philosophers as well, these problems for the phenomenalist construal of transcendental idealism were taken to be evidence that Kant's view itself is inconsistent. In the twentieth century, the phenomenalist (or "Berkeleyan") interpretation of transcendental

idealism is associated with P.F. Strawson, whose massively influential (1966) argued that, for many of the reasons we have seen, transcendental idealism was a blunder on Kant's part (Strawson 1966: 16, 38–42, 253–73). However, Strawson claimed, the core arguments of the Critique do not in fact rely on it and can be reconstructed independently of it.

In the 1960s and 1970s a group of scholars, in some cases in direct opposition to Strawson, developed a non-phenomenalist, anti-metaphysical reading of transcendental idealism, the "dual aspect" view. These scholars took the textbook problems for phenomenalism (especially, the problem of affection) as evidence that this was the wrong interpretation of Kant's position to begin with. They sought to rescue transcendental idealism from what they took to be the phenomenalist misconstrual, defend its philosophical cogency from its detractors, and show, contra Strawson, that the central arguments of the Critique do rely on transcendental idealism. This was as much a philosophical defense of Kantian transcendental idealism as it was an interpretive-exegetical project.

They developed what has become known as the "dual aspect" view. They argue that many of the classic problems for the phenomenalist reading (e.g., affection) arise because it was mistakenly assumed that appearances and things in themselves are distinct kinds of objects. They argued instead that the appearance/thing in itself distinction is not an ontological distinction between two kinds of objects, but an adverbial distinction between two different perspectives or stances we can take on one and the same set of objects: we can consider them as they appear, or as they are "in themselves".

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Discuss the Feder-Garve Review and Kant's Replies.

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2. Write about: Kant as a Phenomenalist.

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3. Discuss the "Dual Aspect" View.

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9.8   LET US SUM UP

"Essence," "transcendental subjectivity," and "lifeworld" are the three cornerstones of Husserlian thinking. They are also respectively the key concepts of what has been regarded as the three stages of the development of Husserl's thoughts. The concept of the *a priori*, in a narrow sense, is coextensive with that of "essence"; in a broader sense, it appears to range over all three. And yet, curiously enough, the concepts of transcendental subjectivity and lifeworld seem to situate philosophical thinking beyond the *a priori—a posteriori* opposition. The tensions in Husserl's thought derive as well from the complex relationship between these three key concepts,[1] as from the way they both appropriate and seek to go beyond traditional western thinking on these matters. The essays collected in this volume may be studied as bearing on these tensions.

9.9 KEY WORDS

Philosophical Thinking: **Philosophy** is a way of **thinking** about the world, the universe, and society. It works by asking very basic questions about the nature of human thought, the nature of the universe, and the connections between them. The ideas in **philosophy** are often general and abstract.

Operative Concept: Philosophizing-along-with takes the form of a sharing in our common relation to the matter of thought. We have here, as it were, a *redoubled thematic*: the philosophizing thought becomes a "theme" with respect to its assertions about what, for itself, is the original theme.

Transcendental Phenomenology: **Transcendental phenomenology** (TPh), largely developed by Husserl, is a philosophical approach to qualitative research methodology seeking to understand human experience (Moustakas, 1994).

Positive Science: **Positive science** is the application of formal analysis to empirical **science**. We do not wish to overstate the scope of such applications, and recognise the possibility that valuable **scientific** results might be obtained whose character defies formal analysis

Pure Consciousness: **Pure consciousness** is the purest state of mind. When the mind becomes a witness and no experiences or impressions remain on the surface of the mind, you experience the mind as **pure consciousness**. **Pure consciousness** is a state of mind, where it acts like a mirror.

9.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss Subjectivity and Lifeworld in Transcendental Phenomenology.
2. Discuss Husserl and the Promise of Time: Subjectivity in Transcendental Phenomenology.
3. Describe appearances and Things in Themselves.
4. Discuss the Feder-Garve Review and Kant's Replies.
5. Write about: Kant as a Phenomenalist.

6. Discuss the "Dual Aspect" View.

9.11 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

- [Ak.] Königlichen Preußischen (later Deutschen) Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), 1900-, Kants gesammelte Schriften, Berlin: Georg Reimer (later Walter De Gruyter).

- Guyer, P. and A. Wood (eds.), 1992–, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Individual volumes used in the preparation of this entry are:

- Allison, H. and P. Heath (eds.), 2002, Theoretical Philosophy after 1781, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Guyer, P. and A. Wood (eds.), 1998, Critique of Pure Reason, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Zweig, A. (ed.), 1999, Correspondence, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- We refer to certain Kantian works by the following abbreviations:

- [Prolegomena] Prolegomena to any future metaphysics. Translation by Gary Hatfield in Theoretical Philosophy after 1781.

9.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1`

1. See Section 9.2
2. See Section 9.3
3. See Section 9.4

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 9.5
2. See Section 9.6
3. See Section 9.7

UNIT 10: INTERNATIONALITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

STRUCTURE

10.0 OBJECTIVES

After finishing this unit,

- History of the issue
- Concepts of Consciousness
- Problems of Consciousness
- The descriptive question: *What* are the features of consciousness?
- The explanatory question: *How* can consciousness exist?
- The functional question: Why does consciousness exist?
- Theories of consciousness
- Metaphysical theories of consciousness
- Specific Theories of Consciousness

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Perhaps no aspect of mind is more familiar or more puzzling than consciousness and our conscious experience of self and world. The problem of consciousness is arguably the central issue in current theorizing about the mind. Despite the lack of any agreed upon theory of consciousness, there is a widespread, if less than universal, consensus that an adequate account of mind requires a clear understanding of it and its place in nature. We need to understand both what consciousness is and how it relates to other, nonconscious, aspects of reality.

10.2 HISTORY OF THE ISSUE

Questions about the nature of conscious awareness have likely been asked for as long as there have been humans. Neolithic burial practices appear to express spiritual beliefs and provide early evidence for at least minimally reflective thought about the nature of human consciousness (Pearson 1999, Clark and Riel-Salvatore 2001). Preliterate cultures have similarly been found invariably to embrace some form of spiritual or at least animist view that indicates a degree of reflection about the nature of conscious awareness.

Nonetheless, some have argued that consciousness as we know it today is a relatively recent historical development that arose sometime after the Homeric era (Jaynes 1974). According to this view, earlier humans including those who fought the Trojan War did not experience themselves as unified internal subjects of their thoughts and actions, at least not in the ways we do today. Others have claimed that even during the classical period, there was no word of ancient Greek that corresponds to "consciousness" (Wilkes 1984, 1988, 1995). Though the ancients had much to say about mental matters, it is less clear whether they had any specific concepts or concerns for what we now think of as consciousness.

Although the words "conscious" and "conscience" are used quite differently today, it is likely that the Reformation emphasis on the latter

as an inner source of truth played some role in the inward turn so characteristic of the modern reflective view of self. The Hamlet who walked the stage in 1600 already saw his world and self with profoundly modern eyes.

By the beginning of the early modern era in the seventeenth century, consciousness had come full center in thinking about the mind. Indeed from the mid-17th through the late 19th century, consciousness was widely regarded as essential or definitive of the mental. René Descartes defined the very notion of thought (pensée) in terms of reflexive consciousness or self-awareness. In the Principles of Philosophy (1640) he wrote,

By the word 'thought' ('pensée') I understand all that of which we are conscious as operating in us.

Later, toward the end of the 17th century, John Locke offered a similar if slightly more qualified claim in An Essay on Human Understanding (1688),

I do not say there is no soul in man because he is not sensible of it in his sleep. But I do say he can not think at any time, waking or sleeping, without being sensible of it. Our being sensible of it is not necessary to anything but our thoughts, and to them it is and to them it always will be necessary.

Locke explicitly forswore making any hypothesis about the substantial basis of consciousness and its relation to matter, but he clearly regarded it as essential to thought as well as to personal identity.

Locke's contemporary G.W. Leibniz, drawing possible inspiration from his mathematical work on differentiation and integration, offered a theory of mind in the Discourse on Metaphysics (1686) that allowed for infinitely many degrees of consciousness and perhaps even for some thoughts that were unconscious, the so called "petites perceptions". Leibniz was the first to distinguish explicitly between perception and apperception, i.e., roughly between awareness and self-awareness. In the

Monadology (1720) he also offered his famous analogy of the mill to express his belief that consciousness could not arise from mere matter. He asked his reader to imagine someone walking through an expanded brain as one would walk through a mill and observing all its mechanical operations, which for Leibniz exhausted its physical nature. Nowhere, he asserts, would such an observer see any conscious thoughts.

Despite Leibniz's recognition of the possibility of unconscious thought, for most of the next two centuries the domains of thought and consciousness were regarded as more or less the same. Associationist psychology, whether pursued by Locke or later in the eighteenth century by David Hume (1739) or in the nineteenth by James Mill (1829), aimed to discover the principles by which conscious thoughts or ideas interacted or affected each other. James Mill's son, John Stuart Mill continued his father's work on associationist psychology, but he allowed that combinations of ideas might produce resultants that went beyond their constituent mental parts, thus providing an early model of mental emergence (1865).

The purely associationist approach was critiqued in the late eighteenth century by Immanuel Kant (1787), who argued that an adequate account of experience and phenomenal consciousness required a far richer structure of mental and intentional organization. Phenomenal consciousness according to Kant could not be a mere succession of associated ideas, but at a minimum had to be the experience of a conscious self situated in an objective world structured with respect to space, time and causality.

Within the Anglo-American world, associationist approaches continued to be influential in both philosophy and psychology well into the twentieth century, while in the German and European sphere there was a greater interest in the larger structure of experience that lead in part to the study of phenomenology through the work of Edmund Husserl (1913, 1929), Martin Heidegger (1927), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945) and

others who expanded the study of consciousness into the realm of the social, the bodily and the interpersonal.

At the outset of modern scientific psychology in the mid-nineteenth century, the mind was still largely equated with consciousness, and introspective methods dominated the field as in the work of Wilhelm Wundt (1897), Hermann von Helmholtz (1897), William James (1890) and Alfred Titchener (1901). However, the relation of consciousness to brain remained very much a mystery as expressed in T. H. Huxley's famous remark,

How it is that anything so remarkable as a state of consciousness comes about as a result of irritating nervous tissue, is just as unaccountable as the appearance of the Djin, when Aladdin rubbed his lamp (1866).

The early twentieth century saw the eclipse of consciousness from scientific psychology, especially in the United States with the rise of behaviorism (Watson 1924, Skinner 1953) though movements such as Gestalt psychology kept it a matter of ongoing scientific concern in Europe (Köhler 1929, Köffka 1935). In the 1960s, the grip of behaviorism weakened with the rise of cognitive psychology and its emphasis on information processing and the modeling of internal mental processes (Neisser 1965, Gardiner 1985). However, despite the renewed emphasis on explaining cognitive capacities such as memory, perception and language comprehension, consciousness remained a largely neglected topic for several further decades.

In the 1980s and 90s there was a major resurgence of scientific and philosophical research into the nature and basis of consciousness (Baars 1988, Dennett 1991, Penrose 1989, 1994, Crick 1994, Lycan 1987, 1996, Chalmers 1996). Once consciousness was back under discussion, there was a rapid proliferation of research with a flood of books and articles, as well as the introduction of specialty journals (The Journal of Consciousness Studies, Consciousness and Cognition, Psyche), professional societies (Association for the Scientific Study of

Consciousness—ASSC) and annual conferences devoted exclusively to its investigation ("The Science of Consciousness").

10.3 CONCEPTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The words "conscious" and "consciousness" are umbrella terms that cover a wide variety of mental phenomena. Both are used with a diversity of meanings, and the adjective "conscious" is heterogeneous in its range, being applied both to whole organisms—creature consciousness—and to particular mental states and processes—state consciousness (Rosenthal 1986, Gennaro 1995, Carruthers 2000).

2.1 Creature Consciousness
An animal, person or other cognitive system may be regarded as conscious in a number of different senses.

Sentience. It may be conscious in the generic sense of simply being a sentient creature, one capable of sensing and responding to its world (Armstrong 1981). Being conscious in this sense may admit of degrees, and just what sort of sensory capacities are sufficient may not be sharply defined. Are fish conscious in the relevant respect? And what of shrimp or bees?

Wakefulness. One might further require that the organism actually be exercising such a capacity rather than merely having the ability or disposition to do so. Thus one might count it as conscious only if it were awake and normally alert. In that sense organisms would not count as conscious when asleep or in any of the deeper levels of coma. Again boundaries may be blurry, and intermediate cases may be involved. For example, is one conscious in the relevant sense when dreaming, hypnotized or in a fugue state?

Self-consciousness. A third and yet more demanding sense might define conscious creatures as those that are not only aware but also aware that they are aware, thus treating creature consciousness as a form of self-consciousness (Carruthers 2000). The self-awareness requirement might

get interpreted in a variety of ways, and which creatures would qualify as conscious in the relevant sense will vary accordingly. If it is taken to involve explicit conceptual self-awareness, many non-human animals and even young children might fail to qualify, but if only more rudimentary implicit forms of self-awareness are required then a wide range of nonlinguistic creatures might count as self-conscious.

What it is like. Thomas Nagel's (1974) famous"what it is like" criterion aims to capture another and perhaps more subjective notion of being a conscious organism. According to Nagel, a being is conscious just if there is "something that it is like" to be that creature, i.e., some subjective way the world seems or appears from the creature's mental or experiential point of view. In Nagel's example, bats are conscious because there is something that it is like for a bat to experience its world through its echo-locatory senses, even though we humans from our human point of view can not emphatically understand what such a mode of consciousness is like from the bat's own point of view.

Subject of conscious states. A fifth alternative would be to define the notion of a conscious organism in terms of conscious states. That is, one might first define what makes a mental state a conscious mental state, and then define being a conscious creature in terms of having such states. One's concept of a conscious organism would then depend upon the particular account one gives of conscious states (section 2.2).

Transitive Consciousness. In addition to describing creatures as conscious in these various senses, there are also related senses in which creatures are described as being conscious of various things. The distinction is sometimes marked as that between transitive and intransitive notions of consciousness, with the former involving some object at which consciousness is directed (Rosenthal 1986).

2.2 State consciousness

The notion of a conscious mental state also has a variety of distinct though perhaps interrelated meanings. There are at least six major options.

States one is aware of. On one common reading, a conscious mental state is simply a mental state one is aware of being in (Rosenthal 1986, 1996). Conscious states in this sense involve a form of meta-mentality or meta-intentionality in so far as they require mental states that are themselves about mental states. To have a conscious desire for a cup of coffee is to have such a desire and also to be simultaneously and directly aware that one has such a desire. Unconscious thoughts and desires in this sense are simply those we have without being aware of having them, whether our lack of self-knowledge results from simple inattention or more deeply psychoanalytic causes.

Qualitative states. States might also be regarded as conscious in a seemingly quite different and more qualitative sense. That is, one might count a state as conscious just if it has or involves qualitative or experiential properties of the sort often referred to as "qualia" or "raw sensory feels". (See the entry on qualia.) One's perception of the Merlot one is drinking or of the fabric one is examining counts as a conscious mental state in this sense because it involves various sensory qualia, e.g., taste qualia in the wine case and color qualia in one's visual experience of the cloth. There is considerable disagreement about the nature of such qualia (Churchland 1985, Shoemaker 1990, Clark 1993, Chalmers 1996) and even about their existence. Traditionally qualia have been regarded as intrinsic, private, ineffable monadic features of experience, but current theories of qualia often reject at least some of those commitments (Dennett 1990).

Phenomenal states. Such qualia are sometimes referred to as phenomenal properties and the associated sort of consciousness as phenomenal consciousness, but the latter term is perhaps more properly applied to the overall structure of experience and involves far more than sensory qualia. The phenomenal structure of consciousness also encompasses much of

the spatial, temporal and conceptual organization of our experience of the world and of ourselves as agents in it. (See section 4.3) It is therefore probably best, at least initially, to distinguish the concept of phenomenal consciousness from that of qualitative consciousness, though they no doubt overlap.

What-it-is-like states. Consciousness in both those senses links up as well with Thomas Nagel's (1974) notion of a conscious creature, insofar as one might count a mental state as conscious in the "what it is like" sense just if there is something that it is like to be in that state. Nagel's criterion might be understood as aiming to provide a first-person or internal conception of what makes a state a phenomenal or qualitative state.

Access consciousness. States might be conscious in a seemingly quite different access sense, which has more to do with intra-mental relations. In this respect, a state's being conscious is a matter of its availability to interact with other states and of the access that one has to its content. In this more functional sense, which corresponds to what Ned Block (1995) calls access consciousness, a visual state's being conscious is not so much a matter of whether or not it has a qualitative "what it's likeness", but of whether or not it and the visual information that it carries is generally available for use and guidance by the organism. In so far as the information in that state is richly and flexibly available to its containing organism, then it counts as a conscious state in the relevant respect, whether or not it has any qualitative or phenomenal feel in the Nagel sense.

Narrative consciousness. States might also be regarded as conscious in a narrative sense that appeals to the notion of the "stream of consciousness", regarded as an ongoing more or less serial narrative of episodes from the perspective of an actual or merely virtual self. The idea would be to equate the person's conscious mental states with those that appear in the stream (Dennett 1991, 1992).

Although these six notions of what makes a state conscious can be independently specified, they are obviously not without potential links, nor do they exhaust the realm of possible options. Drawing connections, one might argue that states appear in the stream of consciousness only in so far as we are aware of them, and thus forge a bond between the first meta-mental notion of a conscious state and the stream or narrative concept. Or one might connect the access with the qualitative or phenomenal notions of a conscious state by trying to show that states that represent in those ways make their contents widely available in the respect required by the access notion.

Aiming to go beyond the six options, one might distinguish conscious from nonconscious states by appeal to aspects of their intra-mental dynamics and interactions other than mere access relations; e.g., conscious states might manifest a richer stock of content-sensitive interactions or a greater degree of flexible purposive guidance of the sort associated with the self-conscious control of thought. Alternatively, one might try to define conscious states in terms of conscious creatures. That is, one might give some account of what it is to be a conscious creature or perhaps even a conscious self, and then define one's notion of a conscious state in terms of being a state of such a creature or system, which would be the converse of the last option considered above for defining conscious creatures in terms of conscious mental states.

2.3 Consciousness as an entity

The noun "consciousness" has an equally diverse range of meanings that largely parallel those of the adjective "conscious". Distinctions can be drawn between creature and state consciousness as well as among the varieties of each. One can refer specifically to phenomenal consciousness, access consciousness, reflexive or meta-mental consciousness, and narrative consciousness among other varieties.

Here consciousness itself is not typically treated as a substantive entity but merely the abstract reification of whatever property or aspect is attributed by the relevant use of the adjective "conscious". Access

consciousness is just the property of having the required sort of internal access relations, and qualitative consciousness is simply the property that is attributed when "conscious" is applied in the qualitative sense to mental states. How much this commits one to the ontological status of consciousness per se will depend on how much of a Platonist one is about universals in general. (See the entry on the medieval problem of universals.) It need not commit one to consciousness as a distinct entity any more than one's use of "square", "red" or "gentle" commits one to the existence of squareness, redness or gentleness as distinct entities.

Though it is not the norm, one could nonetheless take a more robustly realist view of consciousness as a component of reality. That is one could think of consciousness as more on a par with electromagnetic fields than with life.

Since the demise of vitalism, we do not think of life per se as something distinct from living things. There are living things including organisms, states, properties and parts of organisms, communities and evolutionary lineages of organisms, but life is not itself a further thing, an additional component of reality, some vital force that gets added into living things. We apply the adjectives "living" and "alive" correctly to many things, and in doing so we might be said to be attributing life to them but with no meaning or reality other than that involved in their being living things.

Electromagnetic fields by contrast are regarded as real and independent parts of our physical world. Even though one may sometimes be able to specify the values of such a field by appeal to the behavior of particles in it, the fields themselves are regarded as concrete constituents of reality and not merely as abstractions or sets of relations among particles.

Similarly one could regard "consciousness" as referring to a component or aspect of reality that manifests itself in conscious states and creatures but is more than merely the abstract nominalization of the adjective "conscious" we apply to them. Though such strongly realist views are

not very common at present, they should be included within the logical space of options.

There are thus many concepts of consciousness, and both "conscious" and "consciousness" are used in a wide range of ways with no privileged or canonical meaning. However, this may be less of an embarrassment than an embarrassment of riches. Consciousness is a complex feature of the world, and understanding it will require a diversity of conceptual tools for dealing with its many differing aspects. Conceptual plurality is thus just what one would hope for. As long as one avoids confusion by being clear about one's meanings, there is great value in having a variety of concepts by which we can access and grasp consciousness in all its rich complexity. However, one should not assume that conceptual plurality implies referential divergence. Our multiple concepts of consciousness may in fact pick out varying aspects of a single unified underlying mental phenomenon. Whether and to what extent they do so remains an open question.

10.4 PROBLEMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The task of understanding consciousness is an equally diverse project. Not only do many different aspects of mind count as conscious in some sense, each is also open to various respects in which it might be explained or modeled. Understanding consciousness involves a multiplicity not only of explananda but also of questions that they pose and the sorts of answers they require. At the risk of oversimplifying, the relevant questions can be gathered under three crude rubrics as the What, How, and Why questions:

- The Descriptive Question: *What* is consciousness? What are its principal features? And by what means can they be best discovered, described and modeled?
- The Explanatory Question: *How* does consciousness of the relevant sort come to exist? Is it a primitive aspect of reality, and if not how does (or could) consciousness in the relevant respect arise from or be caused by nonconscious entities or processes?

- The Functional Question: *Why* does consciousness of the relevant sort exist? Does it have a function, and if so what is it? Does it act causally and if so with what sorts of effects? Does it make a difference to the operation of systems in which it is present, and if so why and how?

The three questions focus respectively on describing the features of consciousness, explaining its underlying basis or cause, and explicating its role or value. The divisions among the three are of course somewhat artificial, and in practice the answers one gives to each will depend in part on what one says about the others. One can not, for example, adequately answer the what question and describe the main features of consciousness without addressing the why issue of its functional role within systems whose operations it affects. Nor could one explain how the relevant sort of consciousness might arise from nonconscious processes unless one had a clear account of just what features had to be caused or realized to count as producing it. Those caveats notwithstanding, the three-way division of questions provides a useful structure for articulating the overall explanatory project and for assessing the adequacy of particular theories or models of consciousness.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Discuss the History of the issue.

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2. Write the Concepts of Consciousness.

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3. What are the Problems of Consciousness?

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10.5 THE DESCRIPTIVE QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF CONSCIOUSNESS?

The What question asks us to describe and model the principal features of consciousness, but just which features are relevant will vary with the sort of consciousness we aim to capture. The main properties of access consciousness may be quite unlike those of qualitative or phenomenal consciousness, and those of reflexive consciousness or narrative consciousness may differ from both. However, by building up detailed theories of each type, we may hope to find important links between them and perhaps even to discover that they coincide in at least some key respects.

4.1 First-person and third-person data

The general descriptive project will require a variety of investigational methods (Flanagan 1992). Though one might naively regard the facts of consciousness as too self-evident to require any systematic methods of gathering data, the epistemic task is in reality far from trivial (Husserl 1913).

First-person introspective access provides a rich and essential source of insight into our conscious mental life, but it is neither sufficient in itself nor even especially helpful unless used in a trained and disciplined way.

Gathering the needed evidence about the structure of experience requires us both to become phenomenologically sophisticated self-observers and to complement our introspective results with many types of third-person data available to external observers (Searle 1992, Varela 1995, Siewert 1998)

As phenomenologists have known for more than a century, discovering the structure of conscious experience demands a rigorous inner-directed stance that is quite unlike our everyday form of self-awareness (Husserl 1929, Merleau-Ponty 1945). Skilled observation of the needed sort requires training, effort and the ability to adopt alternative perspectives on one's experience.

The need for third-person empirical data gathered by external observers is perhaps most obvious with regard to the more clearly functional types of consciousness such as access consciousness, but it is required even with regard to phenomenal and qualitative consciousness. For example, deficit studies that correlate various neural and functional sites of damage with abnormalities of conscious experience can make us aware of aspects of phenomenal structure that escape our normal introspective awareness. As such case studies show, things can come apart in experience that seem inseparably unified or singular from our normal first-person point of view (Sacks 1985, Shallice 1988, Farah 1995).

Or to pick another example, third-person data can make us aware of how our experiences of acting and our experiences of event-timing affect each other in ways that we could never discern through mere introspection (Libet 1985, Wegner 2002). Nor are the facts gathered by these third person methods merely about the causes or bases of consciousness; they often concern the very structure of phenomenal consciousness itself. First-person, third-person and perhaps even second-person (Varela 1995) interactive methods will all be needed to collect the requisite evidence.

Using all these sources of data, we will hopefully be able to construct detailed descriptive models of the various sorts of consciousness. Though

the specific features of most importance may vary among the different types, our overall descriptive project will need to address at least the following seven general aspects of consciousness (sections 4.2–4.7).

4.2 Qualitative character

Qualitative character is often equated with so called "raw feels" and illustrated by the redness one experiences when one looks at ripe tomatoes or the specific sweet savor one encounters when one tastes an equally ripe pineapple (Locke 1688). The relevant sort of qualitative character is not restricted to sensory states, but is typically taken to be present as an aspect of experiential states in general, such as experienced thoughts or desires (Siewert 1998).

The existence of such feels may seem to some to mark the threshold for states or creatures that are really conscious. If an organism senses and responds in apt ways to its world but lacks such qualia, then it might count as conscious at best in a loose and less than literal sense. Or so at least it would seem to those who take qualitative consciousness in the "what it is like" sense to be philosophically and scientifically central (Nagel 1974, Chalmers 1996).

Qualia problems in many forms—Can there be inverted qualia? (Block 1980a 1980b, Shoemaker 1981, 1982) Are qualia epiphenomenal? (Jackson 1982, Chalmers 1996) How could neural states give rise to qualia? (Levine 1983, McGinn 1991)—have loomed large in the recent past. But the What question raises a more basic problem of qualia: namely that of giving a clear and articulated description of our qualia space and the status of specific qualia within it.

Absent such a model, factual or descriptive errors are all too likely. For example, claims about the unintelligibility of the link between experienced red and any possible neural substrate of such an experience sometimes treat the relevant color quale as a simple and sui generis property (Levine 1983), but phenomenal redness in fact exists within a complex color space with multiple systematic dimensions and similarity

relations (Hardin 1992). Understanding the specific color quale relative to that larger relational structure not only gives us a better descriptive grasp of its qualitative nature, it may also provide some "hooks" to which one might attach intelligible psycho-physical links.

Color may be the exception in terms of our having a specific and well developed formal understanding of the relevant qualitative space, but it is not likely an exception with regard to the importance of such spaces to our understanding of qualitative properties in general (Clark 1993, P.M. Churchland 1995). (See the entry on qualia.)

4.3 Phenomenal structure

Phenomenal structure should not be conflated with qualitative structure, despite the sometimes interchangeable use of "qualia" and "phenomenal properties" in the literature. "Phenomenal organization" covers all the various kinds of order and structure found within the domain of experience, i.e., within the domain of the world as it appears to us. There are obviously important links between the phenomenal and the qualitative. Indeed qualia might be best understood as properties of phenomenal or experienced objects, but there is in fact far more to the phenomenal than raw feels. As Kant (1787), Husserl (1913), and generations of phenomenologists have shown, the phenomenal structure of experience is richly intentional and involves not only sensory ideas and qualities but complex representations of time, space, cause, body, self, world and the organized structure of lived reality in all its conceptual and nonconceptual forms.

Since many non-conscious states also have intentional and representational aspects, it may be best to consider phenomenal structure as involving a special kind of intentional and representational organization and content, the kind distinctively associated with consciousness (Siewert 1998). (See the entry on representational theories of consciousness).

Answering the What question requires a careful account of the coherent and densely organized representational framework within which particular experiences are embedded. Since most of that structure is only implicit in the organization of experience, it can not just be read off by introspection. Articulating the structure of the phenomenal domain in a clear and intelligible way is a long and difficult process of inference and model building (Husserl 1929). Introspection can aid it, but a lot of theory construction and ingenuity are also needed.

There has been recent philosophical debate about the range of properties that are phenomenally present or manifest in conscious experience, in particular with respect to cognitive states such as believing or thinking. Some have argued for a so called "thin" view according to which phenomenal properties are limited to qualia representing basic sensory properties, such as colors, shapes, tones and feels. According to such theorists, there is no distinctive "what-it-is-likeness" involved in believing that Paris is the capital of France or that 17 is a prime number (Tye, Prinz 2012). Some imagery, e.g., of the Eiffel Tower, may accompany our having such a thought, but that is incidental to it and the cognitive state itself has no phenomenal feel. On the thin view, the phenomenal aspect of perceptual states as well is limited to basic sensory features; when one sees an image of Winston Churchill, one's perceptual phenomenology is limited only to the spatial aspects of his face.

Others holds a "thick" view according to which the phenomenology of perception includes a much wider range of features and cognitive states have a distinctive phenomenology as well (Strawson 2003, Pitt 2004, Seigel 2010). On the thick view, the what-it-is-likeness of perceiving an image of Marilyn Monroe includes one's recognition of her history as part of the felt aspect of the experience, and beliefs and thoughts as well can and typically do have a distinctive nonsensory phenomenology. Both sides of the debate are well represented in the volume Cognitive Phenomenology (Bayne and Montague 2010).

4.4 Subjectivity

Subjectivity is another notion sometimes equated with the qualitative or the phenomenal aspects of consciousness in the literature, but again there are good reason to recognize it, at least in some of its forms, as a distinct feature of consciousness—related to the qualitative and the phenomenal but different from each. In particular, the epistemic form of subjectivity concerns apparent limits on the knowability or even the understandability of various facts about conscious experience (Nagel 1974, Van Gulick 1985, Lycan 1996).

On Thomas Nagel's (1974) account, facts about what it is like to be a bat are subjective in the relevant sense because they can be fully understood only from the bat-type point of view. Only creatures capable of having or undergoing similar such experiences can understand their what-it's-likeness in the requisite empathetic sense. Facts about conscious experience can be at best incompletely understood from an outside third person point of view, such as those associated with objective physical science. A similar view about the limits of third-person theory seems to lie behind claims regarding what Frank Jackson's (1982) hypothetical Mary, the super color scientist, could not understand about experiencing red because of her own impoverished history of achromatic visual experience.

Whether facts about experience are indeed epistemically limited in this way is open to debate (Lycan 1996), but the claim that understanding consciousness requires special forms of knowing and access from the inside point of view is intuitively plausible and has a long history (Locke 1688). Thus any adequate answer to the What question must address the epistemic status of consciousness, both our abilities to understand it and their limits (Papineau 2002, Chalmers 2003). (See the entry on self-knowledge).

4.5 Self-perspectival organization

The perspectival structure of consciousness is one aspect of its overall phenomenal organization, but it is important enough to merit discussion in its own right. Insofar as the key perspective is that of the conscious

self, the specific feature might be called self-perspectuality. Conscious experiences do not exist as isolated mental atoms, but as modes or states of a conscious self or subject (Descartes 1644, Searle 1992, though pace Hume 1739). A visual experience of a blue sphere is always a matter of there being some self or subject who is appeared to in that way. A sharp and stabbing pain is always a pain felt or experienced by some conscious subject. The self need not appear as an explicit element in our experiences, but as Kant (1787) noted the "I think" must at least potentially accompany each of them.

The self might be taken as the perspectival point from which the world of objects is present to experience (Wittgenstein 1921). It provides not only a spatial and temporal perspective for our experience of the world but one of meaning and intelligibility as well. The intentional coherence of the experiential domain relies upon the dual interdependence between self and world: the self as perspective from which objects are known and the world as the integrated structure of objects and events whose possibilities of being experienced implicitly define the nature and location of the self (Kant 1787, Husserl 1929).

Conscious organisms obviously differ in the extent to which they constitute a unified and coherent self, and they likely differ accordingly in the sort or degree of perspectival focus they embody in their respective forms of experience (Lorenz 1977). Consciousness may not require a distinct or substantial self of the traditional Cartesian sort, but at least some degree of perspectively self-like organization seems essential for the existence of anything that might count as conscious experience. Experiences seem no more able to exist without a self or subject to undergo them than could ocean waves exist without the sea through which they move. The Descriptive question thus requires some account of the self-perspectival aspect of experience and the self-like organization of conscious minds on which it depends, even if the relevant account treats the self in a relatively deflationary and virtual way (Dennett 1991, 1992).

4.6 Unity

Unity is closely linked with the self-perspective, but it merits specific mention on its own as a key aspect of the organization of consciousness. Conscious systems and conscious mental states both involve many diverse forms of unity. Some are causal unities associated with the integration of action and control into a unified focus of agency. Others are more representational and intentional forms of unity involving the integration of diverse items of content at many scales and levels of binding (Cleeremans 2003).

Some such integrations are relatively local as when diverse features detected within a single sense modality are combined into a representation of external objects bearing those features, e.g. when one has a conscious visual experience of a moving red soup can passing above a green striped napkin (Triesman and Gelade 1980).

Other forms of intentional unity encompass a far wider range of contents. The content of one's present experience of the room in which one sits depends in part upon its location within a far larger structure associated with one's awareness of one's existence as an ongoing temporally extended observer within a world of spatially connected independently existing objects (Kant 1787, Husserl 1913). The individual experience can have the content that it does only because it resides within that larger unified structure of representation. (See the entry on unity of consciousness.)

Particular attention has been paid recently to the notion of phenomenal unity (Bayne 2010) and its relation to other forms of conscious unity such as those involving representational, functional or neural integration. Some have argued that phenomenal unity can be reduced to representational unity (Tye 2005) while others have denied the possibility of any such reduction (Bayne 2010).

4.7 Intentionality and transparency

Conscious mental states are typically regarded as having a representational or intentional aspect in so far as they are about things, refer to things or have satisfaction conditions. One's conscious visual experience correctly represents the world if there are lilacs in a white vase on the table (pace Travis 2004), one's conscious memory is of the attack on the World Trade Center, and one's conscious desire is for a glass of cold water. However, nonconscious states can also exhibit intentionality in such ways, and it is important to understand the ways in which the representational aspects of conscious states resemble and differ from those of nonconscious states (Carruthers 2000). Searle (1990) offers a contrary view according to which only conscious states and dispositions to have conscious states can be genuinely intentional, but most theorists regard intentionality as extending widely into the unconscious domain. (See the entry on consciousness and intentionality.)

One potentially important dimension of difference concerns so called transparency, which is an important feature of consciousness in two interrelated metaphoric senses, each of which has an intentional, an experiential and a functional aspect.

Conscious perceptual experience is often said to be transparent, or in G.E. Moore's (1922) phrase "diaphanous". We transparently "look through" our sensory experience in so far as we seem directly aware of external objects and events present to us rather than being aware of any properties of experience by which it presents or represents such objects to us. When I look out at the wind-blown meadow, it is the undulating green grass of which I am aware not of any green property of my visual experience. (See the entry on representational theories of consciousness.) Moore himself believed we could become aware of those latter qualities with effort and redirection of attention, though some contemporary transparency advocates deny it (Harman 1990, Tye 1995, Kind 2003).

Conscious thoughts and experiences are also transparent in a semantic sense in that their meanings seem immediately known to us in the very act of thinking them (Van Gulick 1992). In that sense we might be said

to 'think right through' them to what they mean or represent. Transparency in this semantic sense may correspond at least partly with what John Searle calls the "intrinsic intentionality" of consciousness (Searle 1992).

Our conscious mental states seem to have their meanings intrinsically or from the inside just by being what they are in themselves, by contrast with many externalist theories of mental content that ground meaning in causal, counterfactual or informational relations between bearers of intentionality and their semantic or referential objects.

The view of conscious content as intrinsically determined and internally self-evident is sometimes supported by appeals to brain in the vat intuitions, which make it seem that the envatted brain's conscious mental states would keep all their normal intentional contents despite the loss of all their normal causal and informational links to the world (Horgan and Tienson 2002). There is continued controversy about such cases and about competing internalist (Searle 1992) and externalist views (Dretske 1995) of conscious intentionality.

Though semantic transparency and intrinsic intentionality have some affinities, they should not be simply equated, since it may be possible to accommodate the former notion within a more externalist account of content and meaning. Both semantic and sensory transparency obviously concern the representational or intentional aspects of consciousness, but they are also experiential aspects of our conscious life. They are part of what it's like or how it feels phenomenally to be conscious. They also both have functional aspects, in so far as conscious experiences interact with each other in richly content-appropriate ways that manifest our transparent understanding of their contents.

4.8 Dynamic flow

The dynamics of consciousness are evident in the coherent order of its ever changing process of flow and self-transformation, what William James (1890) called the "stream of consciousness." Some temporal

sequences of experience are generated by purely internal factors as when one thinks through a puzzle, and others depend in part upon external causes as when one chases a fly ball, but even the latter sequences are shaped in large part by how consciousness transforms itself.

Whether partly in response to outer influences or entirely from within, each moment to moment sequence of experience grows coherently out of those that preceded it, constrained and enabled by the global structure of links and limits embodied in its underlying prior organization (Husserl 1913). In that respect, consciousness is an autopoietic system, i.e., a self-creating and self-organizing system (Varela and Maturana 1980).

As a conscious mental agent I can do many things such as scan my room, scan a mental image of it, review in memory the courses of a recent restaurant meal along with many of its tastes and scents, reason my way through a complex problem, or plan a grocery shopping trip and execute that plan when I arrive at the market. These are all routine and common activities, but each involves the directed generation of experiences in ways that manifest an implicit practical understanding of their intentional properties and interconnected contents (Van Gulick 2000).

10.6 THE EXPLANATORY QUESTION: HOW CAN CONSCIOUSNESS EXIST?

The How question focuses on explanation rather than description. It asks us to explain the basic status of consciousness and its place in nature. Is it a fundamental feature of reality in its own right, or does its existence depend upon other nonconscious items, be they physical, biological, neural or computational? And if the latter, can we explain or understand how the relevant nonconscious items could cause or realize consciousness? Put simply, can we explain how to make something conscious out of things that are not conscious?

5.1 Diversity of explanatory projects

The How question is not a single question, but rather a general family of more specific questions (Van Gulick 1995). They all concern the

possibility of explaining some sort or aspect of consciousness, but they vary in their particular explananda, the restrictions on their explanans, and their criteria for successful explanation. For example, one might ask whether we can explain access consciousness computationally by mimicking the requisite access relations in a computational model. Or one might be concerned instead with whether the phenomenal and qualitative properties of a conscious creature's mind can be a priori deduced from a description of the neural properties of its brain processes. Both are versions of the How question, but they ask about the prospects of very different explanatory projects, and thus may differ in their answers (Lycan 1996). It would be impractical, if not impossible, to catalog all the possible versions of the How question, but some of the main options can be listed.

Explananda. Possible explananda would include the various sorts of state and creature consciousness distinguished above, as well as the seven features of consciousness listed in response to the What question. Those two types of explananda overlap and intersect. We might for example aim to explain the dynamic aspect either of phenomenal or of access consciousness. Or we could try to explain the subjectivity of either qualitative or meta-mental consciousness. Not every feature applies to every sort of consciousness, but all apply to several. How one explains a given feature in relation to one sort of consciousness may not correspond with what is needed to explain it relative to another.

Explanans. The range of possible explanans is also diverse. In perhaps its broadest form, the How question asks how consciousness of the relevant sort could be caused or realized by nonconscious items, but we can generate a wealth of more specific questions by further restricting the range of the relevant explanans. One might seek to explain how a given feature of consciousness is caused or realized by underlying neural processes, biological structures, physical mechanisms, functional or teleofunctional relations, computational organization, or even by nonconscious mental states. The prospects for explanatory success will vary accordingly. In general the more limited and elementary the range

of the explanans, the more difficult the problem of explaining how could it suffice to produce consciousness (Van Gulick 1995).

Criteria of explanation. The third key parameter is how one defines the criterion for a successful explanation. One might require that the explanandum be a priori deducible from the explanans, although it is controversial whether this is either a necessary or a sufficient criterion for explaining consciousness (Jackson 1993). Its sufficiency will depend in part on the nature of the premises from which the deduction proceeds. As a matter of logic, one will need some bridge principles to connect propositions or sentences about consciousness with those that do not mention it. If one's premises concern physical or neural facts, then one will need some bridge principles or links that connect such facts with facts about consciousness (Kim 1998). Brute links, whether nomic or merely well confirmed correlations, could provide a logically sufficient bridge to infer conclusions about consciousness. But they would probably not allow us to see how or why those connections hold, and thus they would fall short of fully explaining how consciousness exists (Levine 1983, 1993, McGinn 1991).

One could legitimately ask for more, in particular for some account that made intelligible why those links hold and perhaps why they could not fail to do so. A familiar two-stage model for explaining macro-properties in terms of micro-substrates is often invoked. In the first step, one analyzes the macro-property in terms of functional conditions, and then in the second stage one shows that the micro-structures obeying the laws of their own level nomically suffice to guarantee the satisfaction of the relevant functional conditions (Armstrong 1968, Lewis 1972).

The micro-properties of collections of H2O molecules at 20°C suffice to satisfy the conditions for the liquidity of the water they compose. Moreover, the model makes intelligible how the liquidity is produced by the micro-properties. A satisfactory explanation of how consciousness is produced might seem to require a similar two stage story. Without it, even a priori deducibility might seem explanatorily less than sufficient,

though the need for such a story remains a matter of controversy (Block and Stalnaker 1999, Chalmers and Jackson 2001).

5.2 The explanatory gap

Our current inability to supply a suitably intelligible link is sometimes described, following Joseph Levine (1983), as the existence of an explanatory gap, and as indicating our incomplete understanding of how consciousness might depend upon a nonconscious substrate, especially a physical substrate. The basic gap claim admits of many variations in generality and thus in strength.

In perhaps its weakest form, it asserts a practical limit on our present explanatory abilities; given our current theories and models we can not now articulate an intelligible link. A stronger version makes an in principle claim about our human capacities and thus asserts that given our human cognitive limits we will never be able to bridge the gap. To us, or creatures cognitively like us, it must remain a residual mystery (McGinn 1991). Colin McGinn (1995) has argued that given the inherently spatial nature of both our human perceptual concepts and the scientific concepts we derive from them, we humans are not conceptually suited for understanding the nature of the psychophysical link. Facts about that link are as cognitively closed to us as are facts about multiplication or square roots to armadillos. They do not fall within our conceptual and cognitive repertoire. An even stronger version of the gap claim removes the restriction to our cognitive nature and denies in principle that the gap can be closed by any cognitive agents.

Those who assert gap claims disagree among themselves about what metaphysical conclusions, if any, follow from our supposed epistemic limits. Levine himself has been reluctant to draw any anti-physicalist ontological conclusions (Levine 1993, 2001). On the other hand some neodualists have tried to use the existence of the gap to refute physicalism (Foster 1996, Chalmers 1996). The stronger one's epistemological premise, the better the hope of deriving a metaphysical

conclusion. Thus unsurprisingly, dualist conclusions are often supported by appeals to the supposed impossibility in principle of closing the gap.

If one could see on a priori grounds that there is no way in which consciousness could be intelligibly explained as arising from the physical, it would not be a big step to concluding that it in fact does not do so (Chalmers 1996). However, the very strength of such an epistemological claim makes it difficult to assume with begging the metaphysical result in question. Thus those who wish to use a strong in principle gap claim to refute physicalism must find independent grounds to support it. Some have appealed to conceivability arguments for support, such as the alleged conceivability of zombies molecularly identical with conscious humans but devoid of all phenomenal consciousness (Campbell 1970, Kirk 1974, Chalmers 1996). Other supporting arguments invoke the supposed non-functional nature of consciousness and thus its alleged resistance to the standard scientific method of explaining complex properties (e.g., genetic dominance) in terms of physically realized functional conditions (Block 1980a, Chalmers 1996). Such arguments avoid begging the anti-physicalist question, but they themselves rely upon claims and intuitions that are controversial and not completely independent of one's basic view about physicalism. Discussion on the topic remains active and ongoing.

Our present inability to see any way of closing the gap may exert some pull on our intuitions, but it may simply reflect the limits of our current theorizing rather than an unbridgeable in principle barrier (Dennett 1991). Moreover, some physicalists have argued that explanatory gaps are to be expected and are even entailed by plausible versions of ontological physicalism, ones that treat human agents as physically realized cognitive systems with inherent limits that derive from their evolutionary origin and situated contextual mode of understanding (Van Gulick 1985, 2003; McGinn 1991, Papineau 1995, 2002). On this view, rather than refuting physicalism, the existence of explanatory gaps may confirm it. Discussion and disagreement on these topics remains active and ongoing.

5.3 Reductive and non-reductive explanation

As the need for intelligible linkage has shown, a priori deducibility is not in itself obviously sufficient for successful explanation (Kim 1980), nor is it clearly necessary. Some weaker logical link might suffice in many explanatory contexts. We can sometimes tell enough of a story about how facts of one sort depend upon those of another to satisfy ourselves that the latter do in fact cause or realize the former even if we can not strictly deduce all the former facts from the latter.

Strict intertheoretical deduction was taken as the reductive norm by the logical empiricist account of the unity of science (Putnam and Oppenheim 1958), but in more recent decades a looser nonreductive picture of relations among the various sciences has gained favor. In particular, nonreductive materialists have argued for the so called "autonomy of the special sciences" (Fodor 1974) and for the view that understanding the natural world requires us to use a diversity of conceptual and representational systems that may not be strictly intertranslatable or capable of being put into the tight correspondence required by the older deductive paradigm of interlevel relations (Putnam 1975).

Economics is often cited as an example (Fodor 1974, Searle 1992). Economic facts may be realized by underlying physical processes, but no one seriously demands that we be able to deduce the relevant economic facts from detailed descriptions of their underlying physical bases or that we be able to put the concepts and vocabulary of economics in tight correspondence with those of the physical sciences.

Nonetheless our deductive inability is not seen as cause for ontological misgivings; there is no "money-matter" problem. All that we require is some general and less than deductive understanding of how economic properties and relations might be underlain by physical ones. Thus one might opt for a similar criterion for interpreting the How question and for what counts as explaining how consciousness might be caused or

realized by nonconscious items. However, some critics, such as Kim (1987), have challenged the coherence of any view that aims to be both non-reductive and physicalist, though supporters of such views have replied in turn (Van Gulick 1993).

Others have argued that consciousness is especially resistant to explanation in physical terms because of the inherent differences between our subjective and objective modes of understanding. Thomas Nagel famously argued (1974) that there are unavoidable limits placed on our ability to understand the phenomenology of bat experience by our inability to empathetically take on an experiential perspective like that which characterizes the bat's echo-locatory auditory experience of its world. Given our inability to undergo similar experience, we can have at best partial understanding of the nature of such experience. No amount of knowledge gleaned from the external objective third-person perspective of the natural sciences will supposedly suffice to allow us to understand what the bat can understand of its own experience from its internal first-person subjective point of view.

5.4 Prospects of explanatory success

The How question thus subdivides into a diverse family of more specific questions depending upon the specific sort or feature of consciousness one aims to explain, the specific restrictions one places on the range of the explanans and the criterion one uses to define explanatory success. Some of the resulting variants seem easier to answer than others. Progress may seem likely on some of the so called "easy problems" of consciousness, such as explaining the dynamics of access consciousness in terms of the functional or computational organization of the brain (Baars 1988). Others may seem less tractable, especially the so-called "hard problem" (Chalmers 1995) which is more or less that of giving an intelligible account that lets us see in an intuitively satisfying way how phenomenal or "what it's like" consciousness might arise from physical or neural processes in the brain.

Positive answers to some versions of the How questions seem near at hand, but others appear to remain deeply baffling. Nor should we assume that every version has a positive answer. If dualism is true, then consciousness in at least some of its types may be basic and fundamental. If so,we will not be able to explain how it arises from nonconscious items since it simply does not do so.

One's view of the prospects for explaining consciousness will typically depend upon one's perspective. Optimistic physicalists will likely see current explanatory lapses as merely the reflection of the early stage of inquiry and sure to be remedied in the not too distant future (Dennett 1991, Searle 1992, P. M.Churchland 1995). To dualists, those same impasses will signify the bankruptcy of the physicalist program and the need to recognize consciousness as a fundamental constituent of reality in its own right (Robinson 1982, Foster 1989, 1996, Chalmers 1996). What one sees depends in part on where one stands, and the ongoing project of explaining consciousness will be accompanied by continuing debate about its status and prospects for success.

10.7 THE FUNCTIONAL QUESTION: WHY DOES CONSCIOUSNESS EXIST?

The functional or Why question asks about the value or role or consciousness and thus indirectly about its origin. Does it have a function, and if so what is it? Does it make a difference to the operation of systems in which it is present, and if so why and how? If consciousness exists as a complex feature of biological systems, then its adaptive value is likely relevant to explaining its evolutionary origin, though of course its present function, if it has one, need not be the same as that it may have had when it first arose. Adaptive functions often change over biological time. Questions about the value of consciousness also have a moral dimension in at least two ways. We are inclined to regard an organism's moral status as at least partly determined by the nature and extent to which it is conscious, and conscious states, especially conscious affective states such as pleasures and pains, play a

major role in many of the accounts of value that underlie moral theory (Singer 1975).

As with the What and How questions, the Why question poses a general problem that subdivides into a diversity of more specific inquiries. In so far as the various sorts of consciousness, e.g., access, phenomenal, meta-mental, are distinct and separable—which remains an open question—they likely also differ in their specific roles and values. Thus the Why question may well not have a single or uniform answer.

6.1 Causal status of consciousness

Perhaps the most basic issue posed by any version of the Why question is whether or not consciousness of the relevant sort has any causal impact at all. If it has no effects and makes no causal difference whatsoever, then it would seem unable to play any significant role in the systems or organisms in which it is present, thus undercutting at the outset most inquiries about its possible value. Nor can the threat of epiphenomenal irrelevance be simply dismissed as an obvious non-option, since at least some forms of consciousness have been seriously alleged in the recent literature to lack causal status. (See the entry on epiphenomenalism.) Such worries have been raised especially with regard to qualia and qualitative consciousness (Huxley 1874, Jackson 1982, Chalmers 1996), but challenges have also been leveled against the causal status of other sorts including meta-mental consciousness (Velmans 1991).

Both metaphysical and empirical arguments have been given in support of such claims. Among the former are those that appeal to intuitions about the conceivability and logical possibility of zombies, i.e., of beings whose behavior, functional organization, and physical structure down to the molecular level are identical to those of normal human agents but who lack any qualia or qualitative consciousness. Some (Kirk 1970, Chalmers 1996) assert such beings are possible in worlds that share all our physical laws, but others deny it (Dennett 1991, Levine 2001). If they are possible in such worlds, then it would seem to follow that even in our world, qualia do not affect the course of physical events including

those that constitute our human behaviors. If those events unfold in the same way whether or not qualia are present, then qualia appear to be inert or epiphenomenal at least with respect to events in the physical world. However, such arguments and the zombie intuitions on which they rely are controversial and their soundness remains in dispute (Searle 1992, Yablo 1998, Balog 1999).

Arguments of a far more empirical sort have challenged the causal status of meta-mental consciousness, at least in so far as its presence can be measured by the ability to report on one's mental state. Scientific evidence is claimed to show that consciousness of that sort is neither necessary for any type of mental ability nor does it occur early enough to act as a cause of the acts or processes typically thought to be its effects (Velmans 1991). According to those who make such arguments, the sorts of mental abilities that are typically thought to require consciousness can all be realized unconsciously in the absence of the supposedly required self-awareness.

Moreover, even when conscious self-awareness is present, it allegedly occurs too late to be the cause of the relevant actions rather than their result or at best a joint effect of some shared prior cause (Libet 1985). Self-awareness or meta-mental consciousness according to these arguments turns out to be a psychological after-effect rather than an initiating cause, more like a post facto printout or the result displayed on one's computer screen than like the actual processor operations that produce both the computer's response and its display.

Once again the arguments are controversial, and both the supposed data and their interpretation are subjects of lively disagreement (see Flanagan 1992, and commentaries accompanying Velmans 1991). Though the empirical arguments, like the zombie claims, require one to consider seriously whether some forms of consciousness may be less causally potent than is typically assumed, many theorists regard the empirical data as no real threat to the causal status of consciousness.

If the epiphenomenalists are wrong and consciousness, in its various forms, is indeed causal, what sorts of effects does it have and what differences does it make? How do mental processes that involve the relevant sort of consciousness differ form those that lack it? What function(s) might consciousness play? The following six sections (6.2–6.7) discuss some of the more commonly given answers. Though the various functions overlap to some degree, each is distinct, and they differ as well in the sorts of consciousness with which each is most aptly linked.

6.2 Flexible control

Increased flexibility and sophistication of control. Conscious mental processes appear to provide highly flexible and adaptive forms of control. Though unconscious automatic processes can be extremely efficient and rapid, they typically operate in ways that are more fixed and predetermined than those which involve conscious self-awareness (Anderson 1983). Conscious awareness is thus of most importance when one is dealing with novel situations and previously unencountered problems or demands (Penfield 1975, Armstrong 1981).

Standard accounts of skill acquisition stress the importance of conscious awareness during the initial learning phase, which gradually gives way to more automatic processes of the sort that require little attention or conscious oversight (Schneider and Shiffrin 1977). Conscious processing allows for the construction or compilation of specifically tailored routines out of elementary units as well as for the deliberate control of their execution.

There is a familiar tradeoff between flexibility and speed; controlled conscious processes purchase their customized versatility at the price of being slow and effortful in contrast to the fluid rapidity of automatic unconscious mental operations (Anderson 1983). The relevant increases in flexibility would seem most closely connected with the meta-mental or higher-order form of consciousness in so far as the enhanced ability to control processes depends upon greater self-awareness. However,

flexibility and sophisticated modes of control may be associated as well with the phenomenal and access forms of consciousness.

6.3 Social coordination

Enhanced capacity for social coordination. Consciousness of the meta-mental sort may well involve not only an increase in self-awareness but also an enhanced understanding of the mental states of other minded creatures, especially those of other members of one's social group (Humphreys 1982). Creatures that are conscious in the relevant meta-mental sense not only have beliefs, motives, perceptions and intentions but understand what it is to have such states and are aware of both themselves and others as having them.

This increase in mutually shared knowledge of each other's minds, enables the relevant organisms to interact, cooperate and communicate in more advanced and adaptive ways. Although meta-mental consciousness is the sort most obviously linked to such a socially coordinative role, narrative consciousness of the kind associated with the stream of consciousness is also clearly relevant in so far as it involves the application to one's own case of the interpretative abilities that derive in part from their social application (Ryle 1949, Dennett 1978, 1992).

6.4 Integrated representation

More unified and densely integrated representation of reality. Conscious experience presents us with a world of objects independently existing in space and time. Those objects are typically present to us in a multi-modal fashion that involves the integration of information from various sensory channels as well as from background knowledge and memory. Conscious experience presents us not with isolated properties or features but with objects and events situated in an ongoing independent world, and it does so by embodying in its experiential organization and dynamics the dense network of relations and interconnections that collectively constitute the meaningful structure of a world of objects (Kant 1787, Husserl 1913, Campbell 1997).

Of course, not all sensory information need be experienced to have an adaptive effect on behavior. Adaptive non-experiential sensory-motor links can be found both in simple organisms, as well as in some of the more direct and reflexive processes of higher organisms. But when experience is present, it provides a more unified and integrated representation of reality, one that typically allows for more open-ended avenues of response (Lorenz 1977). Consider for example the representation of space in an organism whose sensory input channels are simply linked to movement or to the orientation of a few fixed mechanisms such as those for feeding or grabbing prey, and compare it with that in an organism capable of using its spatial information for flexible navigation of its environment and for whatever other spatially relevant aims or goals it may have, as when a person visually scans her office or her kitchen (Gallistel 1990).

It is representation of this latter sort that is typically made available by the integrated mode of presentation associated with conscious experience. The unity of experienced space is just one example of the sort of integration associated with our conscious awareness of an objective world. (See the entry on unity of consciousness.)

This integrative role or value is most directly associated with access consciousness, but also clearly with the larger phenomenal and intentional structure of experience. It is relevant even to the qualitative aspect of consciousness in so far as qualia play an important role in our experience of unified objects in a unified space or scene. It is intimately tied as well to the transparency of experience described in response to the What question, especially to semantic transparency (Van Gulick 1993). Integration of information plays a major role in several current neuro-cognitive theories of consciousness especially Global Workspace theories (see section 9.5) and Giulio Tononi's Integrated Information theory. (section 9.6 below).

6.5 Informational access

More global informational access. The information carried in conscious mental states is typically available for use by a diversity of mental subsystems and for application to a wide range of potential situations and actions (Baars 1988). Nonconscious information is more likely to be encapsulated within particular mental modules and available for use only with respect to the applications directly connected to that subsystem's operation (Fodor 1983). Making information conscious typically widens the sphere of its influence and the range of ways it which it can be used to adaptively guide or shape both inner and outer behavior. A state's being conscious may be in part a matter of what Dennett calls "cerebral celebrity", i.e., of its ability to have a content-appropriate impact on other mental states.

This particular role is most directly and definitionally tied to the notion of access consciousness (Block 1995), but meta-mental consciousness as well as the phenomenal and qualitative forms all seem plausibly linked to such increases in the availability of information (Armstrong 1981, Tye 1985). Diverse cognitive and neuro-cognitive theories incorporate access as a central feature of consciousness and conscious processing. Global Workspace theories, Prinz's Attendend Intermediate Representation (AIR) (Prinz 2012) and Tononi's Integrated Information Theory (IIT) all distinguish conscious states and processes at least partly in terms of enhanced wide spread access to the state's content (See section 9.6)

6.6 Freedom of will

Increased freedom of choice or free will. The issue of free will remains a perennial philosophical problem, not only with regard to whether or not it exists but even as to what it might or should consist in (Dennett 1984, van Inwagen 1983, Hasker 1999, Wegner 2002). (See the entry on free will.) The notion of free will may itself remain too murky and contentious to shed any clear light on the role of consciousness, but there is a traditional intuition that the two are deeply linked.

Consciousness has been thought to open a realm of possibilities, a sphere of options within which the conscious self might choose or act freely. At

a minimum, consciousness might seem a necessary precondition for any such freedom or self-determination (Hasker 1999). How could one engage in the requisite sort of free choice, while remaining solely within the unconscious domain? How can one determine one's own will without being conscious of it and of the options one has to shape it.

The freedom to chose one's actions and the ability to determine one's own nature and future development may admit of many interesting variations and degrees rather than being a simple all or nothing matter, and various forms or levels of consciousness might be correlated with corresponding degrees or types of freedom and self-determination (Dennett 1984, 2003). The link with freedom seems strongest for the meta-mental form of consciousness given its emphasis on self-awareness, but potential connections also seem possible for most of the other sorts as well.

6.7 Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsically motivating states. At least some conscious states appear to have the motive force they do intrinsically. In particular, the functional and motivational roles of conscious affective states, such as pleasures and pains, seem intrinsic to their experiential character and inseparable from their qualitative and phenomenal properties, though the view has been challenged (Nelkin 1989, Rosenthal 1991). The attractive positive motivational aspect of a pleasure seems a part of its directly experienced phenomenal feel, as does the negative affective character of a pain, at least in the case of normal non-pathological experience.

There is considerable disagreement about the extent to which the feel and motive force of pain can dissociate in abnormal cases, and some have denied the existence of such intrinsically motivating aspects altogether (Dennett 1991). However, at least in the normal case, the negative motivational force of pain seems built right into the feel of the experience itself.

Just how this might be so remains less than clear, and perhaps the appearance of intrinsic and directly experienced motivational force is illusory. But if it is real, then it may be one of the most important and evolutionarily oldest respects in which consciousness makes a difference to the mental systems and processes in which it is present (Humphreys 1992).

Other suggestions have been made about the possible roles and value of consciousness, and these six surely do not exhaust the options. Nonetheless, they are among the most prominent recent hypotheses, and they provide a fair survey of the sorts of answers that have been offered to the Why question by those who believe consciousness does indeed make a difference.

6.8 Constitutive and contingent roles

One further point requires clarification about the various respects in which the proposed functions might answer the Why question. In particular one should distinguish between constitutive cases and cases of contingent realization. In the former, fulfilling the role constitutes being conscious in the relevant sense, while in the latter case consciousness of a given sort is just one way among several in which the requisite role might be realized (Van Gulick 1993).

For example, making information globally available for use by a wide variety of subsystems and behavioral applications may constitute its being conscious in the access sense. By contrast, even if the qualitative and phenomenal forms of consciousness involve a highly unified and densely integrated representation of objective reality, it may be possible to produce representations having those functional characteristics but which are not qualitative or phenomenal in nature.

The fact that in us the modes of representation with those characteristics also have qualitative and phenomenal properties may reflect contingent historical facts about the particular design solution that happened to arise in our evolutionary ancestry. If so, there may be quite other means of

achieving a comparable result without qualitative or phenomenal consciousness. Whether this is the right way to think about phenomenal and qualitative conscious is unclear; perhaps the tie to unified and densely integrated representation is in fact as intimate and constitutive as it seems to be in the case of access consciousness (Carruthers 2000). Regardless of how that issue gets resolved, it is important to not to conflate constitution accounts with contingent realization accounts when addressing the function of consciousness and answering the question of why it exists (Chalmers 1996).

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. What are the features of consciousness?

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2. How can consciousness exist?

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3. The functional question: Why does consciousness exist?

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10.8 THEORIES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

In response to the What, How and Why questions many theories of consciousness have been proposed in recent years. However, not all theories of consciousness are theories of the same thing. They vary not only in the specific sorts of consciousness they take as their object, but also in their theoretical aims.

Perhaps the largest division is between general metaphysical theories that aim to locate consciousness in the overall ontological scheme of reality and more specific theories that offer detailed accounts of its nature, features and role. The line between the two sorts of theories blurs a bit, especially in so far as many specific theories carry at least some implicit commitments on the more general metaphysical issues. Nonetheless, it is useful to keep the division in mind when surveying the range of current theoretical offerings.

10.9 METAPHYSICAL THEORIES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

General metaphysical theories offer answers to the conscious version of the mind-body problem, "What is the ontological status of consciousness relative to the world of physical reality?" The available responses largely parallel the standard mind-body options including the main versions of dualism and physicalism.

8.1 Dualist theories

Dualist theories regard at least some aspects of consciousness as falling outside the realm of the physical,but specific forms of dualism differ in just which aspects those are. (See the entry on dualism.)

Substance dualism, such as traditional Cartesian dualism (Descartes 1644), asserts the existence of both physical and non-physical substances. Such theories entail the existence of non-physical minds or selves as entities in which consciousness inheres. Though substance

dualism is at present largely out of favor, it does have some contemporary proponents (Swinburne 1986, Foster 1989, 1996).

Property dualism in its several versions enjoys a greater level of current support. All such theories assert the existence of conscious properties that are neither identical with nor reducible to physical properties but which may nonetheless be instantiated by the very same things that instantiate physical properties. In that respect they might be classified as dual aspect theories. They take some parts of reality—organisms, brains, neural states or processes—to instantiate properties of two distinct and disjoint sorts: physical ones and conscious, phenomenal or qualitative ones. Dual aspect or property dualist theories can be of at least three different types.

Fundamental property dualism regards conscious mental properties as basic constituents of reality on a par with fundamental physical properties such as electromagnetic charge. They may interact in causal and law-like ways with other fundamental properties such as those of physics, but ontologically their existence is not dependent upon nor derivative from any other properties (Chalmers 1996).

Emergent property dualism treats conscious properties as arising from complex organizations of physical constituents but as doing so in a radical way such that the emergent result is something over and above its physical causes and is not a priori predictable from nor explicable in terms of their strictly physical natures. The coherence of such emergent views has been challenged (Kim 1998) but they have supporters (Hasker 1999).

Neutral monist property dualism treats both conscious mental properties and physical properties as in some way dependent upon and derivative from a more basic level of reality, that in itself is neither mental nor physical (Russell 1927, Strawson 1994). However, if one takes dualism to be a claim about there being two distinct realms of fundamental entities or properties, then perhaps neutral monism should not be

classified as a version of property dualism in so far as it does not regard either mental or physical properties as ultimate or fundamental.

Panpsychism might be regarded as a fourth type of property dualism in that it regards all the constituents of reality as having some psychic, or at least proto-psychic, properties distinct from whatever physical properties they may have (Nagel 1979). Indeed neutral monism might be consistently combined with some version of panprotopsychism (Chalmers 1996) according to which the proto-mental aspects of micro-constituents can give rise under suitable conditions of combination to full blown consciousness. (See the entry on panpsychism.)

The nature of the relevant proto-psychic aspect remains unclear, and such theories face a dilemma if offered in hope of answering the Hard Problem. Either the proto-psychic properties involve the sort of qualitative phenomenal feel that generates the Hard Problem or they do not. If they do, it is difficult to understand how they could possibly occur as ubiquitous properties of reality. How could an electron or a quark have any such experiential feel? However, if the proto-psychic properties do not involve any such feel, it is not clear how they are any better able than physical properties to account for qualitative consciousness in solving the Hard Problem.

A more modest form of panpsychism has been advocated by the neuroscientist Giulio Tononi (2008) and endorsed by other neuroscientists including Christof Koch (2012). This version derives from Tononi's integrated information theory (IIT) of consciousness that identifies consciousness with integrated information which can exist in many degrees (see section 9.6 below). According to IIT, even a simple indicator device such as a single photo diode possesses some degree of integrated information and thus some limited degree of consciousness, a consequence which both Tononi and Koch embrace as a form of panpsychism.

A variety of arguments have been given in favor of dualist and other anti-physicalist theories of consciousness. Some are largelya priori in nature such as those that appeal to the supposed conceivability of zombies (Kirk 1970, Chalmers 1996) or versions of the knowledge argument (Jackson 1982, 1986) which aim to reach an anti-physicalist conclusion about the ontology of consciousness from the apparent limits on our ability to fully understand the qualitative aspects of conscious experience through third-person physical accounts of the brain processes. (See Jackson 1998, 2004 for a contrary view; see also entries on Zombies, and Qualia: The Knowledge Argument) Other arguments for dualism are made on more empirical grounds, such as those that appeal to supposed causal gaps in the chains of physical causation in the brain (Eccles and Popper 1977) or those based on alleged anomalies in the temporal order of conscious awareness (Libet 1982, 1985). Dualist arguments of both sorts have been much disputed by physicalists (P.S. Churchland 1981, Dennett and Kinsbourne 1992).

8.2 Physicalist theories
Most other metaphysical theories of consciousness are versions of physicalism of one familiar sort or another.

Eliminativist theories reductively deny the existence of consciousness or at least the existence of some of its commonly accepted sorts or features. (See the entry on eliminative materialism.) The radical eliminativists reject the very notion of consciousness as muddled or wrong headed and claim that the conscious/nonconscious distinction fails to cut mental reality at its joints (Wilkes 1984, 1988). They regard the idea of consciousness as sufficiently off target to merit elimination and replacement by other concepts and distinctions more reflective of the true nature of mind (P. S. Churchland 1983).

Most eliminativists are more qualified in their negative assessment. Rather than rejecting the notion outright, they take issue only with some of the prominent features that it is commonly thought to involve, such as qualia (Dennett 1990, Carruthers 2000), the conscious self (Dennett

1992), or the so called "Cartesian Theater" where the temporal sequence of conscious experience gets internally projected (Dennett and Kinsbourne 1992). More modest eliminativists, like Dennett, thus typically combine their qualified denials with a positive theory of those aspects of consciousness they take as real, such as the Multiple Drafts Model (section 9.3 below).

Identity theory, at least strict psycho-physical type-type identity theory, offers another strongly reductive option by identifying conscious mental properties, states and processes with physical ones, most typically of a neural or neurophysiological nature. If having a qualitative conscious experience of phenomenal red just is being in a brain state with the relevant neurophysiological properties, then such experiential properties are real but their reality is a straight forwardly physical reality.

Type-type identity theory is so called because it identifies mental and physical types or properties on a par with identifying the property of being water with the property of being composed of H2O molecules. After a brief period of popularity in the early days of contemporary physicalism during the 1950s and 60s (Place 1956, Smart 1959) it has been far less widely held because of problems such as the multiple realization objection according to which mental properties are more abstract and thus capable of being realized by many diverse underlying structural or chemical substrates (Fodor 1974, Hellman and Thompson 1975). If one and the same conscious property can be realized by different neurophysiological (or even non-neurophysiological) properties in different organisms, then the two properties can not be strictly identical.

Nonetheless the type-type identity theory has enjoyed a recent if modest resurgence at least with respect to qualia or qualitative conscious properties. This has been in part because treating the relevant psycho-physical link as an identity is thought by some to offer a way of dissolving the explanatory gap problem (Hill and McLaughlin 1998, Papineau 1995, 2003). They argue that if the conscious qualitative

property and the neural property are identical, then there is no need to explain how the latter causes or gives rise to the former. It does not cause it, it is it. And thus there is no gap to bridge, and no further explanation is needed. Identities are not the sort of thing that can be explained, since nothing is identical with anything but itself, and it makes no sense to ask why something is identical with itself.

However, others contend that the appeal to type-type identity does not so obviously void the need for explanation (Levine 2001). Even if two descriptions or concepts in fact refer to one and the same property, one may still reasonably expect some explanation of that convergence, some account of how they pick out one and the same thing despite not initially or intuitively seeming to do so. In other cases of empirically discovered property identities, such as that of heat and kinetic energy, there is a story to be told that explains the co-referential convergence, and it seems fair to expect the same in the psycho-physical case. Thus appealing to type-type identities may not in itself suffice to dissolve the explanatory gap problem.

Most physicalist theories of consciousness are neither eliminativist nor based on strict type-type identities. They acknowledge the reality of consciousness but aim to locate it within the physical world on the basis of some psycho-physical relation short of strict property identity.

Among the common variants are those that take conscious reality to supervene on the physical, be composed of the physical, or be realized by the physical.

Functionalist theories in particular rely heavily on the notion of realization to explicate the relation between consciousness and the physical. According to functionalism, a state or process counts as being of a given mental or conscious type in virtue of the functional role it plays within a suitably organized system (Block 1980a). A given physical state realizes the relevant conscious mental type by playing the appropriate role within the larger physical system that contains it. (See

the entry on functionalism.) The functionalist often appeals to analogies with other inter-level relations, as between the biological and biochemical or the chemical and the atomic. In each case properties or facts at one level are realized by complex interactions between items at an underlying level.

Critics of functionalism often deny that consciousness can be adequately explicated in functional terms (Block 1980a, 1980b, Levine 1983, Chalmers 1996). According to such critics, consciousness may have interesting functional characteristics but its nature is not essentially functional. Such claims are sometimes supported by appeal to the supposed possibility of absent or inverted qualia, i.e., the possibility of beings who are functionally equivalent to normal humans but who have reversed qualia or none at all. The status of such possibilities is controversial (Shoemaker 1981, Dennett 1990, Carruthers 2000), but if accepted they would seem to pose a problem for the functionalist. (See the entry on qualia.)

Those who ground ontological physicalism on the realization relation often combine it with a nonreductive view at the conceptual or representational level that stresses the autonomy of the special sciences and the distinct modes of description and cognitive access they provide.

Non-reductive physicalism of this sort denies that the theoretical and conceptual resources appropriate and adequate for dealing with facts at the level of the underlying substrate or realization level must be adequate as well for dealing with those at the realized level (Putnam 1975, Boyd 1980). As noted above in response to the How question, one can believe that all economic facts are physically realized without thinking that the resources of the physical sciences provide all the cognitive and conceptual tools we need for doing economics (Fodor 1974).

Nonreductive physicalism has been challenged for its alleged failure to "pay its physicalist dues" in reductive coin. It is faulted for supposedly not giving an adequate account of how conscious properties are or could

be realized by underlying neural, physical or functional structures or processes (Kim 1987, 1998). Indeed it has been charged with incoherence because of its attempt to combine a claim of physical realization with the denial of the ability to spell out that relation in a strict and a priori intelligible way (Jackson 2004).

However, as noted above in discussion of the How question, nonreductive physicalists reply by agreeing that some account of psycho-physical realization is indeed needed, but adding that the relevant account may fall far short of a priori deducibility, yet still suffice to satisfy our legitimate explanatory demands (McGinn 1991, Van Gulick 1985). The issue remains under debate.

10.10 SPECIFIC THEORIES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Although there are many general metaphysical/ontological theories of consciousness, the list of specific detailed theories about its nature is even longer and more diverse. No brief survey could be close to comprehensive, but seven main types of theories may help to indicate the basic range of options: higher-order theories, representational theories, interpretative narrative theories, cognitive theories, neural theories, quantum theories and nonphysical theories. The categories are not mutually exclusive; for example, many cognitive theories also propose a neural substrate for the relevant cognitive processes. Nonetheless grouping them in the seven classes provides a basic overview.

9.1 Higher-order theories

Higher-order (HO) theories analyze the notion of a conscious mental state in terms of reflexive meta-mental self-awareness. The core idea is that what makes a mental state M a conscious mental state is the fact that it is accompanied by a simultaneous and non-inferential higher-order (i.e., meta-mental) state whose content is that one is now in M. Having a conscious desire for some chocolate involves being in two mental states; one must have both a desire for some chocolate and also a higher-order state whose content is that one is now having just such a desire.

Unconscious mental states are unconscious precisely in that we lack the relevant higher-order states about them. Their being unconscious consists in the fact that we are not reflexively and directly aware of being in them. (See the entry on higher-order theories of consciousness.)

Higher-order theories come in two main variants that differ concerning the psychological mode of the relevant conscious-making meta-mental states. Higher-order thought (HOT) theories take the required higher-order state to be an assertoric thought-like meta-state (Rosenthal 1986, 1993). Higher-order perception (HOP) theories take them to be more perception-like and associated with a kind of inner sense and intra-mental monitoring systems of some sort (Armstrong 1981, Lycan 1987, 1996).

Each has its relative strengths and problems. HOT theorists note that we have no organs of inner sense and claim that we experience no sensory qualities other than those presented to us by outer directed perception. HOP theorists on the other hand can argue that their view explains some of the additional conditions required by HO accounts as natural consequences of the perception-like nature of the relevant higher-order states. In particular the demands that the conscious-making meta-state be noninferential and simultaneous with its lower level mental object might be explained by the parallel conditions that typically apply to perception. We perceive what is happening now, and we do so in a way that involves no inferences, at least not any explicit personal-level inferences. Those conditions are no less necessary on the HOT view but are left unexplained by it, which might seem to give some explanatory advantage to the HOP model (Lycan 2004, Van Gulick 2000), though some HOT theorists argue otherwise (Carruthers 2000).

Whatever their respective merits, both HOP and HOT theories face some common challenges, including what might be called thegenerality problem. Having a thought or perception of a given item X—be it a rock, a pen or a potato—does not in general make X a conscious X. Seeing or thinking of the potato on the counter does not make it a conscious potato.

Why then should having a thought or perception of a given desire or a memory make it a conscious desire or memory (Dretske 1995, Byrne 1997). Nor will it suffice to note that we do not apply the term "conscious" to rocks or pens that we perceive or think of, but only to mental states that we perceive or think of (Lycan 1997, Rosenthal 1997). That may be true, but what is needed is some account of why it is appropriate to do so.

The higher-order view is most obviously relevant to the meta-mental forms of consciousness, but some of its supporters take it to explain other types of consciousness as well, including the more subjective what it's like and qualitative types. One common strategy is to analyze qualia as mental features that are capable of occurring unconsciously; for example they might be explained as properties of inner states whose structured similarity relations given rise to beliefs about objective similarities in the world (Shoemaker 1975, 1990). Though unconscious qualia can play that functional role, there need be nothing that it is like to be in a state that has them (Nelkin 1989, Rosenthal 1991, 1997). According to the HO theorist, what-it's-likeness enters only when we become aware of that first-order state and its qualitative properties by having an appropriate meta-state directed at it.

Critics of the HO view have disputed that account, and some have argued that the notion of unconscious qualia on which it relies is incoherent (Papineau 2002). Whether or not such proposed HO accounts of qualia are successful, it is important to note that most HO advocates take themselves to be offering a comprehensive theory of consciousness, or at least the core of such a general theory, rather than merely one limited to some special meta-mental forms of it.

Other variants of HO theory go beyond the standard HOT and HOP versions including some that analyze consciousness in terms of dispositional rather than occurrent higher-order thoughts (Carruthers 2000). Others appeal to implicit rather than explicit higher-order understanding and weaken or remove the standard assumption that the

meta-state must be distinct and separate from its lower-order object (Gennaro 1995, Van Gulick 2000, 2004) with such views overlapping with so called reflexive theories discussed in the section. Other variants of HO theory continue to be offered, and debate between supporters and critics of the basic approach remains active. (See the recent papers in Gennaro 2004.)

9.2 Reflexive theories

Reflexive theories, like higher-order theories, imply a strong link between consciousness and self-awareness. They differ in that they locate the aspect of self-awareness directly within the conscious state itself rather than in a distinct meta-state directed at it. The idea that conscious states involve a double intentionality goes back at least to Brentano (1874) in the 19th century. The conscious state is intentionally directed at an object outside itself—such as a tree or chair in the case of a conscious perception—as well as intentionally directed at itself. One and the same state is both an outer-directed awareness and an awareness of itself. Several recent theories have claimed that such reflexive awareness is a central feature of conscious mental states. Some view themselves as variants of higher-order theory (Gennaro 2004, 2012) while others reject the higher-order category and describe their theories as presenting a "same-order" account of consciousness as self-awareness (Kriegel 2009). Yet others challenge the level distinction by analyzing the meta-intentional content as implicit in the phenomenal first-order content of conscious states, as in so called Higher-Order Global State models (HOGS) (Van Gulick 2004,2006). A sample of papers, some supporting and some attacking the reflexive view can be found in Krigel and Williford (2006).

9.3 Representationalist theories

Almost all theories of consciousness regard it as having representational features, but so called representationalist theories are defined by the stronger view that its representational features exhaust its mental features (Harman 1990, Tye 1995, 2000). According to the representationalist, conscious mental states have no mental properties other than their

representational properties. Thus two conscious or experiential states that share all their representational properties will not differ in any mental respect.

The exact force of the claim depends on how one interprets the idea of being "representationally the same" for which there are many plausible alternative criteria. One could define it coarsely in terms of satisfaction or truth conditions, but understood in that way the representationalist thesis seems clearly false. There are too many ways in which states might share their satisfaction or truth conditions yet differ mentally, including those that concern their mode of conceptualizing or presenting those conditions.

At the opposite extreme, one could count two states as representationally distinct if they differed in any features that played a role in their representational function or operation. On such a liberal reading any differences in the bearers of content would count as representational differences even if they bore the same intentional or representational content; they might differ only in their means or mode of representation not their content.

Such a reading would of course increase the plausibility of the claim that a conscious state's representational properties exhaust its mental properties but at the cost of significantly weakening or even trivializing the thesis. Thus the representationalist seems to need an interpretation of representational sameness that goes beyond mere satisfaction conditions and reflects all the intentional or contentful aspects of representation without being sensitive to mere differences in underlying non-contentful features of the processes at the realization level. Thus most representationalists provide conditions for conscious experience that include both a content condition plus some further causal role or format requirements (Tye 1995, Dretske 1995, Carruthers 2000). Other representationalists accept the existence of qualia but treat them as objective properties that external objects are represented as having, i.e.,

they treat them as represented properties rather than as properties of representations or mental states (Dretske 1995, Lycan 1996).

Representationalism can be understood as a qualified form of eliminativism insofar as it denies the existence of properties of a sort that conscious mental states are commonly thought to have—or at least seem to have—namely those that are mental but not representational. Qualia, at least if understood as intrinsic monadic properties of conscious states accessible to introspection, would seem to be the most obvious targets for such elimination. Indeed part of the motivation for representationalism is to show that one can accommodate all the facts about consciousness, perhaps within a physicalist framework, without needing to find room for qualia or any other apparently non-representational mental properties (Dennett 1990, Lycan 1996, Carruthers 2000).

Representationalism has been quite popular in recent years and had many defenders, but it remains highly controversial and intuitions clash about key cases and thought experiments (Block 1996). In particular the possibility of inverted qualia provides a crucial test case. To anti-representationalists, the mere logical possibility of inverted qualia shows that conscious states can differ in a significant mental respect while coinciding representationally. Representationalists in reply deny either the possibility of such inversion or its alleged import (Dretske 1995, Tye 2000).

Many other arguments have been made for and against representationalism, such as those concerning perceptions in different sense modalities of one and the same state of affairs—seeing and feeling the same cube—which might seem to involve mental differences distinct from how the relevant states represent the world to be (Peacocke 1983, Tye 2003). In each case, both sides can muster strong intuitions and argumentative ingenuity. Lively debate continues.

9.4 Narrative Interpretative Theories

Some theories of consciousness stress the interpretative nature of facts about consciousness. According to such views, what is or is not conscious is not always a determinate fact, or at least not so independent of a larger context of interpretative judgments. The most prominent philosophical example is the Multiple Drafts Model (MDM) of consciousness, advanced by Daniel Dennett (1991). It combines elements of both representationalism and higher-order theory but does so in a way that varies interestingly from the more standard versions of either providing a more interpretational and less strongly realist view of consciousness.

The MDM includes many distinct but interrelated features. Its name reflects the fact that at any given moment content fixations of many sorts are occurring throughout the brain. What makes some of these contents conscious is not that they occur in a privileged spatial or functional location—the so called "Cartesian Theater"—nor in a special mode or format, all of which the MDM denies. Rather it a matter of what Dennett calls "cerebral celebrity", i.e., the degree to which a given content influences the future development of other contents throughout the brain, especially with regard to how those effects are manifest in the reports and behaviors that the person makes in response to various probes that might indicate her conscious state. One of the MDM's key claims is that different probes (e. g., being asked different questions or being in different contexts that make differing behavioral demands) may elicit different answers about the person's conscious state. Moreover, according to the MDM there may be no probe-independent fact of the matter about what the person's conscious state really was. Hence the "multiple" of the Multiple Drafts Model.

The MDM is representationalist in that it analyzes consciousness in terms of content relations. It also denies the existence of qualia and thus rejects any attempt to distinguish conscious states from nonconscious states by their presence. It rejects as well the notion of the self as an inner observer, whether located in the Cartesian Theater or elsewhere. The MDM treats the self as an emergent or virtual aspect of the coherent

roughly serially narrative that is constructed through the interactive play of contents in the system. Many of those contents are bound together at the intentional level as perceptions or fixations from a relatively unified and temporally extended point of view, i.e., they cohere in their contents as if they were the experiences of a ongoing self. But it is the order of dependence that is crucial to the MDM account. The relevant contents are not unified because they are all observed by a single self, but just the converse. It is because they are unified and coherent at the level of content that they count as the experiences of a single self, at least of a single virtual self.

It is in this respect that the MDM shares some elements with higher-order theories. The contents that compose the serial narrative are at least implicitly those of an ongoing if virtual self, and it is they that are most likely to be expressed in the reports the person makes of her conscious state in response to various probes. They thus involve a certain degree of reflexivity or self-awareness of the sort that is central to higher-order theories, but the higher-order aspect is more an implicit feature of the stream of contents rather than present in distinct explicit higher-order states of the sort found in standard HO theories.

Dennett's MDM has been highly influential but has also drawn criticism, especially from those who find it insufficiently realist in its view of consciousness and at best incomplete in achieving its stated goal to fully explain it (Block 1994, Dretske 1994, Levine 1994). Many of its critics acknowledge the insight and value of the MDM, but deny that there are no real facts of consciousness other than those captured by it (Rosenthal 1994, Van Gulick 1994, Akins 1996).

From a more empirical perspective, the neuroscientist Michael Gazzaniga (2011) has introduced the idea of an "interpreter module" based in the left hemisphere that makes sense of our actions in any inferential way and constructs an ongoing narrative of our actions and experience. Though the theory is not intended as a complete theory of

consciousness, it accords a major role to such interpretative narrative activity.

9.5 Cognitive Theories

A number theories of consciousness associate it with a distinct cognitive architecture or with a special pattern of activity with that structure.

Global Workspace. A major psychological example of the cognitive approach is the Global Workspace theory. As initially developed by Bernard Baars (1988)) global workspace theory describes consciousness in terms of a competition among processors and outputs for a limited capacity resource that "broadcasts" information for widespread access and use. Being available in that way to the global workspace makes information conscious at least in the access sense. It is available for report and the flexible control of behavior. Much like Dennett's "cerebral celebrity", being broadcast in the workspace makes contents more accessible and influential with respect to other contents and other processors. At the same time the original content is strengthened by recurrent support back from the workspace and from other contents with which it coheres. The capacity limits on the workspace correspond to the limits typically placed on focal attention or working memory in many cognitive models.

The model has been further developed with proposed connections to particular neural and functional brain systems by Stanislas Dehaene and others (2000). Of special importance is the claim that consciousness in both the access and phenomenal sense occurs when and only when the relevant content enters the larger global network involving both primary sensory areas as well as many other areas including frontal and parietal areas associated with attention. Dehaene claims that conscious perception begins only with the "ignition" of that larger global network; activity in the primary sensory areas will not suffice no matter how intense or recurrent (though see the contrary view of Victor Lamme in section 9.7).

Attended Intermediate Representation. Another cognitive theory is Jesse Prinz's (2012) Attended Intermediate level Representation theory (AIR). The theory is a neuro-cognitive hybrid account of conscious. According to AIR theory, a conscious perception must meet both cognitive and neural conditions. It must be a representation of a perceptually intermediate property which Prinz argues are the only properties of which we are aware in conscious experience—we experience only basic features of external objects such as colors, shapes, tones, and feels. According to Prinz, our awareness of higher level properties—such as being a pine tree or my car keys—is wholly a matter of judging and not of conscious experience. Hence the Intermediate Representational (IR) aspect of AIR. To be conscious such a represented content must also be Attended (the A aspect of AIR). Prinz proposes a particular neural substrate for each component. He identifies the intermediate level representations with gamma (40–80hz) vector activity in sensory cortex and the attentional component with synchronized oscillations that can incorporate that gamma vector activity.

9.6 Information Integration Theory

The integration of information from many sources is an important feature of consciousness and, as noted above (section 6.4), is often cited as one of its major functions. Content integration plays an important role in various theories especially global workspace theory (section 9.3). However, a proposal by the neuroscientist Giulio Tononi (2008) goes further in identifying consciousness with integrated information and asserting that information integration of the relevant sort is both necessary and sufficient for consciousness regardless of the substrate in which it is realized (which need not be neural or biological). According to Tononi's Integrated Information Theory (IIT), consciousness is a purely information-theoretic property of systems. He proposes a mathematical measure φ that aims to measure not merely the information in the parts of a given system but also the information contained in the organization of the system over and above that in its parts. φ thus corresponds to the system's degree of informational integration. Such a

system can contain many overlapping complexes and the complex with the highest φ value will be conscious according to IIT.

According to IIT, consciousness varies in quantity and comes in many degrees which correspond to φ values. Thus even a simple system such a single photo diode will be conscious to some degree if it is not contained within a larger complex. In that sense, IIT implies a form of panpsychism that Tononi explicitly endorses. According to IIT, the quality of the relevant consciousness is determined by the totality of informational relations within the relevant integrated complex. Thus IIT aims to explain both the quantity and quality of phenomenal consciousness. Other neuroscientists, notably Christof Koch, have also endorsed the IIT approach (Koch 2012).

9.7 Neural Theories

Neural theories of consciousness come in many forms, though most in some way concern the so called "neural correlates of consciousness" or NCCs. Unless one is a dualist or other non-physicalist, more than mere correlation is required; at least some NCCs must be the essential substrates of consciousness. An explanatory neural theory needs to explain why or how the relevant correlations exist, and if the theory is committed to physicalism that will require showing how the underlying neural substrates could be identical with their neural correlates or at least realize them by satisfying the required roles or conditions (Metzinger 2000).

Such theories are diverse not only in the neural processes or properties to which they appeal but also in the aspects of consciousness they take as their respective explananda. Some are based on high-level systemic features of the brain, but others focus on more specific physiological or structural properties, with corresponding differences in their intended explanatory targets. Most in some way aim to connect with theories of consciousness at other levels of description such as cognitive, representational or higher-order theories.

A sampling of recent neural theories might include models that appeal to global integrated fields (Kinsbourne), binding through synchronous oscillation (Singer 1999, Crick and Koch 1990), NMDA-mediated transient neural assemblies (Flohr 1995), thalamically modulated patterns of cortical activation (Llinas 2001), reentrant cortical loops (Edelman 1989), comparator mechanisms that engage in continuous action-prediction-assessment loops between frontal and midbrain areas (Gray 1995), left hemisphere based interpretative processes (Gazzaniga 1988), and emotive somatosensory hemostatic processes based in the frontal-limbic nexus (Damasio 1999) or in the periaqueductal gray (Panksepp 1998).

In each case the aim is to explain how organization and activity at the relevant neural level could underlie one or another major type or feature of consciousness. Global fields or transient synchronous assemblies could underlie the intentional unity of phenomenal consciousness. NMDA-based plasticity, specific thalamic projections into the cortex, or regular oscillatory waves could all contribute to the formation of short term but widespread neural patterns or regularities needed to knit integrated conscious experience out of the local activity in diverse specialized brain modules. Left hemisphere interpretative processes could provide a basis for narrative forms of conscious self-awareness. Thus it is possible for multiple distinct neural theories to all be true, with each contributing some partial understanding of the links between conscious mentality in its diverse forms and the active brain at its many levels of complex organization and structure.

One particular recent controversy has concerned the issue of whether global or merely local recurrent activity is sufficient for phenomenal consciousness. Supporters of the global neuronal workspace model (Dehaene 2000) have argued that consciousness of any sort can occur only when contents are activated with a large scale pattern of recurrent activity involving frontal and parietal areas as well as primary sensory areas of cortex. Others in particular the psychologist Victor Lamme (2006) and the philosopher Ned Block (2007) have argued that local

recurrent activity between higher and lower areas within sensory cortex (e.g. with visual cortex) can suffice for phenomenal consciousness even in the absence of verbal reportability and other indicators of access consciousness.

9.8 Quantum theories

Other physical theories have gone beyond the neural and placed the natural locus of consciousness at a far more fundamental level, in particular at the micro-physical level of quantum phenomena. According to such theories, the nature and basis of consciousness can not be adequately understood within the framework of classical physics but must be sought within the alternative picture of physical reality provided by quantum mechanics. The proponents of the quantum consciousness approach regard the radically alternative and often counterintuitive nature of quantum physics as just what is needed to overcome the supposed explanatory obstacles that confront more standard attempts to bridge the psycho-physical gap.

Again there are a wide range of specific theories and models that have been proposed, appealing to a variety of quantum phenomena to explain a diversity of features of consciousness. It would be impossible to catalog them here or even explain in any substantial way the key features of quantum mechanics to which they appeal. However, a brief selective survey may provide a sense, however partial and obscure, of the options that have been proposed.

The physicist Roger Penrose (1989, 1994) and the anesthesiologist Stuart Hameroff (1998) have championed a model according to which consciousness arises through quantum effects occurring within subcellular structures internal to neurons known as microtubules. The model posits so called "objective collapses" which involve the quantum system moving from a superposition of multiple possible states to a single definite state, but without the intervention of an observer or measurement as in most quantum mechanical models. According to the Penrose and Hameroff, the environment internal to the microtubules is

especially suitable for such objective collapses, and the resulting self-collapses produce a coherent flow regulating neuronal activity and making non-algorithmic mental processes possible.

The psychiatrist Ian Marshall has offered a model that aims to explain the coherent unity of consciousness by appeal to the production within the brain of a physical state akin to that of a Bose-Einstein condensate. The latter is a quantum phenomenon in which a collection of atoms acts as a single coherent entity and the distinction between discrete atoms is lost. While brain states are not literally examples of Bose-Einstein condensates, reasons have been offered to show why brains are likely to give rise to states that are capable of exhibiting a similar coherence (Marshall and Zohar 1990).

A basis for consciousness has also been sought in the holistic nature of quantum mechanics and the phenomenon of entanglement, according to which particles that have interacted continue to have their natures depend upon each other even after their separation. Unsurprisingly these models have been targeted especially at explaining the coherence of consciousness, but they have also been invoked as a more general challenge to the atomistic conception of traditional physics according to which the properties of wholes are to be explained by appeal to the properties of their parts plus their mode of combination, a method of explanation that might be regarded as unsuccessful to date in explaining consciousness (Silberstein 1998, 2001).

Others have taken quantum mechanics to indicate that consciousness is an absolutely fundamental property of physical reality, one that needs to be brought in at the very most basic level (Stapp 1993). They have appealed especially to the role of the observer in the collapse of the wave function, i.e., the collapse of quantum reality from a superposition of possible states to a single definite state when a measurement is made. Such models may or may not embrace a form of quasi-idealism, in which the very existence of physical reality depends upon its being consciously observed.

There are many other quantum models of consciousness to be found in the literature—some advocating a radically revisionist metaphysics and others not—but these four provide a reasonable, though partial, sample of the alternatives.

9.9 Non-physical theories

Most specific theories of consciousness—whether cognitive, neural or quantum mechanical—aim to explain or model consciousness as a natural feature of the physical world. However, those who reject a physicalist ontology of consciousness must find ways of modeling it as a nonphysical aspect of reality. Thus those who adopt a dualist or anti-physicalist metaphysical view must in the end provide specific models of consciousness different from the five types above. Both substance dualists and property dualists must develop the details of their theories in ways that articulate the specific natures of the relevant non-physical features of reality with which they equate consciousness or to which they appeal in order to explain it.

A variety of such models have been proposed including the following. David Chalmers (1996) has offered an admittedly speculative version of panpsychism which appeals to the notion of information not only to explain psycho-physical invariances between phenomenal and physically realized information spaces but also to possibly explain the ontology of the physical as itself derived from the informational (a version of "it from bit" theory). In a somewhat similar vein, Gregg Rosenberg has (2004) proposed an account of consciousness that simultaneously addresses the ultimate categorical basis of causal relations. In both the causal case and the conscious case, Rosenberg argues the relational-functional facts must ultimately depend upon a categorical non-relational base, and he offers a model according to which causal relations and qualitative phenomenal facts both depend upon the same base. Also, as noted just above (section 9.8), some quantum theories treat consciousness as a fundamental feature of reality (Stapp 1993), and

insofar as they do so, they might be plausibly classified as non-physical theories as well.

Check Your Progress 3

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Discuss the Theories of consciousness.

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2. What are the Metaphysical theories of consciousness?

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3. What are the Specific Theories of Consciousness?

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10.11   LET US SUM UP

A comprehensive understanding of consciousness will likely require theories of many types. One might usefully and without contradiction accept a diversity of models that each in their own way aim respectively to explain the physical, neural, cognitive, functional, representational and higher-order aspects of consciousness. There is unlikely to be any single

theoretical perspective that suffices for explaining all the features of consciousness that we wish to understand. Thus a synthetic and pluralistic approach may provide the best road to future progress.

10.12   KEY WORDS

Comprehensive: including or dealing with all or nearly all elements or aspects of something.

Consciousness: Consciousness at its simplest refers to "sentience or awareness of internal or external existence"

10.13   QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the History of the issue
2. Write the Concepts of Consciousness
3. What are the Problems of Consciousness?
4. What are the features of consciousness?
5. How can consciousness exist?
6. The functional question: Why does consciousness exist?
7. Discuss the Theories of consciousness
8. What are the Metaphysical theories of consciousness?
9. What are the Specific Theories of Consciousness?

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10.15 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1`

Notes

4. See Section 10.2

5. See Section 10.3

6. See Section 10.4

Check Your Progress 2

4. See Section 10.5

5. See Section 10.6

6. See Section 10.7

Check Your Progress 3

1. See Section 10.8

2. See Section 10.9

3. See Section 10.10

UNIT 11: HEIDEGGER: BEING

STRUCTURE

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- Introduction to "Heidegger's Aesthetics": Beyond the Oxymoron
- Heidegger's Philosophical Critique of Aesthetics: Introduction
- Heidegger for Art, Introduction: The Three Pillars of Heidegger's Understanding of Art
- Conclusion: Resolving the Controversy Surrounding Heidegger's Interpretation of Van Gogh

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Heidegger is against the modern tradition of philosophical "aesthetics" because he is for the true "work of art" which, he argues, the aesthetic approach to art eclipses. Heidegger's critique of aesthetics and his advocacy of art thus form a complementary whole. Section 1 orients the

reader by providing a brief overview of Heidegger's philosophical stand *against aesthetics, for art*. Section 2 explains Heidegger's philosophical critique of aesthetics, showing why he thinks aesthetics follows from modern "subjectivism" and leads to late-modern "enframing," historical worldviews Heidegger seeks to transcend from within—in part by way of his phenomenological interpretations of art. Section 3 clarifies this attempt to transcend modern aesthetics from within; focusing on the way Heidegger seeks to build a phenomenological bridge from a particular ("ontic") work of art by Vincent van Gogh to the ontological truth of art in general. In this way, as we will see, Heidegger seeks to show how art can help lead us into a genuinely meaningful postmodern age. Section 4 concludes by explaining how this understanding of Heidegger's project allows us to resolve the longstanding controversy surrounding his interpretation of Van Gogh.

11.2 INTRODUCTION TO "HEIDEGGER'S AESTHETICS": BEYOND THE OXYMORON

Perhaps the first thing to be said about "Heidegger's aesthetics" is that Heidegger himself would consider the very topic oxymoronic, a contradiction in terms like the idea of a "square circle," "wooden iron," or a "Christian philosopher" (Heidegger's own three favorite examples of oxymorons). Treating Heidegger's thinking about art as "aesthetics" would strike him as incongruous and inappropriate because he consistently insisted that the "aesthetic" approach has led Western humanity to understand and experience the work of art in a way that occludes its true historical significance. Nor can Heidegger's thinking be sympathetically classified as "anti-aesthetic," because he suggests that any such anti-aesthetics would remain blindly entangled in aesthetics (in the same way that, for example, atheism remains implicated in the logic of theism—both claiming to know the unknowable); in his view, any merely oppositional movement remains trapped in the logic of what it opposes (QCT 61/GA5 217). For Heidegger, as we will see, the only way to get beyond aesthetics is first to understand how it shapes us and then

seek to pass through and beyond that influence, thereby getting over it as one might "recover" from a serious illness (ID 37/101). Because the aesthetic approach continues to eclipse our access to the role artworks can quietly play in forming and informing our historical worlds, Heidegger thinks that only such a post-aesthetic thinking about art can allow us to recognize and restore art's true significance, helping us recognize the inconspicuous way in which art works to shape our basic sense of what is and what matters.

From a strictly Heideggerian perspective, then, any attempt to explain "Heidegger's aesthetics" (or his "anti-aesthetics") will look either malicious or misconceived, like a deliberate flaunting or else an unwitting display of ignorance about the basic tenets of Heidegger's views on art. Fortunately, our starting point is not really so misconceived. Once we understand why exactly Heidegger criticizes (what we could call) the aestheticization of art, we will thereby have put ourselves on the right track to understanding his own post-aesthetic thinking about the work of art. (We should not confuse the aestheticization Heidegger critiques with "aestheticism," a term standardly taken to refer to the "art for art's sake" movement. For Heidegger, any such attempt to disconnect art from politics, philosophy, and other history-shaping movements would not even be thinkable without the prior reduction of art to aesthetics that he criticizes.) So, what exactly is supposed to be wrong with the aestheticization of art? What leads Heidegger to critique the dominant modern tradition that understands art in an "aesthetic" way, and why does he believe this aesthetic approach eclipses the true significance of the work of art?

1.1 Heidegger's Understanding of the True Work of Art

To understand Heidegger's critique of aesthetics, it will help first to sketch his positive view of art's true historical role. Heidegger's own understanding of the work of art is resolutely populist but with revolutionary aspirations. He believes that, at its greatest, art "grounds history" by "allowing truth to spring forth" (PLT 77/GA5 65). Building

on Heraclitus's view of the pervasive tension of normative conceptual oppositions (good/bad, worthy/worthless, noble/base, and the like) that undergird and implicitly structure our sense of ourselves and our worlds, Heidegger imagines the way an ancient Greek temple at Paestum once worked to help unify its historical world by tacitly reinforcing a particular sense of what is and what matters:

It is the temple-work that first joins together and simultaneously gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline obtain the form of destiny for human being. …The temple first gives to things their look and to humanity their outlook on themselves. (PLT 42–3/GA5 27–9)

Great art works work in the background of our historical worlds, in other words, by partially embodying and so selectively reinforcing an historical community's implicit sense of what is and what matters. In this way, great artworks both (1) "first give to things their look," that is, they help establish an historical community's implicit sense of what things are, and they give (2) "to humanity their outlook on themselves," that is, they also help shape an historical community's implicit sense of what truly matters in life (and so also what does not), which kinds of lives are most worth living, which actions are "noble" (or "base"), what in the community's traditions most deserves to be preserved, and so on.

As this suggests, Heidegger subscribes to a doctrine of ontological historicity (refining a view first developed by Hegel). Put simply, Heidegger thinks that humanity's fundamental experience of reality changes over time (sometimes dramatically), and he suggests that the work of art helps explain the basic mechanism of this historical transformation of intelligibility. Because great art works inconspicuously to establish, maintain, and transform humanity's historically-variable sense of what is and what matters, Heidegger emphasizes that "art is the becoming and happening of truth" (PLT 71/GA5 59). Put simply, great artworks help establish the implicit ontology and ethics through which an historical community understands itself and its world. In keeping with

this (initially strange) doctrine of ontological historicity, Heidegger understands "truth" ontologically as the historically-dynamic disclosure of intelligibility in time. As we will see in section 3, this historical unfolding of truth takes place—to use Heidegger's preferred philosophical terms of art—as an "a-lêtheiac" struggle to "dis-close" or "un-conceal" (a-lêtheia) that which conceals (lêthe) itself, an "essential strife" between two interconnected dimensions of intelligibility (revealing and concealing) which Heidegger calls "world" and "earth" in his most famous work on art.

In sum, great art works by selectively focusing an historical community's tacit sense of what is and what matters and reflecting it back to that community, which thereby comes implicitly to understand itself in the light of this artwork. Artworks thus function as ontological paradigms, serving their communities both as "models of" and "models for" reality, which means (as Dreyfus nicely puts it) that artworks can variously "manifest," "articulate," or even "reconfigure" the historical ontologies undergirding their cultural worlds. Heidegger suggests, in other words, that art can accomplish its world-disclosing work on at least three different orders of magnitude: (1) micro-paradigms he will later calls "things thinging," which help us become aware of what matters most deeply to us; (2) paradigmatic artworks like Van Gogh's painting and Hölderlin's poetry, which disclose how art itself works; and (3) macro-paradigmatic "great" works of art like the Greek temple and tragic drama (works Heidegger also sometimes calls "gods"), which succeed in fundamentally transforming an historical community's "understanding of being," its most basic and ultimate understanding of what is and what matters.

It is with this ontologically revolutionary potential of great art in mind that Heidegger writes:

Whenever [great] art happens—that is, when there is a beginning—a push enters history, and history either starts up or starts again. (PLT 77/GA5 65)

That is, great art is capable of overcoming the inertia of existing traditions and moving the interconnected ontological and ethical wheels of history, either giving us a new sense of what is and what matters or else fundamentally transforming the established ontology and ethics through which we make sense of the world and ourselves.[9] Given Heidegger's view of the literally revolutionary role art can thus play in inconspicuously shaping and transforming our basic sense of what is and what matters, his occasionally ill-tempered critiques of the reduction of art to aesthetics become much easier to understand. For, in his view, the stakes of our understanding of and approach to art could not be higher.

11.3 HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHICAL CRITIQUE OF AESTHETICS: INTRODUCTION

Heidegger believes that the aestheticization of art has gotten us late moderns stuck in the rarefied and abstract view according to which "the enjoyment of art serves [primarily] to satisfy the refined taste of connoisseurs and aesthetes." Hence his amusing but harsh judgment that: "For us today, …art belongs in the domain of the pastry chef" (IM 140/GA40 140). That our culture blithely celebrates café baristas who compete over the "art" of pouring foamed milk into our cappuccinos suggests that we have lost sight of the role art can play in shaping history at the deepest level, an ontologically revolutionary role compared to which Heidegger finds the "artful" gestures of culinary expertise rather empty.

For the same reason, Heidegger is no more impressed by Kant's highbrow view that the disinterested contemplation of art should "serve the moral elevation of the mind" (IM 140/GA40 140).[10] Instead, Heidegger is clearly sympathetic to the "complaint" that, as he puts it:

innumerable aesthetic considerations of and investigations into art and the beautiful have achieved nothing, they have not helped anyone gain access to art, and they have contributed virtually nothing to artistic creativity or to a sound appreciation of art. (N1 79/GA43 92)

Heidegger would thus agree with the sentiment behind Barnet Newman's famous quip: "Aesthetics is for the artist as ornithology is for the birds."[11] Still, for Heidegger such complaints, while "certainly right," are really only symptomatic of a much deeper philosophical problem, a problem which stems from the way modern aesthetics is rooted in the subject/object divide lying at the very heart of the modern worldview. In order to get to the heart of the problem, then, we need to take a step back and ask: How exactly does Heidegger understand aesthetics?[12]

2.1 How Heidegger Understands Aesthetics

As Heidegger points out, the term "aesthetics" is a modern creation. It was coined by Alexander Baumgarten in the 1750s and then critically appropriated by Kant in his Critique of Judgment (published in 1790).[13] Baumgarten formed the term "aesthetics" from the Greek word for "sensation" or "feeling," aisthêsis (N1 83/GA43 98). As this indicates, modern "aesthetics" was originally conceived as the science of aisthêta, matters perceptible by the senses, as opposed to noêma, matters accessible to thought alone, like the truths dealt with in mathematical logic. In fact, modern aesthetics is born of the aspiration to be "in the field of sensuousness what logic is in the domain of thinking" (N1 83/GA43 98). That is, just as logic (conceived as the science of thought) seeks to understand our relation to the true, so aesthetics (conceived as the science of sensation or feeling) seeks to understand our relation to the beautiful.[14]

To recognize that the central focus of modern aesthetics is beauty is not to deny its traditional interest in the sublime or its late-modern preoccupations with the abject, the obscene, kitsch, and so on. Heidegger's point, rather, is that

aesthetics is that kind of meditation on art in which humanity's state of feeling in relation to the beautiful represented in art is the point of departure and the goal that sets the standard for all its definitions and explanations. (N1 78/GA43 91)

In its paradigmatic form (the form "that sets the standard" for all its other "definitions and explanations"), modern "aesthetics is the consideration of humanity's state of feeling in relation to the beautiful" (N1 78/GA43 90).

Heidegger is not denying that there are numerous disagreements within the modern aesthetic tradition (between Kant and Baumgarten, just to begin with). Instead, his thesis is that even the disagreements in the modern aesthetic tradition take place within the framework of a common approach. It is this shared framework that Heidegger designates when he refers to the "aesthetic" approach to art. As we would expect, this basic framework undergirds the paradigmatic inquiry of modern aesthetics, the study of beauty through a "consideration of humanity's state of feeling in relation to the beautiful." In all the aesthetic investigations which take their cues from this one, Heidegger observes:

The artwork is posited as the "object" for a "subject," and this subject-object relation, specifically as a relation of feeling, is definitive for aesthetic consideration. (N1 78/GA43 91)

In other words, modern aesthetics frames its understanding of art by presupposing the subject/object dichotomy: Aesthetics presupposes a fundamental divide between the art "object" and the experiencing "subject," a divide which is subsequently crossed by the commerce of sensation or feeling. Of course, the subject/object dichotomy forms the very basis of the modern worldview, so we would be surprised if modern aesthetics did not presuppose it. So, what specifically does Heidegger object to about the way the aesthetic approach to art presupposes a viewing subject, standing before some art object, enjoying (or not enjoying) his or her sensory experience of this artwork? What is supposed to be the problem with this aesthetic picture of art?

2.2 Heidegger's Critique of the Aesthetic Approach

In a provocatively-titled essay delivered in 1938, "The Age of the World Picture," Heidegger provides a succinct formulation of what it means to approach art aesthetically that helps us reach the core of his objection to

aesthetics. When "art gets pushed into the horizon of aesthetics," he writes, this

means [1] that the artwork becomes an object of lived experience [Gegenstand des Erlebens], and [2] in this way art comes to count as an expression of human life [Lebens]. (QCT 116/GA5 75)

Heidegger is making two connected points here (which are numbered accordingly). The first is that when art is understood and approached "aesthetically," artworks become objects for human subjects to experience in an especially intense, vital, or meaningful way. We can see this if we unpack his typically dense language: As Heidegger frequently points out, in the modern, post-Cartesian world, an "object," Gegenstand, is something that "stands opposite" a human subject, something external to subjectivity. In order to experience an object, the modern subject supposedly must first get outside the immanent sphere of its own subjectivity so as to encounter this "external" object, and then return back to its subjective sphere bearing the fruits of this encounter. Given the modern subject/object dichotomy, such an adventure beyond subjectivity and back again is required for the experience of any object. But in the case of the art object, Heidegger is pointing out, the adventure beyond subjectivity and back again is a particularly intense, meaningful, or enlivening one: A "lived experience" is an experience that makes us feel "more alive," as Heidegger suggests by emphasizing the etymological connection between Erleben and Lebens, "lived experience" and "life."

The second point Heidegger is trying to make is that when artworks become objects for subjects to have particularly meaningful experiences of, these artworks themselves also get understood thereby as meaningful expressions of an artistic subject's own life experiences. Heidegger does not ever develop any argument for this point; the thought simply seems to be that once aesthetics understands artworks as objects of which we can have meaningful experiences, it is only logical to conceive of these art objects themselves in an isomorphic way, as meaningful expressions of the lives of the artists who created them. Still, this alleged

isomorphism of aesthetic "expression and impression" is not immediately obvious.[15] Think, for example, about the seriously playful "found art" tradition in Surrealism, dada, Fluxus, and their heirs, a tradition in which ordinary objects get seditiously appropriated as "art." (The continuing influence of Marcel Duchamp's "readymade" remains visible in everything from Andy Warhol's meticulously reconstructed "Brillo Boxes" (1964) to Ruben Ochoa's large-scale installations of industrial detritus such as broken concrete, rebar, and chain-link fencing, such as "Ideal Disjuncture" (2008). Vattimo thus suggests that Duchamp's "Fountain" illustrates the way an artwork can disclose a new world, a world in which high art comes to celebrate not only the trivial and ordinary but also the vulgar and even the obscene.)[16] This tradition initially seems like a series of deliberate counter-examples to the aesthetic assumption that artworks are meaningful expressions of an artist's own subjectivity.

Even in this tradition, however, the artists' appropriations are never truly random but invariably require some selection, presentation, and the like, and thus inevitably reopen interpretive questions about the significance these art objects have for the artistic subject who chose them. (Why this particular object? Why present it in just this way?) It is thus not surprising that the founding work of found "anti-art," Duchamp's "Fountain" (1917)—his deliciously seditious installation of a deliberately inverted, humorously signed (by "R. Mutt"), and brilliantly re-titled urinal in an art gallery—is typically treated in contemporary aesthetics as an extreme expression of Duchamp's own artistic subjectivity, not as its absence.[17] Here one could also point to the failure of Robert Rauschenberg's attempt to deconstruct the found art ideal of unique and spontaneous invention in his incredible "combines," "Factum I and Factum II," works which, despite Rauschenberg's painstaking efforts to make them identical, instead work to suggest the stubborn uniqueness of any given artwork. So, even the found art tradition of the readymade and its heirs reinforces Heidegger's point that, in the basic aesthetic approach to art, art objects are implicitly understood as meaningful expressions of

artists' lives that are capable of eliciting particularly intense or meaningful experiences in viewing subjects.

In this aesthetic approach, to put it simply, art objects express and intensify human subjects' experiences of life. What Heidegger thus characterizes as the aesthetic approach to art will probably seem so obvious to most people that it can be hard to see what he could possibly find objectionable about it. Art objects express and intensify human subjects' experiences of life; to many people, it might not even be clear what it could mean to understand art in any other way. How should we understand and approach art, if not in terms of the meaningful experiences that a subject might have of some art object, an art object which is itself a meaningful expression of the life of the artist (or artists) who created it? What exactly does Heidegger think is wrong with this "picture" of art?

Despite what one might expect from a phenomenologist like Heidegger, his objection is not that the aesthetic view mischaracterizes the way we late moderns ordinarily experience "art." On the contrary, Heidegger clearly thinks that what he characterizes as "the increasingly aesthetic fundamental position taken toward art as a whole" (N1 88/GA43 103) does accurately describe the experiences of art that take place—when they do take place—in museums, art galleries, and installations; in performance spaces, theaters, and movie houses; in cathedrals, coliseums, and other ruins; in cityscapes as well as landscapes; in concert halls, music clubs, and comic books; even when we listen to our speakers, headphones, ear-buds; and, sometimes (who could credibly deny it?), when we sit in front of our television screens, computer monitors, iPhones, and so on. The experiences we have of what rises to the level of "art" in all such settings are indeed "aesthetic" experiences, that is, particularly intense or meaningful experiences that make us feel more alive; and, if we think about it, we do tend to approach these art objects as expressions of the life of the artists who created them. The aesthetic view correctly characterizes our typical experience of "art" in

the contemporary world—and for Heidegger that is part of the problem.[18]

2.3 Symptoms of Subjectivism

This returns us to the bigger question we have been pursuing, and which we are now prepared to answer: Why exactly does Heidegger object to our contemporary tendency to understand and approach art in this aesthetic way? In the revealingly titled essay we have been drawing on, "The Age of the World Picture," Heidegger explains that "the process by which art gets pushed into the horizon of aesthetics" is neither conceptually neutral nor historically unimportant. On the contrary, the historical process by which Western humanity came to understand art as "aesthetics" is so freighted with significance that it needs to be recognized as "one of the essential phenomena of the contemporary age" (QCT 116/GA5 75). Strikingly, Heidegger goes so far as to assert that our tendency to treat art as aesthetics is just as significant for and revealing of our current historical self-understanding as are the increasing dominance of science and technology, the tendency to conceive of all meaningful human activity in terms of culture, and the growing absence of any god or gods in our Western world (QCT 116–7/GA5 75–6). This is a surprising and deliberately provocative claim, one apparently meant to provoke us into noticing and thinking through something we ordinarily overlook. For, how can our understanding of art as aesthetics be just as essential to our current historical self-understanding as are the dominance of science, the growing influence of technology, the ubiquitous discussions of "culture," and the withdrawal of gods from our history—four seemingly much larger and more momentous historical developments?

These five "essential phenomena"—the historical ascendance of science, technology, aesthetics, and culture, on the one hand, and, on the other, that historical decline of the divine which Heidegger (echoing Schiller) calls the "ungodding" or "degodification" (Entgötterung) of the world— these all are "equally essential" (gleichwesentliche), Heidegger explains, because these five interlocking phenomena express and so reveal the

underlying direction in which the contemporary world is moving historically. Science, technology, aesthetics, culture, and degodification are "equally essential" as five major historical developments that feed into and disclose (what we could think of as) the current, that is, the underlying historical direction or Zeitgeist of our contemporary world.[19] In the late 1930s, Heidegger's name for the underlying direction in which the age is moving is "subjectivism," a movement he defines as humanity's ongoing attempt to establish "mastery over the totality of what-is" (QCT 132/GA5 92). Subjectivism, in other words, designates humanity's increasingly global quest to achieve complete control over every aspect of our objective reality, to establish ourselves as the being "who gives the measure and provides the guidelines for everything that is" (QCT 134/GA5 94). Heidegger's fundamental objection to the aesthetic approach to art, then, is that such an approach follows from and feeds back into subjectivism, contemporary humanity's ongoing effort to establish "our unlimited power for calculating, planning, and molding [or 'breeding,' Züchtung] all things" (QCT 135/GA5 94).

2.4 How Aesthetics Reflects and Reinforces Subjectivism
In order to understand why Heidegger thinks the aesthetic approach to art reflects and reinforces subjectivism, we need to know why Heidegger characterizes humanity's ongoing attempt to master every aspect of our objective reality as "subjectivism" in the first place.[20] We saw earlier that in the modern, post-Cartesian world, an "object" (Gegen-stand), is something that "stands opposite" a human subject, something which is "external" to the subjective sphere. This subject/object dichotomy seems obvious when one is theorizing from within the modern tradition, in which it has functioned as an axiom since Descartes famously argued that the subject's access to its own thinking possesses an indubitable immediacy not shared by our access to objects, which must thus be conceived of as external to subjectivity.

Yet, as Heidegger argues in Being and Time (1927), taking this modern subject/object dichotomy as our point of departure leads us to

fundamentally mischaracterize the way we experience the everyday world in which we are usually unreflectively immersed, the world of our practical engagements. By failing to recognize and do justice to the integral entwinement of self and world that is basic to our experiential navigation of our lived environments, modern philosophy effectively splits the subject off from objects and from other subjects. In this way, modern philosophy lays the conceptual groundwork for subjectivism, the "worldview" in which an intrinsically-meaningless objective realm ("nature") is separated epistemically from isolated, value-bestowing, self-certain subjects, and so needs to be mastered through the relentless epistemological, normative, and practical activities of these subjects. Heidegger suggests that this problem is not merely theoretical, because the subjectivism of the modern worldview functions historically like a self-fulfilling prophecy. Its progressive historical realization generates not only the political freedoms and scientific advances we cherish, but also unwanted downstream consequences such as our escalating environmental crisis and less predictable side-effects like the aestheticization of art.[21]

2.5 Undermining the Subject/Object Dichotomy Phenomenologically

So, how does the aestheticization of art follow from subjectivism? (This is easier to see than Heidegger's converse claim—that the aestheticization of art feeds back into and reinforces subjectivism—so we will address it first.) Being and Time does not undermine the subject/object dichotomy by trying to advance the incredible thesis that the self really exists in a continuous and unbroken unity with its world. Instead, Heidegger seeks to account for the fact that our fundamental, practical engagement with our worlds can easily break down in ways that generate the perspective the subject/object dichotomy describes. Most of the time, we encounter ourselves as immediately and unreflectively immersed in the world of our concerns rather than as standing over against an "external" world of objects. Just think, for example, of the way you ordinarily encounter a hammer when you are hammering with it, or a pen while you are writing with it, a bike while riding it, a car while driving it, or even, say, a freeway interchange as you drive over it

for the umpteenth time. This all changes, however, when our practical engagement with the world of our concerns breaks down. When the head flies off the hammer and will not go back on (and no other hammering implement is available to complete the task at hand); when the pen we are writing with runs out of ink (and we have no other); when our bike tire goes flat or our car breaks down in the middle of a trip; when we find ourselves standing before an artwork that we cannot make sense of; or, in general, when we are still learning how to do something and encounter some unexpected difficulty which stops us in our tracks—in all such cases what Heidegger calls our ordinary, immediate "hands-on" (zuhanden) way of coping with the world of our practical concerns undergoes a "transformation" (Umschlag) in which we come to experience ourselves as isolated subjects standing reflectively before a world of external objects, which we thereby come to experience as standing over against us in the mode of something objectively "on hand" (vorhanden) (BT 408–9/SZ 357–8).

In other words, Heidegger does not deny the reality of the subject/object relation but, rather, points out that our experience of this subject/object relation derives from and so presupposes a more fundamental level of experience, a primordial modality of engaged existence in which self and world are united rather than divided. Heidegger believes that modern philosophy's failure to solve the problem of skepticism about the external world shows that those who begin with the subject/object divide will never be able to bridge it subsequently (BT 249–50/SZ 205–6). He thus insists that this more primordial level of practically engaged, "hands-on" existence—in which self and world are unified—must be the starting point of any description of ordinary human experience that seeks to do justice to what such experience is really like, a phenomenological dictum Heidegger insists should also govern our attempts to describe our meaningful encounters with works of art.

2.6 Phenomenology Against Aesthetic Subjectivism

Following the phenomenological dictum that we should describe our experience of art in a way that is not distorted by the presuppositions we

have inherited from the metaphysical tradition is easier said than done, however, for at least two reasons. First, the subject/object dichotomy is so deeply entrenched in our self-understanding that it has come to implicitly structure the fundamental aesthetic approach (as we have seen). Second, it is not immediately clear where (let alone how) we should look to discover art in a non-aesthetic way. Indeed, it now seems natural for us to think that what makes our experience of art objects significant is that such experiences allow us human subjects temporarily to transcend the sphere of our own subjectivity by getting in touch with art objects outside ourselves, because these transcendent experiences can profoundly enrich our subjective experience.

In Heidegger's view, however, this aesthetic perspective gets the story backward. We do not begin confined to our subjective spheres, temporarily leave those spheres behind in order to experience art objects, only to return back to subjectivity once again, enriched by the "booty" we have captured during our adventure in the external world of art objects (BT 89/SZ 62). The reverse is true: Human existence originally "stands outside" (ek-sistere) itself, integrally involved with the world in terms of which we ordinarily make sense of ourselves.[22] We do occasionally experience ourselves as subjects confronting objects (for example, when we try to learn to draw or paint realistically, or when we find ourselves standing befuddled before an art object), but the experience of ourselves as subjects confronting objects is comparatively infrequent and takes place on the background of a more basic experience of ourselves as integrally involved with the world of our practical concerns, an experience of fundamental self/world intertwinement to which we always return.

"Proximally and for the most part [or 'initially and usually,' zunächst und zumeist]," as Heidegger likes to say, we do not stand apart from the entities that populate our world, observing them dispassionately—or even passionately, hoping to transcend an isolated subjective sphere which in fact we are usually already beyond. Why, then, should we privilege the detached, subject/object framework that results from the

breakdown of our engaged experience when we try to approach art philosophically? We should not; trying to approach art while staying within the aesthetic approach is like trying to learn what it is like to ride a bike by staring at a broken bicycle: It is so to privilege the detached perspective of the observer that the participatory perspective gets eclipsed and forgotten. In Heidegger's view, the phenomenologically faulty presuppositions of modern philosophy have misled aesthetics into looking for the work of art in the wrong place, at a derived rather than the basic level of human interaction with the world, and thus into mistaking an intense subjective experience of an external object for an encounter with the true work of art.

Modern aesthetics presupposes the subject/object dichotomy and then problematically tries to describe the subsequent interaction between two allegedly heterogeneous domains, instead of recognizing and seeking to describe the prior role works of art play in the background of our everyday worldly engagement, in which no such dichotomy can yet be found. Heidegger's post-aesthetic thinking about the work of art will thus instead seek to describe the usually unnoticed way in which artworks can form and inform our basic historical sense of what is and what matters (as we saw in section 1.1). Heidegger's thinking about the formative role art can play in the background of our self-understanding is "post-aesthetic" in that it seeks to get past the constitutive mistakes of aesthetics, but it might also be characterized as "pre-aesthetic" insofar as the way he tries to go beyond aesthetics is by getting back behind aesthetics in order to do justice to that more primordial level of existence aesthetics overlooks. Indeed, although this initially sounds paradoxical, Heidegger suggests that the best way to get beyond aesthetic experience is to transcend it from within (that is, to experience the way a subject's experience of an aesthetic object can lead beyond or beneath itself), as we will see when we turn to his phenomenological analysis of Van Gogh's painting.

To sum up, then, because aesthetics tries to describe artworks from the perspective of a subject confronting an external art object, the aesthetic

approach begins always-already "too late" (BT 249/SZ 207). Aesthetics looks for art in the wrong place (at a derivative rather than primordial level of human interaction with the world), and what it finds there is not the true work of art. Misled by the presuppositions of modern philosophy, aesthetics overlooks that more primordial level of human existence where, Heidegger will argue, true art inconspicuously accomplishes its ontologically-revolutionary work.

2.7 From Modern Subjectivism to Late-Modern Enframing in Aesthetics

Before turning our attention to Heidegger's post-aesthetic thinking, the last thing we need to do is to clarify his more difficult claim that aesthetics not only follows from but also feeds back into subjectivism. What makes this claim difficult to grasp is the specific twist Heidegger gives to it: Put simply, aesthetics feeds back into subjectivism in a way that leads subjectivism beyond itself—and into something even worse than subjectivism. In aesthetics, Heidegger suggests, subjectivism "somersaults beyond itself [selbst überschlägt]" into enframing (N1 77/GA43 90). We can see how subjectivism somersaults beyond itself into enframing if we return to Heidegger's definition of subjectivism in "The Age of the World Picture," according to which modern subjectivism names our modern attempt to secure "our unlimited power for calculating, planning, and molding [or 'breeding,' Züchtung] all things" (QCT 135/GA5 94). It is not difficult to detect a subtle resistance to the National Socialist worldview and (what Heidegger understood as) its Nietzschean roots in Heidegger's 1938 critique of Western humanity's drive toward the total mastery of the world through "calculating, planning, and breeding." But more importantly for our purposes, such descriptions of humanity's drive to master the world completely through the coldly rational application of calculative reasoning also show that what Heidegger calls "subjectivism" is a conceptual and historical precursor to what he will soon call "enframing" (or Gestell).

"Enframing" is Heidegger's famous name for the technological understanding of being that underlies and shapes our contemporary age. Just as Descartes inaugurates modern subjectivism (as we have seen), so Nietzsche inaugurates late-modern enframing by understanding being—the "totality of entities as such"—as "eternally recurring will to power." Heidegger thinks that Nietzsche's "ontotheology" (that means, to put it briefly, Nietzsche's way of grasping the totality of what-is from both the inside-out and the outside-in at the same time) worked to inaugurate our own late-modern view that reality is nothing but forces coming-together and breaking-apart with no end other than the self-perpetuating growth of force itself. By tacitly approaching reality through the lenses of this Nietzschean ontotheology, we increasingly come to understand and so to treat all entities as intrinsically-meaningless "resources" (Bestand) standing by for efficient and flexible optimization. It is (to cut a long story short) this nihilistic technologization of reality that Heidegger's later thinking is dedicated to finding a path beyond. For Heidegger, true art opens just such a path, one that can guide us beyond enframing's ontological "commandeering of everything into assured availability" (PLT 84/GA5 72), as we will see in section 3.

First, however, we need to understand how subjectivism leads beyond itself into enframing. Put simply, subjectivism becomes enframing when the subject objectifies itself—that is, when the human subject, seeking to master and control all aspects of its objective reality, turns that impulse to control the world of objects back onto itself. If we remember that modern subjectivism designates the human subject's quest to achieve total control over all objective aspects of reality, then we can see that late-modern enframing emerges historically out of subjectivism as subjectivism increasingly transforms the human subject itself into just another object to be controlled. Enframing, we could say, is subjectivism squared (or subjectivism applied back to the subject). For, the subjectivist impulse to master reality redoubles itself in enframing, even though enframing's objectification of the subject dissolves the very subject/object division that initially drove the subject's relentless efforts to master the objective world standing over against it (Thomson 2005). Subjectivism "somersaults beyond itself" in our late-modern age of

"enframing" because the impulse to control everything intensifies and accelerates even as it breaks free of its modern moorings and circles back on the subject itself, turning the human subject into just one more object to be mastered and controlled—until the modern subject becomes just another late-modern entity to be efficiently optimized along with everything else. We are thus moving from modern subjectivism to the late-modern enframing of reality insofar as we understand and relate to all things, ourselves included, as nothing but intrinsically-meaningless "resources" standing by for endless optimization. Interestingly, Heidegger saw this technological understanding of being embodied in contemporary works of art like the modern butterfly interchange on a freeway, which, like a late-modern temple, quietly reinforces our technological understanding of all reality as "a network of long-distance traffic, spaced in a way calculated for maximum speed" (PLT 152/GA7 155), an optimizing function now served even more efficiently and pervasively by the internet (to which we are now connected by millions of little shrines, made ever faster, more efficient and portable, and which we find ourselves increasingly unable to live without).

In the late 1930s, Heidegger understood such technological optimization as an all-encompassing attempt to derive the maximal output from the minimal input, a quantification of quality that threatens to dissolve quality in the same way that the objectification of the subject threatens to dissolve subjectivity. Heidegger seems first to have recognized this objectification of the subject in the Nazis' coldly calculating eugenics programs for "breeding" a master race, but (as he predicted) that underlying impulse to objectively master the human subject continues unabated in more scientifically plausible and less overtly horrifying forms of contemporary genetic engineering. Most importantly for us here, Heidegger also recognized this ongoing objectification of the subject in the seemingly innocuous way that aesthetics "somersaults beyond itself" into neuroscientific attempts to understand and control the material substrate of the mind. For, once aesthetics reduces art to intense subjective experience, such experiences can be studied objectively through the use of EEGs, fMRIs, MEG and PET scans (and the like), and

in fact aesthetic experiences are increasingly being studied in this way. At the University of New Mexico's MIND Institute, to mention just one telling example, subjects were given "beautiful" images to look at and the resulting neuronal activity in their brains was studied empirically using one of the world's most powerful functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging machines. In this way, as Heidegger predicted in 1937:

Aesthetics becomes a psychology that proceeds in the manner of the natural sciences; that is, states of feeling become self-evident facts to be subjected to experiments, observation, and measurement. (N1 89/GA43 106)

"Here," Heidegger writes, "the final consequences of the aesthetic inquiry into art are thought through to the end" (N1 91/GA43 108). Aesthetics reaches its logical conclusion—the "fulfillment or consummation" (Vollendung) which completes it and so brings it to its end—when it thus "somersaults beyond itself" into enframing.

Heidegger's objection to aesthetic enframing, then, is not just that the work of art is increasingly falling under the influence of enframing—that artworks too are becoming mere resources for the art industry, standing reserves piled in storerooms "like potatoes in a cellar" to be quickly and efficiently "shipped like coal…or logs…from one exhibition to another" (PLT 19/GA5 3). He is even more troubled by the way art, reduced to aesthetics, does not just get enframed but participates in the enframing—for example, when the feeling of beauty is reduced to a purportedly objective brain state to be precisely measured and controlled through cognitive neuroscience.

As the human subject turns its subjectivist impulse to control the objective world back onto itself in such neuroscientific experimentation, aesthetics increasingly becomes just one more approach reinforcing the technological "enframing" of all reality. Heidegger thus reaches a harsh verdict: Aesthetic "experience is the element in which art dies. This dying goes on for so long that it takes several centuries" (PLT 79/GA5 67).[27] Fortunately, Heidegger's prognosis is not as bleak as this

apparent death sentence suggests. That art is slowly dying as aesthetics, he clarifies in a later addition,

does not mean that art is utterly at an end. That will be the case only if [aesthetic] experience remains the sole element for art. Everything depends on getting out of [aesthetic] experience and into being-here [Dasein], which means reaching an entirely different "element" for the "becoming" of art. (P 50 note b/GA5 67 note b)

In other words, art is dying only as aesthetics, and the death of art as aesthetics makes possible the transformative rebirth of art as something other than a subject's experience of an object. Indeed, just as modern subjectivism led beyond itself historically into late-modern enframing, so Heidegger believes enframing, in turn, can lead beyond itself into a genuine post-modernity, an age that transcends our late-modern age's ongoing technologization of reality and its nihilistic erosion of all intrinsic meaning (the void which we try to fill with all our superficial talk about "values") (see Thomson 2011, 60–2). This hope for an historical turning toward a genuinely meaningful post-modernity is what motivates Heidegger's phenomenological attempt to describe and so convey a post-aesthetic encounter with art, to which we now turn.

2.8 Conclusion and Transition: From Hegel's End of Art to Heidegger's Other Beginning

Because of the predicament in which modern aesthetics has left us, Heidegger provisionally accepts the truth of Hegel's famous judgment that:

Art no longer counts for us as the highest manner in which truth obtains existence for itself. …[I]n its highest determination, vocation, and purpose [Bestimmung], art is and remains for us…a thing of the past. (PLT 80/GA5 68)

Still, Heidegger nurtures the hope that (pace Hegel) the distinctive truth manifest in art could once again attain the kind of history-transforming importance that Hegel and Heidegger agree it had for the ancient Greeks but has lost in the modern world.

This "highest" truth of art for which Heidegger still hopes, however, is not Hegel's "certainty of the absolute" (GA5 68 note a). That is, Heidegger does not hold out hope for some perfect correspondence between (1) the historically-unfolding "concept" Hegel believed was implicit in the development of humanity's intersubjective self-understanding and (2) an objective manifestation of that intersubjective self-understanding in art. Thus, in Hegel's most famous example, the tragic conflict between Antigone and Creon in Sophocles' Antigone perfectly embodied the fundamental but as of yet unresolved ethical conflicts—between conscience and law, the family and the state, and so on—which had arisen implicitly in the intersubjective self-understanding of fifth-century Athens. Hegel thinks it is no longer possible for an artwork to perfectly express the tensions implicit in the self-understanding of the age and thereby call for an historical people to envision a future age in which those tensions would be resolved (because this role was taken over by religion and then by philosophy as our historical self-understanding grew increasingly complex). Heidegger, however, continues to hope for even more, namely, an artwork that already embodies the transition between this age and the next and which is thus capable of helping to inaugurate that future age, here and now.

In tacit opposition to Hegel, Heidegger thus suggests that art's highest "[t]ruth is [not 'the certainty of the absolute' but] the unconcealedness of entities as entities. Truth is the truth of being" (PLT 81/GA5 69). Heidegger's defining hope for art, in other words, is that works of art could manifest and thereby help usher in a new understanding of the being of entities, a literally "post-modern" understanding of what it means for an entity to be, a postmodern ontology which would no longer understand entities either as modern objects to be controlled or as late-modern resources to be optimized. Heidegger expresses this hope that separates him from Hegel in the form of a question: "The truth of Hegel's judgment has not yet been decided," he writes, because

the question remains: Is art still an essential and a necessary way in which that truth happens which is decisive for our historical existence, or is art this no longer? (PLT 80/GA5 68)

Heidegger's point is that Hegel will no longer be right—the time of great art will no longer be at an end—if contemporary humanity still needs an encounter with art in order to learn how to understand the being of entities in a genuinely post-modern way, and if we still remain capable of such an encounter.

As this suggests, the ultimate goal of Heidegger's thinking about art is to show what it would mean to move from a modern aesthetic experience of an art object to a genuinely post-modern encounter with a work of art, so that we can thereby learn from art how to transcend modernity from within. As Heidegger will later claim, when we encounter a true work of art,

the presencing [Anwesen] of that which appears to our look…is different than the standing of what stands-opposite [us] in the sense of an object. (PLT 82/GA5 71)

But what exactly is the difference between an aesthetic experience of an art object and an encounter with the true "presencing" of a work of art? And how is the traversing of that difference in our engagement with a particular work of art supposed to teach us to understand being in a post-modern way? Part III explains Heidegger's fairly complex answers to these difficult but momentous questions.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Discuss the write up on "Heidegger's Aesthetics": Beyond the Oxymoron.

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2. Discuss the Heidegger's Philosophical Critique of Aesthetics: Introduction.

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11.4 HEIDEGGER FOR ART, INTRODUCTION: THE THREE PILLARS OF HEIDEGGER'S UNDERSTANDING OF ART

"The Origin of the Work of Art"—an essay Heidegger delivered repeatedly between 1935 and 1936, rewriting and expanding it into three lectures (which became the three main sections of the published essay, to which Heidegger then added a brief "Afterword" near the end of the 1930s and a slightly longer "Addendum" in 1957)—is far and away the most important source for understanding his attempt to articulate an alternative to the aesthetic understanding of art, although several other works (contemporaneous as well as later) also provide important clues to his view.[30] In the final version of this famous essay, Heidegger meditates on three different works of art in succession: A painting of "A Pair of Shoes" by Vincent van Gogh; a poem entitled "The Roman Fountain" by C. F. Meyer, and an unspecified Greek temple at Paestum (most likely the temple to Hera). Leading Heidegger scholars such as Hubert Dreyfus and Julian Young rely almost entirely on Heidegger's interpretation of the ancient Greek temple in order to explicate his "promethean" view of art's historically revolutionary potential, its ability to focus and transform our sense of what is and what matters. Young (2001, p. 22) and Dreyfus (2005, p. 409) suggest that Heidegger's interpretation of Van Gogh is "anomalous" and "largely irrelevant" to

this view, despite the fame generated by the longstanding controversy surrounding it (a controversy to which we will return at the end). Like almost all other scholars, moreover, Dreyfus and Young simply overlook Heidegger's introduction of Meyer's poem—even as they recognize that for Heidegger, like Plato, "poetry" names the very essence of art (namely, poiêsis or "bringing into being"), hence Heidegger's claim that: "All art [that is, all bringing-into-being] … is essentially poetry" (PLT 73/GA5 59). We thus have to wonder: Is the only complete poem Heidegger included in the essay that advances this view of poetry as the essence of art really of no significance?

In my view, Heidegger's analysis of each of these three works contributes something important to his overarching attempt to guide readers into a phenomenological encounter with art that is capable of helping us transcend modern aesthetics from within. To put it simply, the temple motivates and helps develop the details of Heidegger's larger project; the poem implicitly contextualizes and explains it; and the painting (and only the painting) directly exemplifies it. In order to see how, let us take these points in order. Heidegger's imaginative reconstruction of the lost temple helps motivate his quest for a non-aesthetic encounter with art, but not (as is often said) because he seeks some nostalgic return to the Greek world. Heidegger dismisses such a revival as an impossibility because the ancient temple—just like the medieval cathedral—no longer gathers its historical world around it and thus no longer works as great art, and such "world-withdrawal and world-decay can never be reversed" (PLT 41/GA5 26). Instead, the Greek temple shows that art was once encountered in a way other than as a subject's intense aesthetic experience of an object, and thus suggests that, while those ancient and medieval worlds have been lost irretrievably, other works of art might yet be encountered non-aesthetically in our late-modern world. Heidegger thus elaborates his philosophical vision of how the temple worked for a time to unify a coherent and meaningful historical world around itself (by inconspicuously focusing and illuminating its people's sense of what is and what matters) in order to suggest that a non-aesthetic encounter with

art might yet do the same thing once again: A work of art might yet help to gather a new historical world around itself by focusing and illuminating an understanding of being that does not reduce entities either to modern objects to be controlled or to late-modern resources to be optimized.

While Heidegger's project is thus undeniably inspired by the past, this inspiration serves his goal of helping us move historically into the future. His guiding hope, we have seen, is that a non-aesthetic encounter with a contemporary artwork will help us learn to understand the being of entities not as modern objects ("subjectivism") or as late-modern resources ("enframing") but in a genuinely post-modern way, thereby making another historical beginning. So, which work of art does Heidegger think can help us late moderns learn to transcend modern aesthetics from within and thereby discover a path leading beyond modernity? There are only two viable candidates to fill this crucial role in "The Origin of the Work of Art": Meyer's poem and Van Gogh's painting.

So, why does Heidegger give such pride of place to Meyer's poem? The answer to this puzzle (which too few readers even notice) is that the poem introduces the broader philosophical context of Heidegger's project by conveying his emerging understanding of historicity, the doctrine according to which our fundamental sense of reality changes over time. The ontological "truth" that Meyer's poem embodies—and "sets to work," in Heidegger's creative appropriation of the poem—is that truth itself is essentially historical and, moreover, that this essential history of truth forms three successive "epochs," in the same way that the "jet" of water fills the three consecutive "basins" in Meyer's eponymous fountain. For Heidegger, to put it more precisely, the relations Meyer's poem describes between the fountain's original "jet" and its three successive water basins illuminate the relations between "being" itself (that is, as we will see, the inexhaustible ontological source of historical intelligibility) and the three main historical "epochs" or ages in Western humanity's understanding of being (as Heidegger conceived of this

"history of being" in 1936), namely, ancient "Greece," "the middle ages," and "the modern age" (PLT 76–7/GA5 64–5).

Thus, for example, just as the original "jet" of water "falls" into the fountain's successive basins, so the "overflowing" ontological riches concealed in the ancient world were first diminished in the medieval world. "The Origin of the Work of Art" make the contentious case that this ontological diminution "begins" when concepts central to the ancient Greek understanding of being get translated into Latin without a full experience of what those concepts originally revealed (PLT 23/GA5 8). Hence the obvious appeal for Heidegger of Meyer's suggestive line: "Veiling itself, this [first basin] overflows / Into a second basin's ground" (PLT 37/GA5 23). What remained of these ontological "riches" in the medieval world was then transposed into and reduced further in the modern epoch which, like the fountain's third basin, stands at the furthest remove from its original source. It thus seems clear that Heidegger included Meyer's poem because he believed it suggestively illuminated the way the history of being unfolds as an epochal history of decline, a "fall" which results from this history's increasing forgetting of the source from which it ultimately springs—the Ur-sprung or "origin" of Heidegger's essay's title—in a word: "Being" (Sein), Heidegger's famous name for the source from which all historical intelligibility originates (by way of the disclosive "naming-into-being" which Heidegger understands as the "poetic" essence of art, as we will see in the next section). In other words, Heidegger uses Meyer's poem to allude to the broader philosophical context that helps explain and motivate the new historical beginning he hopes art will help us inaugurate. Heidegger's use of this particular poem suggests, moreover, that in order to accomplish this "other beginning," Western humanity needs to learn to tap back into that original, ontological source (the overflowing "jet" of being), and that such a reconnection with the source of historical intelligibility is something art can still teach us. (Although interpreters also overlook this, the quiet presence of a homophonous "third reich" in Meyer's poem reminds us of the deeply-troubling dimension of Heidegger's thinking in the mid-1930s, the fact that his philosophical

hopes for the future were for a brief time deeply entwined with his idiosyncratic understanding of the direction that the burgeoning National Socialist "revolution" might yet take.)

While both the temple and the poem thus remain quite important, only Van Gogh's painting directly exemplifies what Heidegger thinks it means to encounter art in a way that allows us to transcend modern aesthetics from within. This means that Heidegger's interpretation of Van Gogh's painting, far from being irrelevant, is actually the most important part of his essay. For, it is only from Heidegger's phenomenological interpretation of Van Gogh's artwork that we late moderns can learn how to transcend modern aesthetics from within, and thereby learn from art what it means to encounter being in a post-modern way. Since we have already summarized Heidegger's "promethean" view of the historically-revolutionary work accomplished by the ancient Greek temple (in section 1.1), we will expand on the point of his return to Greece only briefly (in section 3.1), saying more about how this return to the past is supposed to help lead us into the future. The rest of what follows will be dedicated primarily to explaining Heidegger's pivotal understanding of Van Gogh's painting. Our ultimate objective will be to show how Heidegger's interpretation of Van Gogh allows him to move phenomenologically from the analysis of a particular, individual ("ontic") work of art to the ontological structure of artwork in general. Along the way, we will present the main details of the postmodern understanding of being that Heidegger thinks we can learn from a non-aesthetic encounter with the work of art Once we understand the ordered sequence of steps in the phenomenological interpretation whereby Heidegger thinks we can transcend modern aesthetics from within, moreover, we will finally be able to resolve the long-standing controversy surrounding Heidegger's interpretation of Van Gogh (as we will see in section 4).

3.1 Back to the Future: Heidegger on the Essence of Art

Notes

Heidegger's introduction of "a well-known painting by Van Gogh, who painted such shoes several times" (PLT 33/GA5 18), is notoriously abrupt and puzzling to many readers. The path that leads Heidegger to Van Gogh's painting should not be too surprising, however, because it is the same path we have been following here. Looking back at "The Origin of the Work of Art" two years later (in 1938), Heidegger will write that:

The question of the origin of the work of art does not aim to set out a timelessly valid determination of the essence of artwork which could also serve as the guiding thread for an historically retrospective clarification of the history of art. The question is most intimately connected with the task of overcoming aesthetics, which also means overcoming a certain conception of entities as what are objectively representable.

We have seen that because aesthetics tries to describe artworks as objects that express and intensify human subjects' experiences of life, the aesthetic approach begins "always already" too late. Modern aesthetics presupposes the perspective of a subject confronting an external object and thereby misses the way art works inconspicuously in the background of human existence to shape and transform our sense of what is and what matters.

Heidegger expands this critique to include "representation" here because representations are what modern philosophy typically uses to try to bridge the divide Descartes opened between subjects and objects. (The objective world allegedly "external" to subjectivity gets duplicated in miniature, as it were, and "re-presented" to the mind—as in the famous Cartesian picture of consciousness as an internal "theater of representations.") Of course, Heidegger does not deny that representations sometimes mediate our experience of the world. What he denies is that representations go "all the way down," that they plumb the depths of existence. Instead, representations presuppose a level of existence they cannot explain. Heidegger's fundamental phenomenological critique of the modern theoretical picture is that it overlooks and then cannot recapture the more basic level of engaged

existence, a practical coping with equipment in which no subject/object dichotomy has yet opened up because self and world remain integrally entwined and mutually determining. This primordial level of engaged existence, we will see, is what Heidegger thinks Van Gogh's painting allows us to encounter and understand in a way that no mere aesthetic representation ever could. In so doing, Heidegger thinks, Van Gogh's painting allows us to encounter the very essence of art.

11.5 CONCLUSION: RESOLVING THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING HEIDEGGER'S INTERPRETATION OF VAN GOGH

Heidegger's subtle but ambitious effort to show phenomenologically how aesthetics can transcend itself from within in an encounter with Van Gogh's painting has not been well understood, and Heidegger's attempt, as part of that effort, to link Van Gogh's painting with the deep spiritual wisdom of rural life proved highly controversial (to say the least). Unfortunately, this controversy has subsequently distracted readers from understanding what Heidegger was really trying to do. By working through this controversy here, however, we can finally resolve it, draw its important lessons, and so put it behind us.

As we have seen, Heidegger assumes that the shoes Van Gogh painted belong to a farming woman. The standard but unfortunate translation of die Bäuerin—literally "the female farmer"—as "the peasant woman" is not just classist but misleading. That the shoes disclose the world of a farmer is important for Heidegger precisely because the farmer's world is deeply attuned to the struggle with the earth; the farming woman works the earth daily, caring for, struggling with, and ultimately depending on the earth to nurture and bring forth her harvest. Heidegger suggests that no one is more immediately attuned to the struggle between earth and world than the experienced farmer, long intimate with "the uncomplaining fear as to the certainty of bread" as well as "the wordless joy of having once more withstood want" (PLT 34/GA5 19). Of course, farmers forced to abandon their farms in the dust bowl might find

Heidegger's vision of the earth as that which, from out "of the calm of great riches, ripens and dispenses what is inexhaustible" (IM 164/GA40 118) to be a romantic exaggeration.

Nevertheless, during the great depression era of the 1930s, "the earth" really was Heidegger's chosen name for that "inexhaustible" dimension of intelligibility experienced not only by farmers while farming but also by poets while poetizing, painters while painting, thinkers while thinking, and, indeed, by all those who create by patiently and carefully seeking to bring something long nurtured and concealed in a protective darkness into the light of day. That such metaphors also suggest pregnancy might help explain why Heidegger imagines the farmer as a woman, despite the fact that the shoes in Van Gogh's painting appear rather masculine to our contemporary aesthetic sensibilities. Or Heidegger might simply have assumed that the shoes belonged to a female farmer because the exhibition in which he originally saw Van Gogh's 1886 painting of "A pair of shoes" was probably populated with some of Van Gogh's many paintings from 1885 of women engaged in farm work (women digging in the fields, planting, harvesting and peeling potatoes, and so on).

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. What is Heidegger for Art, Introduction: The Three Pillars of Heidegger's Understanding of Art?

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2. How to do resolving the Controversy Surrounding Heidegger's Interpretation of Van Gogh?

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11.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed the importance of the Heidegger's Aesthetics. In fact, however, we have no way of knowing exactly which paintings Heidegger saw at the 1930 exhibit of Van Gogh's works in Amsterdam he later recalled having visited. The debate surrounding Heidegger's interpretation of Van Gogh's painting can be traced back to the fact that initially it is not even clear which painting Heidegger is referring to when he invokes an allegedly "well known painting by Van Gogh, who painted such shoes several times." (Here are links to three of them, dated Spring 1887, early 1887, and June 1886.) If Heidegger was aware that Van Gogh painted no fewer than five works titled "A Pair of Shoes" between 1886 and 1888, plus several other pairs of wooden farmer's clogs, leather clogs, and paintings of more than one pair of shoes, then he does not seem to have thought this fact significant. The art historian who was closest to Heidegger, Heinrich Petzet, proposes that the "various versions [of Van Gogh's 'A Pair of Shoes'] each show the same thing," and this might well be what Heidegger himself thought (if he ever even thought about it): Each of these paintings manifests the struggle between earth and world. Yet, there are lots of other differences between these paintings; anyone who studies them will quickly see that they are not even all paintings of the same pair of shoes. Given the subsequent fame of Heidegger's essay, it is quite understandable that both art historians and phenomenologists would want to determine precisely which painting Heidegger was referring to in "The Origin of the Work of Art" so as to be able to evaluate his interpretation for ourselves. When the eminent art historian Meyer Schapiro took up the task of identifying the painting in the 1960s, however, the mystery over

which shoes Heidegger was actually referring to exploded into a whole new controversy.

11.7 KEY WORDS

Aesthetics: Aesthetics, or esthetics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of art, beauty and taste, with the creation or appreciation of beauty, with theories and conceptions of beauty or art, and with tastes for and approaches to what is pleasing to the senses and especially sight

Oxymoron: An oxymoron is a rhetorical device that uses an ostensible self-contradiction to illustrate a rhetorical point or to reveal a paradox. A more general meaning of "contradiction in terms" is recorded by the OED for 1902.

Controversy: Controversy is a state of prolonged public dispute or debate, usually concerning a matter of conflicting opinion or point of view.

11.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the write up on "Heidegger's Aesthetics": Beyond the Oxymoron.
2. Discuss the Heidegger's Philosophical Critique of Aesthetics: Introduction
3. What is Heidegger for Art, Introduction: The Three Pillars of Heidegger's Understanding of Art?
4. How to do resolving the Controversy Surrounding Heidegger's Interpretation of Van Gogh?

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11.10   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1`

1. See Section 11.2
2. See Section 11.3

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 11.4
2. See Section 11.5

UNIT 12: DASEIN

STRUCTURE

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To discuss the Origins and Meaning of the Concept of Authenticity.
- To discuss the Critique of Authenticity.
- To know about the Conceptions of Authenticity.
- To understand Recent Accounts of Authenticity.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Dasein (German pronunciation: [ˈdaːzaɪn]) is a German word that means "being there" or "presence" (German: da "there"; sein "being"), and is often translated into English with the word "existence". It is a fundamental concept in the existential philosophy of Martin Heidegger, particularly in his magnum opus Being and Time. Heidegger uses the expression Dasein to refer to the experience of being that is peculiar to human beings. Thus it is a form of being that is aware of and must confront such issues as personhood, mortality and the dilemma or

paradox of living in relationship with other humans while being ultimately alone with oneself.

The term 'authentic' is used either in the strong sense of being "of undisputed origin or authorship", or in a weaker sense of being "faithful to an original" or a "reliable, accurate representation". To say that something is authentic is to say that it is what it professes to be, or what it is reputed to be, in origin or authorship. But the distinction between authentic and derivative is more complicated when discussing authenticity as a characteristic attributed to human beings. For in this case, the question arises: What is it to be oneself, at one with oneself, or truly representing one's self? The multiplicity of puzzles that arise in conjunction with the conception of authenticity connects with metaphysical, epistemological, and moral issues. On the one hand, being oneself is inescapable, since whenever one makes a choice or acts, it is oneself who is doing these things. But on the other hand, we are sometimes inclined to say that some of the thoughts, decisions and actions that we undertake are not really one's own and are therefore not genuinely expressive of who one is. Here, the issue is no longer of metaphysical nature, but rather about moral-psychology, identity and responsibility.

When used in this latter sense, the characterization describes a person who acts in accordance with desires, motives, ideals or beliefs that are not only hers (as opposed to someone else's), but that also express who she really is. Bernard Williams captures this when he specifies authenticity as "the idea that some things are in some sense really you, or express what you are, and others aren't" (quoted in Guignon 2004: viii).

Besides being a topic in philosophical debates, authenticity is also a pervasive ideal that impacts social and political thinking. In fact, one distinctive feature of recent Western intellectual developments has been a shift to what is called the "age of authenticity" (Taylor 2007; Ferrarra 1998). Therefore, understanding the concept also involves investigating

its historical and philosophical sources and on the way it impacts the socio-political outlook of contemporary societies.

12.2 ORIGINS AND MEANING OF THE CONCEPT OF AUTHENTICITY

1.1 Sincerity and Authenticity

A number of significant cultural changes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries led to the emergence of a new ideal in the Western world (Trilling 1972). During this period, human beings came to be thought of more as individuals than as placeholders in systems of social relations. This emphasis on the importance of the individual is seen in the prevalence of autobiographies and self-portraits, where the individual becomes the centre of attention not because of extraordinary feats or access to special knowledge, but because he or she is an individual.

In the same period, society comes to be seen not as an organic whole of interacting components, but as an aggregate of individual human beings, a social system with a life of its own, which presents itself to the individual as not itself quite human but rather as artificial, the result of a "social contract". Being human is understood as being best achieved through being unique and distinctive, even when these collide with certain social norms. At the same time, there is an increasing awareness of what Charles Taylor (1989) calls "inwardness" or "internal space". The result is a distinction between one's private and unique individuality, and one's public self (Taylor 1991; Trilling 1972).

With these social changes there is a sharp shift in the conceptions of approbation and disapproval that are commonly used in judging others and oneself. For instance, concepts like sincerity and honor become obsolescent (Berger 1970). In earlier times, a sincere person was seen as someone who honestly attempts to neither violate the expectations that follow from the position he holds in society, nor to strive to appear otherwise than he ought to. However, by the time of Hegel, the ideal of sincerity had lost its normative appeal. Hegel polemically refers to sincerity as "the heroism of dumb service" (Hegel 2002 [1807]: 515) and

launches an attack on the bourgeois "honest man," who passively internalizes a particular conventional social ethos. In the condition of sincerity, the individual is uncritically obedient to the power of society—a conformity that for Hegel leads to subjugation and a deterioration of the individual (Hegel 2002 [1807]; Golomb 1995: 9; Trilling 1972). For Hegel, in the progress of "spirit", the individual consciousness will eventually move from this condition of sincerity to a condition of baseness, in which the individual becomes antagonistic to external societal powers and achieves a measure of autonomy. Hegel shows this clearly in a comment on Diderot's Rameau's Nephew, a story in which the narrator (supposedly Diderot himself) is portrayed as the reasonable, sincere man who respects the prevailing order and who has achieved bourgeois respectability. In contrast, the nephew is full of contempt for the society in which he figures as a worthless person. However, he is in opposition to himself, because he still aspires to a better standing in a society, which he believes has nothing but emptiness to offer (Despland 1975: 360; Golomb 1995: 13–15). For Hegel, the narrator is an example of the sincere, honest soul, while the nephew figures as the "disintegrated," alienated consciousness. The nephew is clearly alienated, but for Hegel this alienation is a step in the progression towards autonomous existence (Williams 2002: 190).

In the midst of this conceptual change, the term 'authenticity' becomes applicable in demarcating a somewhat new set of virtues. The older concept of sincerity, referring to being truthful in order to be honest in one's dealings with others, comes to be replaced by a relatively new concept of authenticity, understood as being true to oneself for one's own benefit. Earlier, the moral advice to be authentic recommended that one should be true to oneself in order thereby to be true to others. Thus, being true to oneself is seen as a means to the end of successful social relations. In contrast, in our contemporary thinking, authenticity as a virtue term is seen as referring to a way of acting that is choiceworthy in itself (Ferrara 1993; Varga 2011a; Varga 2011b).

1.2 Autonomy and Authenticity

The growing appeal of the idea of authenticity has led to the emergence of a highly influential modern "ethic of authenticity" (Ferrara 1993). This ethic acknowledges the value of the dominant "ethic of autonomy" that shapes modern moral thought (Schneewind 1998; Dworkin 1988). The idea of autonomy emphasizes the individual's self-governing abilities, the independence of one's deliberation from manipulation and the capacity to decide for oneself. It is connected to the view that moral principles and the legitimacy of political authority should be grounded in the self-governing individual who is free from diverse cultural and social pressures. According to the ethic of autonomy, each individual should follow those norms he or she can will on the basis of rational reflective endorsement. To some extent, authenticity and autonomy agree in supposing that one should strive to lead one's life according to one's own reasons and motives, relying on one's capacity to follow self-imposed guidelines. In both cases, it is crucial that one has the ability to put one's own behavior under reflexive scrutiny and make it dependent on self-determined goals (Honneth 1994).

One crucial difference is that the ethic of authenticity introduces the idea that there are motives, desires and commitments that sometimes should outweigh the restrictions of rational reflection. This is because those motives are so fundamental to the cohesion of one's own identity that overriding them would mean disintegrating the very self which is necessary to be a moral agent. The point is that there are types of moral philosophical reasoning that can be repressive if they arise from "an autonomous moral conscience not complemented by sensitivity to the equilibrium of identity and by authenticity" (Ferrara 1993: 102). Besides leading an autonomous life, guided by one's own, non-constrained reasons and motives, authenticity requires that these motives and reasons should be expressive of one's self-identity. Authenticity guides the moral agent to follow only those "moral sources outside the subject [that speak in a language] which resonate[s] within him or her", in other words, moral sources that accord with "an order which is inseparably indexed to a personal vision" (Taylor 1989: 510). Hence, authenticity entails an aspect that lies beyond the scope of autonomy, namely, a "language of

personal resonance" (Taylor 1991: 90). This points to the gap between (Kantian) autonomy and authenticity: one can lead an autonomous life, even if this way of living fails to express a person's self-understanding.

In all, the ideal of authenticity does not object to the importance of the self-given law, but disagrees that full freedom consists in making and following such a law (Menke 2005: 308). It is not just about being involved in the authorship of such a law, but about how this law fits with the wholeness of a person's life, and how or whether it expresses who the person is. In this sense, the idea of autonomy already represents a counterposition to an ethic that is solely concerned with strict adherence to social norms.

1.3 Authenticity and the self

Another decisive factor in the development of the ideal of authenticity was that it emerged together with a distinctively modern conception of the self. This is visible in the work of Rousseau, who argues that the orientation toward life that should guide the conduct one chooses should come from a source within. This led to questions about inwardness, self-reflection and introspection, many of them addressed in his Confessions (1770). When the space of interiority becomes a guiding authority, the individual must detect and distinguish central impulses, feelings and wishes from ones that are less central or conflict with one's central motives. In other words, interiority must be divided into what is at the core and what is peripheral. In this picture, the measure of one's actions is whether they spring from and express essential aspects of one's identity or whether they come from a peripheral place.

Such a conception of the self exhibits decisive parallels to the tradition of "religious individualism" that centers religious life on the individual and stresses the importance of inwardness and the introspective examination of one's inner motives, intentions and conscience. Investigating the characteristics of the modern subject of inwardness, Foucault (1980: 58–60) suggests that "it seems to us that truth, lodged in our most secret nature, 'demands' only to surface." For Foucault, confession—the look

inward to monitor one's interior life and to tell certain "truths" about oneself—has become a part of a cultural life, reaching from religious contexts to psychological therapy. The radicalization of the distinction between true and false interiority has led to new possibilities; inner states, motivations and feelings are now increasingly thought of as objectifiable and malleable in different contexts.

Rousseau also adds that acting on motives that spring from the periphery of the self, while ignoring or denying essential aspects of one's self, simply amounts to self-betrayal and annihilation of the self. Rousseau's The New Heloise (1997 [1761]) emphasizes this aspect by showing how the novel accentuates the significant costs and the potential self-alienation involved in suppressing one's deepest motivations. But, in addition, in the Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, Rousseau argues that, with the emergence of a competitive public sphere, the ability to turn inward is increasingly compromised, because competitive relations require intense role-playing, which Rousseau calls an "excessive labor" (Rousseau 1992 [1754]: 22). The ongoing instrumental role-playing not only causes alienation, but ultimately inequality and injustice, since it destroys the immanent moral understanding with which, according to Rousseau, humans are hard-wired.

12.3 CRITIQUE OF AUTHENTICITY

The idea of autonomy—the view that each individual must decide how to act based on his or her own rational deliberations about the best course of action—has in many ways paved the way for the idea of authenticity. However, authenticity goes beyond autonomy by holding that an individual's feelings and deepest desires can outweigh both the outcome of rational deliberation in making decisions, and our willingness to immerse ourselves into the reigning norms and values of society. Whereas sincerity generally seems to accept a given social order, authenticity becomes an implicitly critical concept, often calling into question the reigning social order and public opinion. In Rousseau's optic, one of our most important projects is to avert from the social sphere and to unearth what is truly us underneath the 'masks' that society

forces on us. But when authenticity comes to be regarded as something like sincerity for its own sake (Ferrara 1993: 86), it becomes increasingly hard to see what the moral good is that it is supposed to bring into being.

A frequently mentioned worry with the ideal of authenticity is that the focus on one's own inner feelings and attitudes may breed a self-centered preoccupation with oneself that is anti-social and destructive of altruism and compassion toward others. Christopher Lasch (1979) points out similarities between the clinical disorder referred to as Narcissistic Personality Disorder and authenticity. According to Lasch, narcissism and authenticity are both characterized by deficient empathic skills, self-indulgence and self-absorbed behavior. Similarly, Allan Bloom (1987: 61) maintains that the culture of authenticity has made the minds of the youth "narrower and flatter," leading to self-centeredness and the collapse of the public self. While Lasch and Bloom worry about the threat that the self-centeredness and narcissism of the "culture of authenticity" poses to morality and political coherence, Daniel Bell voices worries about its economic viability. What Bell fears is that the "megalomania of self-infinitization" that comes with the culture of authenticity will erode the foundations of market mechanisms that are "based on a moral system of reward rooted in the Protestant sanctification of work" (Bell 1976: 84).

However, one might argue that this only becomes a problem if one thinks of authenticity as entirely a personal virtue. In other words, there is only a clash between morality and social life and being authentic if the "true" self is regarded as fundamentally prone to anti-social behaviour. But many thinkers at this time understood human nature as fundamentally disposed toward beneficence, so that evil was seen as arising from socialization and upbringing rather than from deep drives within the human being. For instance, Rousseau holds that certain immoral characteristics are immanent in man but were produced by the dynamics of modern society, which is characterized by a competitive way of relating to others and striving for acknowledgement in the public sphere. Rousseau thus externalizes the origins of societal evil and alienation

from the original nature of man. The undistorted self-relation of natural man inspires sympathy and considerate relations with others, sensitive to "seeing any sentient being, especially our fellow-man, perish or suffer, principally those like ourselves" (Rousseau 1992 [1754]: 14). In somewhat the same way, economic theorists of the time supposed that unregulated markets are self-correcting, as human beings are naturally inclined to engage in mutually advantageous commercial activities (Taylor 2007: 221–269). On this view, authenticity does not amount to egoism or self-absorption. On the contrary, the prevailing view seems to have been that, by turning inward and accessing the "true" self, one is simultaneously led towards a deeper engagement with the social world. This is why Taylor (1989: 419–455) describes the trajectory of the project of authenticity is "inward and upward".

It might however be objected that supposing that the "inner" is a morally worthy guide is deeply misguided and builds upon an overly optimistic idea of human nature. It may be argued that once the idea of rational deliberation is set aside, the powerful impact of the non-rational becomes apparent. Thinkers such as Nietzsche and Freud have put in question the conception of human nature, and especially of our "inner" nature, as fundamentally good. Following their "hermeneutics of suspicion" (Ricoeur 1970), human nature comes to be seen as including forces of violence, disorder and unreason as well as tendencies toward beneficence and altruism. In that case, any idea of an ethic based primarily on the ideal of authenticity is simply untenable.

Others have expressed serious concerns not about the optimistic view of human nature, but about the conception of the self that underlies the idea of authenticity. Some argued that the dichotomies that the concept authenticity was built on, like conformity vs. independence, individual vs. society, or inner-directedness vs. other-directedness, were entirely misguided. The underlying assumption that considers the individual separate from the environment is an absurd assumption that erodes that bond between the individual and community, which ultimately is the source of the authentic self (Slater 1970: 15; Sisk 1973). In agreement

with Slater (1970) and Yankelovich (1981), Bellah et al. (1985) and Fairlie (1978) contend that such a pursuit of authenticity is self-defeating, for with the loss of the bond with community, the sense of self is also diminished.

Additionally, in The Jargon of Authenticity, Adorno contended that the "liturgy of inwardness" is founded on the flawed idea of a self-transparent individual who is capable of choosing herself (Adorno 1973: 70). The doubtful picture of the self-centered individual covers up the constitutive alterity and mimetic nature of the self. In the concluding part of The Order of Things, Foucault maintained that present society was witnessing a crisis, not only of authenticity but also of the whole idea of the subject in its temporary historically contingent constitution, foreseeing that "man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea" (Foucault 1994: 387). Foucault clearly opposed the idea of a hidden authentic self, which he critically referred to as the "Californian cult of the self" (1983: 266). The recognition that the subject is not given to itself in advance leads him to the practical consequence that it must create itself as a work of art (Foucault 1983: 392). Rather than searching for a hidden true self, one should attempt to shape one's life as a work of art, proceeding without recourse to any fixed rules or permanent truths in a process of unending becoming (Foucault 1988: 49). In a similar vein, Richard Rorty has argued that the idea of coming to "know a truth which was out there (or in here) all the time" (Rorty 1989: 27) is simply a myth. Postmodern thought raises questions about the existence of an underlying subject with essential properties accessible through introspection. The whole idea of the authentic as that which is "original", "essential", "proper", and so forth now seems doubtful. If we are self-constituting beings who make ourselves up from one moment to the next, it appears that the term "authenticity" can refer only to whatever feels right at some particular moment.

Yet others have based their criticism of authenticity especially on the emergence of a pervasive "culture of authenticity". Cultural critics have

argued that the ostensible "decline" of modern society might not primarily be a result of economical or structural transformations, but as the outcome of an increasingly ubiquitous ideal of authenticity. Before we turn to these critiques, it is helpful to understand how the ideal of authenticity became so widespread. First, we should mention that Rousseau's work, made a significant contribution to the popularization of authenticity. Particularly The New Heloise (1997 [1761]) was enormously influential, with at least 70 editions in print before 1800 (Darnton 1984: 242). This dispersion of the ideal of authenticity into popular culture was further strengthened by several factors. For instance, a wide array of intellectuals of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century had embraced the idea of authenticity, and even radicalized it by resisting established codes and publicly defending alternative, "artistic" or "bohemian" modes of life.

The reception of the work of Sartre and Heidegger has surely contributed to the popularization of the idea of authenticity, and the decisive impact of this idea first began to manifest itself after the Second World War (Taylor 2007: 475). Rossinow contends that the politics of the 1960s were centered on questions of authenticity. Following his account, the main driving force towards political and social changes of the New Left movement in the 1960s was "a search for authenticity in industrial American life" (Rossinow 1998: 345). Both J. Farrell (1997) and Rossinow argue that the New Left emerged partly as a reaction to traditional American liberalism and Christian existentialism, replacing the negative concept of "sin" with "alienation" and the positive goal of "salvation" with that of "authenticity". Confronted with what they understood as alienation that "isn't restricted to the poor" (Rossinow 1998: 194), New Left activism reached beyond civil rights to moral rights and attempted to bring about a recovery of a sense of personal wholeness and authenticity by curing the institutions of American society.

The emerging youth culture was characterized by a severe dissatisfaction with the "morass of conformity" of the parental generation (Gray 1965:

57). The critique of the growing conformity of life got more persistent during the 1950s, and a number of social scientists in widely read books criticized what they saw as widespread conformity and inauthenticity. Among these, The Lonely Crowd (1950) by Riesman and The Organization Man (1956) by Whyte received the most attention. Riesman points out that the efficacious functioning of modern organizations requires other-directed individuals who smoothly adjust to their environment. However, he also notes that such people compromised themselves, and a society consisting mostly of other-directed individuals faces substantial deficiencies in leadership and human potential.

On the background of this development, it seems that at a time when relativism appears difficult to surmount, authenticity has become a last measure of value and a common currency in contemporary cultural life (Jay 2004). So, under the impact of existentialism on Western culture, the ubiquitous desire for authenticity has emerged in modern society as "one of the most politically explosive of human impulses," as Marshall Berman argues (1970: xix).

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Discuss the Origins and Meaning of the Concept of Authenticity.

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2. Discuss the Critique of Authenticity.

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12.4 CONCEPTIONS OF AUTHENTICITY

3.1 Kierkegaard and Heidegger

Kierkegaard's work on authenticity and his suggestion that each of us is to "become what one is" (1992 [1846]: 130), is best seen as linked to his critical stance towards a certain social reality and a certain essentialist trend in philosophical and scientific thought. On the one hand, he (1962 [1846]) condemned aspects of his contemporary social world, claiming that many people have come to function as merely place-holders in a society that constantly levels down possibilities to the lowest common denominator. In more contemporary terms, we can say that Kierkegaard provides a criticism of modern society as causing "inauthenticity". Living in a society characterized by such "massification" lead to what he refers to as widespread "despair" that comes to the fore as spiritlessness, denial, and defiance. On the other hand, he rejected the view that a human being should be regarded as an object, as a substance with certain essential attributes. Rather than being an item among others, Kierkegaard proposes to understand the self in relational terms: "The self is a relation that relates itself to itself…" (Kierkegaard 1980 [1849]:13). This relation consists in the unfolding project of taking what we find ourselves with as beings in the world and imparting some meaning or concrete identity to our own life course. Thus, the self is defined by concrete expressions through which one manifests oneself in the world and thereby constitutes one's identity over time. In Kierkegaard's view, "becoming what one is" and evading despair and hollowness is not a matter of solitary introspection, but rather a matter of passionate commitment to a relation to something outside oneself that bestows one's life with meaning. For Kierkegaard, as a religious thinker, this ultimate commitment was his defining relation to God. The idea is that passionate care about something outside ourselves gives diachronic coherence in our lives and provides the basis for the narrative unity of the self (Davenport 2012).

Notes

Heidegger's conception of human existence (or, as calls it, Dasein, 'being-there') echoes Kierkegaard's conception of the "self". Rather than being an object among others, Dasein is a "relation of being" (Seinsverhältnis; Heidegger 1962 [1927]: 12)—a relation that obtains between what one is at any moment and what one can and will be as the temporally extended unfolding of life into a realm of possibilities. To conceive Dasein as relational means that in living out our lives, we always already care: for each of us, our being is always at issue and this is made concrete in the specific actions we undertake and the roles we enact. Over the course of our lives, our identities are always in question: we are always projections into the future, incessantly taking a stand on who we are.

The most familiar conception of "authenticity" comes to us mainly from Heidegger's Being and Time of 1927. The word we translate as 'authenticity' is actually a neologism invented by Heidegger, the word Eigentlichkeit, which comes from an ordinary term, eigentlich, meaning 'really' or 'truly', but is built on the stem eigen, meaning 'own' or 'proper'. So the word might be more literally translated as 'ownedness', or 'being owned', or even 'being one's own', implying the idea of owning up to and owning what one is and does. Nevertheless, the word 'authenticity' has become closely associated with Heidegger as a result of early translations of Being and Time into English, and was adopted by Sartre and Beauvoir as well as by existentialist therapists and cultural theorists who followed them.[1]

Heidegger's conception of ownedness as the most fully realized human form of life emerges from his view of what it is to be a human being. This conception of human Dasein echoes Kierkegaard's description of a "self". On Heidegger's account, Dasein is not a type of object among others in the totality of what is on hand in the universe. Instead, human being is a "relation of being", a relation that obtains between what one is at any moment (the immediacy of the concrete present as it has evolved) and what one can and will be as the temporally extended unfolding or happening of life into an open realm of possibilities. To say that human

being is a relation is to say that, in living out our lives, we always care about who and what we are. Heidegger expresses this by saying that, for each of us, our being (what our lives will amount to overall) is always at issue. This "being at stake" or "being in question for oneself" is made concrete in the specific stands we take—that is, in the roles we enact—over the course of our lives. It is because our being (our identity) is in question for us that we are always taking a stand on who we are. Since the German word for 'understanding', Verstehen, is etymologically derived from the idea of 'taking a stand', Heidegger can call the projection into the future by which we shape our identity 'understanding'. And because any stand one takes is inescapably "being-in-the-world", understanding carries with it some degree of competence in coping with the world around us. An understanding of being in general is therefore built into human agency.

To the extent that all our actions contribute to realizing an overarching project or set of projects, our active lives can be seen as embodying a life-project of some sort. On Heidegger's view, we exist for the sake of ourselves: enacting roles and expressing character traits contribute to realizing some image of what it is to be human in our own cases. Existence has a directedness or purposiveness that imparts a degree of connection to our life stories. For the most part, having such a life-plan requires very little conscious formulation of goals or deliberation about means. It results from our competence in being members of a historical culture that we have mastered to a great extent in growing up into a shared world. This tacit "pre-understanding" makes possible our familiar dwelling with things and others in the familiar, everyday world.

Heidegger holds that all possibilities of concrete understanding and action are made possible by a background of shared practices opened up by the social context in which we find ourselves, by what he calls the 'They' (das Man). Far from it being the case that social existence is something alien to and opposed to our humanity, Heidegger holds that we are always essentially and inescapably social beings. As he says,

They itself prescribes that way of interpreting the world that lies closest. Dasein is for the sake of the They in an everyday manner… In terms of the They, and as the They, I am 'given' proximally to 'myself'…. (1962 [1927]: 167, translation modified)

To be a teacher, for instance, I must adopt (and perhaps blend) some set of the ready-made styles of classroom presentation and of dealing with students laid out in advance by existing norms and conventions of professional conduct.

To say that we are always the They is not to say we are automata, however. Heidegger suggests that even in the bland conformism of "average everydayness" we are constantly making choices that reflect our understanding of who we are. Nevertheless, in average everydayness, we are as a rule adrift, acting as one of the "herd" or "crowd"—a form of life Heidegger calls "falling" (Verfallen). Heidegger (1962 [1927]: 220) emphasizes that calling this way of living "falling" does not imply that it is "a bad or deplorable ontical property of which, perhaps, more advanced stages of human culture might be able to rid themselves" (1962 [1927]: 220). On the contrary, since there is no exit from the social world—since it is the "only game in town"—it plays a positive role in creating the background of shared intelligibility that lets us be fully human in the first place. Nevertheless, Heidegger is aware that there is something deeply problematic about this falling mode of existence. In "doing what one does", he suggests, we fail to own up to who we are. We do not take over our own choices as our own and, as a result, we are not really the authors of our own lives. To the extent that our lives are unowned or disowned, existence is inauthentic (uneigentlich), not our own (eigen).

Our condition as They-selves is one of dispersal, distraction and forgetfulness. But this "downward plunge" captures only one aspect of Dasein, Heidegger says. In order to be able to realize the capacity for authenticity, one must undergo a personal transformation, one that tears us away from falling. This is possible only given certain fundamental

insights arising in a life. The first major shift can occur when one experiences an intense bout of anxiety. In anxiety, the familiar world that seemed to assure one's security suddenly breaks down, and in this world-collapse one finds that the significance of things is "completely lacking" (1962 [1927]: 186). One finds oneself alone, with no worldly supports for one's existence. In anxiety, Dasein encounters itself as an individual, ultimately alone. In Heidegger's words, "Anxiety individualizes Dasein and thus discloses it as 'solus ipse'" (1962 [1927]: 188). The second transformative event is the encounter with one's "ownmost" possibility, the possibility of death as the possible loss of all possibilities. In facing our own finitude, we find that we are always future-directed happenings or projects, where what is crucial to that ongoing forward movement is not its actualization of possibilities, but the "How" with which one undertakes one's life. Heidegger tries to envision a way of life he calls anticipatory running-forward (Vorlaufen) as a life that clear-sightedly and intensely carries out its projects, no matter what they may be. The third transformative event is hearing the call of conscience. What conscience calls out to us is the fact that we are "guilty" in the German sense of that word, which means that we have a debt (Schuld) and are responsible for ourselves. Conscience tells us that we are falling short of what we can be, and that we are obliged to take up the task of living with resoluteness and full engagement. Such resoluteness is seen clearly in the case of vocational commitments, where one has heard a calling and feels pulled toward pursuing that calling.[2]

The three "existentialia" that structure Dasein's Being-in-the-world make up the "formal existential totality of Dasein's structural whole", what Heidegger calls care. To be Dasein, an entity must have some sense of what it is "coming toward" (Zu-kunft, the German for "future"), what has "come before" (what is "passed", Vorbei), and what one is dealing with in one's current situation ("making present"). The defining characteristics of Dasein's potentiality-for-Being are displayed in the transformative events that lead to the possibility of being authentic (eigentlich, as we saw, from the stem meaning "proper" or "own"). When Dasein confronts and grasps its authentic possibility of being, it becomes possible to see

the whole of Dasein, including both its being as a They-self and as authentic being-one's-self. "Dasein is authentically itself in [its] primordial individualization", where the "constancy [Ständigkeit] of the Self … gets clarified" (1962 [1927]: 322). What defines the wholeness and unity of Dasein is determined not by an underlying substance (e.g., the sub-ject, that which underlies), but by the "steadiness and steadfastness" (beständigen Standfestigkeit, ibid) of authenticity.

The key to understanding authenticity lies, as we have seen, in the characterization of Dasein's being as a relation between two aspects or dimensions making up human existence. On the one hand, we find ourselves thrown into a world and a situation not of our own making, already disposed by moods and particular commitments, with a past behind us that constrains our choices. With respect to this dimension of human life, we are generally absorbed in practical affairs, taking care of business, striving to get things done as they crop up from time to time. This "being-in-a-situation" naturally inclines us to everyday falling as Heidegger describes it.

At the same time, however, to be human is to be underway toward achieving ends that are understood as integral to one's overarching life-project. My actions at any moment, though typically aimed at accomplishing tasks laid out by the demands of circumstances, are also cumulatively creating me as a person of a particular sort. In this sense, my futural projection as "understanding" has the structure of being a projection onto one's ownmost possibility of being. So, for example, when I attend a boring parent/teacher conference, I do so as part of handling my current duties. But this act is also part of being a parent insofar as it contributes to determining "that for the sake of which" I understand myself as existing. Given this distinction between current means/ends strategic actions and long-range life-defining undertakings, it is possible to see that there are two senses of freedom in play in Heidegger's account of human existence. There is freedom in the humdrum sense of doing what I choose to do under ordinary conditions, a freedom Heidegger presumably interprets in an agent-libertarian way.

But there is also freedom in an ethically more robust sense. In addition to choosing courses of action among options, Dasein is capable of "choosing to choose a kind of being-one's-self" (1962 [1927]: 314) through its ongoing constitution of that identity for the sake of which it exists. Thus, I attend the parent/teacher conference and behave in a particular way because I care about being a parent and a citizen of a particular sort. I understand this stance as having repercussions for my life as a whole, and I grasp the need for resoluteness in holding steady to undertakings of this sort if I am to shape my identity in the way I can care about. For Heidegger, the resolute commitment that is made concrete and defined in one's day-to-day actions is what imparts steadiness and steadfastness to a life. It is also the condition for being responsible for one's own existence: "Only so can [one] be responsible [verantwortlich]", Heidegger says (1962 [1927]: 334, translation modified). Authenticity, defined as standing up for and standing behind what one does—as owning and owning up to one's deeds as an agent in the world—becomes possible in this sort of resolute commitment to the "for the sake of which" of one's existence.

It should be obvious that this conception of authenticity has very little to do with the older idea of being true to one's own pregiven feelings and desires. But there is still a clear respect in which the idea of "being true to oneself" has a role to play here. What distinguishes this conception from the conceptions of pop psychology and romantic views of authenticity is the fact that the "true self" to which we are to be true is not some pre-given set of substantive feelings, opinions and desires to be consulted through inward-turning or introspection. On the contrary, the "true self" alluded to here is an on-going narrative construction: the composition of one's own autobiography through one's concrete ways of acting over the course of a life as a whole. Feelings and desires are, of course, profoundly important, as are the features of one's situation and one's concrete connections to others. Heidegger wants to recover a firm sense of the wholeness of the existing individual. But this wholeness is found in the connectedness of what Heidegger calls the "happening" or "movement" of a life—that is, in the unfolding and constantly "in-

progress" storyizing that continues until death. What is at stake in the ideal of authenticity is not being true to some antecedently given nature, then, but being a person of a particular sort. Heidegger emphasizes that being authentic presupposes that one instantiate such virtues as perseverance, integrity, clear-sightedness, flexibility, openness, and so forth. It should be obvious that such a life is not necessarily opposed to an ethical and socially engaged existence. On the contrary, authenticity seems to be regarded as a "executive virtue" that provides the condition for the possibility of being a moral agent in any meaningful sense whatsoever.

Others argue that Heidegger uses authenticity in both evaluative-normative and purely descriptive senses. In the descriptive use of the term, inauthenticity is simply the default condition of everyday life, in which our self-relations are mediated by others. In this sense, authenticity involves no judgment about which mode of being is superior for Dasein. But sometimes Heidegger's language turns normative (Carman 2003), and the seemingly neutral inauthentic form of relating transforms into something negative. Inauthentic Dasein is now "not itself", loses itself (Selbstverlorenheit), and becomes self-alienated. At this point, it is argued that when introducing the normative-evaluative sense, Heidegger presents three modes of life: authentic—average(ness)—inauthentic, where the authentic and inauthentic modes are existential modifications of average everydayness (Blattner 2006: 130; Dreyfus 1991). In this picture, an authentic way of life is owned, an inauthentic disowned, and the middle one—which is how we live much of the time—is simply one that is unowned. Dasein and authenticity emerge in contrast to this background and out of this background, so that the primordially indifferent mode is the condition of possibility for authenticity or inauthenticity. In addition, Carman (2003: 295) argues that Heidegger's notion of conscience can help us further illustrate his account of authenticity and shows how the "call of conscience" may be interpreted as expressive responsiveness to one's own particularity.

3.2 Sartre and de Beauvoir

Published in 1943, Sartre's opus magnum, Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology, had a significant influence on philosophical thought and intellectual life in the second half of the twentieth century. His principal goal in this book is to "repudiate the spirit of seriousness" of traditional philosophy as well as of bourgeois culture (Sartre 1992a [1943]: 796). The spirit of seriousness assumes (1) that there are transcendent values that exist antecedently to humans, and (2) that the value of a thing is part of the actual being of the valued thing. Sartre's view, in contrast, is that all values are generated by human interactions in situations, so that value is a human construct with no extra-human existence in things.

To address the question of human existence, Sartre scrutinizes our everyday lives, focusing on two particular aspects. He notes that human beings, like other entities in the world, have certain concrete characteristics that make up what he calls their "facticity" or what they are "in themselves" (en soi). Facticity makes up the element of "givenness" we must work with: I find myself with a past, a body and a social situation that constrains me in what I can do. This "just being there" is above all contingent: there is no prior justification or reason for the existence of my being. On Sartre's view, the "in itself" does not even have any determinate characteristics, since every determination (every "this, not that") is first introduced into the totality of being by our specific interpretations of things.

While human beings share their "facticity" with other entities in the world, they are unique among the totality of entities insofar as they are capable of distancing themselves from what is "in itself" through reflection and self-awareness. Rather than being an item in the world with relatively fixed attributes, what is distinctive about me as a human being is that I am capable of putting my own being in question by asking myself, for example, whether I want to be a person of a particular sort. This capacity for gaining distance inserts a "not" or a "nonbeing" into the totality of what is, which allows me to organize what surrounds me into a meaningfully differentiated whole. In addition, human consciousness is

the source of the "not" because it is itself a "nothingness". In other words, a human being is not just an "in itself" but also a "for itself (pour soi), thus characterized by what Sartre calls "transcendence". As transcendence, I am always more than I am as facticity because, as surpassing my brute being, I stand before an open range of possibilities for self-definition in the future.

Sartre's notion of transcendence is closely linked with the idea of freedom. Humans are free in the sense that they have the ability to choose how they are going to interpret things, and in these interpretations they are deciding how things are to count or matter. We constitute the world through our freedom to the extent that our ways of taking things determine how reality will be sorted out and matter to us. At the same time, we constitute ourselves through our own choices: though the facticity of my situation creates some constraints on my possible self-interpretations, it is always up to me to decide the meaning of those constraints, and this means that what I take to be limitations are in fact produced by my own interpretations or meaning-giving activities. Such limitations are grasped in light of antecedent commitments, on the background of which situations becomes intelligible, as affording certain actions and/or modes of evaluation. It is our antecedent commitments that shape our world, making situations and objects intelligible as threatening or favorable, easy or full of obstacles, or more generally, as affording certain actions (Sartre 1992a [1943]: 489). Our engagements provide a hermeneutic structure within which our situations and motives become comprehensible and reveal themselves in the way situations appear to us—as significant, requiring our attention, etc. (1992a [1943]: 485).

It is important to note that Sartre's notion of freedom is radical. Freedom is absolute to the extent that each person decides the significance of the constraints in his or her facticity: "I find an absolute responsibility for the fact that my facticity … is directly inapprehensible", because supposed "facts" about me are never brute facts, "but always appear across a projective reconstruction of my for-itself" (Sartre 1992a [1943]: 710).

For Sartre, only our choices and their projected ends define our situations as meaningful, as threatening or favorable, as affording certain actions etc. The resistances and obstacles that one encounters in a situation acquire meaning only in and through the free choice. Thus, individuals are responsible not only for their identities, but for the way the world presents itself in their experiences. Even others are just "opportunities and chances" for my free creative activity. According to this early formulation, it is up to us to interpret how other people are to matter to us relative to situations in which we find ourselves engaged (Sartre 1992a [1943]: 711).

But human beings are not merely characterized by facticity and transcendence; they are also seen as embodying a deep and irreconcilable tension between facticity and transcendence. This tension comes to the fore in Sartre's account of "bad faith". Bad faith, a kind of self-deception, involves believing or taking oneself to be an X while all along one is (and knows oneself to be) actually a Y. The most familiar form of bad faith is acting as if one were a mere thing—solely facticity—and thereby denying one's own freedom to make oneself into something very different. Thus, the person who thinks she is a coward "just as a matter of fact" is excluding from view the ability to transform her existence through changed ways of behaving. Such bad faith is a denial of transcendence or freedom.

At first, it might seem that one could escape bad faith by making a sincere, deep commitment to something and abiding by that commitment—for example, a total, resolute engagement of the self comparable to Kierkegaard's notion of an "infinite passion". In this regard, Sartre considers a person who tries to wholeheartedly believe that his friend really likes him. "I believe it", he says, "I decide to believe in it and maintain myself in this decision…" (Sartre 1992a [1943]: 114). My belief will be steady and solid, like something "in itself" that informs my being and cuts through all the tenuousness and unsteadiness of my subjective life. I know I believe it, I will say. If I could make myself believe something in this way, then to achieve this might be what we

could call "good faith:" to actually be something, without the questionability of the "not" creeping in. However, Sartre doubts that such an absolute, being-determining commitment is possible. In fact, Sartre claims that any such sort of "good faith" would actually amount to little more than another form of self-deception. For if my decision to believe is in fact a decision, it must always be something that to some extent distances me from what is decided. That is why we use the word 'believe' to imply some degree of uncertainty, as when we say, "Is he my friend? Well, I believe he is". Lucid self-awareness shows us that in making a choice, we can never attain the condition of the "in itself", because what we are is always in question for us. This is what Sartre means when he says human being is always "previously corrupted" and that "bad faith [always] reapprehends good faith" (Sartre 1992a [1943]: 116). Thus, the project of being in good faith seems impossible, as we are always necessarily in bad faith.

The inescapable nature of bad faith seems to leave no room for the possibility of authenticity. This might be why the word translated as "authentic" only appears twice in this vast tome. On one occasion, Sartre attacks Heidegger for introducing the idea of authenticity as a way of providing something foundational in an otherwise totally contingent world. The concept of authenticity "shows all too clearly [Heidegger's] anxiety to establish an ontological foundation for an Ethics…" (Sartre 1992a [1943]: 128). A second and more obscure appearance of the word comes at the end of the discussion of bad faith early in the book. Here Sartre acknowledges that his account of bad faith seems to have the consequence that there can be no such thing as good faith, so that "it is indifferent whether one is in good faith or in bad faith", and that in turn seems to imply that "we can never radically escape bad faith". Nevertheless, he goes on, there may be a "self-recovery of being which has been previously corrupted", a recovery "we shall call authenticity, the description of which has no place here" (Sartre 1992a [1943]: 116n).

One might thus conclude that there is no way to be true to what one is, because there is nothing that one is. However, such a negative conclusion

would be reached only by someone who embraced from the outset the "spirit of seriousness" Sartre sets out to attack. Seriousness would lead us to think that there is simply a fact of the matter about a person: the person is either a believer or he is not. But, as Linda A. Bell (1989: 45) has noted, there is another possibility. If one rejects the spirit of seriousness, one might lucidly acknowledge that, as transcendence, one's belief is always in question and so not really a secure belief. Yet, at the same time, one might also recognize that, as facticity, one genuinely holds a belief, and that the belief is central to one's being as an engaged agent in this situation. In Sartre's convoluted style of formulation, "he would be right if he recognized himself as a being that is what it is not and is not what it is" (Bell 1989: 45). On this account, I believe, but I also acknowledge my ability to retract the belief, since nothing is ever fixed in stone.

What is suggested here is that a correlate of authenticity can be found in the idea of being true to the inescapable tension at the core of the human self. This would be attained if one clear-sightedly acknowledged the fundamental ambiguity of the human condition. Authenticity would then be what Sartre calls a "self-recovery of being which was previously corrupted" (1992a [1943]: 116). In a sense, humans can never really be anything in the way brute objects can be things with determinate attributes. In Bell's words, authenticity would be "the awareness and acceptance of—this basic ambiguity" (1989: 46). This conclusion is supported by Sartre's later work, Anti-Semite and Jew where he writes,

Authenticity, it is almost needless to say, consists in having a true and lucid consciousness of the situation, in assuming the responsibilities and risks it involves, in accepting it … sometimes in horror and hate. (1948: 90)

Lucid recognition of the ambiguity of the human condition is the leading idea behind Beauvoir's The Ethics of Ambiguity. Beauvoir takes over Sartre's characterization of the human condition and expands on ideas only hinted at in Sartre's famous lecture, "The Humanism of

Existentialism" (1946), in developing a conception of authenticity. According to Beauvoir, Sartre's conception of the human being as "engaged freedom" implies not just that each individual finds his or her "reason for being" in concrete realizations of freedom, but that willing one's own freedom necessarily involves willing the freedom of all humans. In achieving one's own freedom, she writes, freedom must also will "an open future, by seeking to extend itself by means of the freedom of others" (1948: 60). The point here is that a dedication to freedom, when clearly grasped in its full implications, will be seen to call for a future in which an unrestricted range of possibilities is open to all.

Beauvoir also builds on Sartre's notion of engagement to extend the idea of authenticity. Following Sartre, we are always already engaged in the affairs of the world, whether we realize it or not. To be human is to be already caught up in the midst of social and concrete situations that call for commitments of certain sorts on our part. Sartre takes this ground-level fact of engagement as the basis for exhorting us to be engaged in a deeper sense, where this implies that we decisively and wholeheartedly involve ourselves in what the current situation demands. Of course, once we have abandoned the spirit of seriousness, we will recognize that there are no antecedently given principles or values that dictate the proper course for our existential engagement, so that any commitment will be tenuous and groundless. But the authentic individual will be the one who takes up the terrifying freedom of being the ultimate source of values, embraces it, and acts with a clarity and firmness suitable to his or her best understanding of what is right in this context. In this way, the conception of authenticity is continuous with the ideal of being true to ourselves: we are called upon to become, in our concrete lives, what we already are in the ontological structure of our being.

This is in agreement with the manner in which Sartre describes the consequences of acting against one's deepest commitments.

There is no doubt that I could have done otherwise, but that is not the problem. It ought to be formulated like this: could I have done otherwise

without perceptibly modifying the organic totality of the projects that make up who I am?

Sartre goes on to say that the character of the act may be such that

instead of remaining a purely local and accidental modification of my behavior, it could be effected only by means of a radical transformation of my being-in-the-world… In other words: I could have acted otherwise. Agreed. But at what price? (Sartre 1992a [1943]: 454)

Thus, acting otherwise or, more precisely, failing to act on one's fundamental commitments, comes at the price of transforming who one is. This change effectively precludes one from carrying on with an unchanged self-conception.

12.5 RECENT ACCOUNTS OF AUTHENTICITY

In the last three decades, authors like Taylor (1989, 1991, 1995, 2007), Ferrara (1993; 1998), Jacob Golomb (1995), Guignon (2004, 2008) and Varga (2011a) have attempted to reconstruct authenticity by maintaining that the justified criticism of self-indulgent forms of the idea does not justify the total condemnation of the idea itself (see Taylor 1991: 56). Instead of abandoning the notion of authenticity, they attempt to reconstruct it in a manner that leads neither to aestheticism nor to atomistic self-indulgence.

In The Ethics of Authenticity, and the more fully articulated Sources of the Self, Taylor makes a case for retaining the concept of authenticity (and the practices associated with it) on the grounds that the original and undistorted idea of authenticity contains an important element of self-transcendence (Taylor 1991: 15; Anderson 1995). Unsatisfied with the widespread criticism of authenticity as an adequate ethical orientation, Taylor sets out to prove that authenticity does not necessarily lead to aestheticism or self-indulgence: the justified criticism of self-indulgent forms of the ideal does not justify the complete condemnation of the

ideal itself (Taylor 1991: 56). This would mean extricating aestheticism, subjectivism, individualism, and self-indulgent interpretations of this ideal from what Taylor (Ibid.: 15) holds to be an original understanding of that concept as achieving self-transcendence (Anderson 1995). Restoring an undistorted version, Taylor says, could guard against meaninglessness, which is one of the "malaises of modernity" that Taylor regards as tied to trivialized forms of the culture of authenticity. Self-transcendence, which once was a crucial element in the ideal of authenticity, is practically lost from the contemporary version, giving rise to cultures of self-absorption, which ultimately deteriorate into the malaise of absurdity.

Already in Sources of the Self, Taylor draws attention to how modernism gives birth to a new kind of inward turn that not only attempts to overcome the mechanistic conception of the self linked to disengaged reason but also the Romantic ideal of a faultless alignment of inner nature and reason. Instead, for the modernists, a turn inward did not mean a turn towards a self that needs articulation.

On the contrary, the turn inward may take us beyond the self as usually understood, to a fragmentation of experience which calls our ordinary notions of identity into question. (Taylor 1989: 462)

While in modernism, the turn inward still contained a self-transcending moment, the critical point where the ideal of authenticity becomes flattened is when it becomes 'contaminated' by a certain form of 'self-determining freedom' that also contains elements of inwardness and unconventionality (Taylor 1991: 38). Self-determining freedom

is the idea that I am free when I decide for myself what concerns me, rather than being shaped by external influences. It is a standard of freedom that obviously goes beyond what has been called negative liberty (being free to do what I want without interference by others) because that is compatible with one's being shaped and influenced by society and its laws of conformity. Instead, self-determining freedom

demands that one break free of all such external impositions and decide for oneself alone. (Taylor 1991: 27)

Not only is self-determining freedom not a necessary part of authenticity, it is also counterproductive because its self-centeredness flattens the meanings of lives and fragments identities. For Taylor, the process of articulating an identity involves adopting a relationship to the good or to what is important, which is connected to one's membership in a language community (Taylor 1989: 34–35). As he clearly states, "authenticity is not the enemy of demands that emanate from beyond the self; it presupposes such demands" (Taylor 1991: 41). It cannot be up to me to decide what is important, since this would be self-defeating. Instead, whatever is important for me must connect to an inter-subjective notion of the good, wherefrom a good part of its normative force lastly emanates. In this sense, authenticity simply requires maintaining bonds to collective questions of worth that point beyond one's own preferences. Taylor wants to show that modes of contemporary culture that opt for self-fulfillment without regard

(a) to the demands of our ties with others, or (b) to demands of any kind emanating from something more or other than human desires or aspirations are self-defeating, that they destroy the conditions for realizing authenticity itself. (Taylor 1991: 35)

Thus, not only do we need the recognition of concrete others in order to form our identities, but we must also (critically) engage with a common vocabulary of shared value orientations. In other words, Taylor points out that authenticity needs the appropriation of values that make up our collective horizons.

In his Reflective Authenticity, Alessandro Ferrara also sets out to defend authenticity as an ideal, but in contrast to Taylor he is interested in the social and philosophical issues of the relation between authenticity and validity. According to Ferrara's diagnosis, we are currently witnessing a profound transition that, besides affecting cultures, values and norms,

also touch on the "foundations of validity," thereby affecting the "bedrock of the symbolic network through which we relate to reality and reproduce our life-forms" (Ferrara 1998: 1). At the core of this transformation is the reformulation of "well-being" (eudaimonia) as the normative ideal of authenticity, which can be of help in reconstructing a contemporary understanding of normativity. For Ferrara, it can ground a new ideal of universal validity "ultimately linked with the model of exemplary uniqueness or enlightening singularity thus far associated with 'aesthetics'" (Ferrara 1998: 10). Authenticity is then characterized by the "self-congruency" of an individual, collective or symbolic identity (Ferrara 1998: 70), and is thought of as providing a new universal validity that does not build on the generalizable but rather on the exemplary. Ferrara views Simmel's idea of an individual law as an instructive example of such an anti-generalizing universalism, and it is exactly this characteristic that makes it better suited to the pluralist contexts faced by modern Western societies.

Golomb (1995) provides an informative historical overview of the genesis and development of the concept of authenticity, paying attention to both literary and philosophical sources. While continuously reminding us of the inherently social dimension of authenticity, one of the achievements here is the focus on boundary situations where authenticity "is best forged and revealed" (Ibid.: 201). Golomb takes a neutral position on the ethical value of authenticity, maintaining that "there is no reason to suppose that it is any better or any more valuable to be authentic than to act inauthentically" (Ibid.: 202).

Guignon (2004) explores both the philosophical roots of authenticity and its contemporary manifestations in popular culture. He thoughtfully criticizes pop-psychological literature that deals with the authentic life by making recourse to the subdued 'inner child'. Since Rousseau, the dichotomy between authentic and inauthentic has often been interpreted akin to the distinction between child and adult (Guignon 2004: 43). Like the inner child, the authentic self is depicted as not yet corrupted by the pressures, competitiveness, and conformity of modern public life.

Guignon draws on the psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Jung to remind us of less romanticized visions of the inner child. Additionally, Guignon (2004: 151) aims to identify the manner in which authenticity can be understood as being at the same time a personal and a "fundamentally and irreducibly" social virtue. Authenticity then involves reflectively discerning what is really worth pursuing in the social context in which the agent is situated (Ibid.: 155). If the ideal of authenticity is possible only in a free society with a solid foundation of established social virtues, it would seem that trying to be authentic, if it is to be coherent, must involve a commitment to sustaining and nurturing the type of society in which such an ideal is possible. A reflection on the social embodiment of virtues therefore suggests that authenticity, like many other character ideals, carries with it an obligation to contribute to the maintenance and well-being of a particular type of social organization and way of life (Guignon 2008: 288; 2004: 161). On the other hand, Guignon (2004, 2008) argues that in a democratic society, in which the authority of government—in setting the political course—stems from the consent of the governed, there is good reason to promote virtues like authenticity that sustain such an organization of government. To be authentic is to be clear about one's own most basic feelings, desires and convictions, and to openly express one's stance in the public arena. But that capacity is precisely the character trait that is needed in order to be an effective member of a democratic society (Guignon 2008: 288).

Varga (2011a) shares the fundamental assumption that authenticity has a certain potential (and therefore deserves to be reformulated), but he also thinks that it could be used for a critical inquiry into the practices of the self in contemporary life. By way of an analysis of self-help and self-management literature, Varga detects a "paradoxical transformation:" the ideal of authenticity that once provided an antidote to hierarchical institutions and requirements of capitalism, now seems to function both as an institutionalized demand towards subjects to match the systemic demands of contemporary capitalism and as a factor in the economic utilization of subjective capacities. Varga argues that it is in "existential" choices that we express who we are, and that these have a complex

phenomenology characterized by a sense of necessity. In such choices, described as "alternativeless choices", we articulate who we are, bringing into reality some tacit intuitions that often only take on a gestalt-like formation. In these cases, we both discover who we are "on the inside", and actively constitute ourselves. Varga's examination of the structure of our commitments culminates in the claim that the internal structure of our commitments commits us to more than what we happen to care about. In many cases it may actually commit us to publicly intelligible values that we take our commitments to embody—an aspect that may constrain the manner of our practical deliberation and the way in which we can pursue our commitments (Varga 2011a,b).

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Write about the Conceptions of Authenticity.

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    …………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………
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2. Write about Recent Accounts of Authenticity.

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12.6 LET US SUM UP

Dasein (German pronunciation: [ˈdaːzaɪn]) is a German word that means "being there" or "presence" (German: da "there"; sein "being"), and is often translated into English with the word "existence". It is a

fundamental concept in the existential philosophy of Martin Heidegger, particularly in his magnum opus Being and Time. Heidegger uses the expression Dasein to refer to the experience of being that is peculiar to human beings. Thus it is a form of being that is aware of and must confront such issues as personhood, mortality and the dilemma or paradox of living in relationship with other humans while being ultimately alone with oneself.

12.7 KEY WORDS

Presence: the state or fact of existing, occurring, or being present.

Authentication: the process or action of proving or showing something to be true, genuine, or valid.

12.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the Origins and Meaning of the Concept of Authenticity.
2. Discuss the Critique of Authenticity.
3. Write about the Conceptions of Authenticity.
4. Write about Recent Accounts of Authenticity.

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12.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1`

1. See Section 12.2
2. See Section 12.3

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 12.4
2. See Section 12.5

UNIT 13: MARLEAU-PONTY: PHENOMENOLOGY OF PERCEPTION

STRUCTURE

13.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit 13, we can able to know:

- To know Life and Works of Marleau- Ponty
- To discuss The Nature of Perception and The Structure of Behavior
- To know about the Phenomenology of Perception
- To know the Expression, Language, and Art
- To know about The Visible and the Invisible
- To highlight the Influence and Current Scholarship

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Maurice Jean Jacques Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961), French philosopher and public intellectual, was the leading academic proponent of existentialism and phenomenology in post-war France. Best known for his original and influential work on embodiment, perception, and ontology, he also made important contributions to the philosophy of art, history, language, nature, and politics. Associated in his early years with the existentialist movement through his friendship with Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty played a central role in the dissemination of phenomenology, which he sought to integrate with Gestalt psychology, psychoanalysis, Marxism, and Saussurian linguistics. Major influences on his thinking include Henri Bergson, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Max Scheler, and Jean-Paul Sartre, as well as neurologist Kurt Goldstein, Gestalt theorists such as Wolfgang Köhler and Kurt Koffka, and literary figures including Marcel Proust, Paul Claudel, and Paul Valéry. In turn, he influenced the post-structuralist generation of French thinkers who succeeded him, including Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and Jacques Derrida, whose similarities with and debt to the later Merleau-Ponty have often been underestimated. Merleau-Ponty published two major theoretical texts during his lifetime: The Structure of Behavior (1942 SC) and Phenomenology of Perception (1945 PP). Other important publications include two volumes of political philosophy, Humanism and Terror (1947 HT) and Adventures of the Dialectic (1955 AdD), as well as two books of collected essays on art, philosophy, and politics: Sense and Non-Sense ([1948]1996b/1964) and Signs (1960/1964). Two unfinished manuscripts appeared posthumously: The Prose of the World (1969/1973), drafted in 1950–51; and The Visible and the Invisible (1964 V&I), on which he was working at the time of his death. Lecture notes and student transcriptions of many of his courses at the Sorbonne and the Collège de France have also been published.

For most of his career, Merleau-Ponty focused on the problems of perception and embodiment as a starting point for clarifying the relation between the mind and the body, the objective world and the experienced world, expression in language and art, history, politics, and nature.

Although phenomenology provided the overarching framework for these investigations, Merleau-Ponty also drew freely on empirical research in psychology and ethology, anthropology, psychoanalysis, linguistics, and the arts. His constant points of historical reference are Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and Marx. The characteristic approach of Merleau-Ponty's theoretical work is his effort to identify an alternative to intellectualism or idealism, on the one hand, and empiricism or realism, on the other, by critiquing their common presupposition of a ready-made world and failure to account for the historical and embodied character of experience. In his later writings, Merleau-Ponty becomes increasingly critical of the intellectualist tendencies of the phenomenological method as well, although with the intention of reforming rather than abandoning it. The posthumous writings collected in The Visible and the Invisible aim to clarify the ontological implications of a phenomenology that would self-critically account for its own limitations. This leads him to propose concepts such as "flesh" and "chiasm" that many consider to be his most fruitful philosophical contributions.

Merleau-Ponty's thought has continued to inspire contemporary research beyond the usual intellectual history and interpretive scholarship, especially in the areas of feminist philosophy, philosophy of mind and cognitive science, environmental philosophy and philosophy of nature, political philosophy, philosophy of art, philosophy of language, and phenomenological ontology. His work has also been widely influential on researchers outside the discipline of philosophy proper, especially in anthropology, architecture, the arts, cognitive science, environmental theory, film studies, linguistics, literature, and political theory.

13.2 LIFE AND WORKS

Merleau-Ponty was born in Rochefort-sur-Mer, in the province of Charente-Maritime, on March 14, 1908. After the death in 1913 of his father, a colonial artillery captain and a knight of the Legion of Honor, he moved with his family to Paris. He would later describe his childhood as incomparably happy, and he remained very close to his mother until her death in 1953. Merleau-Ponty pursued secondary studies at the Parisian

lycees Janson-de-Sailly and Louis-le-Grand, completing his first course in philosophy at Janson-de-Sailly with Gustave Rodrigues in 1923–24. He won the school's "Award for Outstanding Achievement" in philosophy that year and would later trace his commitment to the vocation of philosophy to this first course. He was also awarded "First Prize in Philosophy" at Louis-le-Grand in 1924–25. He attended the École Normale Supérieure from 1926 to 1930, where he befriended Simone de Beauvoir and Claude Lévi-Straus. Some evidence suggests that, during these years, Merleau-Ponty authored a novel, Nord. Récit de l'arctique, under the pseudonym Jacques Heller (Alloa 2013b). His professors at ENS included Léon Brunschvicg and Émile Bréhier, the latter supervising his research on Plotinus for the Diplôme d'études supérieures in 1929. Bréhier would continue to supervise Merleau-Ponty's research through the completion of his two doctoral dissertations in 1945. During his student years, Merleau-Ponty attended Husserl's 1929 Sorbonne lectures and Georges Gurvitch's 1928–1930 courses on German philosophy. He received the agrégation in philosophy in 1930, ranking in second place.

After a year of mandatory military service, Merleau-Ponty taught at the lycee in Beauvais from 1931 to 1933, pursued a year of research on perception funded by a subvention from the Caisse nationale des sciences (the precursor of today's Centre national de la recherche scientifique) in 1933–34, and taught at the lycee in Chartres in 1934–35. From 1935 to 1940, he was a tutor (agégé-répétiteur) at the École Normale Supérieure, where his primary duty was to prepare students for the agrégation. During this period, he attended Alexandre Kojève's lectures on Hegel and Aron Gurwitsch's lectures on Gestalt psychology. His first publications also appeared during these years, as a series of review essays on Max Scheler's Ressentiment (1935), Gabriel Marcel's Being and Having (1936), and Sartre's Imagination (1936). In 1938, he completed his thèse complémentaire, originally titled Conscience et comportement [Consciousness and Behavior] and published in 1942 as La structure du comportement [The Structure of Behavior, SC]. He was the first outside visitor to the newly established Husserl Archives in

Louvain, Belgium, in April 1939, where he met Eugen Fink and consulted Husserl's unpublished manuscripts, including Ideen II and later sections of Die Krisis.

With the outbreak of World War Two, Merleau-Ponty served for a year as lieutenant in the 5th Infantry Regiment and 59th Light Infantry Division, until he was wounded in battle in June 1940, days before the signing of the armistice between France and Germany. He was awarded the Croix de guerre, recognizing bravery in combat. After several months of convalescence, he returned to teaching at the Lycée Carnot in Paris, where he remained from 1940 until 1944. In November 1940, he married Suzanne Jolibois, and their daughter Marianne was born in June 1941. In the winter of 1940–41, Merleau-Ponty renewed his acquaintance with Jean-Paul Sartre, whom he had met as a student at the École Normale, through their involvement in the resistance group Socialisme et Liberté. The group published around ten issues of an underground review until the arrest of two members in early 1942 led to its dissolution. After the conclusion of the war, in 1945, Merleau-Ponty would collaborate with Sartre and Beauvoir to found Les Temps Modernes, a journal devoted to "littérature engagée", for which he served as political editor until 1952.

At the end of the 1943–44 school year, Merleau-Ponty completed his main thesis, Phénoménologie de la perception [Phenomenology of Perception, PP], and in 1944–45 he taught at the Lycée Condorcet in Paris, replacing Sartre during the latter's leave from this position. Merleau-Ponty defended his two dissertations in July 1945, fulfilling the requirements for the Docteur ès lettres, which was awarded "with distinction". In October 1945, Les Temps Modernes published its inaugural issue; Merleau-Ponty was a founding member of the journal's governing board, managed its daily affairs, and penned many of its editorials that were signed simply "T.M.", even though he refused to allow his name to be printed on the cover alongside Sartre's as the review's Director. That fall, Merleau-Ponty was appointed to the post of Maître de conférences in Psychology at the University of Lyon, where he was promoted to the rank of Professor in the Chair of Psychology in

1948. From 1947 to 1949, he also taught supplementary courses at the École Normale Supérieure, where his students included the young Michel Foucault. Student notes (taken by Jean Deprun) from Merleau-Ponty's 1947–48 course on "The Union of the Soul and the Body in Malebranche, Biran, and Bergson"—a course that he taught at both Lyon and E.N.S. to prepare students for the agrégation and which was attended by Foucault—were published in 1968 (1997b/2001).

In 1947, Merleau-Ponty participated regularly in the Collège philosophique, an association formed by Jean Wahl to provide an open venue for intellectual exchange without the academic formality of the Sorbonne, and frequented by many leading Parisian thinkers. Merleau-Ponty published his first book of political philosophy in 1947, Humanisme et terreur, essai sur le problème communiste [Humanism and Terror: An Essay on the Communist Problem, 1969, HT], in which he responded to the developing opposition between liberal democracies and communism by cautioning a "wait-and-see" attitude toward Marxism. A collection of essays concerning the arts, philosophy, and politics, Sens et non-sense [Sense and Non-Sense, 1996b/1964], appeared in 1948. In the fall of 1948, Merleau-Ponty delivered a series of seven weekly lectures on French national radio that were subsequently published as Causeries 1948 (2002/2004).

Merleau-Ponty declined an invitation to join the Department of Philosophy at the University of Chicago as a Visiting Professor in 1948–49, but instead received a leave from Lyon for the year to present a series of lectures at the University of Mexico in early 1949. Later in 1949, Merleau-Ponty was appointed Professor of Child Psychology and Pedagogy at the University of Paris, and in this position lectured widely on child development, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, Gestalt psychology, and anthropology. His eight courses from the Sorbonne are known from compiled student notes reviewed by him and published in the Sorbonne's Bulletin de psychologie (1988/2010). Merleau-Ponty held this position for three years until his election, in 1952, to the Chair of Philosophy at the Collège de France, the most prestigious post for a

philosopher in France, which he would hold until his death in 1961. At forty-four, Merleau-Ponty was the youngest person ever elected to this position, but his appointment was not without controversy. Rather than following the typical procedure of ratifying the vote of the General Assembly of Professors, who had selected Merleau-Ponty as their lead candidate, the Académie des sciences morales et politiques made the unprecedented decision to remove his name from the list of candidates; the Académie's decision was subsequently overturned by the Minister of Education himself, who allowed the faculty vote in favor of Merleau-Ponty to stand. Merleau-Ponty's January 1953 inaugural lecture at the Collège de France was published under the title Éloge de la Philosophie [In Praise of Philosophy, 1953/1963]. Many of his courses from the Collège de France have subsequently been published, based either on student notes or Merleau-Ponty's own lecture notes (1964b, 1968/1970, 1995/2003, 1996a, 1998/2002, 2003/2010, 2011, 2013).

In the face of growing political disagreements with Sartre set in motion by the Korean War, Merleau-Ponty resigned his role as political editor of Les Temps Modernes in December of 1952 and withdrew from the editorial board altogether in 1953. His critique of Sartre's politics became public in 1955 with Les Aventures de la dialectique [Adventures of the Dialectic, 1973 AdD], in which Merleau-Ponty distanced himself from revolutionary Marxism and sharply criticized Sartre for "ultrabolshevism". Beauvoir's equally biting rebuttal, "Merleau-Ponty and Pseudo-Sartreanism", published the same year in Les Temps Modernes, accuses Merleau-Ponty of willfully misrepresenting Sartre's position, opening a rift between the three former friends that would never entirely heal. Merleau-Ponty's intellectual circle during his years at the Collège de France included Lévi-Straus and Jacques Lacan, and for several years he was a regular contributor to the popular weekly magazine L'Express. In October and November 1955, on a commission from Alliance française, Merleau-Ponty visited several African countries, including Tunisia, French Equatorial Africa, the Belgian Congo, and Kenya, where he delivered a series of lectures on the concept of race, colonialism, and development. In 1956, he published Les Philosophes

célèbres [Famous Philosophers], a large edited volume of original introductions to key historical and contemporary thinkers (beginning, interestingly, with philosophers from India and China) whose contributors included Gilles Deleuze, Gilbert Ryle, Alfred Schutz, and Jean Starobinski. In April 1957, Merleau-Ponty declined to accept induction into France's Order of the Legion of Honor, presumably in protest over the inhumane actions of the Fourth Republic, including the use of torture, during the Battle of Algiers. In October and November of 1957, as his second commission from Alliance française, he lectured in Madagascar, Reunion Island, and Mauritius, citing as a primary motivation for accepting the commission his desire to see first-hand the effects of reforms in French policies governing overseas territories. The last book Merleau-Ponty published during his lifetime, Signes [Signs, 1960/1964], appearing in 1960, collecting essays on art, language, the history of philosophy, and politics that spanned more than a decade. His last published essay, "L'Œil et l'esprit" ["Eye and Mind", 1964a OEE] addressing the ontological implications of painting, appeared in the 1961 inaugural issue of Art de France. Merleau-Ponty died of a heart attack in Paris on May 3rd, 1961, at the age of 53, with Descartes' Optics open on his desk.

Merleau-Ponty's friend and former student Claude Lefort published two of his teacher's unfinished manuscripts posthumously: La prose du monde [The Prose of the World, 1969/1973], an exploration of literature and expression drafted in 1950–51 and apparently abandoned; and Le visible et l'invisible [The Visible and the Invisible, 1968 V&I], a manuscript and numerous working notes from 1959–1961 that present elements of Merleau-Ponty's mature ontology. The latter manuscript was apparently part of a larger project, Être et Monde [Being and World], for which two additional unpublished sections were substantially drafted in 1957–1958: La Nature ou le monde du silence [Nature or the World of Silence] and Introduction à l'ontologie [Introduction to Ontology] (Saint Aubert 2013: 28). These manuscripts, along with many of Merleau-Ponty's other unpublished notes and papers, were donated to the

Bibliothèque Nationale de France by Suzanne Merleau-Ponty in 1992 and are available for consultation by scholars.

13.3 THE NATURE OF PERCEPTION AND THE STRUCTURE OF BEHAVIOR

Merleau-Ponty's lifelong interest in the philosophical status of perception is already reflected in his successful 1933 application for a subvention to study the nature of perception, where he proposes to synthesize recent findings in experimental psychology (especially Gestalt psychology) and neurology to develop an alternative to dominant intellectualist accounts of perception inspired by critical (Kantian) philosophy. Interestingly, this early proposal emphasizes the significance of the perception of one's own body for distinguishing between the "universe of perception" and its intellectual reconstructions, and it gestures toward the "realist philosophers of England and America" (presumably William James and A. N. Whitehead, as presented in Jean Wahl's 1932 Vers le concret) for their insights into the irreducibility of the sensory and the concrete to intellectual relations. While this initial proposal makes no mention of phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty's subsequent 1934 report on the year's research, noting the limitations of approaching the philosophical study of perception through empirical research alone, emphasizes the promise of Husserlian phenomenology for providing a distinctively philosophical framework for the investigation of psychology. In particular, Merleau-Ponty mentions the distinction between the natural and transcendental attitudes and the intentionality of consciousness as valuable for "revising the very notions of consciousness and sensation" (NP: 192/78). He also cites approvingly Aron Gurwitsch's claim that Husserl's analyses "lead to the threshold of Gestaltpsychologie", the second area of focus in this early study. The Gestalt is "a spontaneous organization of the sensory field" in which there are "only organizations, more or less stable, more or less articulated" (NP: 193/79). Merleau-Ponty's brief summary of Gestalt psychology, anticipating research presented in his first two books, emphasizes the figure-ground structure of perception, the phenomena of depth and movement, and the syncretic perception of children.

Nevertheless, Merleau-Ponty concludes—again citing Gurwitsch—that the epistemological framework of Gestalt psychology remains Kantian, requiring that one look "in a very different direction, for a very different solution" to the problem of the relation between the world described naturalistically and the world as perceived (NP: 198/82).

Merleau-Ponty's first book, The Structure of Behavior (SC), resumes the project of synthesizing and reworking the insights of Gestalt theory and phenomenology to propose an original understanding of the relationship between "consciousness" and "nature". Whereas the neo-Kantian idealism then dominant in France (e.g., Léon Brunschvicg, Jules Lachelier) treated nature as an objective unity dependent on the synthetic activity of consciousness, the realism of the natural sciences and empirical psychology assumed nature to be composed of external things and events interacting causally. Merleau-Ponty argues that neither approach is tenable: organic life and human consciousness are emergent from a natural world that is not reducible to its meaning for a mind; yet this natural world is not the causal nexus of pre-existing objective realities, since it is fundamentally composed of nested Gestalts, spontaneously emerging structures of organization at multiple levels and degrees of integration. On the one hand, the idealist critique of naturalism should be extended to the naturalistic assumptions framing Gestalt theory. On the other hand, there is a justified truth in naturalism that limits the idealist universalization of consciousness, and this is discovered when Gestalt structures are recognized to be ontologically basic and the limitations of consciousness are thereby exposed. The notion of "behavior", taken by Merleau-Ponty as parallel to the phenomenological concept of "experience" (in explicit contrast with the American school of behaviorism), is a privileged starting point for the analysis thanks to its neutrality with respect to classical distinctions between the "mental" and the "physiological" (SC: 2/4).

The Structure of Behavior first critiques traditional reflex accounts of the relation between stimulus and reaction in light of the findings of Kurt Goldstein and other contemporary physiologists, arguing that the

organism is not passive but imposes its own conditions between the given stimulus and the expected response, so that behavior remains inexplicable in purely anatomical or atomistic terms. Merleau-Ponty instead describes the nervous system as a "field of forces" apportioned according to "modes of preferred distribution", a model inspired by Wolfgang Köhler's Gestalt physics (SC: 48/46). Both physiology and behavior are "forms", that is,

total processes whose properties are not the sum of those which the isolated parts would possess…. [T]here is form wherever the properties of a system are modified by every change brought about in a single one of its parts and, on the contrary, are conserved when they all change while maintaining the same relationship among themselves. (SC: 49–50/47)

Form or structure therefore describes dialectical, non-linear, and dynamic relationships that can function relatively autonomously and are irreducible to linear mechanical causality (see Thompson 2007).

The critique of physiological atomism is also extended to theories of higher behavior, such as Pavlov's theory of conditioned reflexes. Merleau-Ponty argues that such accounts rely on gratuitous hypotheses lacking experimental justification and cannot effectively explain brain function or learning. In the case of brain function, experimental work on brain damage demonstrates that localization hypotheses must be rejected in favor of a global process of neural organization comparable to the figure-ground structures of perceptual organization. Similarly, learning cannot be explained in terms of trial-and-error fixing of habitual reactions, but instead involves a general aptitude with respect to typical structures of situations. Merleau-Ponty proposes an alternative tripartite classification of behavior according to the degree to which the structures toward which it is oriented emerge thematically from their content. Syncretic behaviors, typical of simpler organisms such as ants or toads, respond to all stimuli as analogues of vital situations for which the organism's responses are instinctually prescribed by its "species a

priori", with no possibility for adaptive learning or improvisation. Amovable behaviors are oriented toward signals of varying complexity that are not a function of the organism's instinctual equipment and can lead to genuine learning. Here the organism, guided by its vital norms, responds to signals as relational structures rather than as objective properties of things. Drawing on Köhler's experimental work with chimpanzees, Merleau-Ponty argues that even intelligent non-human animals lack an orientation toward objective things, which emerges only at the level of symbolic behavior. While amovable behavior remains attached to immediate functional structures, symbolic behavior (here limited to humans) is open to virtual, expressive, and recursive relationships across structures, making possible the human orientation toward objectivity, truth, creativity, and freedom from biologically determined norms.

More generally, Merleau-Ponty proposes that matter, life, and mind are increasingly integrative levels of Gestalt structure, ontologically continuous but structurally discontinuous, and distinguished by the characteristic properties emergent at each integrative level of complexity. A form is defined here as

a field of forces characterized by a law which has no meaning outside the limits of the dynamic structure considered, and which on the other hand assigns its properties to each internal point so much so that they will never be absolute properties, properties of this point. (SC: 148/137–38)

Merleau-Ponty argues that this understanding extends to all physical laws, which "express a structure and have meaning only within this structure"; the laws of physics always refer back to "a sensible or historical given" and ultimately to the history of the universe (SC: 149/138, 157/145). At the level of life, form is characterized by a dialectical relation between the organism and its environment that is a function of the organism's vital norms, its "optimal conditions of activity and its proper manner of realizing equilibrium", which express its style or "general attitude toward the world" (SC: 161/148). Living things are

not oriented toward an objective world but toward an environment that is organized meaningfully in terms of their individual and specific style and vital goals.

Mind, the symbolic level of form that Merleau-Ponty identifies with the human, is organized not toward vital goals but by the characteristic structures of the human world: tools, language, culture, and so on. These are not originally encountered as things or ideas, but rather as "significative intentions" embodied within the world. Mind or consciousness cannot be defined formally in terms of self-knowledge or representation, then, but is essentially engaged in the structures and actions of the human world and encompasses all of the diverse intentional orientations of human life. While mind integrates within itself the subordinate structures of matter and life, it goes beyond these in its thematic orientation toward structures as such, which is the condition for such characteristically human symbolic activities as language and expression, the creation of new structures beyond those set by vital needs, and the power of choosing and varying points of view (which make truth and objectivity possible). In short, mind as a second-order or recursive structure is oriented toward the virtual rather than simply toward the real. Ideally, the subordinate structure of life would be fully absorbed into the higher order of mind in a fully integrated human being; the biological would be transcended by the "spiritual". But integration is never perfect or complete, and mind can never be detached from its moorings in a concrete and embodied situation.

Merleau-Ponty emphasizes throughout The Structure of Behavior that form, even though ontologically fundamental, cannot be accounted for in the terms of traditional realism; since form is fundamentally perceptual, an "immanent signification", it retains an essential relationship with consciousness. But the "perceptual consciousness" at stake here is not the transcendental consciousness of critical philosophy. The last chapter of The Structure of Behavior clarifies this revised understanding of consciousness in dialogue with the classical problem of the relation between the soul and the body in order to account for the relative truths

of both transcendental philosophy and naturalism. The issue concerns how to reconcile the perspective of consciousness as "universal milieu" (i.e., transcendental consciousness) with consciousness as "enrooted in the subordinated dialectics", that is, as a Gestalt emerging from lower-order Gestalts (i.e., perceptual consciousness) (SC: 199/184). In the natural attitude of our pre-reflective lives, we are committed to the view that our perceptual experience of things is always situated and perspectival (i.e., that physical objects are presented through "profiles", Husserl's Abschattungen), but also that we thereby experience things "in themselves", as they really are in the mind-independent world; the perspectival character of our opening onto the world is not a limitation of our access but rather the very condition of the world's disclosure in its inexhaustibility. At the level of this prereflective faith in the world, there is no dilemma of the soul's separation from the body; "the soul remains coextensive with nature" (SC: 203/189).

This prereflective unity eventually splinters under our awareness of illness, illusion, and anatomy, which teach us to separate nature, body, and thought into distinct orders of events partes extra partes. This culminates in a naturalism that cannot account for the originary situation of perception that it displaces, yet on which it tacitly relies; perception requires an "internal" analysis, paving the way for transcendental idealism's treatment of subject and object as "inseparable correlatives" (SC: 215/199). But transcendental idealism in the critical tradition subsequently goes too far: by taking consciousness as "milieu of the universe, presupposed by every affirmation of the world", it obscures the original character of the perceptual relation and culminates in "the dialectic of the epistemological subject and the scientific object" (SC: 216/200, 217/201). Merleau-Ponty aims to integrate the truth of naturalism and transcendental thought by reinterpreting both through the concept of structure, which accounts for the unity of soul and body as well as their relative distinction. Against the conception of transcendental consciousness as a pure spectator correlated with the world, Merleau-Ponty insists that mind is an accomplishment of structural integration that remains essentially conditioned by the matter and life in which it is

embedded; the truth of naturalism lies in the fact that such integration is essentially fragile and incomplete. Since "integration is never absolute and always fails", the dualism of mind and body

is not a simple fact; it is founded in principle—all integration presupposing the normal functioning of subordinated formations, which always demand their own due. (SC: 226–27/210)

The Structure of Behavior concludes with a call for further investigation of "perceptual consciousness", a task taken up by its sequel, Phenomenology of Perception. In the concluding pages of Structure, Merleau-Ponty offers a preliminary sketch of phenomenologically inspired approaches to the "problem of perception" that set the stage for his subsequent work, emphasizing (a) the difference between what is directly given as an aspect of individual lived experience and intersubjective significations that are only encountered virtually; and (b) the distinctiveness of one's own body, which is never experienced directly as one objective thing among many. The book concludes by identifying the "problem of perception" as its encompassing concern:

Can one conceptualize perceptual consciousness without eliminating it as an original mode; can one maintain its specificity without rendering inconceivable its relation to intellectual consciousness? (SC: 241/224)

The solution requires a "return to perception as to a type of originary experience" by means of an "inversion of the natural movement of consciousness", an inversion that Merleau-Ponty here equates with Husserl's phenomenological reduction (SC: 236/220). If successful, this rehabilitation of the status of perception would lead to a redefinition of transcendental philosophy "in such a way as to integrate with it the very phenomenon of the real" (SC: 241/224).

13.4 PHENOMENOLOGY OF PERCEPTION

Completed in 1944 and published the following year, Phenomenology of Perception (PP) is the work for which Merleau-Ponty was best known during his lifetime and that established him as the leading French phenomenologist of his generation. Here Merleau-Ponty develops his own distinctive interpretation of phenomenology's method, informed by his new familiarity with Husserl's unpublished manuscripts and his deepened engagement with other thinkers in this tradition, such as Eugen Fink and Martin Heidegger. Phenomenology of Perception again draws extensively on Gestalt theory and contemporary research in psychology and neurology; the case of Schneider, a brain-damaged patient studied by Adhémar Gelb and Kurt Goldstein, serves as an extended case-study. Psychological research complements and, at times, serves as a counterpoint to phenomenological descriptions of perceptual experience across a wide range of existential dimensions, including sexuality, language, space, nature, intersubjectivity, time, and freedom. In Phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty develops a characteristic rhythm of presenting, first, the realist or empiricist approach to a particular dimension of experience, followed then by its idealist or intellectualist alternative, before developing a third way that avoids the problematic assumption common to both, namely, their "unquestioned belief in the world": the prejudice that the objective world exists as a ready-made and fully present reality.

Phenomenology of Perception introduces its inquiry with a critique of the "classical prejudices" of empiricism and intellectualism. Merleau-Ponty rejects the empiricist understanding of sensation, with its correlative "constancy hypothesis", and the role empiricism grants to association and the projection of memory for treating the basic units of sensation as determinate atoms rather than as meaningful wholes. These wholes include ambiguities, indeterminacies, and contextual relations that defy explanation in terms of the causal action of determinate things. Intellectualism aims to provide an alternative to empiricism by introducing judgment or attention as mental activities that synthesize experience from the sensory givens, yet it adopts empiricism's starting point in dispersed, atomic sensations. Both approaches are guilty of

reading the results of perception (the objective world) back into perceptual experience, thereby falsifying perception's characteristic structure: the spontaneous organization or configuration of perceived phenomena themselves, with their indeterminacies and ambiguities, and the dynamic character of perception as an historical process involving development and transformation. By treating perception as a causal process of transmission or a cognitive judgment, empiricism and intellectualism deny any meaningful configuration to the perceived as such and treat all values and meanings as projections, leaving no basis in perception itself for distinguishing the true from the illusory.

In contrast, Merleau-Ponty argues that the basic level of perceptual experience is the gestalt, the meaningful whole of figure against ground, and that the indeterminate and contextual aspects of the perceived world are positive phenomenon that cannot be eliminated from a complete account. Sensing, in contrast with knowing, is a "living communication with the world that makes it present to us as the familiar place of our life" (PP: 79/53), investing the perceived world with meanings and values that refer essentially to our bodies and lives. We forget this "phenomenal field", the world as it appears directly to perception, as a consequence of perception's own tendency to forget itself in favor of the perceived that it discloses. Perception orients itself toward the truth, placing its faith in the eventual convergence of perspectives and progressive determination of what was previously indeterminate. But it thereby naturally projects a completed and invariant "truth in itself" as its goal. Science extends and amplifies this natural tendency through increasingly precise measurements of the invariants in perception, leading eventually to the theoretical construction of an objective world of determinate things. Once this determinism of the "in itself" is extended universally and applied even to the body and the perceptual relation itself, then its ongoing dependence on the "originary faith" of perception is obscured; perception is reduced to "confused appearances" that require methodical reinterpretation, and the eventual result is dualism, solipsism, and skepticism. The "fundamental philosophical act" would therefore be to "return to the lived world beneath the objective world" (PP: 83/57).

This requires a transcendental reduction: a reversal of perception's natural tendency to cover its own tracks and a bracketing of our unquestioned belief in the objective world. Yet this cannot be a recourse to any transcendental consciousness that looks on the world from outside and is not itself emergent from and conditioned by the phenomenal field. Rather than a transcendental ego, Merleau-Ponty speaks of a "transcendental field", emphasizing that reflection always has a situated and partial perspective as a consequence of being located within the field on which it reflects.

The first of the three major parts of Phenomenology concerns the body. As we have seen, perception transcends itself toward a determinate object "in itself", culminating in an objective interpretation of the body. Part One shows the limits of this objective account and sketches an alternative understanding of the body across a series of domains, including the experience of one's own body, lived space, sexuality, and language. Through a contrast with pathological cases such as phantom limbs, Merleau-Ponty describes the body's typical mode of existence as "being-toward-the-world"—a pre-objective orientation toward a vital situation that is explicable neither in terms of third-person causal interactions nor by explicit judgments or representations. The body's orientation toward the world is essentially temporal, involving a dialectic between the present body (characterized, after Husserl, as an "I can") and the habit body, the sedimentations of past activities that take on a general, anonymous, and autonomous character. While the body's relation to the world serves as the essential background for the experience of any particular thing, the body itself is experienced in ways that distinguish it in kind from all other things: it is a permanent part of one's perceptual field, even though one cannot in principle experience all of it directly; it has "double sensations", such as when one hand touches another, that enact a form of reflexivity; it has affective experiences that are not merely representations; and its kinesthetic sense of its own movements is given directly.

This kinesthetic awareness is made possible by a pre-conscious system of bodily movements and spatial equivalences that Merleau-Ponty terms the "body schema". In contrast with the "positional spatiality" of things, the body has a "situational spatiality" that is oriented toward actual or possible tasks (PP: 129/102). The body's existence as "being-toward-the-world", as a projection toward lived goals, is therefore expressed through its spatiality, which forms the background against which objective space is constituted. Merleau-Ponty introduces here the famous case of Schneider, whose reliance on pathological substitutions for normal spatial abilities helps to bring the body's typical relationship with lived space to light. Schneider lacks the ability to "project" into virtual space; more generally, his injury has disrupted the "intentional arc" that

projects around us our past, our future, our human milieu, our physical situation, our ideological situation, and our moral situation, or rather, that ensures that we are situated within all of these relationships. (PP: 170/137)

The body's relationship with space is therefore intentional, although as an "I can" rather than an "I think"; bodily space is a multi-layered manner of relating to things, so that the body is not "in" space but lives or inhabits it.

Just as bodily space reflects an originary form of intentionality—a pre-cognitive encounter with the world as meaningfully structured—the same is shown to be the case for sexuality and for language. Sexuality takes on a special significance because it essentially expresses the metaphysical drama of the human condition while infusing the atmosphere of our lives with sexual significance. Like space and sexuality, speech is also a form of bodily expression. Language does not initially encode ready-made thoughts but rather expresses through its style or physiognomy as a bodily gesture. We mistake language for a determined code by taking habitual or sedimented language as our model, thereby missing "authentic" or creative speech. Since language, like perception, hides its own operations in carrying us toward its meaning, it offers an ideal of

truth as its presumptive limit, inspiring our traditional privileging of thought or reason as detachable from all materiality. But, at a fundamental level, language is comparable to music in the way that it remains tied to its material embodiment; each language is a distinct and ultimately untranslatable manner of "singing the world", of extracting and expressing the "emotional essence" of our surroundings and relationships (PP: 228/193).

Having rediscovered the body as expressive and intentional, Merleau-Ponty turns in Part Two of Phenomenology to the perceived world, with the aim of showing how the pre-reflective unity of co-existence that characterizes the body has as its correlate the synthesis of things and the world; "One's own body is in the world just as the heart is in the organism" (PP: 245/209), and its expressive unity therefore also extends to the sensible world. Merleau-Ponty develops this interpretation of the sensible through detailed studies of sensing, space, and the natural and social worlds. Sensing takes place as the "co-existence" or "communion" of the body with the world that Merleau-Ponty describes as a reciprocal exchange of question and answer:

a sensible that is about to be sensed poses to my body a sort of confused problem. I must find the attitude that will provide it with the means to become determinate … I must find the response to a poorly formulated question. And yet I only do this in response to its solicitation… . The sensible gives back to me what I had lent to it, but I received it from the sensible in the first place. (PP: 259/222)

As co-existence, sensing is characterized by an intentionality that sympathetically attunes itself to the sensed according to a dialectic in which both terms—the perceiving body and the perceived thing—are equally active and receptive: the thing invites the body to adopt the attitude that will lead to its disclosure. Since the subject of this perception is not the idealist's "for itself", neither is the object of perception the realist's "in itself"; rather, the agent of perception is the pre-reflective and anonymous subjectivity of the body, which remains

enmeshed in and "connatural" with the world that it perceives. The senses are unified without losing their distinctness in a fashion comparable to the binocular synthesis of vision, and their anonymity is a consequence of the "historical thickness" of perception as a tradition that operates beneath the level of reflective consciousness (PP: 285/248). For first-person awareness, one's anonymous perceptual engagement with the world operates as a kind of "original past, a past that has never been present" (PP: 252/252).

The pre-historical pact between the body and the world informs our encounters with space, revealing a synthesis of space that is neither "spatialized" (as a pre-given container in which things are arranged) nor "spatializing" (like the homogenous and interchangeable relations of geometrical space). Drawing on psychological experiments concerning bodily orientation, depth, and movement, Merleau-Ponty argues that empiricist and intellectualist accounts of space must give way to a conception of space as co-existence or mutual implication characterized by existential "levels": our orientation toward up and down, or toward what is in motion or stationary, is a function of the body's adoption of a certain level within a revisable field of possibilities. Lived inherence in space contrasts with the abstract space of the analytical attitude, revindicating the existential space of night, dreams, or myths in relation to the abstract space of the "objective" world.

The properties of things that we take to be "real" and "objective" also tacitly assume a reference to the body's norms and its adoption of levels. An object's "true" qualities depend on the body's privileging of orientations that yield maximum clarity and richness. This is possible because the body serves as a template for the style or logic of the world, the concordant system of relations that links the qualities of an object, the configuration of the perceptual field, and background levels such as lighting or movement. In this symbiosis or call-and-response between the body and the world, things have sense as the correlates of my body, and reality therefore always involves a reference to perception. Yet, to be real, things cannot be reducible to correlates of the body or perception;

they retain a depth and resistance that provides their existential index. While each thing has its individual style, the world is the ultimate horizon or background style against which any particular thing can appear. The perspectival limitations of perception, both spatially and temporally, are the obverse of this world's depth and inexhaustibility. Through an examination of hallucination and illusions, Merleau-Ponty argues that skepticism about the existence of the world makes a category mistake. While we can doubt any particular perception, illusions can appear only against the background of the world and our primordial faith in it. While we never coincide with the world or grasp it with absolute certainty, we are also never entirely cut off from it; perception essentially aims toward truth, but any truth that it reveals is contingent and revisable.

Rejecting analogical explanations for the experience of other people, Merleau-Ponty proposes that the rediscovery of the body as a "third genre of being between the pure subject and the object" makes possible encounters with embodied others (PP: 407/366). We perceive others directly as pre-personal and embodied living beings engaged with a world that we share in common. This encounter at the level of anonymous and pre-personal lives does not, however, present us with another person in the full sense, since our situations are never entirely congruent. The perception of others involves an alterity, a resistance, and a plenitude that are never reducible to what is presented, which is the truth of solipsism. Our common corporeality nevertheless opens us onto a shared social world, a permanent dimension of our being in the mode of the anonymous and general "someone". The perception of others is therefore a privileged example of the paradox of transcendence running through our encounter with the world as perceived:

Whether it is a question of my body, the natural world, the past, birth or death, the question is always to know how I can be open to phenomena that transcend me and that, nevertheless, only exist to the extent that I take them up and live them. (PP: 422/381)

This "fundamental contradiction" defines our encounters with every form of transcendence and requires new conceptions of consciousness, time, and freedom.

The fourth and final section of Phenomenology explores these three themes, starting with a revision of the concept of the cogito that avoids reducing it to merely episodic psychological fact or elevating it to a universal certainty of myself and my cogitationes. Merleau-Ponty argues that we cannot separate the certainty of our thoughts from that of our perceptions, since to truly perceive is to have confidence in the veracity of one's perceptions. Furthermore, we are not transparent to ourselves, since our "inner states" are available to us only in a situated and ambiguous way. The genuine cogito, Merleau-Ponty argues, is a cogito "in action": we do not deduce "I am" from "I think", but rather the certainty of "I think" rests on the "I am" of existential engagement. More basic than explicit self-consciousness and presupposed by it is an ambiguous mode of self-experience that Merleau-Ponty terms the silent or "tacit" cogito—our pre-reflective and inarticulate grasp on the world and ourselves that becomes explicit and determinate only when it finds expression for itself. The illusions of pure self-possession and transparency—like all apparently "eternal" truths—are the results of acquired or sedimented language and concepts.

Rejecting classic approaches to time that treat it either as an objective property of things, as a psychological content, or as the product of transcendental consciousness, Merleau-Ponty returns to the "field of presence" as our foundational experience of time. This field is a network of intentional relations, of "protentions" and "retentions", in a single movement of dehiscence or self-differentiation, such that "each present reaffirms the presence of the entire past that it drives away, and anticipates the presence of the entire future or the 'to-come'" (PP: 483/444). Time in this sense is "ultimate subjectivity", understood not as an eternal consciousness, but rather as the very act of temporalization. As with the tacit cogito, the auto-affection of time as ultimate subjectivity is not a static self-identity but involves a dynamic opening toward alterity.

In this conception of time as field of presence, which "reveals the subject and the object as two abstract moments of a unique structure, namely, presence" (PP: 494/454–55), Merleau-Ponty sees the resolution to all problems of transcendence as well as the foundation for human freedom. Against the Sartrean position that freedom is either total or null, Merleau-Ponty holds that freedom emerges only against the background of our "universal engagement in a world", which involves us in meanings and values that are not of our choosing. We must recognize, first, an "authochthonous sense of the world that is constituted in the exchange between the world and our embodied existence" (PP: 504/466), and, second, that the acquired habits and the sedimented choices of our lives have their own inertia. This situation does not eliminate freedom but is precisely the field in which it can be achieved. Taking class consciousness as his example, Merleau-Ponty proposes that this dialectic of freedom and acquisition provides the terms for an account of history, according to which history can develop a meaning and a direction that are neither determined by events nor necessarily transparent to those who live through it.

The Preface to Phenomenology of Perception, completed after the main text, offers Merleau-Ponty's most detailed and systematic exposition of the phenomenological method. His account is organized around four themes: the privileging of description over scientific explanation or idealist reconstruction, the phenomenological reduction, the eidetic reduction, and intentionality. Phenomenology sets aside all scientific or naturalistic explanations of phenomena in order to describe faithfully the pre-scientific experience that such explanations take for granted. Similarly, since the world exists prior to reflective analysis or judgment, phenomenology avoids reconstructing actual experience in terms of its conditions of possibility or the activity of consciousness. The phenomenological reduction, on his interpretation, is not an idealistic method but an existential one, namely, the reflective effort to disclose our pre-reflective engagement with the world. Through the process of the reduction, we discover the inherence of the one who reflects in the world that is reflected on, and consequently, the essentially incomplete

character of every act of reflection, which is why Merleau-Ponty claims that the "most important lesson of the reduction is the impossibility of a complete reduction" (PP: 14/lxxvii). Similarly, the "eidetic reduction", described by Husserl as the intuition of essential relations within the flux of conscious experience, is necessary if phenomenology is to make any descriptive claims that go beyond the brute facts of a particular experience. But this does not found the actual world on consciousness as the condition of the world's possibility; instead, "the eidetic method is that of a phenomenological positivism grounding the possible upon the real" (PP: 17/lxxxi). Lastly, Merleau-Ponty reinterprets the phenomenological concept of intentionality, traditionally understood as the recognition that all consciousness is consciousness of something. Following Husserl, he distinguishes the "act intentionality" of judgments and voluntary decisions from the "operative intentionality" that "establishes the natural and pre-predicative unity of the world and of our life" (PP: 18/lxxxii). Guided by this broader concept of intentionality, philosophy's task is to take in the "total intention" of a sensible thing, a philosophical theory, or an historical event, which is its "unique manner of existing" or its "existential structure" (PP: 19–20/lxxxii–lxxxiii). Phenomenology thereby expresses the emergence of reason and meaning in a contingent world, a creative task comparable to that of the artist or the political activist, which requires an ongoing "radical" or self-referential reflection on its own possibilities. On Merleau-Ponty's presentation, the tensions of phenomenology's method therefore reflect the nature of its task:

The unfinished nature of phenomenology and the inchoative style in which it proceeds are not the sign of failure, they were inevitable because phenomenology's task was to reveal the mystery of the world and the mystery of reason. (PP: 21–22/lxxxv).

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. How to know Life and Works of Marleau- Ponty?

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2. Discuss The Nature of Perception and The Structure of Behavior.

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3. How do you know about the Phenomenology of Perception?

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13.5 EXPRESSION, LANGUAGE, AND ART

The concepts of expression and style are central to Merleau-Ponty's thought and already play a key role in his first two books, where they characterize the perceptual exchange between an organism and its milieu, the body's sensible dialogue with the world, and even the act of philosophical reflection (see Landes 2013). In both works, Merleau-Ponty draws on a range of literary and artistic examples to describe the creative and expressive dimensions of perception and reflection, emphasizing in particular the parallels between the task of the artist and that of the thinker: as the concluding lines of the Preface to Phenomenology of Perception note,

Phenomenology is as painstaking as the works of Balzac, Proust, Valéry, or Cézanne—through the same kind of attention and wonder, the same

demand for awareness, the same will to grasp the sense of the world or of history in its nascent state. (PP: 22/lxxxv)

Expression, particularly in language and the arts, plays an increasingly central role in Merleau-Ponty's thought in the years following *Phenomenology*, when he aimed to formulate a general theory of expression as the grounding for a philosophy of history and culture.[5] This interest is first reflected in a series of essays addressing painting, literature, and film published in the years immediately following *Phenomenology* (in Merleau-Ponty 1996b/1964). These include Merleau-Ponty's first essay on painting, "Cézanne's Doubt", which finds in Cézanne a proto-phenomenological effort to capture the birth of perception through painting. Cézanne epitomizes the paradoxical struggle of creative expression, which necessarily relies on the idiosyncracies of the artist's individual history and psychology, as well as the resources of the tradition of painting, but can succeed only by risking a creative appropriation of these acquisitions in the service of teaching its audience to see the world anew. Similarly, Leonardo da Vinci's artistic productivity is explicable neither in terms of his intellectual freedom (Valéry) nor his childhood (Freud) but as the dialectic of spontaneity and sedimentation by which Merleau-Ponty had formerly defined history.

In 1951, Merleau-Ponty summarizes his research after *Phenomenology* as focused on a "theory of truth" exploring how knowledge and communication with others are "original formations with respect to perceptual life, but … also preserve and continue our perceptual life even while transforming it" (UMP: 41–42/287). Expression, language, and symbolism are the key to this theory of truth and provide the foundation for a philosophy of history and of "transcendental" humanity. Whereas the study of perception could only provide a "bad ambiguity" that mixes "finitude and universality", Merleau-Ponty sees in the phenomenon of expression a "good ambiguity" that "gathers together the plurality of monads, the past and the present, nature and culture, into a single whole" (UMP: 48/290). Many of Merleau-Ponty's courses from 1947 through

1953 at the University of Lyon, the Sorbonne, and the Collège de France focus on language, expression, and literature.[6]

The manuscript partially completed during these years and published posthumously as The Prose of the World (1969/1973) pursues these themes through a phenomenological investigation of literary language and its relationship with scientific language and painting. Critiquing our commonsense ideal of a pure language that would transparently encode pre-existing thoughts, Merleau-Ponty argues that instituted language—the conventional system of language as an established set of meanings and rules—is derivative from a more primordial function of language as genuinely creative, expressive, and communicative. Here he draws two insights from Saussurian linguistics: First, signs function diacritically, through their lateral relations and differentiations, rather than through a one-to-one correspondence with a conventionally established meaning. Ultimately, signification happens through the differences between terms in a referential system that lacks any fixed or positive terms. This insight into diacritical difference will later prove important to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of perception and ontology as well (see Alloa 2013a). Second, the ultimate context for the operation of language is effective communication with others, by which new thoughts can be expressed and meanings shared. Expression accomplishes itself through a coherent reorganization of the relationships between acquired signs that must teach itself to the reader or listener, and which may afterwards again sediment into a taken-for-granted institutional structure.

In a long extract from the manuscript that was revised and published in 1952 as "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence" (in Merleau-Ponty 1960/1964), Merleau-Ponty brings this understanding of language into conversation with Sartre's What is Literature? and André Malraux's The Voices of Silence. Sharing Malraux's criticisms of the museum's role in framing the reception of painting, but rejecting his interpretation of modern painting as subjectivist, Merleau-Ponty offers an alternative understanding of "institution" (from Husserl's Stiftung) as the creative establishment of a new field of meaning that opens an historical

development. The style of an artist is not merely subjective but lived as a historical trajectory of expression that begins with perception itself and effects a "coherent deformation" in inherited traditions. Rather than opposed as silent and speaking, painting and language are both continuations of the expressivity of a perceptual style into more malleable mediums. The unfinished character of modern painting is therefore not a turn from the objectivity of representation toward subjective creation but rather a more authentic testament to the paradoxical logic of all expression.

Merleau-Ponty returns to the analysis of painting in his final essay, "Eye and Mind" (1964a OEE), where he accords it an ontological priority—between the linguistic arts and music—for revealing the "there is" of the world that the operationalism of contemporary science has occluded. It is by "lending his body to the world that the artist changes the world into paintings" (OEE: 16/353), and this presupposes that the artist's body is immersed in and made of the same stuff as the world: to touch, one must be tangible, and to see, visible. Merleau-Ponty describes this as an "intertwining" or "overlapping", in which the artist's situated embodiment is the other side of its opening to the world. There is as yet no sharp division between the sensing and the sensed, between body and things as one common "flesh", and painting arises as the expression of this relation: it is a "visible to the second power, a carnal essence or icon" of embodied vision (OEE: 22/355). Descartes's efforts, in the Optics, to reconstruct vision from thought leads him to focus on the "envelope" or form of the object, as presented in engraved lines, and to treat depth as a third dimension modeled after height and width. This idealization of space has its necessity, yet, once elevated to a metaphysical status by contemporary science, it culminates in an understanding of being as purely positive and absolutely determinate. The ontological significance of modern painting and the plastic arts—e.g., Klee, de Staël, Cézanne, Matisse, Rodin—lies in the alternative philosophy that they embody, as revealed through their treatment of depth, color, line, and movement. Ultimately, such works teach us anew what it means to see:

Vision is not a certain mode of thought or presence to self; it is the means given me for being absent from myself, for being present from the inside at the fission of Being only at the end of which do I close up into myself. (OEE: 81/374)

Political Philosophy:

From the first issue of Les Temps Modernes in October 1945 until his death, Merleau-Ponty wrote regularly on politics, including reflections on contemporary events as well as explorations of their philosophical underpinnings and the broader political significance of his times. During his eight-year tenure as unofficial managing editor of Les Temps Modernes, he charted the review's political direction and penned many of its political editorials. After leaving Les Temps Modernes in 1953, Merleau-Ponty found new outlets for his political writings, including L'Express, a weekly newspaper devoted to the non-communist left. Both of the essay collections that he published during his lifetime, Sense and Non-Sense and Signs, devote significant space to his political writings. He also published two volumes devoted entirely to political philosophy, Humanism and Terror (HT) and Adventures of the Dialectic (1955 AdD). Always writing from the left, Merleau-Ponty's position gradually shifted from a qualified Marxism, maintaining a critical distance from liberal democracy as well as from Soviet communism, to the rejection of revolutionary politics in favor of a "new liberalism". His political writings have received relatively scant attention compared with other aspects of his philosophy, perhaps because of their close engagement with the political situations and events of his day. Nevertheless, scholars of his political thought emphasize its continuity with his theoretical writings and ongoing relevance for political philosophy (see Coole 2007; Whiteside 1998).

The 1947 publication of Humanism and Terror responded to growing anti-communist sentiment in France fueled in part by the fictional account of the Moscow trials in Arthur Koestler's popular novel

Darkness at Noon. Merleau-Ponty sought to articulate an alternative to the choice Europe apparently faced in the solidifying opposition between the United States and the Soviet Union. Humanism and Terror criticizes Koestler's portrayal of the fictional Rubochov, modeled on Nikolai Bukharin, for replacing the "mutual praxis" of genuine Marxism (HT: 102/18) with an opposition between pure freedom and determined history, the "yogi" who withdraws into spiritual ideals or the "commissar" who acts by any means necessary. Turning to an examination of Bukharin's 1938 trial, Merleau-Ponty finds there an example of "revolutionary justice" that "judges in the name of the Truth that the Revolution is about to make true" (HT: 114/28), even though the historical contingency that this entails is denied by the procedures of the trials themselves. On the other hand, Trotsky's condemnation of Stalinism as counter-revolutionary similarly misses the ambiguity of genuine history. Ultimately, the dimension of terror that history harbors is a consequence of our unavoidable responsibility in the face of its essential contingency and ambiguity.

Although violence is a consequence of the human condition and therefore the starting point for politics, Merleau-Ponty finds hope in the theory of the proletariat for a fundamental transformation in the terms of human recognition:

The proletariat is universal de facto, or manifestly in its very condition of life…. [I]t is the sole authentic intersubjectivity because it alone lives simultaneously the separation and union of individuals. (HT: 221/116–17)

A genuinely historical Marxism must recognize that nothing guarantees progress toward a classless society, but also that this end cannot be brought about by non-proletarian means, which is what Soviet communism had apparently forgotten. Despite the failures of the Soviet experiment, Merleau-Ponty remains committed to a humanist Marxism:

Marxism is not just any hypothesis that might be replaced tomorrow by some other. It is the simple statement of those conditions without which there would be neither any humanism, in the sense of a mutual relation between men, nor any rationality in history. In this sense Marxism is not a philosophy of history; it is the philosophy of history and to renounce it is to dig the grave of Reason in history. (HT: 266/153)

Even if the proletariat is not presently leading world history, its time may yet come. Merleau-Ponty therefore concludes with a "wait-and-see" Marxism that cautions against decontextualized criticisms of Soviet communism as well as apologetics for liberal democracies that whitewash their racist and colonial violence.

Revelations about the Gulag camps and the outbreak of the Korean War forced Merleau-Ponty to revise his position on Marxism and revolutionary politics, culminating in the 1955 Adventures of the Dialectic (AdD). The book begins with the formulation of a general theory of history in conversation with Max Weber. Historians necessarily approach the past through their own perspectives, but, since they are themselves a part of history's movement, this need not compromise their objectivity. The historical events and periods within which the historian traces a particular style or meaning emerge in conjunction with historical agents, political actors or classes, who exercise a creative action parallel to the expressive gesture of the artist or the writer. History may eliminate false paths, but it guarantees no particular direction, leaving to historical agents the responsibility for the continuation or transformation of what is inherited from the past through a genius for inventing what the times demand: "In politics, truth is perhaps only this art of inventing what will later appear to have been required by the time" (AdD: 42/29). Merleau-Ponty finds a similar position articulated by the young Georg Lukacs, for whom "There is only one knowledge, which is the knowledge of our world in a state of becoming, and this becoming embraces knowledge itself" (AdD: 46/32). History forms a third order, beyond subjects and objects, of interhuman relations inscribed in cultural objects and institutions, and with its own logic of sedimentation and spontaneity. The

self-consciousness that emerges within this third order is precisely the proletariat, whose consciousness is not that of an "I think" but rather the praxis of their common situation and system of action. Historical truth emerges from the movement of creative expression whereby the Party brings the life of the proletariat to explicit awareness, which requires, in return, that the working class recognize and understand itself in the Party's formulations.

With this understanding, Lukacs aims to preserve the dialectic of history, to prevent it from slipping into a simple materialism, and thereby to discover the absolute in the relative. But Lukacs backtracks on this position after its official rejection by the communist establishment in favor of a metaphysical materialism, and Merleau-Ponty finds a parallel in Marx's own turn away from genuine dialectic toward a simple naturalism that justifies any action in the name of a historical necessity inscribed in things. For the lack of a genuine concept of institution that can recognize dialectic in embodied form, Marxist materialism repeatedly abandons its dialectical aspirations, as Merleau-Ponty further illustrates through the example of Trostky's career.

In the final chapter of Adventures, Merleau-Ponty turns his sights toward Sartre's endorsement of communism in The Communists and Peace. On Merleau-Ponty's interpretation, Sartre's ontological commitment to a dualism of being and nothingness, where the full positivity of determinate things juxtaposes with the negating freedom of consciousness, eliminates any middle ground for history or praxis. Since consciousness is unconstrained by any sedimentation or by the autonomous life of cultural acquisitions, it can recognize no inertia or spontaneity at the level of institutions, and therefore no genuine historical becoming. More centrally, by interpreting the relation between the Party and the proletariat through his own conception of consciousness as pure freedom, Sartre rules out in principle any possibility for their divergence. This leads Sartre to an "ultrabolshevism" according to which the Party's position is identified with the revolutionary agenda, any opposition to which must be suppressed.

In the Epilogue that summarizes Merleau-Ponty's own position, he explains his rejection of revolutionary action, understood as proletarian praxis, for remaining equivocal rather than truly dialectical. The illusion that has brought dialectic to a halt is precisely the investment of history's total meaning in the proletariat, ultimately equating the proletariat with dialectic as such, which leads to the conviction that revolution would liquidate history itself. But it is essential to the very structure of revolutions that, when successful, they betray their own revolutionary character by sedimenting into institutions. Drawing on the extended example of the French revolution, Merleau-Ponty argues that every revolution mistakes the structure of history for its contents, believing that eliminating the latter will absolutely transform the former. Thus, "The very nature of revolution is to believe itself absolute and to not be absolute precisely because it believes itself to be so" (AdD: 298/222). While Soviet communism may continue to justify itself in absolute terms, it is concretely a progressivism that tacitly recognizes the relativity of revolution and the gradual nature of progress. The alternative that Merleau-Ponty endorses is the development of a "noncommunist left", an "a-communism", or a "new liberalism", the first commitment of which would be to reject the description of the rivalry between the two powers as one between "free enterprise" and Marxism (AdD: 302–3/225). This noncommunist left would occupy a "double position", "posing social problems in terms of [class] struggle" while also "refusing the dictatorship of the proletariat" (AdD: 304/226). This pursuit must welcome the resources of parliamentary debate, in clear recognition of their limitations, since Parliament is "the only known institution that guarantees a minimum of opposition and of truth" (AdD: 304/226). By exercising "methodical doubt" toward the established powers and denying that they exhaust political and economic options, the possibility opens for a genuine dialectic that advances social justice while respecting political freedom.

13.6 THE VISIBLE AND THE INVISIBLE

Notes

The manuscript and working notes published posthumously as The Visible and the Invisible (1964 V&I), extracted from a larger work underway at the time of Merleau-Ponty's death, is considered by many to be the best presentation of his later ontology. The main text, drafted in 1959 and 1960, is contemporaneous with "Eye and Mind" and the Preface to Signs, Merleau-Ponty's final collection of essays. The first three chapters progressively develop an account of "philosophical interrogation" in critical dialogue with scientism, the philosophies of reflection (Descartes and Kant), Sartrean negation, and the intuitionisms of Bergson and Husserl. These are followed by a stand-alone chapter, "The Intertwining—The Chiasm", presenting Merleau-Ponty's ontology of flesh. The published volume also includes a brief abandoned section of the text as an appendix and more than a hundred pages of selected working notes composed between 1959 and 1961.[7]

Merleau-Ponty frames the investigation with a description of "perceptual faith", our shared pre-reflective conviction that perception presents us with the world as it actually is, even though this perception is mediated, for each of us, by our bodily senses. This apparent paradox creates no difficulties in our everyday lives, but it becomes incomprehensible when thematized by reflection:

The "natural" man holds on to both ends of the chain, thinks at the same time that his perception enters into the things and that it is formed this side of his body. Yet coexist as the two convictions do without difficulty in the exercise of life, once reduced to theses and to propositions they destroy one another and leave us in confusion. (V&I: 23–24/8)

For Merleau-Ponty, this "unjustifiable certitude of a sensible world" is the starting point for developing an alternative account of perception, the world, intersubjective relations, and ultimately being as such. Neither the natural sciences nor psychology provide an adequate clarification of this perceptual faith, since they rely on it without acknowledgment even as their theoretical constructions rule out its possibility. Philosophies of reflection, exemplified by Descartes and Kant, also fail in their account

of perception, since they reduce the perceived world to an idea, equate the subject with thought, and undermine any understanding of intersubjectivity or a world shared in common (V&I: 62/39, 67/43).

Sartre's dialectic of being (in-itself) and nothingness (for-itself) makes progress over philosophies of reflection insofar as it recognizes the ecceity of the world, with which the subject engages not as one being alongside others but rather as a nothingness, that is, as a determinate negation of a concrete situation that can co-exist alongside other determinate negations. Even so, for Sartre, pure nothingness and pure being remain mutually exclusive, ambivalently identical in their perfect opposition, which brings any movement of their dialectic to a halt. The "philosophy of negation" is therefore shown to be a totalizing or "high-altitude" thought that remains abstract, missing the true opening onto the world made possible by the fact that nothingness is "sunken into being" (V&I: 121–122/88–89). This "bad" dialectic must therefore give way to a "hyperdialectic" that remains self-critical about its own tendency to reify into fixed and opposed theses (V&I: 129/94).

The philosophy of intuition takes two forms: the Wesenschau of Husserl, which converts lived experience into ideal essences before a pure spectator, and Bergsonian intuition, which seeks to coincide with its object by experiencing it from within. Against the first, Merleau-Ponty argues that the world's givenness is more primordial than the ideal essence; the essence is a variant of the real, not its condition of possibility. Essences are not ultimately detachable from the sensible but are its "invisible" or its latent structure of differentiation. Against a return to the immediacy of coincidence or a nostalgia for the pre-reflective, Merleau-Ponty holds that there is no self-identical presence to rejoin; the "immediate" essentially involves distance and non-coincidence. Consequently, truth must be redefined as "a privative non-coinciding, a coinciding from afar, a divergence, and something like a 'good error'" (V&I: 166/124–25).

Notes

In the final chapter, "The Intertwining—The Chiasm", Merleau-Ponty turns directly to the positive project of describing his ontology of "flesh". Intertwining [entrelacs] here translates Husserl's Verflechtung, entanglement or interweaving, like the woof and warp of a fabric. Chiasm has two senses in French and English that are both relevant to Merleau-Ponty's project: a physiological sense that refers to anatomical or genetic structures with a crossed arrangement (such as the optic nerves), and a literary sense referring to figures of speech that repeat structures in reverse order (AB:BA). For Merleau-Ponty, the chiasm is a structure of mediation that combines the unity-in-difference of its physiological sense with the reversal and circularity of its literary usage (see Toadvine 2012; Saint Aubert 2005). A paradigmatic example of chiasmic structure is the body's doubling into sensible and sentient aspects during self-touch. Elaborating on Husserl's descriptions of this phenomenon, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes three consequences: First, the body as sensible-sentient is an "exemplar sensible" that demonstrates the kinship or ontological continuity between subject and object among sensible things in general. Second, this relationship is reversible, like "obverse and reverse" or "two segments of one sole circular course" (V&I: 182/138). Third, the sentient and sensible never strictly coincide but are always separated by a gap or divergence [écart] that defers their unity.

Chiasm is therefore a crisscrossing or a bi-directional becoming or exchange between the body and things that justifies speaking of a "flesh" of things, a kinship between the sensing body and sensed things that makes their communication possible. Flesh in this sense is a "general thing" between the individual and the idea that does not correspond to any traditional philosophical concept, but is closest to the notion of an "element" in the classical sense (V&I: 184/139). Merleau-Ponty denies that this is a subjective or anthropocentric projection:

carnal being, as a being of depths, of several leaves or several faces, a being in latency, and a presentation of a certain absence, is a prototype of Being, of which our body, the sensible sentient, is a very remarkable

variant, but whose constitutive paradox already lies in every visible. (V&I: 179/136)

The generality of flesh embraces an intercorporeity, an anonymous sensibility shared out among distinct bodies: just as my two hands communicate across the lateral synergy of my body, I can touch the sensibility of another: "The handshake too is reversible" (V&I: 187/142).

Sensible flesh—what Merleau-Ponty calls the "visible"—is not all there is to flesh, since flesh also "sublimates" itself into an "invisible" dimension: the "rarified" or "glorified" flesh of ideas. Taking as his example the "little phrase" from Vinteuil's sonata (in Swann's Way), Merleau-Ponty describes literature, music, and the passions as "the exploration of an invisible and the disclosure of a universe of ideas", although in such cases these ideas "cannot be detached from the sensible appearance and be erected into a second positivity" (V&I: 196/149). Creative language necessarily carries its meaning in a similarly embodied fashion, while the sediments of such expression result in language as a system of formalized relations. What we treat as "pure ideas" are nothing more than a certain divergence and ongoing process of differentiation, now occurring within language rather than sensible things. Ultimately we find a relation of reversibility within language like that holding within sensibility: just as, in order to see, my body must be part of the visible and capable of being seen, so, by speaking, I make myself one who can be spoken to (allocutary) and one who can be spoken about (delocutary). While all of the possibilities of language are already outlined or promised within the sensible world, reciprocally the sensible world itself is unavoidably inscribed with language.

This final chapter of The Visible and the Invisible illustrates chiasmic mediation across a range of relations, including sentient and sensed, touch and vision, body and world, self and other, fact and essence, perception and language. There is not one chiasm but rather various chiasmic structures at different levels. As Renaud Barbaras notes,

It is necessary … to picture the universe as intuited by Merleau-Ponty as a proliferation of chiasms that integrate themselves according to different levels of generality. (1991, 352/2004, 307)

The ultimate ontological chiasm, that between the sensible and the intelligible, is matched by an ultimate epistemological chiasm, that of philosophy itself. As Merleau-Ponty writes in a working note from November 1960,

the idea of chiasm, that is: every relation with being is simultaneously a taking and a being held, the hold is held, it is inscribed and inscribed in the same being that it takes hold of. Starting from there, elaborate an idea of philosophy… . It is the simultaneous experience of the holding and the held in all orders. (V&I: 319/266; see also Saint Aubert 2005: 162–64)

13.7 INFLUENCE AND CURRENT SCHOLARSHIP

While the generation of French post-structuralist thinkers who succeeded Merleau-Ponty, including Deleuze, Derrida, Irigaray, and Foucault, typically distanced themselves from his work, lines of influence are often recognizable (see Lawlor 2006, 2003; Reynolds 2004). Irigaray (1993) suggests that Merleau-Ponty's ontology of flesh tacitly relies on feminine and maternal metaphors while rendering sexual difference invisible. Derrida's most detailed engagement with Merleau-Ponty, in Le Toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy (On Touching—Jean-Luc Nancy, 2000/2005), criticizes the latter's account of touch and ontology of flesh for its tendency to privilege immediacy, continuity, and coincidence over rupture, distance, and untouchability. Nevertheless, Derrida ultimately suspends judgment over the relation between these two tendencies in Merleau-Ponty's final writings. The legacy of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of embodiment and ontology of flesh is also apparent in the work of subsequent French phenomenologists, including Françoise Dastur, Michel Henry, Henri Maldiney, Jean-Louis Chrétien, and Jacob Rogozinski.

Recent English-language scholarship on Merleau-Ponty, inspired by the availability of new materials from his course notes and unpublished

writings, has focused on his concept of subjectivity (Morris and Maclaren 2015; Welsh 2013; Marratto 2012), his relationship to literature, architecture, and the arts (Carbone 2015; Locke & McCann 2015; Wiskus 2014; Kaushik 2013; Johnson 2010), and his later ontology and philosophy of nature (Foti 2013; Toadvine 2009). His work has also made important contributions to debates in cognitive science (Thompson 2007; Gallagher 2005), feminism (Olkowski and Weiss 2006; Heinämaa 2003), animal studies (Westling 2014; Buchanan 2009; Oliver 2009), and environmental philosophy (Cataldi & Hamrick 2007; Abram 1996).

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. How do you know the Expression, Language, and Art?

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2. How know about The Visible and the Invisible?

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3. How to highlight the Influence and Current Scholarship?

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13.8 LET US SUM UP

Maurice Jean Jacques Merleau-Ponty (French: [mɔʁis mɛʁlo pɔ̃ti, moʁ-]; 14 March 1908 – 3 May 1961) was a French phenomenological philosopher, strongly influenced by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. The constitution of meaning in human experience was his main interest and he wrote on perception, art, and politics. He was on the editorial board of Les Temps modernes, the leftist magazine established by Jean-Paul Sartre in 1945.

At the core of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is a sustained argument for the foundational role perception plays in understanding the world as well as engaging with the world. Like the other major phenomenologists, Merleau-Ponty expressed his philosophical insights in writings on art, literature, linguistics, and politics. He was the only major phenomenologist of the first half of the twentieth century to engage extensively with the sciences and especially with descriptive psychology. It is through this engagement that his writings became influential in the project of naturalizing phenomenology, in which phenomenologists use the results of psychology and cognitive science.

Merleau-Ponty emphasized the body as the primary site of knowing the world, a corrective to the long philosophical tradition of placing consciousness as the source of knowledge, and maintained that the body and that which it perceived could not be disentangled from each other. The articulation of the primacy of embodiment led him away from phenomenology towards what he was to call "indirect ontology" or the ontology of "the flesh of the world" (la chair du monde), seen in his final and incomplete work, The Visible and Invisible, and his last published essay, "Eye and Mind".

In his earlier work, Merleau-Ponty supported Soviet communism while remaining critical of Soviet policies and Marxism in general, adopting a skeptical stance which he termed Western Marxism. His endorsement of the Soviet show trials and prison camps was published as Humanism and

Terror in 1947, though he would later denounce Soviet terror as being counter to the purportedly humanist aims of the revolution.

13.9 KEY WORDS

Behavior: the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others.

Expression: the action of making known one's thoughts or feelings.

13.10   QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

4. How to know Life and Works of Marleau- Ponty?
5. Discuss The Nature of Perception and The Structure of Behavior.
6. How do you know about the Phenomenology of Perception?
7. How do you know the Expression, Language, and Art?
8. How know about The Visible and the Invisible?
9. How to highlight the Influence and Current Scholarship?

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13.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1`

1. See Section 13.2
2. See Section 13.3
3. See Section 13.4

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 13.5
2. See Section 13.6
3. See Section 13.7

UNIT 14: CONCEPT OF SENSATION AND PERCEPTION SENSATION AND PERCEPTION

STRUCTURE

14.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the meaning of sensation;

- Describe the process through which one makes distinction between different objects of the world;

- Explain how our senses like vision, hearing, smell, taste and skin work;

- Define perception; and

- Identify the process of perception like perceptual selectivity, perceptual constancy and perceptual organisation.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Important philosophical problems derive from the epistemology of perception—how we can gain knowledge via perception—such as the question of the nature of qualia. Within the biological study of perception naive realism is unusable. However, outside biology modified forms of naive realism are defended. Thomas Reid, the eighteenth-century founder of the Scottish School of Common Sense, formulated the idea that sensation was composed of a set of data transfers but also declared that there is still a direct connection between perception and the world. This idea, called direct realism, has again become popular in recent years with the rise of postmodernism.

The succession of data transfers involved in perception suggests that sense data are somehow available to a perceiving subject that is the substrate of the percept. Indirect realism, the view held by John Locke and Nicolas Malebranche, proposes that we can only be aware of mental representations of objects. However, this may imply an infinite regress (a perceiver within a perceiver within a perceiver...), though a finite regress is perfectly possible. It also assumes that perception is entirely due to data transfer and information processing, an argument that can be avoided by proposing that the percept does not depend wholly upon the transfer and rearrangement of data. This still involves basic ontological issues of the sort raised by Leibniz Locke, Hume, Whitehead and others, which remain outstanding particularly in relation to the binding problem, the question of how different perceptions (e.g. color and contour in

vision) are "bound" to the same object when they are processed by separate areas of the brain.

Indirect realism (representational views) provides an account of issues such as perceptual contents, qualia, dreams, imaginings, hallucinations, illusions, the resolution of binocular rivalry, the resolution of multistable perception, the modelling of motion that allows us to watch TV, the sensations that result from direct brain stimulation, the update of the mental image by saccades of the eyes and the referral of events backwards in time. Direct realists must either argue that these experiences do not occur or else refuse to define them as perceptions.

Idealism holds that reality is limited to mental qualities while skepticism challenges our ability to know anything outside our minds. One of the most influential proponents of idealism was George Berkeley who maintained that everything was mind or dependent upon mind. Berkeley's idealism has two main strands, phenomenalism in which physical events are viewed as a special kind of mental event and subjective idealism. David Hume is probably the most influential proponent of skepticism.

A fourth theory of perception in opposition to naive realism, enactivism, attempts to find a middle path between direct realist and indirect realist theories, positing that cognition arises as a result of the dynamic interplay between an organism's sensory-motor capabilities and its environment. Instead of seeing perception as a passive process determined entirely by the features of an independently existing world, enactivism suggests that organism and environment are structurally coupled and co-determining. The theory was first formalized by Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch in "The Embodied Mind".

You walk in a flower garden and see a beautiful rose, the word comes out from your mouth 'how beautiful', or you walk by the side of a river and see a crocodile, recognise it and escape. In our daily life we distinguish

between two objects, although the world has dazzling array of objects like humans, animals, houses, plants, etc. But how do we really do it? How do we know the world around us? Have you ever though on this issue? If not, does not matter! This chapter on sensation and perception will help you to understand the process of getting complex and diverse set of things "out there" inside our brain clearly and vividly. Philosophers have attempted to answer such problems throughout the history of civilisation but in the past century such issues have become central point of psychologists. The processes through which we come to experience the stimuli present in the environment are known as sensation and perception. Human senses translate physical energy into electrical signals by specialised receptor cells and transmit to our brain via specialised sensory nerves through which information about our environment is received. Our senses include vision, hearing, smell, taste and skin senses.

The study of sensation is related to the initial contact between organism and the physical environment focusing on different forms of sensory stimulation (example: electro-magnetic pressure, sound-waves) and the input registration by the sense organs (e.g. the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin). Perception is the process through which we interpret and organise the received information so as to produce our conscious experience of objects and their relationship. In this process physical energy; such as light, sound waves, heat; emanating from objects is transformed by the concerned sense organs into a code and transferred to and interpreted by the brain. The line between the two terms sensation and perception, therefore, is somewhat arbitrary. Sensation typically refers to the direct reception and transmission of messages, whereas perception refers to the active process of integrating and organising these sensations. In the following sections you will come to know some more details of sensory process like vision, hearing, skin senses, smell and taste and characteristics of related physical energy like light, sound waves, heat, changes in air pressure, pain etc. you will also know about perception as an active process with perceptual selectivity and perceptual constancy. Perceptual selectivity will include attention, perceptual set,

perceptual accentuation and perceptual constancy will have some details of size, shape, colour and brightness constancies. You will also know as to how perception is organised according to Gestalt theory. This way, you will be in a position to understand scientifically the process of sensation and perception through which we are able to recognise objects in this world and make distinction among them. The whole process will include reception of physical energy by receptor cell, conversion into electrical impulses traveling along nerve fibers to the central nervous system and finally to the appropriate area of cerebral cortex. Information received in the appropriate area of brain is processed and interpreted to yield our experienced perception. In short, we feel something in sensation when stimulus is present and when meaning is added to them it becomes perception. So perception is sensation and meaning of the situation.

14.2 MEANING OF SENSATION

We live in a world where complex and diverse set of things are around us – houses, plants, animals, paper, pencil, computer and billions of other people. How do we recognise them and make distinctions? How do we feel them and make out meanings out of them? The objects present in the world are known as stimulus. Physical energy (such as light, heat, sound waves) emanating from objects are transformed by sense organs into a code and interpreted by brain.

The relationship between various forms of sensory stimulation (electro-magnetic, pressure, sound waves) and their registration by sense organs (eyes, tongue, skin, ears) is the process of sensation. This definition of sensation has the following components:

i) involvement of sense organs of the organism.

ii) presence of stimulus in the physical environment

iii) constructing knowledge out of raw material and

iv) initial contact i.e. contact without meaning

Take an example: you encounter the pleasant fragrance of a rose. You get the fragrance through the sense organ 'nose'. Rose is the stimulus present in the physical environment. You feel something and it is constructing knowledge out of raw stimulus material. You just have thye initial contact without clear cut knowledge of source i.e. rose. Feeling up to this stage is sensation. Imagine some other example of similar nature and try to understand the meaning of sensation. Sensation is the starting point of knowledge of presence of any object around us.

14.2.1 Human Senses and Physical Energy

The beautiful sight of sun-rise, the intense "crack" of start of an old motor-cycle, the smooth touch of a skin of body, the summer heat, the intense cold, the foul odor; the sweet taste, all these are experienced by us. But how ? These are all through different sense organs. Our sense-organs-eyes, ears, skin, nose and tongue – provide sensations of vision, hearing, skin senses, smell and taste. Physical energy emanates from objects such as light, sound waves, heat and touch. These physical energies provide different types of sensations when presented as stimuli. You have known here two things, that is (i) Our senses include vision, hearing, skin senses, smell and taste. (ii) Physical energies emanates from objects such as light, sound waves, heat and touch. In the absence of physical energies as stimuli, sensation normally does not take place.

14.2.2 Process of Sensation

The process of sensation is very easy to understand. Physical energy, such as light, sound waves, heat; emanating from objects becomes stimuli and is received by concerned sense organs like eyes, ears, and elsewhere through specialised receptor cells. The energy is next converted into electrical impulses and this process is known as transduction. The translation of a physical energy into electrical impulses by specialised receptor cells is known as transduction. The electrical

impulses then travel from the sense organs along nerve fibers to the central nervous system and finally to appropriate area of the cerebral cortex. The process of sensation includes the direct reception and transmission of messages to cerebral cortex. The process may be understood in the following diagram more easily.

14.3 OUR SENSES

14.3.1 Vision

The greatest gift of our life is vision through which we know most of the things about the outside world. It dominates in our adjustment. This is why of all the senses scientists have done much researches in the area of vision. We see through our eyes. This is like a colour television camera. The physical stimulus i.e. light admits into it through a small hole and passes through lens that focuses an image on a photosensitive surface. The vision is managed through the cornea, pupil, iris and retina in the eyes and receptor cells transmit finally the information to the brain via optic nerve. Sensation of colour takes place by nerve cells called cones. Black and white sensation takes place by optic nerves called rods. Rods and cones are distributed on retina, the number being more than 100 millions and 6 millions respectively. The structure of eye with function will be discussed in the next section in details. These rods and cones help in light or dark adaptation. You may have the experience of going to theater when movie has started. The theater is dark and you stumble around not making out location of seat or people. After a few minutes you are able to locate seat and people around.

Adaptation from bright to dim light is managed by Rods and cones present in eyes.(Look at the eye diagram given below) Chemicals in rods and cones are build-up faster in dim light with greater concentration than in by bright light stimulation, hence, adaptation to darkness becomes easy. The cones adapt quickly in the dark as compared to rods. But when adapted fully, the rods are much more sensitive to light than cones.

Cones are located in the centre of the eye and rods on the edge of the retina. In pitch darkness if you want to see a dim light look away from the object and not on it, you will see dim light more clearly. When you see away from the object in darkness rods situated on the edge of retina become more active, providing better visibility. Try this process in cinema hall. When movie is in progress and you want to move to the gate with dim light on the passage, you will have better visibility of the way if do not look at dim light point but away of it. It is said that a candle flame can be seen at a distance of 30 miles on the dark clear night as rods of retina becomes more active due to distinct image.

Fig: 14.1 - Diagram of the eye
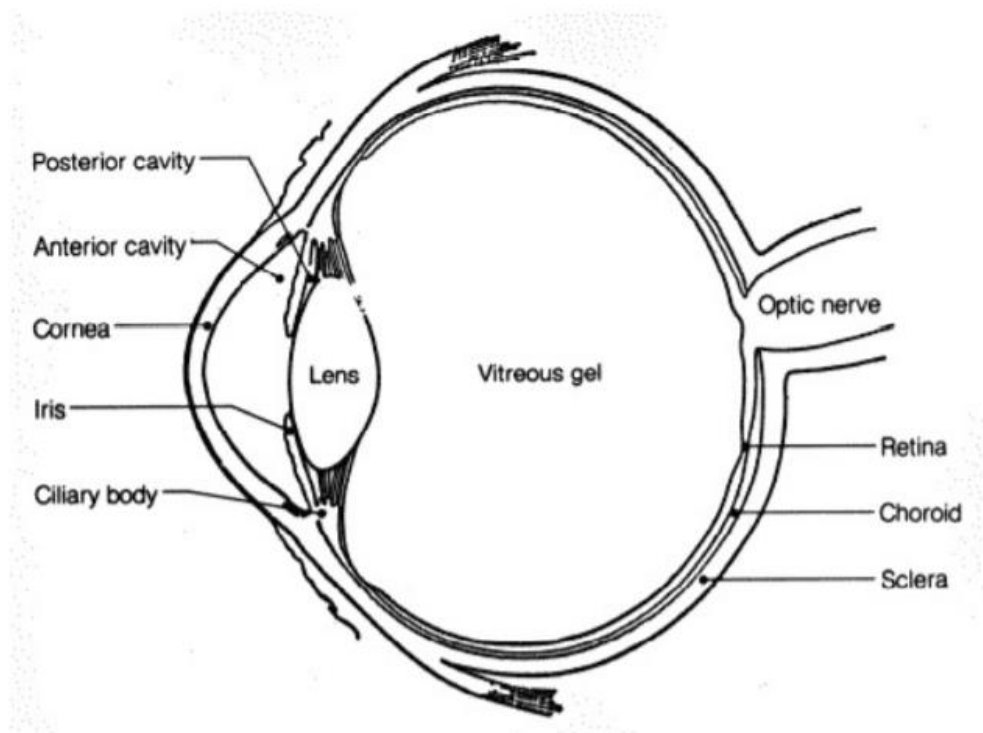
14.3.1.1 Visual Aquity

You see many people using spectacle for reading or for seeing far objects or both. They are not able to discriminate the details in the field of vision. This is greatly affected by the shape of a person's eyeball. When eyeball of a person is too big, the lens of eye focuses the image in front of the retina and not directly on it. In this case, vision to near object is

clear but far objects appear blurred. This phenomenon is called nearsightedness. When eye ball is too short, the lens focuses the image behind the retina and the result is that far objects are in sharp focus but close objects become indistinct. This condition is known as farsightedness. Nearsightedness or farsightedness are the examples of non-discriminating objects in the field of vision properly. This ability to discriminate properly the details in the field of vision is known as visual acuity. There appears to be a relationship between advancement in age and visual acuity. Normally, as age advances visual activity becomes poorer in most cases.

14.3.1.2 Blind Spot

At one spot of the retina where the nerves of the eye converge to form the optic nerve is called blind spot. Blind spot has no visual acuity. These optic nerves connect the eyes to the brain from the back wall of the eyeball. People compensate the effects of blind spot by moving their head or making use of other eye unknowingly. How sensation of vision takes place with visual acuity in our daily life, you must have understood. The main points are: • The physical energy for vision is light. • Eyes manage vision. • Rods and cones help in dark adaptation. • The ability to discriminate the details in the field of vision is visual acuity. • Blind spot, a point in retina, does not have visual acuity

14.3.2 Hearing

Ear through which sensation of hearing takes place is a fascinating instrument. You have two ears on two sides which detect sound from the external world. Sound source produces changes in air pressure by vibrations or movements. It is noticed and registered through the ears. There are three main characteristics of sound – pitch, loudness and Timbre. Pitch, the high or low quality of a sound, is determined by the frequency of vibration of waves. Faster the vibration, higher the pitch. Loudness is the amplitude of sound waves, the expansion and contraction. When you turn up the volume of television, you increase the

amplitude of vibrations, hence, sound becomes louder. Timbre is the quality of sound that comes from a particular sound source. A note played on Shehnai will not sound the same as played on piano. This difference of richness is known as timbre. This way, pitch, loudness are the characteristics of hearing and frequency, amplitude are the characteristics of sound waves. You may now be interested to know as to how the ear receives and amplifies the vibration movement of the air and sends information to the nervous system. To understand this process it would be desirable to see the structure and function of the ear. The structure of the ear has three parts – the outer, the middle and the inner ones. You may have a look at the structure of the ear given in the diagram below:

Fig 14.2:Ear
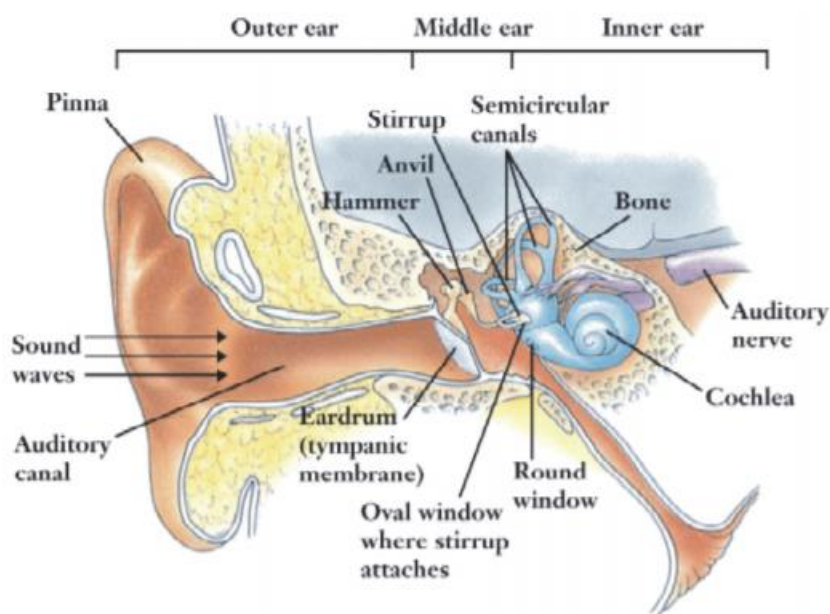
14.3.2.1 Structure of Ear

The outer ear is made of a canal and the eardrum (tympanic membrane). The middle ear has three bones: the malleus, the incus and the stapes, the Latin names. The English equivalant of these terms are hammer, anvil and stirrup. The inner ear contains a snail-shaped structure called cochlea

with fluid inside. The function of the three parts of the ear is different but related to one another. Changes in air pressure are received in the outer ear eardrum and the membrane moves in response to the pressure changes. The middle ear sends sound waves to the inner ear with movements in the three bones. These vibrations are transmitted to the fluid inside cochlea. At this point the sound waves reach the receptor cells for hearing and are translated into nerve impulses. The auditory nerve sends the nerve impulses into appropriate portion of the brain. This way, you are able to hear a sound around you. You may be aware that these days noise pollution has become one of the greatest environmental hazards. Why is it so ? The answer is — when the cells of the inner ear are very frequently bombarded with loud sounds these can be damaged leading to hearing loss. Many million people of the world suffer from hearing loss due to noise pollution. You, therefore, in your life try to avoid noise both by reception or by creation. Always speak in low voice which shows politeness and discourage others to speak in loud voice. This will keep your hearing intact and others too throughout your life.

14.3.3 Smell

Of the five senses vision, hearing, smell, taste and skin the taste and skin senses tell us about the objects and events close to our body and the remaining three that is, vision, hearing and smell receptive systems enlarge our world by responding to a stimuli at a distance. Of these, smell in many ways is most primitive. The sense of smell, you get, from stimulation of receptor cells present in the nose. Smell provides information about chemicals suspended in air which excite receptors located at the top of our nasal cavity. (Diagram of the nose is given below)

Fig. 14.3: Diagram of the nose
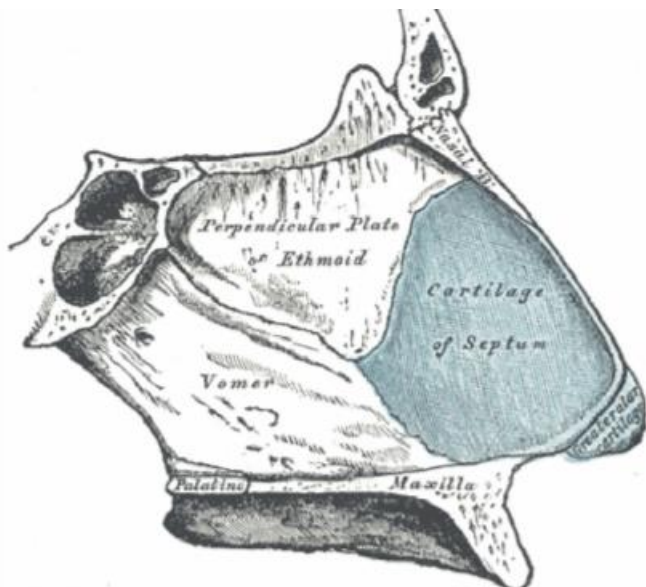
The gaseous chemical molecules suspended in air are normally heavier than air, therefore, these collect on the floor or ground. To smell you have to sniff coming closer to the object. Breathing through nose increases the number of molecules that hit olfactory membrane and smell is detected. Human beings have only about 50 million of olfactory receptors where as dogs possess more than 200 million such receptors. Dogs are more sensitive to smell, therefore, they are put in Dogsquad to detect crime and criminals in police department. Further, sensitivity of our olfactory receptors are limited in terms of stimuli range. Carlon (1998) stated that human olfactory receptors can detect only substances with molecular weights – the sum of the atomic weights of all atoms in an odorous molecule – between 15 and 300. This is the reason that you can smell the alcohol contained in a mixed drink, with a molecular weight of 46, but cannot smell one table spoon sugar, with a molecular weight of 342. The sensation of smell in humans, in many ways, is the most primitive as compared to other senses. But in other species olfaction is more effective. Certain animals secrete special chemical substances called pheromones which trigger particular reactions in other members of their own kind. In some cases, olfaction works as primitive form of communications. Individual differences are available in humans in smell sensation due to different reactions of olfactory receptors in them and the placement of stimuli.

14.3.4 Taste

Sensation of taste is related to smell as well. Tastes primarily depend upon the taste buds scattered across the upper surface and side of tongue. Each taste bud contains several receptor cells. Human beings posses about 10,000 taste buds. In contrast, chickens have only 24 and the maximum number of taste buds is in catfish, the number being 175,000, distributed all over the body. You may be thinking, based on your experience, that you can distinguish a large number of flavours in food. It is not true. You have only four basic tastes – sweet, salty, sour and bitter. But why do you have such an opinion that you can distinguish many more tastes than these four? The reason is that while eating you are not aware of only taste of the food but of its smell, its texture, its temperature, the pressure it exerts on your tongue and mouth, and many more sensations. But the basic sensation of taste depends on taste buds. Normally, sensitivity to salt is highest on the tip and sides of the tongue. Sour is detected on the sides of the tongue and bitter on the back of the tongue. This view is based on widely held hypothesis that each of these primary taste qualities is associated with different kinds of taste receptors. Further, question about the stimuli that produce these four basic taste qualities, the answer is not definite. Sweet is produced by various sugars, but also by saccharin, a chemical compound that is structurally very different from sugar. Just what these substances have in common which activate the same taste receptors is still not known. The number of taste buds on the tongue decreases with age. As a result, older people are comparatively less sensitive to taste than children are. (Diagram of tongue given below)
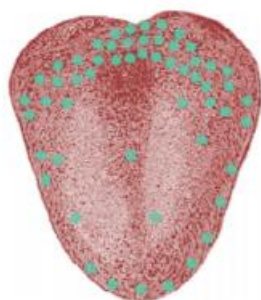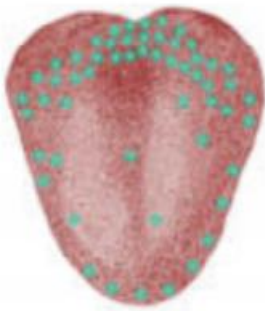
Fig. 14.4: Tongue Diagram

Fig. 14.5: Bitter Taste Buds

Fig. 14.6: Salty Taste Buds
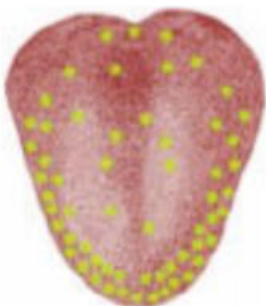

Fig. 14.7: Sour Taste Buds

Fig. 14.8: Sweet Taste Buds

14.3.5 Skin senses

You try one experience. Keep three buckets of water – one cold, another warm and third lukewarm. Now put one hand in cold water bucket and another hand in warm water bucket. You will feel that warmth or cold comes only on the portion where the hands meet both water and air. Take out your both hands and put in the third bucket filled with lukewarm water. You will feel cold to the hand that was in warm water and warm to the hand that was in cold water. The sensation in hand depends on the temperature to which the skin was previously adapted. Stimulation of the skin informs the organism of what is directly adjacent to its own body. Skin senses are, in fact, a combination of at least four different sensations: pressure, warmth, cold and pain. These sensory qualities are so very different that led to the belief that they are produced by various underlying receptor systems. Skin sensitivity is acute in those parts of the body that are most relevant to exploring the world that surrounds us directly: the hands, the fingers, the lips, the tongue. Different spots on the skin are not uniformly sensitive to the stimuli which produce different sensations. Now have another experience of skin sensation on yourself. Get yourself blind folded. Now with the tip of a ball pen probe an area of your skin lightly, you will feel pressure at certain points where the pen contacts your skin, but not at every point. You do the same process one by one with a cold wire, warm wire and a pin. With cold wire you will feel cold at various specific points, with warm wire, you will feel warmth at various points and the point of pin will produce spots of pain. Such a sensation takes place as different points on the skin are serviced by

receptors that are sensitive to different kinds of stimuli. The experience you have when you are touched lightly with a pointed object is called pressure or touch. Some parts of the body are more sensitive to pressure or touch. The lips, the fingers, the hands and the tip of the tongue are most sensitive areas. The arms, legs, and body trunk are less sensitive. This way, different account of touch or pressure is required to produce such an experience which varies for different parts of the body. Less is known about the underlying receptor systems for temperature and pain. Skin also contains receptors for heat and cold. These temperature receptors are more concentrated on the trunk of the body with hands and feet with standing greater temperature extremes. Cold receptors are about six times more than the heat receptors. Sensation of pain has been the subject of much controversy. Some investigators believe that these are specialised pain receptors which are activated by tissue injury and produce an unpleasant sensation. Others believe that pain is the outcome of the over estimation of any skin receptor. Pain seems to be received by a variety of nerve endings not only in skin but in other sense organs. Extreme stimulation of any sense organ may cause pain like very bright lights, loud noises, high or low temperature. More details about sensation and perception of pain you will come to know, in one of the units to follow.

14.3.6 Kinesthetic Sense

The kinesthetic senses provide information about positions and movements of your muscles and joints. Close your eyes and touch your lips with finger. You know where both parts of the body are. The sense that gives us information about the location of our body parts with respect to one another and allows us to perform movement is known as Kinesthesia. Kinesthetic receptors are available in muscles which send information to the brain about the load on the muscle and degree of contraction. Other receptors are in joints. There kinesthetic receptors provide information about body movement. Kinesthetic senses moreover provide sense of balance or equilibrium of the body. When this sensitivity is destroyed one may not be in a position to maintain balance

in the body parts with sense you make destination between objects of different weights by lifting. These senses keep tract of body movement and body position in relation to gravity.

14.4 PERCEPTION

You have come to know now that sensation is the first stage of the experience of a stimulus or stimuli present in the environment through our senses. But our sense organs become more active when encounters a sensation and act in more complex manner. The eye becomes more than a camera; the ear is more than a microphone. Both sensory systems transform their stimulus inputs at the very start of their neurological journey, emphasising differences and minimising stimulation that remain unchanged. When you see a red rose you merely do not have a sensation of the presence of an object around you but you recognise it and know the characteristics of the rose. The sensation gets a meaning. This meaning depends not only on the presence of the stimulus but on many other factors like past experience, our needs, and our values. One who has not known about the rose may not be able to make meaning out of it. We rarely got one sensation at a time. We are most of the time flooded with a magnitude of messages. We sort it out, identify and interpret in order to construct a meaningful picture of reality. We may define perception as: An active process in which we select, organise and interpret sensory input to achieve a grasp of our surroundings

14.4.1 Process of Perception

When perception is an active process, where individual plays an important role in determining objects and reactions around environment, you may be interested in knowing the main processes involved in it. How a person is able to get one message, out of thousands of messages of different senses active at a point of time, sent to the brain? The process of getting a small portion of sensations in one's environment selected by the individual to be transmitted to the brain for meaning is known as perceptual selectivity. The first process to this effect is attention in which

certain stimuli are selected to be transmitted to the brain and others are suppressed. Individual has the tendency to attend to certain sensations we expect to, while remaining unaware of things we do not expect. This phenomenon is called perceptual set. As early in 1935, Siipola demonstrated the phenomenon of perceptual set in responses to words. He had two groups of subjects. One group was told that they would be shown words that referred to animals. The other group was told that they would be shown words relating boats. The two groups had different responses as per their expectations. The letters forming words really did not mean anything but the first group perceived words relating to different animals and the second group pertaining to different aspects of boat. Such a type of response was there as they had perceptual set. So the perceptual set is the tendency to perceive what one expect to. You may experience the phenomenon of perceptual set with the help of an example cited by Leeper (1935).

Fig. A: Fig. B:

Fig. C:

(See the two pictures above) You show picture A to your friend .Ask what the person sees ? Then present picture C and ask what the person sees. Your friend may say that picture A is of an old woman and C is also the picture of the same women. Ask another friend to see picture B and picture C one by one. Most likely s/he may say that both the pictures are of young girl. They are all correct in their perception. They see as they want to see. Again ask them to see each picture carefully. They may see changed face but the time taken to come over to recognise changed face would be different in different cases. Perception, in fact, is influenced by learning and experience. We perceive objects as per our needs and values. Psychological and physiological needs allow us to perceive things in our own way. A hungry person, for example, may perceive other objects as food items. Mc Clelland and Atkinson (1948), for example, have shown that persons who have not eaten for long periods display the 'mirage effect" of identifying hazy objects as food or eating utensils. Further, our perception is determined by our values. People tend to perceive an object larger whom they value more. Bruner and Goodman (1947), in a study, found that poor children estimated size of the coin larger than the rich children. The phenomenon of perceiving valued objects as larger or as more vivid than they actually are, is known as perceptual accentuation. It will now be clear that how attention, perceptual set and perceptual accentuation determine our perception by perceptual selectivity

14.4.2 Perceptual Constancy

We see an object as we have image on our retina. When the object is closer we have full image of it on the retina. But when it moves far, the image becomes different yet we see the object in the same shape, size, colour and brightness. We see a white, bright, big and rectangular table in our front, we have an image of it on the retina. We move it further when only we can see just vague image of it. What happens then? Yet we perceive it as a table of the same size, shape, colour and brightness. The tendency of the individual to perceive aspects of the world as unchanging despite changes in the sensory input we receive from them is the phenomenon known as perceptual constancy. Hastorf, Schneider and Polefka (1970) have given an example. You are sitting in a chair in your living room. A man walks into your room, moves over to a table by the window, picks up a news paper, and then goes across the room to sit down and read. What are the successive patterns of visual stimulation that register on your retina as you watch this scene? Every time the man moves closer to you, the image on the retina gets larger. In fact, if the person moves from 20 feet away to 10 feet away, the height of the image on your retina doubles. The opposite occurs if the person moves away from you. In addition, as the person moves nearer the window, more light is available, and his image on your retina gets brighter. When the person moves away from the window, the image gets darker. Retina senses this way but what you perceive?. A changeable chameleon of a person who constantly gets larger and smaller, lighter and darker? Not at all. We see the person in the same way with no changes. This type of adjustment is due to perceptual constancy. Perceptual Constancy is of four types – size constancy, shape constancy, colour constancy and brightness constancy. Perceptual size of an object remains the same when the distance is varied, even though the size of the image it casts on the retina changes greatly. This is size constancy. Two factors appear to produce size constancy – size distance invariance and relative size. While estimating size of an object, we take into account both the size of the image on the retina and the apparent distance of the object. This characteristic is known as sizedistance invariance. When we are

estimating size of an unfamiliar object we take into account the relative size of the object compared to objects of known size and it is the characteristics of relative size. These two factors determine mainly our size constancy. The tendency to perceive a physical object as having a constant shape, even though the image on the retina changes, is known as shape constancy. You take a coin of circular shape and throw it in the air. Keep on looking at it and you will always see it circular although it casts different images on your retina. This is due to the perception of shape constancy. Similarly we perceive objects as constant in brightness and colour, even though they are viewed under different conditions. Objects appear to be of same brightness no matter what the lighting conditions. Object maintains its colour no matter what the lightening or what other colours are near. Perceptual constancies are highly useful in our life. Had it not been so, we would have been badly engaged in managing various sensations and their impact on perceptual adjustment.. This way, the gap between our sensations and the perception managed by constancies is clearly beneficial.

14.4.3 Perceptual Organisation

In this world, for an organism there are three main perceptual questions and answers to these are key to its survival. What is it? Where is it? What is it doing? Gestalt Psychologists, first of all, studied perceptual organisation systematically and attempted to answer such questions. The process by which we structure the input from our sensory receptors is called perceptual organisation. Gestalt Psychologists advocated that we have tendency to perceive sensory patterns as well organised wholes rather than as separate isolated parts. Perceptual organisation is known as figure – background relationship. It means that we tend to divide the world around us into two parts: figure, which has a definite shape and location in space, and, ground, which has no shape, seems to continue behind the figure, and has no definite location. The segregation of figure and background can easily be seen in two dimensional pictures. You see the following picture in which the bright splotch appears as the figure and darker region is perceived as background. Figure is cohesive and

articulated where as background is relatively formless and appears to extend behind the figure. (Refer to figure below)
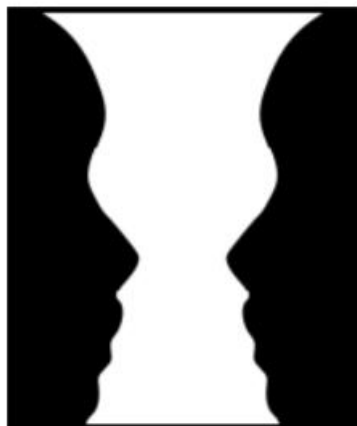
Fig. ground relationship

Figure: The figure –

background relationship helps clarify the distinction between sensation and perception. Gestalt psychologists described some of the principles on which we group items together perceptually. These principles are known as the laws of groupings. This shows as to how perception is organised in daily life.Wertheimer (1923) regarded these laws as the laws of perceptual organisations. Some of these are: law of proximity, law of similarity, law of good continuation, law of closure, law of simplicity and law of common region.   (See figure below)

Similarity   Proximity   Continuity   Closure

Law

ofProximity: We have a tendency to perceive objects located together as a group. The closer two figures are to each other (proximity) the more

they will tend to be grouped together perceptually. a b c d e f. The low lines a, b, c, d, and e, f are perceived together as they are in proximity to each other.

Law of Similarity: We have a tendency to group figures according to their similarity.

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Here, similar items as a group is perceived. This way, we organise different objects around us on the basis of similarity of physical or psychological properties.

Law of good continuation: The tendency to perceive stimuli as a part of continuous pattern is known as law of good continuation. Our visual system normally prefers contours that continue smoothly along their original course. Good continuation is a powerful organisational factor which prevails even when pitted against prior experience. In military setting, camouflage is achieved by using this law.

Law of closure:We have the tendency to perceive objects as whole entities, even some parts may be missing or obstructed from view. See this figure:
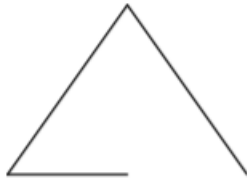
You will say it is triangle although it is not complete and lines at some points are missing. This is due to the law of closure. Law of simplicity: The tendency to perceive complex patterns in terms of similar shapes is known as the law of simplicity. Individuals have a tendency to perceive objects and situations in a similar way so as to get maximum meanings without strain out of them.

Law of common region: We have a tendency to organise materials around us in a group to make them more meaningful and clear. This tendency of perceiving objects around a group if they occupy the same place within a plane is known as the law of common region. These laws or principles of perceptual organisation are not hard and fast rules. These simply explain as to how we perceive world around us. We see objects in different forms. Perceptually, a form is experienced as a Gestalt, a whole which is different from the sum of parts. To perceive a form, we perceive certain relations among the component parts which remain intact despite alterations of the parts of a figure. Perception of depth is mainly explained by binocular disparity. Our two eyes look out on the world from slightly different positions, providing somewhat different view of any solid object they converge on. This binocular disparity normally induces perception of depth. This explanation provides the answer to the question as to how perception of third dimension takes place when we have image on our retina in two dimensions only. Perceptual organisation also explains how a light is seen travelling from one point to the other, even there is no stimulation (let alone movement) in the intervening region. It happens where right time-interval is placed among them. This phenomenon, apparent movement, is produced by the sequence of optical events. For example, light A flashes at time 1, followed by light B at time 2, then back to light A at time 3. If the time

intervals are appropriately chosen, the perceptual experience will be of a light moving from left to right and back. This is how, perception of movement takes place.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1) Discuss the meaning of Sensation.

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2) Discuss the Senses.

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3) Discuss the Percetption.

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14.5 LET US SUM UP

From the discussions provided earlier you must have understood as to how we see and feel meaningfully world around us. How sensation takes place and perception is managed in our daily life. With these two concepts we manage to live in the external world successfully. Sensation is the first experience of presence of objects around us and when we

understand meaning of these, it becomes perception. For the whole process of understanding, the presence of the stimuli, sensory transmission and activities of the right part in the brain are essential.

The philosophy of perception is concerned with the nature of perceptual experience and the status of perceptual data, in particular how they relate to beliefs about, or knowledge of, the world. Any explicit account of perception requires a commitment to one of a variety of ontological or metaphysical views. Philosophers distinguish internalist accounts, which assume that perceptions of objects, and knowledge or beliefs about them, are aspects of an individual's mind, and externalist accounts, which state that they constitute real aspects of the world external to the individual. The position of naïve realism—the 'everyday' impression of physical objects constituting what is perceived—is to some extent contradicted by the occurrence of perceptual illusions and hallucinations and the relativity of perceptual experience as well as certain insights in science. Realist conceptions include phenomenalism and direct and indirect realism. Anti-realist conceptions include idealism and skepticism.

We may categorize perception as internal or external.

Internal perception (proprioception) tells us what is going on in our bodies; where our limbs are, whether we are sitting or standing, whether we are depressed, hungry, tired and so forth.

External or sensory perception (exteroception), tells us about the world outside our bodies. Using our senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste, we perceive colors, sounds, textures, etc. of the world at large. There is a growing body of knowledge of the mechanics of sensory processes in cognitive psychology.

Mixed internal and external perception (e.g., emotion and certain moods) tells us about what is going on in our bodies and about the perceived cause of our bodily perceptions.

The philosophy of perception is mainly concerned with exteroception.

14.6 KEY WORDS

Phenomenalism: Phenomenalism is the view that physical objects cannot justifiably be said to exist in themselves, but only as perceptual phenomena or sensory stimuli situated in time and in space. In particular, some forms of phenomenalism reduce talk about physical objects in the external world to talk about bundles of sense-data.

14.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What is sensation? Describe with suitable examples.
2. Relate human sensation and physical energy. How are these related?
3. Describe the process of sensation with a diagram.
4. Discuss the meaning of Sensation.
5. Discuss the Senses.
6. Discuss the Percetption.

14.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

- Carlon, N.R. (1998) Physiology of Behaviour (6th ed.), Needham Heights, M.A. Allyn & Bacon.
- Hastorf, A.H., Schneider, D.J., and Polefka, J. (1970) Person Perception. Reading Mass: Addison - Wesley.
- Munn, Norman. (1997). Introduction to Psychology. Holt Rinehart, New Delhi

14.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1`

1. See Section 14.2
2. See Section 14.3
3. See Section 14.4