

A Phenomenological Description of the Self

By Bill Meacham, Ph. D.

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New Introduction

A Phenomenological Description Of The Self is my Ph.D. Dissertation, written in 1971. Regardless of whether it will be of interest to anyone else, it has certainly been useful to me to remember what I discovered years ago. This paper serves as good reference material. I hope it will be useful to others as well, that it will inspire others to examine their own experience and confirm (or not) what I found in examining mine.

I have left the text pretty much as it was when I wrote it even though I would make some stylistic changes were I to write it today. In particular, the text quite often uses the first-person ("I") without being clear as to whether things asserted are intended to be true of everyone or only of the author. See my "Talking About the First-Person," here: <http://www.bmeacham.com/whatswhat/FirstPersonTalk.htm>. If were to rewrite it, I would make the distinction.

What were unnumbered footnotes in the original I have included as parenthetical remarks in the body of the text.

I have no reason to doubt any of the assertions in this paper. I have found no evidence that contradicts them. However, with more experience I find that some of my original observations, particularly of emotions, were incomplete, so I have added a few new remarks. The new material is in square parentheses and italics: *[like this]*.

I have, in more recent years, come to a different view of the function of the human being, but that view is informed by much more than phenomenology.

– Austin, Texas, December 2013

A Phenomenological Description of the Self

by

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Dissertation

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Supervising Professor: Richard M. Zaner

Abstract

This paper outlines the results of a phenomenological investigation into the nature of the self. It is a conceptual model of the composition and functional structure which is, I hope, true for all human selves.

Phenomenology is biasless reflective examination of experience, in this case experience of the self. Thus, the model of the self presented is a model of the self as experienced by itself. To do phenomenology, each person must examine his or her own experience. Thus, this essay is devoted to outlining the results of my own examination of my experience of myself. By reporting these results in a language publicly available to all, I make it possible for others to compare the findings of their own reflective examination of themselves with my results, thereby making possible consensual validation or disconfirmation of assertions regarding the nature of the self.

The investigation proceeds from the transcendental Self (what Husserl calls the transcendental Ego) taken as that-which-is-conscious to the empirical self, that synthetic unity of diverse elements available as objects of consciousness which each of us is, to the transcendental Self taken as agent, as that-which-acts. The transcendental Self is inherently incapable of becoming an object of consciousness, for it is that which is itself conscious. Strictly speaking we should not use a noun phrase, but should rather speak of experiencing and acting as functions of the self to which no particular experientiable objects or types of objects correspond.

The empirical self is the self as available in experience to conscious examination; it is that complex of affairs of which I am or can become conscious which has or can rationally acquire the sense “me” or “mine.” It is composed of thinking and thoughts, perceptions, bodily sensations, emotions, moods, the self-concept, and deliberate and habitual action viewed from the point of view of that person whose action it is.

Though composed of many elements, the self is a unity in that it is located in a single place, is embodied, and its elements are functionally related to each other and to the whole in a teleological drive toward survival, health and happiness.

The self is intrinsically related to its world, to other selves, and to itself. By virtue of its relation to itself, the self is free to choose courses of action and to perform them. It is free to determine for itself ethical maxims by which to guide its actions fruitfully. Determination of such ethical maxims is, however, beyond the scope of this paper.

Introduction

For more than five years now I have been pursuing a phenomenological investigation into the nature of the self, or, to be more exact, the nature of my own self, the self that I am. In this paper I outline some of the results of that investigation; I present a conceptual model of the structure and composition of the self that I believe to be true for all human selves, leaving out what appears idiosyncratic and peculiar to me. If my endeavor needs justification, I offer two.

Philosophy, says Aristotle, begins with a sense of wonder.¹ For what reason I know not, but I am often filled with awe at the marvelous complexity of the human self, living in a world full of the most beautiful and frightful things, ever confronting the new and unexpected in the midst of the familiar and repetitious, experiencing and making use of a dazzling wealth of detail, and yet somehow coping with it, taking it all in stride. The self intrigues me; how strange it is to be so familiar with myself and yet so ignorant, for what is most familiar is often, for that very reason, most overlooked. I experience the world as we all do, I act in it; most of us simply take that for granted and go on to pursue our affairs. But who or what is this self which experiences and acts? I turn my gaze upon myself to find out, merely to see with clarity what I am, and I find an unfathomable mystery, for in the moment of being conscious I am not and cannot be conscious of I-who-am-conscious, the ultimate subject-pole of my experience. I find myself, in a sense, not there at all; and yet here I am, living, growing, changing, unfolding, all from a source which I cannot perceive. How unfair it seems, to be barred from being conscious of that which I want most of all to know! I am challenged and enticed to search again, I am beckoned onward into the heart of mystery. I find that I can at least be conscious of and set down in words for myself the manner of my experiencing and acting, the typical patterns of what happens when experience of the world is transformed into action upon it. I find out more and more; the sense of mystery is lost for a time, it all seems commonplace. But still I find myself with new thoughts, glimpses of new vistas, new plans for my life. Where do they come from? I can do no more than accept them, incorporate them into the patterns to which I have become accustomed, all the while reflectively observing myself and what I do with what is granted me, fitting bits of the puzzle together. I think I have achieved as much as I can, only to be reminded that there is more, there are still areas of myself opaque to me, calling for patient observation yet again and careful construction of a conceptual scheme that adequately reflects and communicates to others what I have found. I attain some distance from my feverish quest and realize that it is all for the good, that I have a hobby that will occupy and entertain me for a good many years yet to come, perhaps for the rest of my life, perhaps, even, beyond that. I am content to continue, pausing at times to set down on paper the results of my labors for any who may share my peculiar curiosity. Herewith follows one of those reports.

This, then, is the first justification of my pursuit: I cannot do otherwise. I simply find myself impelled to satisfy my curiosity, to attain theoretical knowledge of myself, for no other reason than that it is satisfying, I like to do it.

There is, however, another, and much more practical, motive behind my quest for myself. I have been inspired by the example of Socrates, who spent his life searching for ways to live a good life, and who refused to depart from the way he found, though it meant his death.

¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 982b, tr. W. D. Ross, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, p. 692.

Socrates, quite simply, wanted to find out how to be happy, how to lead a life of fulfillment and satisfaction. He saw that he – like all persons – was a living organism, composed of many elements, each of which has a natural function. When the self performs its functions well, such that the functioning of each element enhances or facilitates rather than frustrates or inhibits the functioning of the others, it is well-balanced, in tune with itself, and is happy. But such harmonious interfunctioning of the elements is not something that we can count on to happen automatically. I am often at odds with myself, in internal conflict; deliberate guidance is needed to set the “parts of the soul” in order, to achieve smooth functioning of the organism as a whole. To be able to guide the course of my life fruitfully I must know what I am doing. That is, I must know what the elements of the self are, how each functions, and how they properly function together. To live a happy life I must have self-knowledge.²

I myself, like Socrates, want to be happy. It is not my concern in this paper to argue that I should (or should not) want to be happy. My concern is more limited: Given that desire, what should I do in order to satisfy it? The Socratic program is clear. I should find out who I am, what my natural functions are, and then act so as to allow myself to function in a well-balanced, harmonious way. In this paper, I outline the results I have attained (so far) only as regards the first step in that program; what follows is a summary of the knowledge I have attained regarding the nature of the self common, I believe, to all human selves.

The question of knowledge is important. Knowledge is not simply a matter of believing what happens to be true, but of having good reasons for what I believe. It may be argued that we don't really need knowledge of ourselves to lead happy lives, we only need true opinions. Indeed, Socrates says that “true opinion when it governs any course of action produces as good a result as knowledge.”³ But the problem is to be sure that it is true opinion and not false that is governing our actions. Socrates likens true opinion to the (presumably mythical) statues of Daedalus, which walk away if not fastened down:

True opinions are a fine thing and do all sorts of good so long as they stay in their place, but they will not stay long. They run away from a man's mind; so they are not worth much until you tether them by working out the reason Once they are tied down, they become knowledge and are stable. That is why knowledge is something more valuable than right opinion. What distinguishes one from the other is the tether.⁴

To avoid bad guesses and plausible falsehoods, to be sure we know how to live well, we must have knowledge of ourselves, that is, we must have good reasons for what we believe, to refer to in times of doubt. We must be able to refer to something we can't doubt.

All I need do to have an opinion is to believe what someone tells me or what seems plausible without inquiring further. But to have knowledge I must “work out the reason,” and working out the reason is something I must do for myself – that is, each of us must do for him- or

² To document this view of Socrates in any detail would extend this introduction beyond its appropriate limits. Let me only refer the reader to an excellent summary of Socrates' views, *Socratic Humanism*, by Laszlo Versenyi, my former teacher and the person who instilled in me the Socratic spirit of philosophy.

³ Plato, *Meno* 98b, tr. W. K. C. Guthrie, in *Plato: The Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, p. 382.

⁴ *Ibid.* 97-e-98a, *Ibid.*, p. 381-2.

herself. Says Versenyi:

Knowledge . . . requires rational assent which presupposes rational reflection on the part of the individual, i.e. something he himself must engage in and work at. Anyone can supply a man with opinions, but only he himself can appropriate knowledge.⁵

To achieve knowledge, in the Socratic sense, I must fulfill two requirements. First, I must ground, or tie down, my model of the self to something I cannot doubt. Only then am I sure I have knowledge. Second, I must do it myself; it is not enough to read the doctrines of others and pick and choose according to my preferences. But I am doing more than acquiring knowledge for myself; I am reporting my findings to you, my reader. This puts an added burden on me, for I must communicate my knowledge to you in a way that will yield knowledge on your part. It is not enough for you to agree or disagree with me according to your preferences.

My method is phenomenology. Phenomenology is analysis of one's own experience – in this case, my analysis of my experience of myself. To do it at all, each person must do it for him- or herself. What I can do is tell you my method and relate to you my own sequence of investigation and discovery. I can tell you, so to speak, where I've been, how I got there, and what I've found. You can either take my work for it – and then you'll have only true opinion – or repeat my investigations for yourself, investigating your experience of yourself. It is my hope that some, at least, of my readers will choose the latter path. If so, they can tell me what they have discovered, either corroborating my discoveries or disagreeing with them. Together we can seek the truth; together we can find out who we are and how to live well.

But this paper does not report the complete fulfillment of my Socratic quest, even for myself, for I am reporting only what I have found to be the nature of the self and not how to act with that knowledge to achieve happiness. It is perhaps fitting that I stop short of recommending conduct. I am being unsocratic enough by committing my findings to writing. By not recommending conduct, I ensure that you cannot even get true opinion from me; you must find out for yourself.

⁵ Versenyi, p. 112.

Chapter One. On Method.

We have seen that “knowledge” means justified belief; opinions whose truth we have not rationally justified are not good enough. This means that at the outset we must take nothing for granted; we must disregard all theories and doctrines of the self, no matter how plausible, and find out for ourselves what is the nature of the self. But if we disregard all pregiven theories, what do we have to work with, how shall we start?

If we disregard all theories, what each of us has to work with is himself or herself. To use a conventional way of talking, what I have to work with is myself – each of us is to apply this mode of talking to his or her own case and say “I” and “myself,” etc. I start with direct experience of myself, with perception of myself, as Husserl says, in the mode, “it itself.”⁶ To use a distinction that James has made, in order to get knowledge about the self I must start with my acquaintance with myself.⁷ Now this is exactly what phenomenology is all about – starting without presuppositions, I examine my own experience, in this case my experience of myself. Phenomenology is *biasless reflective examination of experience*. It is the method that I, the author of this essay, have in fact used; it is the method that you must use if you are to repeat for yourself the process of inquiry whose results I shall presently outline. To help you do this, I shall explain what the phrase “biasless reflective examination of experience” means.

The term “experience,” as I use it, denotes everything of which I (each of us) am aware. “An experience” means everything of which I am aware at a single moment or over a short period of time. “The stream of experience” denotes everything of which I am aware over a longer period of time; it connotes change, movement, process. The term “experience” can also mean my experiences considered cumulatively, as in phrases such as “Experience shows that such-and-such is the case.” The term is also used as a verb; “I experience something” means that I perceive it or am aware of it in some way. Experience is thus a matter of being aware – but not necessarily of being conscious. Forgive me; it is crucially important, in order to avoid confusion, to get the usage of key terms straight at the outset, so I must explain how I use the phrases “being conscious” and “being aware.”

It is more common to use the terms “consciousness” and “awareness.” I do not follow this practice because it is misleading. The term “consciousness,” because it is a noun, ordinarily connotes a kind of fixity or substantialness that is not in fact found in experience. When I am conscious of something, say a book, my “consciousness” of the book is not a thing but much more like a process. Accordingly I use “being conscious” and “being aware” instead of “consciousness” and “awareness.” Moreover, the term “consciousness” often denotes simply a characteristic of our everyday life, namely wide-awake, attentive perception, either of the external world or of the inner world of thought, emotions, etc. When we clearly and distinctly see or hear something, etc., we say that we are conscious of it. But I need a term to denote also indistinct and unclear perceptions. There is much more present in any moment of experience than what is focally attended to; with James, it is “the reinstatement of the vague and inarticulate to its proper place in our mental life which I am so anxious to press on the attention.”⁸

⁶ Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, tr. Dorion Cairns, p. 314.

⁷ William James, *Psychology*, p. 27; also *The Writings of William James*, p. 27; v. also *The Writings of William James*, ed. John Jay McDermott, pp. 140-142.

⁸ James, *Psychology*, p. 157.

Because “consciousness,” or as I shall now say, “being conscious,” ordinarily connotes clarity and distinctness of perception, I shall use “being aware” to denote the broad spectrum of ways we experience and take into account our environment, from clear and distinct perception of Objects or ideas to vague and obscure presentations of moods, bodily sensations, the not-fully-attended-to physical environment, etc. (Following Cairns, I distinguish between “Object” and “object,” paralleling Husserl’s usage of “*Objekt*” and “*Gegenstand*,” and the same applies to words derived from these words.⁹ An Object (*Objekt*) is public, “there for everyone,”¹⁰ but an object (*Gegenstand*) is simply something present in experience, something of which I am aware in some way. Thus there are both subjective and Objective objects. Sometimes Husserl uses “object” (“*Gegenstand*”) to mean something self-identical, to which I can return again.¹¹ But I use the term to mean anything of which I am aware, whether or not it has the sense, “one-and-the-same,” “perceivable again.”)

I shall reserve “being conscious” for wakenly and explicitly being aware. To point out what I mean: until I called it to your attention, you were probably not conscious of the chair pressing against your seat and back. You were not conscious of it, i.e., you were not attending to it, but you were aware of it, it was present in your experience, nevertheless. There is a vast range of objects in our experience of which we are not normally conscious – something of which not only the “external horizon”¹² (what I see out of the corner of my eye, background noises, etc.), but also subjective elements such as emotions, moods, bodily sensations, and what Husserl calls “noeses,”¹³ interpretations that contribute significance to my experience such that I experience an orderly and coherent world of discrete Objects, people, events, institutions, etc., instead of a chaotic flux of sensation. My point is that clear and distinct perception is not the only form of being aware; in fact is it only one end of a continuum, at the other end of which are vague and indistinct presentations, emotional and physical feelings, and finally subliminally or subconsciously presented objects of which I can only with the greatest of difficulty become explicitly conscious.

[2017] I no longer recommend this usage of “being conscious” and “being aware.” I now use them as synonyms. I now call being conscious wakenly and explicitly “being focally conscious” or “being focally aware.” I call being conscious of vague and indistinct or subliminal objects “being peripherally conscious” or “being peripherally aware.”

All of these forms of being aware have a similar structure. There is something and it is presented to me who am aware of it in some way. The object may be distinct or indistinct, vivid or lifeless, heard, seen or touched, etc. Now, at this point in our quest for the self we do not yet have a clear and unambiguous notion of what “me” means. In order not to prejudice the case, therefore, instead of saying that objects are presented to me, I shall introduce the phrase “*pure transcendental consciousness*,” and say that in any moment of experience, the objects are presented to pure transcendental consciousness. “Pure transcendental consciousness” means *that which is aware* (of whatever it may be aware of), *that to which the*

⁹ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, tr. Dorion Cairns, p. 3, translator’s note 2.

¹⁰ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 240. See also, *Cartesian Meditations*, pp. 5, 52-3, and 80, for further examples of Husserl’s usage.

¹¹ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 157.

¹² Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, tr. David Carr, p. 162.

¹³ Husserl, *Ideas*, tr. W. R. Boyce Gibson, pp. 228, 230-231.

objects of being aware appear, that for which there are objects. I call it “pure” because everything, even the operative¹⁴ noeses of ordinary experience, are objects for it – nothing is “overlooked.” It is “transcendental” because it lies at the base or root of experience; it is that without which there would be no experience, no objects, no being aware. At this point this stipulation of the usage of the phrase “pure transcendental consciousness” is merely arbitrary. In Chapter Two, I outline a path whereby experiential insight into the state of affairs that this definition is meant to express can be achieved.

So much for experience. But phenomenology is the effort to apprehend my experience reflectively, to experience my experience. Phenomenological reflection is a species of ordinary reflection. “To reflect” means, in a general way, to think, but to reflect is more than to think. To reflect is to take a mental step backwards, to consider something in its broader context, to see how it is related to other things, what is its nature and place in the world. If, in the straightforward course of my daily life, I get angry with someone and speak sharply to that person, I have an unreflective experience of anger. If I stop to consider why I got angry, what effect my anger had on that person and on myself, etc., I am reflecting on my anger. If I am at a political meeting vociferously advocating a party line, I am doing so unreflectively. If I stop to consider the broader implications of that line, what its probable consequences are if it be implemented, etc., I am reflecting on it. In order to reflect, I must suspend my interest, stand back and take a neutral attitude, and try to see my object (in the mode, “thinking about it”) more clearly and in a broader context. Says Richard Schmitt, “. . . reflection requires detachment and widens the scope of inquiry.”¹⁵ The process is the same whether the object is oneself or an aspect thereof or an aspect of one’s world.

Phenomenological reflection is no different. The difference between naively and straightforwardly experiencing something, say seeing a tree, and phenomenologically reflecting on that seeing is as follows: In the naïve experience my attention is directed toward the tree. Certain interpretations, or noeses, are present, but only operatively, in the background or “margin”¹⁶ – interpretations such as that this object is a tree, that it is an Object, perceivable by everyone, that if I walk around it I shall see the other side, etc. If I reflect on this experience phenomenologically, I can make these operative interpretations thematic, I can attentively notice them, as well as the tree subjectively experienced through them. Thus I apprehend the tree in a broader context, the context of the rest of my experience of the tree. “Reflexion,” says Husserl, referring specifically to phenomenological reflection, “is an expression for acts in which the stream of experience (*Erlebnis*), with all its manifold events (phases of experience, intentionalities) can be grasped and analyzed”¹⁷ We’ll see later, in Chapter Three, just what “intentionality” means. Here, note that phenomenological reflection on an experience reveals the whole experience, not just the focal object of the experience. A clearer statement is found in *Cartesian Meditations*: “. . . reflection makes an object out of what was previously a subjective process but not objective.”¹⁸ Thus, what was only operative, only in the background, in the original, un-reflected-upon experience becomes available for attentive inspection when I reflect upon the experience – and this background

¹⁴ Something is operative if it is present in and influencing the course of experience, but not focally, not in the “spotlight of attention.” “Operative” is contrasted to “thematic,” which means “present explicitly” or “focally attended to.” See Richard M. Zaner, *The Way of Phenomenology*, p. 115.

¹⁵ Richard Schmitt, “Husserl’s Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction,” in *Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Its Interpretation*, ed. Joseph I Kackelmann, p. 63.

¹⁶ Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 107.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

¹⁸ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 34.

includes not only operative interpretations or noeses, but also subjective reactions to the focal object, such as interest or disgust or aesthetic delight, etc., as well as extraneous elements that may or may not be present, such as idly thinking about something else, etc.

Let me add something that should be obvious, but is frequently overlooked – that although most instances of phenomenological reflection on experience are recollective, i.e., the reflected-upon experience is present in the mode, “remembering it,” this need not be the case. I can pay attention to my experience while it is happening, thematically noting operative interpretations as well as the focal object and concomitant subjective feelings. Husserl sneers at “vague talk concerning reflexion or – what is ordinarily identified with this – recollection . . .,”¹⁹ and speaks of “immanent perceiving reflexion,” that is, reflection that has as its object an experience as it is going on.²⁰ Unfortunately, many philosophers, even one so astute as Alfred Schutz, have mistakenly thought that reflection on experience can take place only in the mode of recollection.²¹

Of course, when I reflectively consider an experience, whether in the modes, “remembering it,” or “thinking about it,” or immediately apprehending it as it is happening, the experience reflected upon is not the same as the experience of reflecting on it. The experience reflected upon is the intentional object – only one aspect – of the reflecting experience. Says Husserl, “. . . reflexions upon experiences [are] themselves experiences of which we are unreflectively aware.”²²

Now, the third characteristic of phenomenology is that it is to be biasless. It is the reflecting experience – the process of being conscious of the reflected-upon experience and actively trying to notice all the aspects of it – that is, to be free from bias. It is to be free from bias in order that the biases inherent in the reflected-upon experience can be clearly “seen” (observed, apprehended, grasped, noticed in any mode of experience). Indeed, in the natural attitude, naively living in the taken-for-granted lifeworld,²³ we normally have a strong bias against becoming conscious that we are biased – too much questioning of our taken-for-granted assumptions is regarded as threatening, even subversive.

The elimination of biases in the reflecting experience so that the reflected-upon experience can be “seen” in its entirety is what Husserl means by “bracketing” the natural attitude; it is his *epokhe*, or abstention from questions of existence and non-existence, etc.²⁴ One of the most fundamental presuppositions of the natural attitude is the assumption that the Objective world has factual, spatio-temporal existence; phenomenological reflection reveals this assumption for what it is, a complex set of operative noeses functioning to interpret my sensations as perceptions of a really existing world. In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl speaks of “absolute freedom from prejudice.”²⁵ A clearer statement appears in *The Paris Lectures*: “Phenomenological experience as reflection must avoid any interpretive constructions. Its descriptions must reflect accurately the concrete contents of experience,

¹⁹ Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 200.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 203.

²¹ Alfred Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, tr. George Walsh and Frederick Lehnert, p. 51.

²² Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 203.

²³ Husserl, *Crisis*, v., for instance, pp. 142-151.

²⁴ Husserl, *Ideas*, pp. 96-100.

²⁵ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 35 (emphasis omitted).

precisely as these are experienced.”²⁶ Now we must see what these statements mean in more detail.

Before we do, I should note that freedom from bias is an ideal toward which the phenomenologist strives, but it is not something accomplished easily or all at once. I must reflectively apprehend a typical state of affairs or mode of experience again and again to be sure I have not missed anything and have made thematic all the operative interpretive elements. I should engage in dialogue with other phenomenologists as a further check. I’ll discuss these points in more detail shortly. But note that this is not a hopeless situation, for eventually there comes a time when I have made thematic all that is present in a moment of experience or a certain type of experience, and – try as I might – I cannot find anything more which I have left out, nor anything that I have “read in” that is not in fact there.

Corresponding to the different modes of being reflectively conscious of an experience, the injunction to be biasless, to observe without presuppositions, prejudices, preconceived notions, ungrounded concepts and theories, etc., takes different forms. When I am reflectively conscious of an experience in the mode, “thinking about it,” I must be careful not to try to interpret or explain what I “see” in terms of concepts and theories whose meaning and truth I have not subjected to thorough criticism. It is illegitimate, for instance, to interpret the process of experience as a function of brain-processes or of social interaction or of hypothetical psychological entities such as libido, id, ego, etc. It is illegitimate because none of these categories correspond to what is strictly reflectively *observed* to be elements in the experience reflected upon. After I have attained a clear idea of what is inherent in the different modes of experience, I may go on to incorporate my findings in a larger theory, perhaps using concepts derived from other areas of inquiry – but not before the proper groundwork has been laid through careful examination of what is present in experience itself. The injunction to observe without presuppositions acquires more force in the case of being conscious of an experience in the mode, “remembering it.” It is all too easy to “read in” elements that I think ought to be there because some theory or doctrine tells me that they are there, but which are not in fact there. Moreover, I must be careful not to overlook elements that I don’t expect. This is particularly important in being reflectively conscious of an experience while it is going on, being conscious of it in the mode, “it itself.” It was only after many attempts reflectively to grasp my experience in its concreteness that I, the author of this essay, began to be able to be conscious of the specifically noetic elements in experience, the nearly subliminal interpretations and perceptual judgments that let me know that this particular configuration of shape, color, texture, etc., for instance, is my typewriter, an enduring Object, usable for specific purposes and with a certain sentimental value. (The topic of the noetic element in experience is treated in more detail in Chapter Three.) The beginner in phenomenology should not be too easily discouraged at the outset if he or she does not find the wealth of detail that Husserl and the other phenomenologists assert to be present in experience. Our habit of overlooking the subjective and noetic elements in experience is too ingrained to be easily or quickly overcome.

Perhaps it would be helpful for me to explain how I myself practice phenomenology. Most of my own reflective analysis of experience occurs in situations in which I almost spontaneously disengage myself from an experience while it is going on and start to notice the different operative elements. I then spend some time “playing it back,” as it were, actively retaining it, recalling it and recollectively living through it again (often several times), now with enough

²⁶ Husserl, *The Paris Lectures*, tr. Peter Koestenbaum, p. 13.

distance explicitly to note features originally present only marginally or implicitly (operatively). I actively observe and pay attention to the experience, first in the mode, “itself,” and then in the mode, “retaining it” or “remembering it.” While I am doing this, I am making an effort to form a clear idea or concept of what I “see.” The beginning stages of doing phenomenology are devoted merely to sorting the various elements in experience into types; such as sensations, noeses, emotions, thoughts or ideas, bodily feelings, etc. Later, after I have gained some idea of what sorts of objects are present in each mode of experience, I can begin to “see” functional interrelationships between them. The sorting into types is based on what can be reflectively observed to be present in any single moment of experience, as if I were taking a snapshot of it and sorting out what I “see.” The various functions of each of the types of elements can only be “seen” over a period of time, because it takes some time for the functions to be performed – it is easier, for instance, to be conscious that there are noetic elements functioning to interpret my sensations if I notice that I take a series of changing sensations to be perceptions of an enduring Object than if I reflectively apprehend only one perspectival profile of the Object. Similarly, the functional interrelationships between the various aspects of my experience are much more easily noted over a period of time than in a single moment of experience. Of course, the apprehension of function aids the sorting into types. It is chiefly by virtue of function that noeses, for instance, are distinguished from mere nearly-subliminal idle thoughts.

Note that it is not necessarily the case that I must put *all* ideas out of my mind in order reflectively to apprehend an experience phenomenologically. What I must do is to put out of play all preconceived notions that I have not “seen” to be true, but inherent in the process of doing phenomenology is the attempt actively to form ideas of what is clearly “seen” in the reflected-upon experiences. Doing phenomenology has been likened to constructing maps of a new territory.²⁷ Clearly, I must not depend on maps that someone else has made and of whose truth I am not sure (although I can and do examine my experience in order to “see” whether those maps are correct). What I do instead is to form my own maps, based on what I observe to be the case. But once I have a map of my own, I may refer to it in order to get my bearings when I am reflectively examining a new experience. Indeed, my own maps are an invaluable aid to being clearly conscious of what is present in the reflected-upon experience. Whitehead has asserted that all being conscious is a matter of being conscious of something along with something else that contrasts with it, specifically that conscious perception always involves the contrast between the given (sensation) and the conceptual.²⁸ I think he overstates the case; being conscious can also occur when there is a contrast merely between different things in the external world (in the sensory field that has the sense “Objective world”). But it is true that having an idea of what I have found in previous examinations of experience aids me in “seeing” what is present in an experience that I am currently reflecting upon.

Now, I must note that in one respect my way of doing phenomenology differs from that of Husserl, although in all other respects I look to Husserl as the founder of an important and radically new way of investigating experience and human existence in general. I practice phenomenology as an *empirical* discipline, not an eidetic one. That means that I do not practice Husserl’s method of imaginative eidetic variation;²⁹ in the present inquiry I have not been concerned with finding the essential nature of any conceivable self, but only with the

²⁷ Zaner, pp. 35-36; cf Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 259.

²⁸ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, p. 245.

²⁹ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, pp. 69-72.

nature of the self as I in fact find it. My method is empirical in that 1) I investigate the self as it is revealed in concrete originary experience, and 2) I make inductive generalizations from repeated observations. I have, for instance, repeatedly found an emotional component in experience, and I have found this component every time I “looked;” so I generalize inductively and say that there is always an emotional component in experience. Whether or not I can imagine a totally emotionless experience is irrelevant. I regard the results of my inquiry as tentative, always open to correction (if I were reflectively to observe an emotionless moment of experience, I should have to revise my generalization). That I regard my results as tentative does not differ from Husserl.³⁰ But the source of such correction is new perceptions of the self, not new imaginative perceptions of it, either my own perceptions (where each of us says “my own”) or someone else’s, who tells me about it (I shall return to the latter point near the end of this chapter.).

I have no quarrel with the possibility and legitimacy of the method of imaginative eidetic variation; I (the author of this paper) merely have less confidence in my powers of imagination than my powers of originary reflective observation. Husserl notes that being conscious of something in the mode, “it itself,” takes precedence over all other modes of being conscious of it; all other modes (such as “remembering it,” “thinking about it,” “imagining it”) point back or refer in some way to the original experiencing in the mode, “it itself.”³¹ I prefer to stick with originary (*originär*) or “primordial”³² experience because that is the final court of appeal anyway.

Appeals to authority have some rhetorical, if not philosophical, impact, so let me note that Husserl regards what I call empirical phenomenology as a necessary prerequisite to the eidetic phenomenology which will ultimately ground a complete, apodictic and universal science. Phenomenology, he says, must proceed in two stages:

In the first stage the realm accessible to transcendental self-experience (a tremendous realm, as we soon discover) must be explored – and, at first, with simple devotion to the evidence inherent in the harmonious flow of such experience In this stage accordingly . . . we proceed like the natural scientist in his devotion to the evidence in which Nature is experienced³³

The second stage is the stage of “ultimate criticism, intent on apodictic principles governing the range of evidence,”³⁴ and such criticism, if I am interpreting Husserl correctly, is done by means of imaginative eidetic variation. But I regard myself merely as a natural scientist of experience, finding out what the nature of the self is as it is concretely given in originary experience. Empirical phenomenology differs from traditional British empiricism in that it is a method for reflectively apprehending *all* that is found in experience. Locke, Hume, *et. al.*, had much simpler models of experience than I have found to be the case; I can only assume that they did not carry out their analyses far enough. Their models have some *prima facie* plausibility, but experience is far richer than they imagined. My method of empirical phenomenology corresponds more closely with James’ radical empiricism. I agree wholeheartedly with his “postulate” that the only things that shall be debatable among

³⁰ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 156.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

³² Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 350, and the translator’s Analytical Index, p. 430.

³³ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 29 (emphasis omitted).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience;” and his insistence that relations between things are matters of direct experience,³⁵ as well as the whole of his *Psychology*, shows his drive toward attention to detail.

The eidetic method consists in imagining all possible variations of a certain type of experience, or, in the present case, of a certain aspect of the self as experienced, to see what features are invariantly present in all instances of that type – the essential features – and what are only incidental and non-essential. Another reason I do not practice this method is simply that I have not yet had the time for it. It is easy to see that an essential feature of visual perception of a physical thing is that I can only see one side of it at a time, but the self is a much more complex matter than that. It has taken me five years to “see” with clarity what is involved in the self as experienced in the mode, “it itself;” it will take many more years to consider all possible variations of it.

Moreover, it is not as yet clear to me whether the eidetic method is simply an inductive method transferred to the realm of imagination or whether there is a sudden intuition into essence that obviates the necessity of considering the variations case by case. Whether it is possible to have such a supra-rational intuition and how it could be recognized as such were it to occur to me are not matters that I have satisfactorily made clear to myself. Whatever the final judgment on this matter, at least the empirical method has no need of such an intuition, and the thorny methodological problems relating to it may safely be bypassed.

Some who are more versed in the eidetic method than I have remarked that the features of the self that I outline seem to be, in fact, essential features, and then wonder why I do not recognize and assert that. They may well be essential; every actual instance of experience of a certain feature of the self must, of course, conform to the essential possibility of experience of that type of feature. But I have not yet advanced to the stage where I can assert with confidence that my model of the self is a model of the essence of the self. I have focused only on those features that seem to me probably common to all selves. I differentiate idiosyncratic features from those common to all by comparing myself with others, although sometimes, to be sure, with imagined others. But such limited use of imagination by no means constitutes full use of the eidetic method. In the absence of imaginative eidetic variation, I confirm that the features of the self I mention are common to all selves through intersubjective dialogue, a topic to which I shall return.

It is common to think that the eidetic phenomenologist claims absolute certainty for his assertions concerning the nature of experience. Indeed, Husserl speaks of “apodictic evidence,” which is characterized by “absolute indubitability” or “absolute certainty.”³⁶ He elsewhere acknowledges that even ostensibly apodictic claims must be held with a certain tentativeness, that “even an ostensibly apodictic evidence can become disclosed as deception”³⁷ Whether this is indeed a denial of the possibility of apodictic evidence, as Merleau-Ponty claims,³⁸ or merely an injunction to be forever critical of what one thinks he or she knows is not a point I want to try to settle here. Note only that the confusion surrounding this topic is one more reason why I do not claim to follow the eidetic method, and that it is

³⁵ James, *Pragmatism and four essays from The Meaning of Truth*, p. 199; v. also *The Writings of William James*, pp. 134-136.

³⁶ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, pp. 14-16.

³⁷ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 156; v. also *Ideas*, p. 236.

³⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Essential Writings of Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Alden L. Fisher, P. 38, n. 10.

important to get clear on just what I can and cannot be certain of, and in what modes – and this clarity must come from what I can clearly “see” to be the case, as I reflectively apprehend my experience.

Note first that “certainty” may mean either the subjective feeling of being sure of the truth of my claims, of having no doubts, or the rational justifiability of my claims. The two are not the same – I may be uncritically certain of beliefs that I have not justified to myself – but the feeling is generally attendant on having performed a rational justification. It is with certainty in the latter sense that we are now concerned. As Socrates says, I can be sure I have knowledge and not just opinion if I can, at any time, tie it down to an unshakeable foundation, tether it to something that I cannot doubt. We must now see how phenomenology is a way of getting knowledge in this sense.

The unshakeable foundation which I cannot doubt, that to which I tie all my knowledge of the self, is immediate reflective experience of experience. To clarify this assertion, we need to get clear on some terms and concepts. Husserl calls experience of experience, of which phenomenological reflection is a type, “immanent” experience; the intentional object has the sense, via operative interpretations (noeses) of being part of the same stream of experience as the experience of reflectively apprehending it. This is in contrast to “transcendent” experience which has for its object something that has the sense of being other than my own stream of experience,³⁹ for instance physical things or unreal objectivities such as judgments, mathematical and logical theories, etc. Husserl notes also that there is a phenomenon found in experience that he calls “retention” or “‘primary’ memory,”⁴⁰ afterimages, as it were, but in all sense-modalities, of what was just experienced but is now no longer strictly present in the mode, “it itself.” By virtue of my retentions I am still conscious of what was immediately presented to me a moment ago.

Now, Husserl says that the experience of paying attention to experience while it is happening and paying attention to it as retained, which he calls “immanent perceiving reflexion” and “immanent retention,” have an “absolute right.”⁴¹ He also says, “Every immanent perception necessarily guarantees the existence (*Existenz*) of its object . . . ; it would be nonsense to maintain the possibility of an experience *given in such a way not* truly existing.”⁴² That is, to put it loosely, I can’t doubt that what I have before my eyes is before my eyes. I have absolute certainty that something is there, and I can see what is there and know what it is. Not only that, I have absolute certainty that something has just been, and I can pay attention to the retention and know what has just been. Let me add that this is strictly true only for what is focally attended to in the reflected-upon experience. I have found that even in the best cases of being reflectively conscious of an experience while it is happening and then as it is retained and remembered there are features (usually noted in the third or fourth recollective living-through) which I am not sure were really there in the original, not sure whether I am not reading into the memory on the basis of what I think ought to be there, given the interpretive framework I’m trying to construct. There is always a margin of uncertainty in such procedures, though it does not include the clearly focused-upon features of the experience reflected upon.

³⁹ Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 112.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 197-198.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 203. The term “right,” says the translator, “implies intrinsic justification and legitimacy, and therefore the authority that confers legitimacy (p. 435).”

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 130.

There is, of course, another kind of certainty, the certainty of definitions and analytic truths, but this is not our concern here. Note only that it is crucially important to make sure that definitions accurately and usefully refer to experienceable states of affairs. I find Sartre inordinately confusing, for instance, when he uses the term “consciousness” to refer to two entirely different features of experience, in spite of qualifying that term by “positional” and “non-positional.”⁴³ (This concern for clarity of definition motivated much of the discussion in this chapter.)

Now, the certainty inherent in immanent perceiving reflection and immanent retention is the bedrock of phenomenologically gained knowledge. If I make an assertion about the nature of experience or of an experience of something, I can at any time return to my experience, take another “look” at it, and confirm my assertion. But note that *absolute* certainty is characteristic only of the *evidence*, of what is strictly experienced;⁴⁴ inductive generalizations about the nature of all experience, including what I have not (and not yet) reflectively apprehended, have at best only what Husserl calls “empirical certainty,” certainty that is “good until counter-evidence.”⁴⁵ I must be open to the possibility that my conceptual model of experience, or, in the present case, of the self may be disconfirmed by further experience (however unlikely that may be). But of the evidence itself, what is revealed in immanent perceiving reflection and immanent retention, I have absolute certainty. The more my assertions are confirmed by originary absolute evidence, the more certain I may feel that they are true. Moreover, I do not in practice doubt my memory, at least my memory of what was clearly reflectively apprehended. My memory of an experience is tied to the originary experience by “a continuous series of retentions, . . . a continuous chain of retentions of retentions.”⁴⁶ It is this link that provides the characteristic feeling of remembering correctly, a feeling noticeable chiefly when someone else (or I myself) questions or disputes my memory and I contemplate it again to be sure. Of course, my memory *may* be false, especially as regards the margin or “fringe”⁴⁷ that was not focally apprehended, a possibility that Husserl recognizes when he speaks of “the *relative* right of immanent recollections, which extends just so far as the content of this memory, taken by itself, shows the genuine character of recollection (this is by no means shown, in general, by every aspect of the remembered)”⁴⁸ The danger of misremembering can be mitigated by taking notes immediately after retentive-recollective reflection on an experience. But this is not a serious danger, for my conceptual model of (in the present case) the self is based on the cumulative evidence of many reflective experiencings, and the general structural features of the self are not revealed only in rare and isolated experiences, but are noticeable whenever I apprehend phenomenologically my experience of myself. Since my experience is always on-going, I can at any time return to it and “see” with originary evidence what is revealed there. I don’t doubt what I have “seen” for myself; I can always account for my knowledge by “looking” again. Thus phenomenology fulfills the Socratic requirement for knowledge in that I can at any time tie down or ground my conceptual model of the self, of which I have empirical certainty, to originary evidence, of which I have absolute certainty.

⁴³ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, tr. Hazel E. Barnes, pp. 1-1vi; v. also *The Transcendence of the Ego*, tr. Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick, pp. 40-41.

⁴⁴ This usage of the term “evidence” follows Husserl; v., for instance, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 12.

⁴⁵ Schutz, *Collected Papers I*, ed. Maurice Natanson, p. 33, citing Husserl’s *Erfahrung und Urteil*.

⁴⁶ Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 218.

⁴⁷ James, *Psychology*, p. 156.

⁴⁸ Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 203.

It should be noted that returning to originary evidence is not the only way to validate knowledge, though in doing phenomenology it is the most important way and is the final court of appeal. Knowledge can be validated in other ways as well, two of which are important for the present inquiry.

Our concern is ultimately pragmatic, to learn how to live well. Thus, the ethical maxims which are derivable from our analysis of the self can be tested pragmatically; by living our lives in accord with them we can find out whether they lead to happiness or unhappiness, to fulfillment or frustration. In fact, as I myself have discovered, and invite you to discover, maxims that suggest themselves on the basis of analyses and descriptions that I am sure are correct turn out, when put into practice and lived by, to yield the desired results. Thus the maxims have pragmatic sanction – they “work” – and are not only supported by the analyses on which they are based, but in turn lend support to them. This is beyond the scope of this paper, however.

But prior to such testing, it is crucial to be sure that the pure description is correct. Now, if I were only concerned with the nature and structure of my own self, idiosyncratically, then my only appeal would be to my own evidential “seeings” of what is the case. But I myself and, I hope, my readers are interested in doing more. We are interested in finding out what is the nature of the human self in general, of all selves. This presents a peculiar difficulty, for I have immediate access only to my own experience of my own self, not to anyone else’s experience of himself or herself. If the object of our inquiry were something Objective, there would be much less difficulty. In the natural attitude, when we are doing scientific inquiry into some feature of the Objective world, there is a standard procedure for validating claims as to the nature of that feature. I adopt the scientific attitude of the neutral, disinterested observer and describe what I see, perhaps in the course of performing an experiment. My descriptions are correct if others, adopting the same neutral viewpoint, can perform an exactly similar experiment or observe the same or an exactly similar state of affairs, see what I have described, and agree that my description is correct. The goal of scientific inquiry is to get a conceptual model of the world that anyone who adopts the neutral attitude and who has enough training to understand the concepts involved will agree with. When this is done, we have “consensually validated” knowledge, a phrase I borrow from Harry Stack Sullivan.⁴⁹

But the object of our inquiry is not something Objective, but something subjective, to which only I (each of us) have direct access – my self as I experience it. It is impossible for anyone to verify my descriptions of my experience by adopting the same point of view, because only I have direct access to my experience. Conversely, strictly speaking I cannot ground assertions about other selves in originary evidence, because I cannot experience anyone else’s experience of himself or herself. Each person who does phenomenology must make his or her own map, his or her own conceptual model. It is impossible for me to check my map against your experience, nor your map against your experience; the best I can do is to check my map and yours with my experience. Correlatively, the best you can do is to check your map and mine with your experience. You must listen to my description of the experienced structures of my self and then investigate your experience of yourself to see if my description applies or not or to correct it in some way. We can do this because our maps, expressed in verbal or perhaps pictorial concepts, are sharable, as our experiences are not.

⁴⁹ Harry Stack Sullivan, *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry*, ed. Helen Swick Perry and Mary Ladd Garvel, pp. 183-4, 224-5, and Mabel Blake Cohen’s introduction, p. xiv.

Certain things are required if this process of intersubjective dialogical checking is to take place; doing phenomenology requires a two-fold integrity. First, it is obviously important to have good maps, maps useful to our colleagues in dialogue. Phenomenological reporting, that is, description of experienced states of affairs, if it is to be of any use to anyone but the reporter, must be clear, precise, and accurate. Words should be used unambiguously, and efforts should be made to relate the vocabulary of the report to that of other reporters' reports. Dialogues should be held with others to see by question and answer whether the meaning of one's words is getting through to the other and is correct.

Second, good phenomenological reporting involves integrity in another sense. Most crudely put, no one else can really tell if I am lying. More realistically, no one else can really tell – for sure – whether I am mistaken or not, when I claim to have reflectively observed some feature of experience. If I am to be accurate in my reporting then I'll have to be very critical of what I observe. I have to develop, through long practice, acute powers of observation and a good memory; and I have to undergo and analyze similar experiences again and again, to make sure I haven't missed anything. In effect, I have to become my own outside observer looking over my shoulder – I have to because nobody else possibly can!

Thus, phenomenological integrity involves being true to two things at once. I must be true to the phenomena, to the "*Sachen selbst*"⁵⁰ – says Husserl, "We must not make assertions about that which we do not ourselves see."⁵¹ – and I must be true to my audience, to whom I make my reports.

Only among phenomenologists of such two-fold integrity can intersubjective dialogical checking of assertions about the nature of everyone's self usefully take place. In particular, only in such a way can I clearly distinguish the merely idiosyncratic aspects of myself from the types of elements and the functional interrelationships between them which are common to all selves. The distinction to which I allude is what Heidegger calls the distinction between *existenziell* or ontic understanding, which deals with the individual in all his or her unique concreteness, and *existenzial* or ontological understanding, which deals with the structures of human existence in general.⁵² Reflectively apprehending my experience of myself, I construct – or discover – concepts which seem to me to describe the *existenzial* or ontological features of the self which may be common to all selves. In order to find out whether these concepts are correct, whether they are universally true of all human selves, I must communicate my findings to others and see if they agree. "Universality," says Richard F. Grabau, "is a function of the fact that communication has occurred and that the symbolic form in question has been shared."⁵³

Accordingly, when I find that another author has conceptualized an aspect of experience in a way that I find useful or illuminating or has expressed something well that I have found to be the case, I mention his findings in support of my own. I have already done this more than once. When I do this, the doctrines of these authors should be taken as corroborative evidence which tends to support my findings and lend them consensual validation. I should note that with respect to Husserl, James, and to a lesser extent Peirce, it is much more nearly

⁵⁰ Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, Zweiter Band, I Teil, p. 6.

⁵¹ Husserl, *The Paris Lectures*, p. 9.

⁵² Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson, pp. 31, 33.

⁵³ Richard F. Grabau, *Existential Universals*, in *An Invitation to Phenomenology*, ed. James M. Edie..

the case that my investigations corroborate theirs. Their investigations are, in general, much more extensive and far-reaching than my own, if only because they have had more time to do the investigating. I feel some confidence in referring to their reports because even though I have not had evidential “seeings” of all they assert to be the case, I have experienced for myself enough that corresponds to what they say to trust the rest to be correct. But this is no blind appeal to authority; each of us bears the responsibility – if we are to obtain knowledge and not just opinion – to examine phenomenologically his or her own experience of himself or herself to see if the reports of other investigators are correct. Because you can’t investigate my experience, you will have to confirm what I say about the nature of the self by investigating your experience. You will have to acquire your own knowledge for yourself. Thus, phenomenology fulfills the Socratic requirement for knowledge in another way – each person must do it for himself or herself.

So much for method; it is time to get on with more substantial matters. Let me briefly outline what to expect in the rest of this essay. What follows is a report of the results of my own investigation, amplified at points with the reports of other investigators (especially Husserl, James and Peirce) whose results I trust. In Chapters Two through Five, I outline in detail the composition and functional structure of the self as I have reflectively experienced it. Some of the discussion may seem overly complex; but the self is quite complex, and I go into so much detail for two reasons: 1) For my own satisfaction, I have set down all the results I have attained so that I can refer to them and confirm (or disconfirm) them as my investigation – which I do not regard as complete – continues; 2) I hope this report will be of some use to others as they try to orient themselves to the subjective structures of their own experience; it seems to me that if I left something out, such orientation would be that much less facilitated. These chapters can be regarded largely as the results of sorting the elements of the self into types and noting the function of each. In Chapter Six, I summarize my findings regarding the composition of the self; and in Chapter Seven I summarize the structure of the self, showing the functional interrelationships between the types of elements, the unity of the self, and the relatedness of the self to its world, to other selves, and to itself. The reader who does not wish to pursue the detailed investigations may skip immediately, without loss of continuity, to Chapter Six.

Chapter Two. I-Who-Experience.

Where shall we begin? If we take nothing for granted, we may not even take for granted that we know what the self is; so we do not know, at the outset, what to look for or where to look for it. As a heuristic clue only, let me suggest the following: We are doing phenomenology, which is biasless, reflective examination of experience. Clearly, such a project presupposes that I experience. Phenomenology is something that I do; it presupposes that I act. Therefore, let us examine our experience to see if there is any experienceable object which is I-the-experiencer-and-actor. In this chapter, however, we shall ignore I-the-actor for the moment and try to find I-the-experiencer. This procedure is by no means necessary; I have no justification for starting this way except that it is the way that I followed originally. In this chapter, I am reporting not only the results of my investigations but the path that the investigation took as well, hoping thereby to lead you to find out what I have found out.

My investigation was prompted by a story I once heard Ralph Metzner tell about a certain guru in India who used what he called the “direct method.” A seeker would come to him and ask, “Master, what is the Self?” The master would reply, “Who asks that questions?” If the inquirer said he didn’t understand, the master would reply, “Who does not understand?” If the seeker expressed confusion, the reply would be, “Who is confused?” The dialogue would go on like this until the seeker left in anger (“Who is angry?”) or until it dawned on him that the master was trying to tell him something.

What was the guru trying to tell the naïve seeker? I think it was something like this: Do not identify yourself with anything that you are aware of; for you are the Self who is aware, not the objects of which you are aware. You are aware of the questioning, the failure to understand, the confusion, the anger – but you are not any of these things. In this chapter, I shall adopt this “direct method” and try to go straight to the heart of the matter. Note that the truth of the claim that I am not any of the things of which I am aware is not established at the outset. Again, it is only a heuristically useful clue. As this report proceeds, it will become clear in what sense it is true and in what sense false to say that I am not what I am aware of, as will the reason for capitalizing the word “Self” in this context.

Let us start from the natural attitude and consider the various classes of objects of which I am aware, discarding all that is not the Self. Husserl’s own description of the natural attitude or, as he says, of the world experienced “from the natural standpoint,” is a useful categorization of the various types of objects of experience.⁵⁴ There are, first of all, Objective things, events, affairs and affair-complexes, such as physical things, people, animals, institutions, cultural objects, positive laws, natural regularities, etc. At this point, it is quite clear what the Self is not – it is not the Objective world which I experience and take for granted that others experience also. We can dismiss the whole of reality experienced as external to me and public as not being the Self.

In addition to the Objective, public world, there is the private world of my own mental acts and objects. I have ideas and concepts about myself and my world, memories and anticipations of my surroundings, nearly subconscious schemata or “maps” of my environment, knowledge and mental images of all sorts. All these are objects for me, objects of which I am aware. Since I am aware of them, they too are not the Self, not I-who-am-

⁵⁴ Husserl, *Ideas*, pp. 91-93.

aware. To be sure, there is a certain intimacy about them, for only I can be aware of my subjective experience, but it is a mistake to think that my subjective experience is that which is aware of the Objective world. On the contrary, both subjective and Objective elements of experience are objects for me, not I myself.

In addition, I experience values and value-qualities; things are not simply there, but are there as beautiful, ugly, admirable, disgusting, etc. An adequate discussion of Husserl's theory of how values are experienced is beyond our scope here.⁵⁵ Suffice it to say that although he describes the value-characters as being aspects of the perceived things, as being Objective and other than himself, in fact the values themselves (the qualities, for instance, beauty, pleasantness, strangeness, friendliness, etc.) are not perceived by means of sense-perception, but by means of interpretive ideas and feelings present in experience with the objects or, as it were, attached to them. *Through* these ideas and feelings, the characters "beautiful," "friendly," etc., appear as belonging to the objects. These interpretations and feeling-responses are thoroughly subjective, available directly only to me; beauty is in the eye of the beholder. From the phenomenological point of view it is possible to distinguish these feelings and interpretations from the things, people, events, and so on, to which they are initially attached. Then we are left with the objects themselves, which are clearly not the Self, and interpretations and feelings. Interpretations, in the broad meaning I give to the word, are mental objects – images, words, schemata or maps of the world, concepts, etc., which may or may not be the result of deliberate thinkings, but which do play a determining role in what I notice and how it appears to me (e.g., *as* threatening, friendly, ugly, beautiful, etc.). These mental objects are there for me to be aware of, though usually quite obscurely and penumbrally. Thus they are not the Self. We are left with feelings.

I shall reserve a detailed discussion of feelings for Chapter Four. Let me say at this point only that by "feeling" I mean anything immediately present in experience, such as bodily feelings, sensations, emotions, moods, and impulsions to action. They are distinguished from external and other internal objects such as physical things, people, concepts and images, etc., in that the latter are present in experience mediately, in the form of feeling or sensation plus interpretive elements. The only point I want to make about feelings, at this stage, is that they, too, are objects of which I am or can become aware. Sometimes I am aware of them only dimly, sometimes I am conscious of them quite vividly. Sometimes they occupy most of my attention, but more often they are present only as a vague background or accompaniment to that toward which I am chiefly directing my attention. But they are nevertheless objects for me, affairs of which I can be aware. They too, then, are not the Self.

The entire contents of the Objective world and my private subjective world have been discarded; they are not the Self. All that is left is pure transcendental consciousness itself. The Self, it seems, is that pure consciousness which is aware of everything present to it. But what is pure transcendental consciousness? Surely we can now answer the question of the Self definitely from the phenomenological point of view by describing pure consciousness itself.

But I can't describe pure transcendental consciousness, for I cannot become aware of it at all! I am barred from becoming conscious of the I, the Self, that is itself aware; for to do so would require that the I be no longer the conscious subject, but an object. The I that is aware cannot be seen or heard, it cannot be intuited through thought (for then I would be aware, not of the

⁵⁵ See, for instance, *Ibid.*, sections 116 and 117, pp. 300-307.

I, but of an image or concept of the I). The I which is aware, I-the-experiencer, is unintuitable. It is ungraspable, a void, a nothingness – it is no thing. I can characterize the Self as that to which the world is present, that for which there is the world, but what it is in itself I cannot grasp in the mode, “it itself,” I cannot be aware of in any way. It is a mystery.

This state of affairs is so peculiar and unique that there is no adequate language for it. If by the term “I” or “Self” we mean I-who-experience, then I am not there at all! There is no experienceable object which is I-the-experiencer. It seems misleading to use a noun or noun phrase, for there is nothing to which such a noun or noun phrase refers. This, I take it, is the point behind Sartre’s talk of Nothingness and the Buddhists’ talk of the Void. And yet I take it for granted that I exist, that I experience the world; nothing could be more obvious than that experience is going on and that it is my experience, if only because it is mine and not someone else’s. Thus, the Upanishads and the later Hindu tradition speak of the Atman, that innermost Self which experiences the world; and Husserl speaks of the “pure Ego,” “the phenomenological Ego which finds things presented to it”⁵⁶

If, following Husserl, we choose to put a name to that-which-experiences, such as the “transcendental Ego,” or as I prefer, the “transcendental Self,” we must always keep in mind that it is not in any sense an object: “. . . we shall never stumble across the pure Ego as an experience among others within the flux of manifold experiences . . . nor shall we meet it as a constitutive bit of experience appearing with the experience of which it is an integral part and again disappearing. . . . it can *in no sense* be reckoned as a *real part or phase* of the experiences themselves,”⁵⁷ where “real” means experienceable, present in experience, or present to pure consciousness. Because, in spite of the fact that I cannot experience I-who-experience, nevertheless I do experience, Husserl says, “The Ego appears to be permanently, even necessarily there . . . , it belongs to every experience that comes and streams past, its ‘glance’ goes ‘through’ every actual *cogito* and towards the object.”⁵⁸ The word “appears” should not be taken literally. It is clear that the Ego does not appear as an object; rather it is that to which both the *cogito* and the object appear. The *cogito* is the noetic (loosely: subjective) aspect of an experience, the object the noematic (loosely: objective, but not necessarily Objective) aspect. Thus the noesis is an object for pure transcendental consciousness as is the noema – only in the natural attitude it is overlooked. Husserl’s clearest characterization of the pure Ego appears almost sixty pages later:

. . . the experiencing Ego is still nothing that might be taken *for itself* and made into an object of inquiry on its *own* account. Apart from its “ways of being related” or “ways of behaving,” it is completely empty of essential components, it has no content that could be unraveled, it is in and for itself indescribable: pure Ego and nothing further.⁵⁹

There is a very good reason why it is “in and for itself indescribable.” To be able to describe something, you must be able in some way to perceive it – and the pure Ego is that which perceives but which cannot itself be perceived.

Thirteen years later, in *The Paris Lectures*, Husserl had not changed his position. He speaks of the “transcendental ego” which is a “transcendental spectator,” “the disinterested spectator of

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 156.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 214.

my natural and worldly ego and its life.”⁶⁰ His translator comments:

The transcendental Ego . . . is not given as an object, but as the subject for which the object manifests itself. . . . the Ego is not one object among others [but] the perennial observer of existence The examiner itself, the observer proper, the *unbeteiligte Zuschauer* (disengaged observer) is mercurial and elusive: it is the camera-eye that focuses, but can never film itself.⁶¹

There is another aspect of the transcendental ego which I have not mentioned. Husserl speaks of the ego’s “ways of behaving.” He also speaks of the pure Ego as “free spontaneity and activity,” the “primary source of generation,” the “subject of the spontaneity.”⁶² The transcendental Self is not, in fact, solely passive and receptive; it is also the source of action. The activity of attending to something, for instance, is what Husserl means by *acts* of consciousness:

. . . the focal is girt about with a “zone” of the marginal; the stream of experience can never consist wholly of focal actualities. These indeed determine . . . through the contrast with marginal actualities . . . the pregnant meaning of the expression “*cogito*,” . . . “I perform an act of consciousness.”⁶³

The transcendental Self is the source not only of active attending but of all my action. Koestenbaum comments, “The transcendental Ego is not only passive . . . but also active. In numerous instances I experience myself as agent or creator. In these cases, the transcendental Ego is experienced not merely as an observer or spectator, but as a spontaneous initiator as well.”⁶⁴ He speaks loosely; strictly speaking the transcendental Self is not experienced, but can only be had in the mode, “thinking about it;” but his point is well taken. Because I am reserving for Chapter Five a complete discussion of action, at this point we abstract from the full nature of the transcendental Self and consider it only as I-who-experience. The point remains the same; the Self as transcendental agent is also unintuitable, unperceivable.

As long as this point is kept clearly in mind, it need not be misleading to use a noun phrase, “transcendental Self,” to refer to the basic state of affairs that is always and everywhere evident regarding myself, that I experience and act. Strictly speaking, we can say that experiencing and acting are functions of the self to which no particular experienceable object corresponds; we’ll see that there are other functions of the self to which experienceable objects do correspond. For the moment, let us continue to use the noun phrase, potentially misleading as it is, because it is convenient to do so. The important point remains: I cannot become aware of myself in the mode, “I myself,” for I am that which is aware, I am pure transcendental consciousness. I can characterize the transcendental Self as that to which the world is present, but what it is in itself – what I am, what my Self is – I cannot directly experience in any way. I am a mystery.

This is as far as the phenomenological evidence will take us. We have reached, in a sense, the ultimate – that beyond which it is impossible to go. Pure transcendental consciousness is of

⁶⁰ Husserl, *The Paris Lectures*, pp. 15, 16, emphasis omitted.

⁶¹ Peter Koestenbaum, *Introductory Essay*, in Husserl, *The Paris Lectures*, pp. LII, LIII.

⁶² Husserl, *Ideas*, pp. 315, 316.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 107, emphasis omitted.

⁶⁴ Koestenbaum, p. L

necessity a mystery, unperceivable. Is this the end of our quest then? Can nothing more be said about the self? I think not – that we have arrived at an ultimate does not mean that we cannot fit that ultimate into a conceptual, interpretive framework. In the interest of knowledge we must go beyond the pure phenomenological evidence and try to make something of our findings. But what direction shall we take? The first should be simply a recognition of the facts.

We have found an ultimate mystery. Simply to recognize that there is indeed a mystery at the heart of the self, at the core of my being, is at least a healthy and realistic appraisal of the way things are. Bernard Steinzor, a psychotherapist whose theories, it is obvious, have arisen from his daily practice, has made this generalization concerning the object of our quest:

The Self is a more or less fluid patterning of a diversity of relations at the core of which lies a relation to the unknown – sometimes called God, sometimes mystery, sometimes creativity, sometimes the future.⁶⁵

Steinzor points to something that the purely phenomenological approach has led us to overlook – that even if I cannot be conscious of the Self as pure consciousness, at least I who search am in relation to it. I cannot be directly aware of the Self; I can only imagine a sort of picture of the Self being aware of the world but not of itself – like an eye that cannot see itself or a spotlight that illuminates the stage but not its own casing and wiring. Nevertheless, I *know* that I cannot be aware of the Self. And that fact, of which I am quite well aware, is a mystery – not just something that I don't know, and not even something indifferently unknowable, but a mystery which seems at once to culminate and thwart my search for myself. I am awed and humbled at this knowledge, as well as confused and searching for another clue.

At this point, I am left not simply with the bare fact of unperceivability, but with a variety of other things as well: knowledge of that fact, in the sense of mental entertainment of an idea of it; a noticeable, if mixed, emotional reaction to that discovery and knowledge, including wonder as well as a certain dissatisfaction with the conclusion; and the impulsion to keep on looking to find some other, more satisfactory, answer. These things too, not simply pure consciousness watching the world go by, are present in the situation – that is, at least these things are present to pure consciousness. At this point we can go in two directions. One is to say, “Yes, all this is present to pure consciousness; therefore it is not the Self, but only an object for the Self.” This path only leads in a circle. The other way is to note that there are definite objects of which I am aware present at the end of the inquiry and that they do not seem to be simply accidentally or indifferently there, but on the contrary have arisen out of the inquiry itself. Let us then take this as a clue and say, “Aha! Therefore the Self must be at least these things – a mental concept, an emotional reaction, and an impulsion to further action!”

But a doubt arises. Is this not simply an interpretation? And are we therefore, if we adopt this suggestion, being phenomenological no longer? My reply is two-fold. First, recall that phenomenology, as I define and practice it, is a matter of reflective *seeing* (in an extended, metaphorical sense) without letting interpretations, biases, prejudices, etc., blind me to what is there to be seen. I must notice, make thematic, *all* that is there, including both what was previously thematic and what was only operative. But once I have observed and described

⁶⁵ Bernard Steinzor, *The Healing Partnership*, p. 240.

something, or my experience of something, without biases, then the results of my inquiry are available for me to make something of, to incorporate somehow in a system of knowledge, to place conceptually in a broader scheme of things. I must not let interpretations bias my seeing; but what I have seen I must then interpret. Thus, the interpretation that certain classes of subjective objects before me comprise *me* need not bias clear seeing of those objects.

Second, I want to note something that previously I avoided mentioning. Recall that our original project was to examine experience from the point of view solely of pure consciousness and try to find the Self. We used as a clue, or guiding principle, the exhortation not to identify the Self with any object of which I am or can be aware. Now note that not only does this guiding principle determine the results from the outset (although that was not initially obvious), but that it is itself an interpretation, an idea by reference to which we categorized classes of experienced objects as being of a certain type, namely not-me – but this interpretation did not bias clear perception of the situation, i.e., that perception of pure transcendental consciousness is impossible.

We have been operating under the guidance of an interpretation from the outset. Not only that, we have also been active – we have engaged in a search, a quest, looking at possibilities and discarding them, etc., trying to reach a dimly-envisioned goal. Finally I, the writer and investigator, have felt from the outset a certain eagerness, a certain excitement, a certain tantalizing attraction to an unknown goal, and perhaps I have communicated some of this to you, my reader. There has been emotional element throughout the quest.

(I refer not only to the process of writing this exposition of ideas that were for the most part already clear to me, but even more to the original process of discovery that I underwent more than five years ago. I was impelled to displeasure with myself-in-the-world in general. When the first intimation of the conclusion we have reached occurred to me, obscure but beckoning, I was puzzled. I had vague premonitions of something overwhelming about to be discovered, some great illuminating realization about to dawn. I was pulled onward, pausing at each step only long enough to feel that I was on the right track. I am not this, I thought, I am not this. I am aware of myself. But I that am aware am not myself of which I am aware. Therefore . . . therefore . . . I am not! I cannot become aware of myself, and thus I do not exist! For a long time, as I recall, I was close to ecstatic contemplation of that absurd and yet apparently indubitable conclusion. I felt awe, wonder, dread – and then a great laugh of relief as I thought to myself, if I don't exist then I don't have to worry about how I shall live my life – I can't because I don't exist! What I now recognize as a quite erroneous conclusion at the time filled me with a curious euphoria and sense of peace.)

Thus, from the very beginning there has been present not only an interpretation guiding our procedure, but the activity of proceeding itself, as well as the emotions that, as it were, motivated that activity and kept it going. But what are these but characteristics of the subjective point of view? Let this be a clue for a new quest; let us say that if it is discoverable at all, *the Self must be discoverable from the subjective point of view!*

We have an even clearer clue. At the end of this phase of our question, we are left not only with a mystery, but with three other things as well – a mental idea or concept; emotional feelings; and an impulse to further action, to keep on looking. Steinzor has said that at the core of the self there lies a relation to the unknown, to mystery. Therefore, not only because it seems to be all we are left with, but even more because it seems that we find ourselves in a

kind of limiting situation, where reality is most starkly, but also most clearly, revealed, I shall now adopt a new interpretation to guide our quest. Reserving the capitalized form of the word for the transcendental Self, we'll now say that *the self is composed of mental events, of feelings, and of actions*. I'll now report the results of my investigations into each of these types of subjective objects.

(Husserl agrees that the self as it is ordinarily understood, i.e., what in the natural attitude I call "me," "myself," is an object or is composed of objects and is not the same as the transcendental Self. In *Ideas*, he speaks of "the intentional empirical unities, body, soul, empirical ego-subject."⁶⁶ He says that "the psychical in general in the psychological sense, . . . psychical personalities, psychical properties, experiences or states are empirical unities, and are therefore . . . unities of an intentional 'constitution' . . ."⁶⁷ For now, we can understand "intentional unities" to mean coherent complexes of objects present to pure consciousness. (A fuller discussion of intentionality appears in the next chapter.)

In the *The Paris Lectures* as well, Husserl notes that the phenomenologist "discovers that he, as a human being, exists . . . as a *cogitatum*,"⁶⁸ that is, as something perceived. Koestenbaum comments that "what we ordinarily mean by 'me,' by 'I,' by 'myself,' by 'my ego,' is really merely one of many *objects* within the totality of experience . . ."⁶⁹)

⁶⁶ Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 152.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Husserl, *The Paris Lectures*, p. 15.

⁶⁹ Koestenbaum, pp. XLIX-L.

Chapter Three. Thought.

I cannot become conscious of the transcendental Self, I-who-am-aware. But I am conscious of a vast array of different objects and types of objects. Some of these are Objective, they have the sense, “there for everyone” – such objects as physical things, people, cultural objects such as institutions and values, etc. Others are subjective, they have the sense “there directly only for me” – such objects as thoughts, emotions, feelings of all types, etc. Process is experienced Objectively as movement of things or behavior of people; but from my own subjective point of view, I am aware of my behavior as my action – sometimes deliberate, sometimes habitual, but my action.

Doing phenomenology, I reflectively examine my experience of myself to find out who I am; I try to find the nature of the self as I experience it. Of all the objects of which I am conscious, the ones that I initially mark off and say of them, “This is me,” are those available directly only to me – thoughts, feelings, and actions.

(To say this is to make an abstraction from the concrete character of the self-in-the-world. Again, this is a heuristically useful device and in fact the way my own investigation has proceeded. As we concentrate our attention on the aspects of the self present in my experience and directly available only to me, we shall find concrete evidence of the relatedness of the self to the world and to other selves.)

All of these (thoughts, feelings, and actions) are present in experience, although action, as we shall see, is available to me in a peculiar way. We shall now take these types of objects and analyze each in turn, both as abstracted from the rest of the objects of which I am aware and as it occurs in its relations to the others. But, as William James says, “Between what a man calls me and what he simply calls *mine* the line is difficult to draw.”⁷⁰ At the outset of this investigation, we cannot be overly precise; as it continues the distinction, in particular cases, it will become clearer.

We must initially distinguish between thoughts and thinking. Thoughts are objects of which I am conscious. They are not, of course, physical Objects in the spatio-temporal world Objectively available to all. In a sense they are only in my mind – certainly only I can be directly conscious of what I am thinking – but in a sense they are more than merely private mental objects, for they are sharable by others (others can think the same thoughts I do) and they have a certain stability and identity (I can think the same thought over and over again). Thinking is the activity whereby I bring thoughts to mind, contemplate them, compare them, alter them, follow out their implications, etc. Much of my thinking is deliberate; I reflectively apprehend it as my doing, done on purpose. But much of the time thoughts simply occur to me, without my deliberately thinking them. Thus, the activity of thinking shows the same characteristic as all action; it may be more or less deliberate or more or less involuntary (see Chapter Five, “Action.”)

Thoughts have a two-fold nature. On the one hand they are simply there, present to pure consciousness; they are objects of which I am conscious. On the other hand they refer to something else, they are thoughts of something. I call these aspects of thoughts their material aspect and their intentional aspect, respectively. The distinction I am drawing can be seen in

⁷⁰ James, *Psychology*, p. 166.

a remark that William James has made. Says James:

it makes little or no difference in what sort of mind-stuff, in what sort of imagery, our thinking goes on. The only images *intrinsically* important are the halting-places, the substantive conclusions Let A be some experience from which a number of thinkers start. Let Z be the practical conclusion rationally inferable from it. One gets to this conclusion by one line, another by another; one follows a course of English, another of German, verbal imagery. With one, visual images predominate; with another, tactile. Some trains are tinged with emotions, others not; some are very abridged, synthetic and rapid; others hesitating and broken into many steps. But when the penultimate terms of all the trains, however differing *inter se*, finally shoot into the same conclusion, we say; and rightly say, that all the thinkers have had substantially the same thought. It would probably astound each of them beyond measure to be let into his neighbor's mind and to find how different the scenery there was from that in his own.⁷¹

The material aspect of a thought is that aspect of it which is immediately present to pure consciousness, what James calls "imagery" and "mind-stuff," or as I shall say, "material quality." It may, for all we know, vary considerably from person to person; we can only find out by telling each other what the material qualities of our thoughts are, because each of us is restricted to his or her own subjective experience and cannot experience anyone else's. The intentional aspect is the character thoughts have of being thoughts *of* something else, something other than what is immediately before the mind. By virtue of their intentional aspect thoughts are stable, self-identical objects which seem to remain existent even when I am not contemplating them, for I can return to them repeatedly. Because their intentional objects are mostly public, they are sharable by others; many people can, as James says, have the same thought. I'll return to the topic of the intentional aspect shortly.

I suspect that the material qualities of thoughts vary considerably from mind to mind. Describing this aspect of thoughts is an area in which it is difficult for me, the subjective-phenomenological observer, to distinguish the ontic from the ontological, that which is peculiar to myself from those general structures shared by all. This is an area in which intersubjective checking and comparison is a necessity. In order for such checking to take place, each of us must make his or her subjective life available to all by describing what is found there. Accordingly, I shall briefly list the material qualities of thoughts that I find in my subjective life.

In my own mind there are four kinds of material qualities of thoughts: words and sounds, pictures, vague visual outlines or *gestaltlich* forms, and a kind of vivid three-dimensional fantasy reality in which I participate as in a dream. Words and sounds are exactly that – I hear tunes running through my mind, or I think sentences or isolated words. I may deliberately think them or they may be there without my having called them forth. Pictures are much the same in that respect; most often I will simply have a flash of seeing something quite detailed and colorful. I find it more difficult deliberately to visualize a picture than to sound words to myself; perhaps I am simply more oriented through my ears than through my eyes. Both of these sorts of thoughts occur at varying levels of intensity and often they occur together. It may be that I will hear clearly a phrase or a sentence, especially when I am deliberately thinking. Often, however, the sounds are fainter, harder to recognize –

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 160-161.

sometimes I can stop and try to recognize what has just passed briefly through my mind and perhaps repeat it to myself, but sometimes it simply gets lost into oblivion. Thoughts on this level I call preverbal. “Preverbal” means in this case not prior in time to the acquisition of language, as in developmental psychology; it refers rather to thoughts that, were they more intense or present with more force, would be verbal, that is, distinct words, phrases, sentences, etc. Sometimes I can call them to mind more forcefully, make them explicit and fully verbal. Before I do this they are preverbal. A similar thing happens with pictures – there is a previsual level of images that aren’t quite intense enough for me to see clearly or recognize. Often, especially on the preverbal and previsual level, there occurs a sort of mixed-media thought form which consists of words and pictures together.

The ultimate vagueness of a picture is its outline or shape. Color seems to go first and then the details of the picture. Most of my visual thoughts are of this outline variety, where I will see simply geometrical shapes – shapes or lines standing out from that background. This type of thought is the way I chiefly apprehend abstract concepts. Visual gestalts like this often occur in a mixed mode with words, either explicit or preverbal. I can, for instance, visualize the shape of an argument, knowing where the argument begins and which way it moves; each part of the shape has a preverbal string of words attached to it, the words being (if I make them more distinct) the explicit verbalization of the concept involved and the visual aspect indicating the relations between the concepts. I often apprehend concepts or arguments this way that I know well and have gone over often; I am so familiar with the ideas that this is a sort of shorthand for them. Sometimes, however, I will be working through a new idea and suddenly perceive it as related to other concepts by means of these visual gestalts. I discover things in this way. Again, there are different levels of intensity or force with which these gestalts are present. It often happens that I will have a vague intuition of such a shape and have to try to make it more clear and distinct – by letting my mind go blank and allowing it to come forth, for instance, or by going over the first couple of steps in a train of thought preverbally and hoping that the rest will follow.

There has been some controversy throughout the history of philosophy as to whether thought is identical with language or whether language merely expresses a thought that pre-existed in a latent form. It seems to me that thought, even abstract thought, does occur in ways other than verbal. Verbalization is necessary to make a thought explicit and fixed – words are easier to remember than pictures and more easily communicated to others. But this is not at all the only way that I think. I recall once shuffling papers and wanting a stapler to fasten them together. I had a picture in my mind of the stapler located in a box; I went to that box, pulled out the stapler, and returned to my desk to use it. This was a situation in which I was definitely thinking, but not verbally.

There is another type of material quality of thought that is not related to the first three in that it does not convey abstract concepts. It is, however, composed largely of words and pictures. This is when I imagine myself being in a real-life situation, often with other people. I get a full three-dimensional scene in which I am conscious of my surroundings and of myself, what I am doing and how I am feeling. If I didn’t know this was a fantasy I would be hallucinating. Sometimes I will imagine myself saying or doing things; sometimes I will see mostly the faces and actions of other people. This sort of thing happens in reveries and daydreams, in actual dreams, and sometimes deliberately, as when I am anticipating a situation and deciding what to say or do.

In addition to these major types of material qualities of thoughts, there are others which occur

less frequently and less intensely. There are such things as imagining tastes or smells or bodily feelings, or mentally going through certain motions or actions, such as dancing, without overtly doing them. Thoughts of these kinds seem to have less relation to the conceptual, although they can be quite practical – imagining the flavor of a certain food, for instance, enables me to see whether I am hungry for it or not.

Such are the general types of material qualities found in my thoughts. But we must be careful not to be misled into a Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness, “the accidental error of mistaking the abstract for the concrete.”⁷² To consider thoughts, especially merely in their material aspect, as objects that simply hover, statically, before the mind is to commit that error; for my mental life is constantly in flux. Says Husserl, “Every experience is in itself a flow of becoming.”⁷³ Thoughts come and go, appear with vivid force and fade away, whether I am deliberately thinking them or not. Moreover, thoughts are connected or associated with each other. Thinking of something will lead me to think of something else, and that in turn to something else – whether I am idly daydreaming or thinking through a philosophical or political argument. The connections between thoughts are usually a function of their intentional aspect, a topic I shall turn to shortly.

Finally, it is not the case that thoughts, even when I am explicitly conscious of them, are entirely clear and distinct. I have already alluded to this in my talk of preverbal, previsual, etc. thoughts. When I am conscious of a thought, I “see” a more or less clear core, a picture perhaps or a phrase; but this distinct focal point is girt about with what William James calls “fringe,” a zone of indistinct and obscure material contents pervaded by feeling. Says James:

Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows around it. With it goes the sense of its relations, near and remote, the dying echo of whence it came to us, the dawning sense of whither it is to lead. The significance, the value, of the image is all in this halo or penumbra that surrounds and escorts it, - or rather that is fused into one with it⁷⁴

James’ remark about significance is important. I shall return to it after introducing one more concept, the concept, “concept.”

I have mentioned concepts as well as more primitive elements of thoughts like words and pictures. By “concept,” in its material aspect, I mean a coherent group of words, pictures, etc., that is a unity in itself. The concept, “chair,” for instance, to take a trivial but easily-analyzed example, consists partly of a picture or outline of a typical chair, partly of the word “chair,” partly of a fantasy of sitting down in a chair and of being seated in it, and partly of a fringe of preverbal, previsual, and premotor elements that, if followed out explicitly relate the concept to other concepts, such as typical knowledge of what to do with a chair, where to buy chairs, etc. A concept is a unity in itself. Whenever I think of a chair or chairs, I get some or all of the above-mentioned material contents. But I do not get exactly the same material contents each time. Depending on the context in which I am thinking of a chair, I may get just the word, or just the picture, or just an impulsion to go do something with a chair; and every time I think of “chair,” there is a qualitatively different fringe relating to the immediately antecedent and subsequent thoughts.

⁷² Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, p. 52.

⁷³ Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 202.

⁷⁴ James, *Psychology*, pp. 157-158.

Because the material content of the concept “chair” is not rigidly fixed, but changes somewhat with each change of context, it is clear that the unity of the concept is not found simply in its material aspect. Rather, since the concept “chair” is one and the same even in different material manifestations of it, the unity of the concept is found in its meaning. What makes the concept one and the same is that it is a concept *of* something, not simply a bare material quality in itself.

This meaning is the intentional aspect of the concept. When I think of something, I do not simply have a bare material content before my mind. I know that the concept refers to something other than itself; it is not simply an object before my mind, but a concept *of* something. This *of*-relationship is hard to grasp phenomenologically because it is not plain and evident as is the material quality of the concept. I express the relationship between the material and the intentional aspect of concepts as follows: When I think of something, say my car, what strictly speaking I am conscious of, what I have in the mode, “it itself,” is the material quality of the concept – words, pictures, etc., explicit or preverbal and previsual. By means of the material quality of the concept, I am conscious of something else, what the concept is a concept of, the car. This second thing, the intentional object, I have in the mode, “having it in my mind.” To put it another way, when I think of my car outside in the driveway, I am conscious *that* my car is out there by means of being conscious *of* the concept or idea in its material aspect. It is not hard to express this relationship in words; it is more difficult to have an evident “seeing” of what the words mean.

William James gives us a clue. Recall that he says that “The significance . . . of the image is all in this halo or penumbra that surrounds and escorts it”⁷⁵ When I am conscious that something is the case by means of being conscious of a certain concept, the intentionality of the concept, the being *of* something else than it itself, is found in the dimly-apprehended material fringe of the concept. Connected with the focal nucleus of the concept, though at a more or less preconscious level, are associations, links, with a large number of things, including other thoughts, suggested by the concept, connotations, steps in reasoning, etc.; concepts of the surroundings or context of the intentional object; memories perhaps, of having been in contact with it itself and anticipations or at least imaginings of coming into contact with it, perhaps again; knowledge of what the intentional object is good for, what it does, and what I can do with it; “recipes,” so to speak, for typical action relating to it, which I shall call latent action-schemata; and incipient impulses to action. Of course, knowledge-that, such as knowledge that I can do typical things with my car, like get in and drive it, etc., is also present to pure consciousness in the form of material contents, but in the dimly-apprehended fringe. The forms of intentionality are many-leveled and complex, and the unraveling of them requires much patient and painstaking observation and analysis – analysis which I have by no means completed.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Says Husserl (and here we may read “experience” for “consciousness,” since Husserl uses the latter term differently from the way I do), “If one intends to understand what consciousness does . . . it is not enough, here or anywhere else, to speak of the ‘directedness’ of consciousness . . . to objects and, at most, to distinguish superficially among internal and external experience, ideation, and the like. The *multiplicities of consciousness* coming under these headings must be brought to sight in phenomenological reflection and dissected structurally . . . one must seek out the intentional role or function (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 163).” Such detailed investigation is, however, beyond the scope of this paper.

Now, this fringe, exactly because it is the fringe, and thus dimly apprehended, is hard to analyze in detail. It is only on occasion that I have been able evidently to “see” the fringe of a concept for what it is. Most of the time I simply have a vague feeling that the concept is a concept *of* its intentional object. Were that all there is to the story, my account of intentionality would have to stop here, vague and ambiguous as it is. But there is more. In reflecting on my experience in general, taking into account evidence gained not only in strict phenomenological observation but also through thinking about myself in a variety of modes, I have come to agree with another observation that William James makes, that the intentional aspect of concepts consists in that they orient me to *action* regarding something beyond themselves, i.e., their intentional objects. In a famous essay called “The Tigers of India,” James asks about the nature of conceptual knowledge. When we know that there are tigers in India, when, as I say, we are conscious of them in the mode, “having them in mind,” James asks, “Exactly what do we *mean* by saying that we here know the tigers?” Most people, he says, would say that “what we mean by knowing the tigers is mentally *pointing* towards them as we sit here. But now what do we mean by *pointing*, in such a case as this?” I can do no better than quote his answer:

The pointing of our thought to the tigers is known simply and solely as a procession of mental associates and motor consequences that follow on the thought, and that would lead harmoniously, if followed out, into some ideal or real context, or even into the immediate presence, of the tigers. It is known as our rejection of a jaguar, if that beast were shown us as a tiger; as our assent to a genuine tiger if so shown. It is known as our ability to utter all sorts of propositions which don’t contradict other propositions that are true of the real tigers. It is even known, if we take the tigers very seriously, as actions of ours which may terminate in directly intuited tigers, as they would if we took a voyage to India for the purpose of tiger-hunting and brought back a lot of skins of the striped rascals which we had laid low. In all this there is no self-transcendancy in our mental images *taken by themselves*. They are one phenomenal fact; the tigers are another; and their pointing to the tigers is a perfectly commonplace intra-experiential relation⁷⁷

The truth of James’ contention can be seen, not in simply contemplating a concept, but in following out the fringe, letting the material core of the concept fade away and be replaced by one or another of the associated concepts or of the impulses to action. The associated concepts are connected by virtue of the intentional object, not the material quality. Concepts do not somehow magically have an “intentional quality” that hovers ghost-like above the material quality. On the contrary, the intentional aspect is found in the material fringe, which, if followed out, leads me to *do* something, either to think of it in a different context or to act toward it in some way in the mode, “it itself.” Thus, *the specifically intentional aspect of concepts consists in that they orient me to action regarding something beyond themselves, their intentional objects*. Even when there is no question of overt action – I don’t plan, for instance, to go to India to see the tigers – even when I am just contemplating, idly thinking or thinking something through, I *feel* that I am thinking *of* something, that my concepts are concepts *of* something. That feelings consists of immediate impulses to think more about the intentional object, latent action-schemata, preverbal or latent knowledge about the object or how to act regarding it (for instance, knowledge that I could go to India and see tigers), incipient impulses to action, whether overt or just thinking of related concepts, perhaps imaginings of acting with concomitant evaluational feelings.

⁷⁷ James, *Pragmatism*, pp. 225-226.

With this understanding of intentionality in mind, we can see the truth of James' remark that the material qualities, the "imagery" and "mind-stuff," don't matter. Whether I think the words, "my car," or get a picture of my car or become conscious of it (in the mode, "having it in mind") by means of some other material quality, the important point is that I eventually be led to relate to the car either in some other way in the mode "having it in mind" or in the mode "it itself." It is not so much whether my thinking is primarily pictorial or verbal that is significant, but how my concepts lead me to think of other concepts or act in the external world, and whether my concepts are shared by others – each in his own way.

It is also clear that by virtue of their intentional aspect, concepts are stable entities, to which I can return again and again. To return to a concept is not necessarily to return to the same material qualities; rather, it is to think of the same intentional object or state of affairs. It is a mistake to think that concepts are nothing but their material qualities and that every time I think of something I get a different concept of it, to equate, as Husserl says, "the formations produced by judging . . . with phenomena appearing in internal experience." On the contrary:

in repeated acts, which are quite alike or else similar, the produced judgments, arguments, and so forth are not merely quite alike or similar but *numerically, identically, the same* Their "making an appearance" in the domain of consciousness is multiple. The particular formative processes of thinking are temporally outside one another . . . ; they are individually different and separated. Not so, however, the thoughts that are thought in the thinking. To be sure, the thoughts do not make their appearance in consciousness as something "external." They are not real objects, not spatial objects, but unreal formations produced by the mind; and their peculiar essence excludes extension, original locality, and mobility.⁷⁸

Because their intentional objects are mostly public, concepts are sharable. When we think of the same thing, we can be said to be thinking the same concept. Moreover, we can know that we have the same concept because as Husserl notes, concepts are expressible in language Objectively available to all.⁷⁹

Also note that the relations between concepts, although present on a preconscious level or incipiently in the fringe of each concept as I hold it before my mind, are experienced mostly as movements from one concept to another, whether I deliberately think the subsequent concepts or idly allow my mind to wander. Even when I think of a whole argument or train of thought by getting a visual gestalt of the whole thing, I am getting a sort of fixed isolate depicting relations statically and simultaneously which originally had to be discovered or followed through in sequence. And even when I do this, I often have to run my attention from the top of the gestalt to the bottom, from beginning to end, in order to apprehend it as a whole. It is clear that most movement between concepts is a function of their intentional aspect. If I think of my car, I may be led to think that it needs a tune-up, and then to think of possible people to call who will tune it up for me. The transition between concepts is motivated by their intentional objects, not their material qualities. I can, of course, in a moment of sheer idle thinking, be led from the word "car," to "bar" and "far," etc. – such a transition is based solely on the homophony of the material qualities and is without significance. The movement between concepts is hard to apprehend phenomenologically

⁷⁸ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, pp. 154-155.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

because movement, especially complex movement is hard to apprehend. To apprehend something, i.e., to “see” it clearly enough to form a definite image of it – takes time, and if that something is gone before I have a chance to apprehend it, as relations between concepts often are, then I am lost unless I can recapture that movement. In this respect, James makes the distinction between “substantive” or static concepts that can be held before the mind for a long time, and “transitive” states of mind consisting of movement between the substantive parts. “Now it is very difficult,” he notes,

introspectively, to see the transitive parts for what they really are. If they are but flights to a conclusion, stopping them to look at them before the conclusion is reached is really annihilating them. Whilst if we wait till the conclusion *be* reached, it so exceeds them in vigor that it quite eclipses and swallows them up in its glare.⁸⁰

James is eager to insist that the fact that these transitive states of mind are hard to capture should not prevent us from “seeing” that they really are there.

In addition to their material and intentional aspects, concepts and conceptual thinking have a function. That function is interpretation. By means of concepts I interpret the world of which I am aware, including Objective and subjective reality. I conceptually place things in categories, organize them according to type, and perceive (in the mode, “having them in mind”) or discover the relations between various types of things. By building up a system of concepts and relations between concepts that refer to the various types of objects that I experience and the relations between them, I construct a guide that I can refer to in my dealings with reality. The world as it appears to me is constantly in flux; by referring what I experience as it comes and goes to a stable system of concepts, I can take note of regularities in the behavior of the various objects I am conscious of, learn to predict future consequences of events, and learn to manipulate different objects in the world for my own purposes. Says James:

All our conceptions are what the Germans call *Denkmittel*, means by which we handle facts by thinking them. Experience merely as such doesn’t come ticketed and labeled, we have first to discover what it is. . . . What we usually do is first to frame some system of concepts mentally classified, serialized, or connected in some intellectual way, and then use this as a tally by which we ‘keep tab’ on the impressions that present themselves. When each is referred to some possible place in the conceptual system, it is thereby ‘understood.’⁸¹

Now, in order to fully understand the function of concepts and conceptual thinking, we shall have to recognize and investigate the fact that concepts play a role in all modes of experience, not just conceptual thinking. As a way of approaching this topic, let us consider James’ assertion that experience doesn’t come “ticketed and labeled.”

When he says this, he refers to experience as it is initially had in the early years of life, before we have learned to make sense of it – his example is of a baby who doesn’t wonder where his rattle has gone when he drops it nor where it came from when someone puts it in his hand; “The idea of its being a ‘thing,’ whose permanent existence by itself he might interpolate

⁸⁰ James, *Psychology*, p. 153.

⁸¹ James, *Pragmatism*, p. 115.

between its successive apparitions has evidently not occurred to him.”⁸² But as an adult I do – automatically – think of things as existing when I am not looking at them. In fact, the process is so automatic that I don’t even think – I just experience physical things as having an independent spatio-temporal existence of their own. Not only that, I know what they are. I have, as Schutz says, a stock of knowledge at hand of the typical characteristics of all the different kinds of things that I experience.⁸³ This knowledge too is not something that I have to think about; rather, I simply perceive things as what they are, as trees, papers, people, etc. In other words, my adult experience *is* ticketed and labeled, and the tickets and labels are found in experience itself. That is, there is a conceptual element in all my experience, in perception, recollection, imagination, anticipation, etc., not just in conceptual thinking. This conceptual element is the locus of intentionality in a broader sense, Husserl’s famous “intentionally of consciousness,” not just the intentionality in conceptual thinking.

Intentionality, says Husserl, is “the unique peculiarity of experiences ‘to be the consciousness of something.’”⁸⁴ This phrase could be taken in two ways. On the one hand, consciousness, that is, pure transcendental consciousness, is always consciousness of something in that there are always objects there, presented to it. Both the material quality and the fringe, wherein resides the intentional aspect, of a concept are objects for pure transcendental consciousness, things that are there, to which I have only to pay attention to “see.” But this is not exactly Husserl’s meaning. For one thing, he uses the term “consciousness” to mean something different from pure transcendental consciousness, which as we have seen, he terms the “pure Ego.” “Consciousness” for Husserl is a broad term signifying experience in general. He says, “. . . in its widest connotation the expression ‘consciousness’ . . . includes all experiences (*Erlebnisse*).”⁸⁵ Again: “. . . we can interpret consciousness to cover eventually whatever the concept of experience includes”⁸⁶ To prevent confusion with pure transcendental consciousness, I shall say “experience” instead of “consciousness.” When Husserl says that experience is intentional, he means that there is an intentional object which an experience is an experience *of*, just as a concept is a concept of its intentional object. This is true of all modes of experience,⁸⁷ but for simplicity, let’s limit the discussion to perceptual experience. In perception – meaning by that term the process or act (in so far as there is deliberate paying attention to) of perceiving – there is a material aspect and an intentional aspect, just as in conception, the process or act of thinking conceptually. The material element is sensation. Husserl speaks of “‘sensory contents’ such as colour, touch, sound, and the like, . . . pleasure, pain, tickling, etc., and also the sensile phases of the sphere of ‘impulses.’”⁸⁸ Sensations are just bare qualities – just *this* shade of blue, for instance, or just *this* tone or flavor, etc. Sensations are much more vivid than the material qualities of concepts – a fact which has lead some, especially the British Empiricists, to think that concepts are nothing but faint images of sensations, a mistake which ignores the element of intentionality. When I perceive something, I do not simply have a bare sensation or collection of sensations. My sensations are elements in perceptions *of* something. This *of*, this intentionality, is due to the presence in experience (presence to pure consciousness) of a conceptual fringe, inextricably attached and intermingled with the bare sensation. This conceptual fringe is composed of preverbal,

⁸² Ibid., p. 116.

⁸³ Schutz, *Collected Papers I*, pp. 7-8.

⁸⁴ Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 223.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 102.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 114.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 238.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 226.

previsual, etc., thoughts, all very vague and obscure, almost or entirely imperceptible, and generally entirely overlooked in the natural attitude. By virtue of these conceptual elements, perception is intentional, that is, I have a perception *of* something, not just a meaningless collection of sensations. As James says:

‘Ideas’ *about* the object mingle with the awareness of its mere sensible presence, we name it, class it, compare it, utter propositions concerning it In general, this higher consciousness about things is called Perception, the mere inarticulate feeling of their presence is Sensation⁸⁹

James notes that we as adults almost never have bare sensation uninterpreted, that is, unaccompanied by conceptual elements. It is obvious, he says, that “immediate sensations can only be realized in the earliest days of life. They are all but impossible to adults with memories and stores of associations acquired A sensation is thus an abstraction seldom realized by itself.”⁹⁰ He notes that “To some degree we seem able to lapse into this inarticulate feeling at moments when our attention is entirely dispersed.”⁹¹

Husserl speaks of the same state of affairs, but in different language. He speaks of “sensile phases” of experience and “sensory contents.” “Such concrete data of experience,” he says, “are to be found as components in concrete experiences of a more comprehensive kind which as wholes are intentional”⁹² He also calls the material element in perception “*sensile hyle*,”⁹³ using a Greek word for “matter,” and “*hyletic* or *material data*.”⁹⁴ Present in experience with hyletic data are other elements which make up the specifically intentional character: “. . . over those sensile phases lies as it were an ‘animating,’ *meaning-bestowing* stratum . . . , a stratum through whose agency, out of the *sensile-element, which contains in itself nothing intentional*, the concrete intentional experience takes form and shape.” “Sensory data offer themselves as material for intentional informings or bestowals of meaning”⁹⁵ The emphasis on meaning, which occurs over and over again in Husserl’s discussion of intentionality, indicates the conceptual element. That which bestows meaning on material data he calls the “*noetic phase*,” or, more briefly put, *noesis*. These noeses constitute the specifications of “Nous (mind, spirit) in the widest sense of the term”⁹⁶ Thus, noeses are conceptual in nature.

The way in which noeses “animate” material data can be seen from Husserl’s account of the intentional object, the “*noematic content*” or “*noema*.”⁹⁷ He gives an example: seeing a tree and noting the color of the tree trunk. We take the color of the trunk to be always the same color, no matter how we look at it! Phenomenological reflection reveals that:

this colour . . . belongs to the noema. But it does not belong to the perceptual experience as a real (reales) integral part of it, although we also find in the experience “a colour-like something,” namely, the “sensory colour,” the hyletic phase of the

⁸⁹ James, *Psychology*, p. 26.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 226.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 227.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 228.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 227-228.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 228.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 238.

concrete experience in which the noematic or “objective” [*objektiv*]⁹⁸ colour “manifests itself *in varying perspectives*.”

But one and the same noematic colour of which we are thus aware *as self-same*, in itself unchanged . . . , runs through its perspective variations in a continuous variety of sensory colours.⁹⁹

By a “real part” of an experience, Husserl means something that is actually *there* for inspection, present, as I say, to pure consciousness, or present in experience. Now what is there in this sense is a series of different material qualities; the immediate sensory color changes as I look from the shady portion of the tree trunk to the sunny portion. But I take the tree to have the same color all around it, and I assume that others will see the same color. This color, which I take to be the same even though, strictly speaking, I see different color-sensations, is an intentional object, noematic. The same is true of the tree itself, taken as an Objectively existing material thing. What strictly speaking is present to pure consciousness, the real factors in the experience, are the material data and the conceptual or noetic fringe. By virtue of the noesis, I take the continuously and systematically changing material data to be sensations *of one and the same* actually-existing tree. Says Husserl:

. . . not only the hyletic phases (the sensory colours, sounds, etc.), but also the animating apprehensions . . . belong to the “real” (*reelen*) constitution of the experience.

. . . whereas that which “exhibits” itself in its variety and “varies perspectively” has its place in the *noema*.¹⁰⁰

. . . the specifically *noetical* phases . . . contrive it so that a complex variety of hyletic data, of colour or touch, for instance, assumes the function of varied perspectival shading of one and the same objective [*objektiven*]¹⁰¹ thing.¹⁰²

Noeses are what, in Chapter Two, I have called “interpretations.” They are conceptual in nature and interpret my sensations such that I have perceptions of something. Husserl notes this explicitly in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*:

Such an affair as an object (even a physical object) draws the *ontic sense* peculiar to it . . . *originally from the mental processes of experience alone*

Consequently a certain *ideality* lies in the sense of every experientiable object, including every physical object, over against the manifold “psychic” processes *separated* from each other by individuation in immanent time It is the *universal ideality of all intentional unities* over against the *multiplicities* constituting them.¹⁰³

A fundamental type of noesis or interpretation is what Husserl calls a “synthesis of

⁹⁸ Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und Phänomenologischen Philosophie*, p. 243.

⁹⁹ Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 261.

¹⁰⁰ Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 262.

¹⁰¹ Husserl, *Ideen*, p. 247.

¹⁰² Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 265.

¹⁰³ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, pp. 164, 165.

recognition,” by virtue of which I recognize something as one-and-the-same, something which, perhaps, I have come into contact before, but at any rate can come into contact with again:

Perception *alone* is never a full Objectivating performance, if we understand such a performance to be indeed the seizing upon an *object* itself. We accept internal perception as a seizing upon an object itself, only because we are tacitly taking into account possible recollection, repeatable at will. When actualized, recollection gives for the first time original certainty of the being of a subjective *object* in the full sense . . . something to which one can “always go back again” and which one can recognize in a reactivation as the selfsame. Naturally, the concomitant intentional relation to such a “*synthesis of recognition*” plays a similar role in the case of each external objectivity – which is by no means to say that it makes up the full performance effected by external experience.¹⁰⁴

James recognizes the same fact:

Any fact, be it thing, event, or quality may be conceived sufficiently for purposes of identification, if only it be singled out and marked so as to separate it from other things. Simply calling it ‘this’ or ‘that’ will suffice. . . . The essential point is that it should be reidentified by us This sense of sameness is the very keel and backbone of our consciousness.¹⁰⁵

As Husserl notes, there are many other noeses in experience besides syntheses of recognition. One of the most pervasive is the interpretation (in the natural attitude) that the Objective world has factual, spatio-temporal existence. This is clear even in Husserl’s initial portrayal of the natural attitude:

The General Thesis according to which the real world about me is at all times known . . . as a fact-world that has its being out there, does not consist of course in an act proper, in an articulated judgment about existence. . . . What has been at any time perceived . . . bears in its totality and in all its articulated sections the character “present” “out there,” a character which can function essentially as the ground of support for an explicit (predicative) existential judgment which is in agreement with the character it is grounded upon. If we express that same judgment, we know quite well that in so doing we have simply put into the form of a statement and grasped as a prediction what we already lay somehow in the original experience, or lay there as the character of something “present to one’s hand.”¹⁰⁶

The character, “present” “out there,” is present in experience of the external world in the form of an operative interpretation, an implicit judgment, in short, a noesis.

In general, my experience is pervaded by noeses, usually of a more specific character. When I see my typewriter, for instance, I know not only that it is an enduring Object in the spatio-temporal world, but also that it is a typewriter, that I can use it to type letters, papers, etc. I know how to type on it; I know its individual quirks that make it different from other

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 157.

¹⁰⁵ James, *Psychology*, p. 218.

¹⁰⁶ Husserl, *Ideas*, pp. 96-97.

typewriters. I recognize it not only as the self-same thing that it has been as long as I have been acquainted with it, but I recognize it as an implement useful for certain purposes. Recognition in this latter sense is not the same as Husserl's synthesis of recognition, although it is founded on the former, in the sense that without the former recognition I could not recognize it as a typewriter. The synthesis of recognition, which I shall call "simple recognition," reveals that this Object is enduring, something I can return to and see again and again. The latter recognition, which I shall call "recognition-as," is a – generally preconscious, that is, entirely operative – being aware that the Object is related to a broader context, the context of what it can do and what I can do with it.

Husserl says that "The viewpoint of Function is the central viewpoint of phenomenology."¹⁰⁷ His talk of noeses as animating the hyletic data, as effecting a performance and bestowing meaning, should be seen in this light, for he says "all treatment of detail is governed by the 'teleological' view of its function in making 'synthetic unity' possible."¹⁰⁸ My experience is always in process, in flux. The noetic elements in experience function such that I recognize continuity amid the flux. I take a series of changing sensations to be a tree, as I walk past it; I take this configuration of shape, color, texture, and resistance before me to be my typewriter. Moreover, depending on which further interpretations are indeed operative and not merely latent (i.e., possible, but not actualized), I "see" the object in a different light. I can look at my typewriter and think of it as a tool, useful for getting legible words onto paper; or I can think of it as a relatively ugly piece of machinery; or, as *my* typewriter, which has a certain sentimental value. These different ways of thinking of it, i.e., of having it by means of concepts, animate the same configuration of sensations differently in the different ways of perceiving it, having it itself. I have it itself in a different way with each different interpretation. Noeses thus structure my experience in various ways, but we should not take the "noetic performance" to mean that first we have bare sensations and then, with the addition of noeses, intentional objects. On the contrary, sensation and interpretation occur concomitantly. As James has pointed out, we almost never have bare sensation.

The second thing to note is that the intentionality of perception is exactly analogous to the intentionality of conception in that both orient me to (actual or possible) *action* regarding the intentional object. Husserl says that "consciousness *points* . . . to something of which it is the consciousness."¹⁰⁹ The pointing here is of the same nature as the mental pointing of which James spoke when we think of something, have a concept of it. To perceive something as one-and-the-same via simple recognition is to know that I can *do* something – I can return to it, I can look away and look back and it will still be there. To perceive this Object as a typewriter via a recognition – as is to know that I can use it for certain purposes, I can perform certain actions, such as type this essay, with it. As in conceptual intentionality, the intentionality itself, the of-relationship, is present in the immediate experience in the conceptual fringe of my perception. I can become aware of it explicitly by following out the fringe and actually performing the actions suggested in the immediate perception. Thus, speaking of a percept as analogous to a concept, *the specifically intentional aspect of percepts consists in that they orient me to action regarding their intentional objects.*

The intentional aspect of both conception and perception is the same as their function. Both in thought and in perception I am aware of a world that is significantly organized, a world in

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 231.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 228.

which I know how to act, how to get around. I shall borrow the terminology of Joseph Church at this point and call sets of noeses – for they almost never occur one at a time – which organize my experience, “schemata.”¹¹⁰ Schemata are of various types. One kind is visual, operating in such a way that instead of sheer visual chaos, I see discrete Objects of definite shape and color and at various distances from me with unperceived sides which I know are there. Another is sound-oriented, as when I complete to myself a tune half-heard on the radio. Another is sound- and meaning-oriented, as when I struggle to make sense of words heard dimly or distorted. Another governs habitual actions, as when I go through my routine of getting up in the morning, getting dressed, etc., while I am still half-asleep or thinking of something else. Another very common type is a sort of generalized awareness of how space is divided up and what Objects are where, etc. – a combination of visual and motor schemata. Because they are so pervasive, schemata are for the most part overlooked, simply operative and not thematic. Schemata which are not present in experience on any level to which I have conscious (explicit) access I call “latent.” Latent schemata are potentially actualizable when the need arises, but are not in operation at the moment; some examples of my schemata which are latent as I sit here and type are the motor-schemata involved in swimming and the spatial-orientation schemata used in getting around New York City. Schemata are most often noticed when they conflict with perceived reality – when the last step of a stairway is not there, for instance. I went to an art show one time and entered through the left door; the next day I entered through the right door and was disorganized because what I saw didn’t agree with what I had expected, schematically, to see. My one previous acquaintance with the place had instituted a set of schemata relating to spatial configuration.

The function of schemata is the same as that of conception: interpretation. We can now see that there are actually two functions involved, the one for the sake of the other. The first is to organize experience so that I perceive a stable and orderly world rather than chaos without significance. Says Church, “a schema is an implicit principle by which we organize experience we become sensitive to regularities in the way things are constituted and act, so that we perceive the environment as coherent and orderly”¹¹¹ But this organization of experience is for the sake of action; its function is to enable me to get around in the world, to do all the typical things that I do without having to stop and think and figure out what to do. The other side of schemata, says Church, is that “schemata exist in our mobilization to act and react, which in turn reflect the environmental properties to which we are sensitive.”¹¹²

I have been emphasizing that schemata (noeses, operative interpretations) are conceptual in nature; it is by virtue of the conceptual element in experience that experience is intentional. Concepts merge into schemata; thus, the way I think of the world, how I believe it to be, influences my perception of the world. C.S. Peirce has called attention to this fact. In an early essay, “Questions Concerning Faculties Claimed for Man,” he states that

. . . just as we are able to recognize our friends by certain appearances, although we cannot possibly say what those appearances are and are quite unconscious of any process of reasoning, so in any case when the reasoning is easy and natural to us, however complex may be the premises, they sink into insignificance and oblivion proportionately to the satisfactoriness of the theory based upon them.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Joseph Church, *Language and the Discovery of Reality*, pp. 35-37.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Selected Writings*, ed. Philip P. Wiener, p. 24.

What I have called “operative interpretations” Peirce calls “perceptual judgments.”¹¹⁴ He gives an illustration of what he means by referring to a common optical illusion:

So it is with that well-known unshaded outline figure of a pair of steps seen in perspective. We seem at first to be looking at the steps from above; but some unconscious part of the mind seems to tire of putting that construction upon it and suddenly we seem to see the steps from below, and so the perceptive judgment, and the percept itself, seems to be shifting from one general aspect to the other and back again.

In all such visual illusions . . . the most striking thing is that a certain theory of interpretation of the figure has all the appearance of being given in perception.¹¹⁵

Now, Peirce says that perceptual judgments are “logically analogous to inferences excepting only that they are unconscious and therefore uncontrollable and therefore not subject to criticism.”¹¹⁶ I can control my deliberate judgments by going over my reasoning again and again in order to see that it is correct, subjecting each step of an argument to criticism to see that it follows from previous steps in accordance with the rules of inference that hold good in every analogous case.¹¹⁷ But the making of a perceptual judgment is automatic, and whatever steps of reasoning are involved have sunk into “insignificance and oblivion.” This is the meaning of saying that concepts merge into schemata, operative interpretations present in immediate perceptual experience (and in all other modes of experience).

Peirce is correct in saying that perceptual judgments are not subject to control when they arise in immediate perceptual experience. But it is not the case that they are altogether uncontrollable. To take Peirce’s own example: he looks at a surface and sees that it is clean (he sees a clean surface), but upon looking again he sees that it is dirty. In such a case,

I have no right to say that my first *percept* was that of a soiled surface. I absolutely have no testimony concerning it, except my perceptual judgment, and although that was careless and had no high degree of veracity, still I have to accept the only evidence in my possession.¹¹⁸

Peirce’s point is that he saw what he saw, and even if it later turns out that his original perception was mistaken, still there is no way to go back and correct that perception. More importantly, there is no way, at the time of the original perceptual judgment, to evaluate that judgment by looking at the process of inference that gave rise to it, for if there was any process of inference, it was unconscious or (here I interpret Peirce) at best preconscious. The results of such unconscious mental processes, considered individually, can only be taken at face value. In this sense they are “absolutely forced upon my acceptance.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers*, Vol. V, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, pp. 38, 114-115.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 70, 120.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

In another sense, however, Peirce is mistaken. No doubt he cannot truthfully say that his original perception was of anything but a clean surface; but it is equally clear that he can later say that that perceptual judgment was mistaken. He can say this, not on the basis of logical criticism of the assumed inference that led to the judgment, but on the basis of further perceptions of the same intentional object. Such further perceptions, while not altering the original perception, certainly can be instrumental in controlling later perceptual judgments. To push his own example to an extreme, it seems likely that Peirce could at least learn to look more closely at surfaces, thereby reducing the possibility of misperception in the future. To take a less trivial example, a racist may perceive black people as smelly, ugly, shiftless and lazy, etc., but he can be made to lose his prejudices through a process of education about black history and accomplishments, acquaintance with blacks, and perhaps an explanation of the social forces reinforcing racist attitudes. If such a process is successful, he will no longer perceive blacks so unfavorably. The point is that deliberate observation and reflection can at least influence, if not control, later perceptual judgments. Thus they are subject to some kind of control.

A further examination of Peirce's doctrine of perceptual judgments will reveal in more detail just how they are related to action. Perceptual judgments, says Peirce, "are to be regarded as an extreme case of abductive inferences . . ." ¹²⁰ Abduction differs from deduction, strict derivation of conclusions from what is logically contained in the premises, and from induction, reasoning that if something is true of a sample of a certain type of thing or event then it will be true of all such things or events. Abduction consists in deriving the minor premises of a syllogism from the major premise and the conclusion. Thus, given two propositions, 1) All copper conducts electricity, and 2) Item x conducts electricity, it may be inferred that 3) Item x is copper. In his early writings, Peirce called this kind of inference "hypothetic reasoning" or "hypothesis":

Hypothesis may be defined as an argument which proceeds upon the assumption that a character which is known necessarily to involve a certain number of others, may be probably predicated of any object which has all the characters which this character is known to involve.

The function of hypothesis is to substitute for a great series of predicates forming no unity in themselves, a single one (or small number) which involves them all, together (perhaps) with an indefinite number of others. ¹²¹

This is, if an object has all the characteristics included in the definition of copper it may be inferred that it is copper. A certain name or general category is judged to be applicable in a specific instance. The usefulness of this procedure is apparent, for it allows us to refer to something by a single name rather than by a long list of predicates, thus simplifying language and thought.

Now, Peirce says that perceptual judgments are extreme cases of abductive inferences, that are exactly analogous to such inference. This means that in immediate perception of something, I (generally) immediately recognize what it is, what type of thing it is, as Schutz says. Now, to recognize something as what it is is to know what to do with it. Peirce says that "A judgment is an act of formation of a mental proposition combined with an adoption of

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 113.

¹²¹ Peirce, *Selected Writings*, pp. 46-47.

it or act of assent to it.”¹²² For Peirce it is so axiomatic as to be definitional that assent to a proposition, i.e., belief that it is true, involves the willingness to act on it. As early as 1868, Peirce wrote that “it is a mere question of words whether we define belief as that judgment which is accompanied by this feeling [of conviction], or as that judgment from which a man will act.”¹²³ In the famous *Popular Science Monthly* essays, he states that

The feeling of believing is a more or less sure indication of there being established in our nature some habit which will determine our actions.

Belief does not make us act at once, but puts us into such a condition that we shall behave in a certain way, when the occasion arises.¹²⁴

We need not take Peirce’s word for it that this is true. By following out the conceptual fringe present in any moment of perception I can become conscious of action-schemata that guide further action regarding the intentional object of my perception and of incipient impulses to perform the typical actions that I know I can perform.

We thus have more corroborative evidence for the assertions that schemata (noeses, operative interpretations, perceptual judgments) are conceptual in nature; that concepts merge into schemata in such a way that the way I think of the world or some part of it influences the way I experience it – as Peirce says, “abductive inference shades into perceptual judgment without any sharp line of demarcation between them . . .”¹²⁵; and that the function of both clear concepts and operative schemata is to enable me to act fruitfully, to get around in the world and do the things I do. If I have to figure out what I am to do and how to accomplish it, it is my conceptual structure of beliefs about the world and myself that enables me to do it; if I am acting straightforwardly, either deliberately or habitually, the fact that my experience of the world and myself is organized into coherent, recognizable patterns enables me to do that.

There is a more subtle way that my concepts influence my perceptions and my actions. Not only do my beliefs about the world shade into perceptual noeses, but the very structure of the concepts by means of which I think and believe influences my perception and action. This can be seen by looking briefly at the nature of language.

I want to discuss language only as it relates to me, occupying and phenomenologically investigating the subjective point of view. First, the obvious fact should be noted that verbal thoughts are reflections or imaginations of actual vocal speech. This assertion is confirmed phenomenologically by noting not only that imagined words “sound” like spoken words, but also that when I think to myself in words, sometimes I can feel the muscles of my mouth and tongue and throat move slightly – I can feel impulses to speak as I think to myself. When I speak, I usually speak to someone else; in fact it is hard to imagine language existing without the function of interpersonal communication – it seems that language is essentially social in nature.

Now, language fixes our experience in symbolic forms. Words are a way of (conceptually) dividing up reality, reducing the chaotic flux to patterned and ordered elements, stable and

¹²² Peirce, *Collected Papers*, Vol. V, pp. 73-74.

¹²³ Peirce, *Selected Writings*, p. 31.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

¹²⁵ Peirce, *Collected Papers*, Vol. V, p. 113.

recognizable in both senses. Thus, it directs attention to certain aspects of reality and leads us to ignore others. This can be verified phenomenologically by comparing your everyday state of mind with a non-verbal state of mind, with little or no conceptual thought. There exist techniques – Zen meditation is one – for attaining such a state of “no-mind.” It can also be seen by a comparison of how different languages are related to different perceived realities experienced by members of different cultures. This comparison is not phenomenological, of course, but is heuristically useful. Benjamin Whorf has done pioneering work in this field. His basic generalization is that “all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can be in some way calibrated Languages dissect nature in many ways”¹²⁶ Among his many examples, Whorf notes that English and related languages divide reality into things and events, corresponding to nouns and verbs. But “in Nootka, a language of Vancouver Island, all words seem to us to be verbs . . . ; we have, as it were, a monistic view of nature that gives us only one class of word for all kinds of events. ‘A house occurs’ or ‘it houses’ is the way of saying ‘house,’ exactly like ‘a flame occurs’ or ‘it burns.’”¹²⁷ Some languages classify things differently from English; the Hopi, for instance, call everything that flies by one name – except for birds. If this class seems too large and general, Whorf points out, so does our word for snow seem to the Eskimo, who have many words for different kinds of snow. For Whorf, such examples point to the fact that

various grand generalizations of the Western world, such as time, velocity, and matter, are not essential to the construction of a consistent picture of the universe. The psychic experiences that we class under these headings are, of course, not destroyed; rather, categories derived from other kinds of experience take over the rulership of the cosmology and seem to function just as well.¹²⁸

It seems a little too one-sided to push this position to its extreme, as does one of Whorf’s followers, who says, “analysis of nature (and the classification of events as ‘like’ or ‘in the same category’) are governed by mere *grammatical* habits – and not by the objective structure of the real world.”¹²⁹ Language, words, do refer to elements of reality that are given, not just thought up. Alan Watts notes both sides of this tension. “What governs what we choose to notice?” he asks, and answers, Two things. One is “the pattern and logic of all the notation symbols which we have learned from others, from our society, and our culture.” The other is “whatever seems advantageous or disadvantageous for our survival, our social status, and the security of our egos.”¹³⁰ These two are interrelated of course in that our culture in many ways defines for us what is advantageous and disadvantageous, but also such judgments arise out of a continuing common perception of those things as having those value characteristics. I prefer to say that reality is not only socially constructed but also socially discovered.

We can now briefly summarize the functions of thought. Concepts – both in deliberate conceptual thinking and as the noetic element in perception and other modes of experience, interpret what I experience. This includes two aspects. One is the description, classification, and explanation of reality and the structuring of my experience, whether Objective or

¹²⁶ Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Science and Linguistics*, in Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality*, ed. John B. Carroll, p. 214.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 215-216.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

¹²⁹ Weston La Barre, *The Human Animal*, p. 204.

¹³⁰ Alan Watts, *The Book*, p. 29.

subjective. Description and explanation of reality and logical clarification of the relations between concepts are but two sides of one function. The other is to orient me to reality with respect to action. To know that reality is divided up in such and such a way and to experience it that way is to know that certain actions are possible and appropriate, and certain others impossible or inappropriate. Through conceptual thinking and the schematic interpretive elements in experience, we both discover and create the elements and structures of reality and we both discover and create ways of behaving and acting that are useful.

We can now begin to make some judgments regarding the ways that the conceptual element in experience is and is not an element in the self. It is clear that the intentional objects of my concepts are not the self; even when I am thinking of myself, I have myself in the mode, “having myself in mind,” not in the mode, “I myself.” The material qualities of my concepts are uniquely mine – no one else has them directly – but the concepts in their full nature, as intentional, may be shared by others. That is, you and I may both have the same concept of the Pythagorean Theorem, say, or of the physical layout of the University, or of the value of certain kinds of action, such as being honest. We can find out that we have the same concepts either by discussing the matter or simply by observing that we treat the intentional objects or states of affairs the same way, we perform typically the same actions toward them. The activity of thinking, of calling concepts to mind and thinking about things by means of them, is, however, uniquely mine, if not me. When I deliberately pursue a train of thought, it is *I* who think, it is *my* activity. This has a double sense. On the one hand, it is I rather than someone else who am thinking. This is true even in moments of idle contemplation, when thoughts just drift through my mind. But in moments of deliberate thinking about something, the element of deliberateness, of doing it on purpose, makes the thinking mine in a further sense, a sense that is distinguished from mere idle thinking in that there is a distinct sense of agency involved. If I am just idly letting thoughts come and go, the thoughts occur to me, but I do not deliberately think them; the activity is more anonymous than deliberate thinking. I shall deal with the exact nature of this sense of agency in Chapter Five.

With respect to noeses, the conceptual element in perception, recollection, etc., the situation is somewhat similar. The intentional objects are not me – unless I am self-consciously paying attention to myself. But the noeses are at least mine, in that they function in *my* experience, not someone else’s. They are not my action, in the sense of deliberate action; they function automatically. But I think it makes sense to say that they are me in a way similar to the way that my heart and lungs are me. I do not deliberately make my heart beat; nor (for the most part) do I deliberately think of the Objects I see as having other sides, as being perceivable by others, etc. But both the functioning of my heart and of my noeses are indispensable if I am to continue to exist and exist in more or less the same way as I always have been existing. As James says, the line between “me” and “mine” is hard to draw; but it seems clear that my noeses are fundamentally mine, if not me. Were they different or absent altogether, I, as the whole complex of elements in experience that I am, would be quite different. To put it another way, whenever I reflectively “look” at myself, I find my operative noeses, just as I find my automatically functioning heart and lungs. My noeses are a quite fundamental and pervasive feature of my experience.

Now, I have noted that my explicit concepts merge with and become functionally indistinguishable from my operative interpretations, my noeses. In the sense of being pervasively present and having a constant effect on my experience and actions, my basic beliefs about myself and my world are at least fundamentally mine, if not me. My belief that people should be treated equally and with respect influences the way I perceive others and

the way I act toward them. If this belief were altered or abandoned, I would be a different person, recognizably different, both to myself and to others. Not all my beliefs share this characteristic. My belief that the mailbox is on the corner, for instance, is my belief, but is not fundamentally me. If it were found to be false (if the mailbox were moved, for instance), the way I conduct my life would be altered only to an insignificant degree. By basic or fundamental beliefs, I mean those that orient me to all or most of what I experience all or most of the time. Such fundamental beliefs may be me, or at least peculiarly mine, in another sense if they are the result of careful criticism and are ones which I have deliberately adopted. Then they partake of that sense of agency, as the results of *my* doing. They are me no longer simply as I find myself to be, but now as I have created myself to be as well. I'll discuss the self-creative nature of myself more fully in Chapters Four and Seven.

It is important to recognize that my beliefs may be true or false, and so, in a sense, may my schemata. In order for my action to be effective it must be based on true beliefs; if not, it will be frustrated and inhibited. Now, it is a characteristic of the self that I keep on believing what I find to be true and stop believing something when I find it to be false, and that I can determine the truth and falsehood of my beliefs. The most basic way that this happens is by comparing, in a sense, the belief or the judgment believed to be true with the state of affairs that it refers to. As Husserl says,

Every judgment can be confronted with "its affairs themselves" and adjusted to them in either a positive or a negative adequation. In the one case, the judgment is evidently true – it is in fulfilling and verifying coincidence with the categorical objectivity meant in the relevant judging . . . and now offering itself as itself-given; in the other case it is evidently false because . . . there comes out as itself-given a categorical objectivity that conflicts with the total judicial meaning and necessarily "annuls" it.¹³¹

To take a trivial but easily grasped example, if I believe that my car is in the driveway, I have only to go and look to see whether it is or not in order to determine whether my belief is true or not. If my car is in the driveway, my judgment to that effect is true; if not, the belief is false. But this process occurs not only on the level of explicit conceptual judgments, but also on the level of operative interpretations, of perceptual judgments. Recall Peirce's example of first seeing a clean surface and then seeing that it was dirty. In that case, the later perceptions conflict with the first one and prove it mistaken. If, in such a case, I continue to see a clean surface each time I look at it, then I simply go on believing it to be clean, without thinking about it. Now, Husserl says, and the phenomenological evidence bears him out, that whenever I experience something, I expect to be able to experience it again and to "see" it as what I saw the first time (unless it is something inherently unstable and fleeting, such as a flash of lightning or a passing image in my mind). By virtue of a synthesis of recognition, I can perceive something as the same thing that I perceived earlier. But more than this, when I perceive something for the first time, one aspect of the schemata that tell me what it is is the implicit anticipation of being able to recognize it again. Says Husserl,

The effect produced by a single intentional process, in particular its effect as a giving of something-itself, its effect as evidence, is . . . not shut off singly. The single evidence, by its own intentionality, can implicitly "demand" further givings of the object itself; it can "refer one" to them for a supplementation of its Objectivating effect

¹³¹ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 193.

Absolutely any consciousness of anything whatever belongs a priori to an openly endless multiplicity of possible modes of consciousness, which can always be connected synthetically in the unity-form of a conjoint acceptance . . . to make one consciousness, as a consciousness of “*the Same*.”¹³²

But further perceptions, further givings of something-itself, can either fulfill or annul this implicit demand. Further perceptions give me either something indeed the same, or something different, in which case my implicit belief that I shall perceive the same thing is proven false. On this fundamental level of syntheses of recognition, my beliefs are constantly being verified or falsified. Speaking of “evidence” as “that performance on the part of intentionality which consists in the giving of something-itself,”¹³³ Husserl says that

Thanks to evidence, the life of consciousness has an *all-pervasive teleological structure*, a pointedness toward “reason” and even a pervasive tendency toward it – that is: toward the discovery of correctness (and, at the same time, toward the lasting acquisition of correctness) and toward the canceling of incorrectness (thereby ending their acceptance as acquired possessions).¹³⁴

To put it in different terms, it is a fundamental function of the self to acquire true beliefs and true perceptions and to hold them as “lasting acquisitions” and to discard false beliefs and perceptions.

Phenomenological analysis of concepts and the conceptual element in experience leads us to begin to see another fundamental characteristic of the self. We started out the analysis of the empirical self by deciding to investigate those elements of the world present to pure consciousness that have the sense, “subjective, available directly only to me,” and to say that these elements compose the self. But through our investigation of the conceptual element in experience, we begin to suspect that this is an abstraction and that the self cannot be understood without reference to other selves. This is seen easily in the case of concepts and conceptual thinking. Much of my thinking (though not all) is by means of language; I think about things by thinking verbal thoughts, words and sentences. But language, at least as I find it in my experience, is an intersubjective phenomenon. I may think to myself in words, but only because I am able to talk to others and have them understand me and because I am able to hear and understand them. Without language, my thinking would be much less easy and effective; pictures and other modes of sensory imagery convey both too much and too little information – too much because it is presented all at once, with aspects of what is thought about that are relevant to my purposes and aspects that are irrelevant being presented together, and too little because if I can’t easily distinguish what is relevant and significant from what is not the effect is the same as having no information at all, or nearly so. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but words are much easier to fix in the mind and on paper and are easier to communicate to others. My ability to think is enhanced immeasurably because I think in language over what it would be if I had no language. Moreover, as we have seen, my language influences my perception of reality. We’ll see in Chapter Four that I am who I am correlative to what I perceive and interact with; because language influences what I perceive and how I perceive it, it influences who I am.

¹³² Ibid., pp. 159-160.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 157, emphasis omitted.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 160.

The relatedness of the self to other selves is seen also in the operative interpretations, the noeses, that are an integral element in my experience of the world. One of the most fundamental (and therefore easily overlooked) interpretations operative in perception of the Objective world is the knowledge that others can perceive the same world and perceive it in much the same way I do. Husserl notes that

the world is the world *for us all*; as an Objective world it has, in its own sense, the categorical form, “*once for all truly existing*,” not only for me but *for everyone World-experience . . . signifies, not just my quite private experience, but community experience*: The world itself, according to its sense, is the one identical world, to which all of *us* necessarily have experiential access, and about which all of *us* by “*exchanging*” our experiences – that is: by making common –, can reach a common understanding¹³⁵

Alfred Schutz has noted the same fact in his analysis of the nature of our common-sense knowledge of the world. Under the heading of “the reciprocity of perspectives,” he notes that “in daily life I take it for granted that intelligent fellow-men exist. This implies that the objects of the world are, as a matter of principle, accessible to their knowledge”¹³⁶ I also take it for granted that were I to change places with someone else, I should see the world as he did and he as I did and that we should recognize the same features of it as significant or insignificant: “‘We’ assume that both of us have selected and interpreted the actually or potentially common objects and their features in an identical manner or at least an ‘empirically identical’ manner, i.e., one sufficient for all practical purposes.”¹³⁷ It is thus a fundamental characteristic of the self as I find it in my experience that I experience a world that includes other selves who experience it much the same way as I do. As our investigation proceeds, we shall find more evidence for the relatedness of the self to other selves.

More can be said about the way the conceptual element in experience figures in the structure and composition of the self, but not before we “see” what the other elements of my self are and how they interact. By way of transition into the next topic, the discussion of feeling, let us remember

Watts’ words – that we notice aspects of reality that are advantageous or disadvantageous to us. That is a more or less Objective way of saying that reality, filtered through and divided up and structured by my noeses, is perceived as attractive or repellant, good or bad (or indifferent), leading to satisfaction or not. In everyday experience, feelings arise concomitantly with perception and conception and all other modes of experience. Even my most abstract concepts are never devoid of feeling. The feeling element may be reduced to unnoticed insignificance; but if it is, I am bored, and boredom is surely a feeling.

Watts has pointed out one aspect of a general truth – that in my mental life *nothing is devoid of emotion*. We encountered another example of this truth when we found the self unperceivable; we were at least puzzled – I myself was amazed and awed – at the conclusion. To give another example, feelings are involved in conceptual thinking in the very process of writing this paper. On the one hand, I am often aware of vague *gestaltlich* outlines of concepts, abstract visual patterns of the structure of the concepts and of the emerging

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 236.

¹³⁶ Schutz *Collected Papers I*, p. 11.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 12.

structure of the essay. On the other hand, I am thinking of exact words, phrases, sentences, to put on paper. Often I seem to be trying out different phrases against the more abstract pattern to see if they fit or are appropriate, trying to express an exact nuance of meaning – when I get one that feels good, I write it down. But note that an essential element here is the feeling of harmony or discord, of feeling-good-with or feeling-bad-with, between the words and the un verbalized concept. It is not a matter of comparing two equally distinct entities and finding an identity – I do not simply verbalize a previously existing thought. On the contrary, as I verbalize my thoughts I discover more precisely what it is that I am thinking; and the clue, the aspect of reality that tells me whether I have expressed by thought well or poorly, is the feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction that occurs with it.

I shall use the terminology of R. G. Collingwood and say that attached to every thought, every percept, every word and image, is an “emotional charge.”¹³⁸ Collingwood uses the phrase to refer to a characteristic of perception of external reality, that perceptions of Objects, events, relations, etc., are accompanied by emotional feelings. I go farther and say that emotional charges are attached to my concepts as well. If one will examine his experience, says Collingwood, “I believe that he will find that every sensum [percept] presents itself to him bearing a peculiar emotional charge, and that sensation [perception] and emotion, thus related, are twin elements in every experience of feeling.”¹³⁹ I say this is true of all experience – but that is to anticipate the detailed discussion of feeling.

¹³⁸ R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, p. 162.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.

Chapter Four. Feeling And The Self-Concept.

A. Feeling

The question of the status of feelings is crucial for our inquiry, for it seems that they are what is most intimate, they are closest to me and least public. For this reason they are hardest to talk about, impossible to describe in detail. The best I can do is either to use the crude categories that the language of my culture gives me or to refer to feelings by means of other, more public things that occur with them. I can speak of depression and elation, hatred and compassion – but each of these terms covers a broad range of feeling, innumerable subtle variations and nuances. Words in this case are like least common denominators. Only I can feel all the subtle shades and variations of my happiness, and only you can feel yours – but we both put the same label on those feelings, thereby reducing them (unless we are careful) to a sort of standardized and nonvariant feeling that we call being happy. If I can't find an appropriate label for my feelings, then I can refer to them by noting the situation in which they occur. In that case I can only hope that you have been in a similar situation, have had a similar experience, so that you know what I'm talking about. Otherwise how can I describe walking across the university campus on a blustery winter day except by such a gross inadequacy as "invigorating"? But the fact that feelings are hard to talk about should not blind us to being aware that feelings come in all sorts of shades, variations, tones, nuances, and that these can be discriminated even though there are no labels for them.

The term, "feeling," in its broadest extension, denotes all that is immediately present in experience, although clearly feelings can be differentiated according to immediately-experiencable qualities and according to their different functions. Both the material qualities of my thoughts and their intentional fringes, in so far as the latter are vivid enough for me reflectively to "see" them, as well as my sensations and their intentional fringes are thus feelings. I categorize feelings into five types: sensations, bodily feelings or sensations, emotions, moods, and impulsions to action.

Feelings as they first come to my attention are sheer material qualities, immediately and directly there for me to be aware of. But they are also modes or ways of being aware of something else, they are media through which I am aware of intentional objects. This is obvious in the case of sensations which are elements in external perception; usually I pay no attention to the specific qualities of my sensations, but only to the intentional objects. I distinguish bodily sensations from sensation in general because, in certain sense-modes at least, they clearly have the sense of being intermediary between I who perceive and the external intentional object perceived, their intentional reference is at least partially to my body.

Everyone is acquainted with bodily feelings or sensations. A headache is an obvious example, as is the pleasant feeling in my stomach after I have just eaten. There are feelings of bodily movement, of muscles exerting themselves and moving in various ways. There are feelings of warmth and coldness, of pressure, of texture. The sense of touch is a case in which the medium-quality of bodily sensations is most pronounced. When I touch a table I feel the table, of course, but also my fingers. The sense of taste is another obvious case. When I eat an apple, I know that it is an apple that I am eating, I recognize it as an apple – even when I am blindfolded and someone puts it in my mouth so I don't touch or see it. The taste-

sensations are localized in my mouth and tongue, and to identify them as sensations of an apple is, of course, an interpretation, but the point is that I am aware, through the medium of taste, of something other than just my mouth and tongue, something I immediately or subsequently recognize as an apple. Much the same can be said for the sense of smell. If I close my eyes and someone holds up to my nose first nutmeg, then a banana, then some tobacco and then an exotic perfume, I am conscious of different sensations, which I can identify or not depending on my previous acquaintance with them. But they are sensations of something besides my body, not just states of my nose.

The quality sensations have of being elements in perceptions of something other than my body is more pronounced in the case of hearing. When I hear music or noises on the street, I am conscious mostly of the sounds and negligibly or not at all of the changing pressures on my eardrum. The external intentionality of feeling is most pronounced in the case of sight. When I am seeing, I definitely see objects, shapes, colors, things that have the sense, “out there.” I distinguish and recognize these different objects by means of operative perceptual judgments or noeses. But my visual sensations do not normally have the sense of being states of my eyes; my attention is directed at the intentional objects that I see. Nevertheless, it seems that visual sensations are feelings of my eyes, just as tactile sensations and smells are feelings of my skin and nose.

Of course I sometimes experience my body directly, as when I have a headache or feel my muscles moving when I dance. In such cases the intentional object of the (introspective) perception of which the feelings are elements is my body or some part of it, and we may call these feelings “bodily sensations proper.” Clear recognition of the intentional objects of bodily feelings proper is aided by the fact that they are localized, at least to some extent – if my back itches I know at least that it is my back, even if I can’t quite get the exact spot. If I have been exercising, I feel a mildly pleasant fatigue in my muscles, but not in my stomach or in my head. Bodily sensations proper, as well as sensations in general, can thus be thought of as spread out on a continuum as to immediacy, localization, and directedness toward intentional objects, either objects external to me or my body or some part of it.

Feelings of this sort are also on a continuum with respect to the amount of conscious or deliberate control I have over them. Bodily feelings proper are the least controllable – try to feel your liver or your appendix, or try not to feel your headache when you have one! The sense of sight is most controllable. I can easily look this way or that or shut my eyes altogether – I can turn my sight on and off. Hearing is slightly less controllable, in that I can’t shut my ears, but I can easily direct my attention towards sounds or toward something else. The other kinds of sensations and bodily feelings fall in between these two extremes.

There are other types of feelings besides sensations and bodily feelings or sensations. There are also emotions and moods – depression, anger, elation, eagerness, fear, friendliness, hostility, sadness, pleasure and pain in the sense of pervasive comfort or discomfort, annoyance, admiration, awe, etc. These to exhibit a medium-like quality, a state of affairs I express by *The Principle of Correlativity: a feeling arises correlatively to the intentional object of which I am aware*. I do not say that the object causes the feeling, nor that the feeling causes my perception of the object. Both of these propositions are true taken together; neither is true in abstraction from the other.

I walk into a room and am immediately struck by a red poster hanging on a wall. Is the emotional charge of mild excitement caused by the red poster, or do I notice the poster

because of the emotional charge? A person whom I find repellent walks in, and I feel a slight wave of disgust. Is my disgust caused by the person, or do I perceive the person as repellent because of my disgust? The answer is, Both. I do not feel admiration, awe, respect, disdain, etc., simply as vaguely directed feelings; they are ways of being aware of and in relation to something particular beyond themselves – in these cases, usually people. Emotions arise correlatively to all sorts of objects, of course, but they are one of the primary media through which I am aware of other people. Using the term “feeling” to mean emotion, George Schrader asserts that “Feeling is a form of awareness To feel is to be aware of something”¹⁴⁰ He says that when I am angry, my anger is not directed at myself, but at something beyond myself. “If anger can be counted as a feeling, we have here an instance of a prereflective awareness through which an individual is projected beyond himself.”¹⁴¹ I think his choice of words is well-taken – just as I am conscious of a red lampshade through my visual sensations, of an apple through the taste-sensations in my mouth, so am I aware of you through my anger at you.

The way I feel about others influences how I perceive them; but, correlatively, the way I perceive others in ordinary unreflective life contributes to how I feel. If I like you, I am likely to pay attention to you; and the more I pay attention to you, the more I learn about you, the more likely – usually – I am to like you. When I am intensely and directly related to you, the primary locus of interaction is often a line from my eyes to yours. The more I look at you, the more I am conscious of you, the more information I get about you. I can fill in the silences between your words with an immediate sympathetic feeling of how you are feeling, of what your words mean to you. You are more real to me – and I am more real to myself, as well as to you. Here the Principle of Correlativity extends beyond any single emotion to my whole sense of myself. The more aspects of you that I am conscious of – that is, the deeper the feelings, the more understandable the visual cues – the more aspects of myself I am conscious of. I get a sense of life, of vitality, of fullness, both as properties of myself and of you. If on the other hand, you mention something that is painful to me, that I should rather ignore, and if I shift the conversation to something else, then I have limited the ways you can express yourself and the aspects of yourself that can be revealed to me. I have forced you to be, in this situation, less than what you could be. Because there is less to respond to, I have limited myself in the same way.

Moods, too, exhibit the Principle of Correlativity. When I am feeling unhappy, in the sense of an all-pervasive subjective state, it is hard to find any definite object of unhappiness – although if I think about it I can probably find reasons for my mood and perhaps even do something about it. The object is rather the world in general or the situation I find myself in, not any single thing but the broad character of all or most of what I am, at the time, aware of or in relation to. Heidegger asserts that pervasive moods are ways of being related towards the world in a general way. The word translated into English as “mood” is “*die Stimmung*,” which has the root meaning of “attunement” or “being attuned.”¹⁴² Clearly one is attuned to something. “A mood makes manifest ‘how one is and how one is faring,’” he says, indicating a vague awareness of oneself in relation to his or her world.¹⁴³ On the one hand, the kind of mood I am in determines to some extent the kind of world that I am aware of, the character of

¹⁴⁰ George A. Schrader, *The Structure of Emotion*, in *An Invitation to Phenomenology*, ed. James M. Edie, p. 254.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 257-258.

¹⁴² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 172, translators’ note 3.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

the world I live in. If I am afraid and anxious, the world is menacing; if I am intent upon a task, the world is simply there to be used or perhaps to get in the way; if I am happy, self-confident, at ease, the world is full of fascinating and wonderful things to groove on. On the other hand, the world provokes moods in me – I feel that a cold, rainy day is a good day for moody contemplation or for sleeping; a bright sunny day makes me cheerful and active. My mood and my world are *correlative*; causality does not go in only one direction.

My moods and emotions also arise correlatively to my body. Much of my pervasive subjective state consists of feelings of my body and of my movements, and their correlative moods and emotions. This is clearest in extreme cases, such as sickness. The bad feelings are localized in various places, but I am feverish and weak all over. Not surprisingly, my mood is one of depression, perhaps disgruntlement. I think depressing thoughts, imagine situations in which I am a failure, remember past mistakes. Not only are my bodily feelings correlative to my body as an intentional object, but my mood is correlative to my bodily feelings. To take the opposite extreme, when I am extraordinarily healthy I can brave cold winds, walk long distances through hostile city streets and feel invigorated, strong and tough. I get a feeling of accomplishment, of self-sufficiency, a continuing strength in my stride, a feeling of power. My mood is exuberance. This correlation between my body and my moods occurs in small ways too – it makes a difference in how I feel, whether I let my face sag so that the whites of my eyes show under the pupils or whether I keep my eyes at a slightly greater level of tension, encouraging me to use them to look at things, to be out in the world instead of into my thoughts. The relation goes the other way, of course. When I am self-confident and happy, I stand tall; when I am depressed, others can see it in the way I crumple into a chair or allow my posture to sag. The pervasive feelings of my body and their correlative moods and emotions are integral elements in my over-all subjective state.

The final category of feeling is impulsion to action. This type of feeling is noticeable chiefly when I think about doing something and almost do it, but stop myself – when I stop myself from uttering a harsh word, for instance, or when I almost reach for another cigarette but don't, remembering not only that cigarettes are bad for my lungs but that they make me sick to my stomach as well. Impulsions are like "least actions" or incipient actions. Were they actualized they would issue in full action, the intentional object of which would then occupy my attention, and not the feeling of acting. Discussion of the whole area of action I shall reserve for Chapter Five. Here it is sufficient to note that impulsions, like all feelings, are both felt objects in their own right and are ways of being directed toward objects in the world or in my subjective state. Impulsions are distinguished from other types of feeling by being media in a double sense. They arise correlatively to something experienced, but also to something (almost, at least) acted upon. We may regard experiencing as a somewhat passive process; my sensations are simply given to me, although there is usually a lot of noetic activity involved in recognition of the intentional objects and often active paying attention as well. Acting is the opposite; and impulsions to action are media in both processes.

There is of course a difference between immediately or unreflectively feeling a feeling and reflectively noting that I am feeling it. In the case of sight, I am usually simply conscious of what I am seeing, the intentional object, but I can reflectively know *that* I am seeing – that is, I can have a mental idea or concept that refers to my seeing. Also I can pay attention to my sensations, as distinct from what I am looking at. At the opposite extreme, in the case of moods, the situation is similar but reversed. When I am elated, for instance, I am usually simply unreflectively elated, but can reflectively know that I am elated. Also I can, perhaps with some difficulty, be aware of the object of my elation.

To complete this classification of feelings, note that not only are bodily feelings present in any moment of sense-perception or perception of the body, but emotional feelings as well. I have used Collingwood's phrase, "emotional charge," to refer to the emotion attached to, accompanying, or present in a moment of experience with, a perceived object, person, or concept. This fact is often overlooked, partly because it is obvious and partly because we tend to ignore much of our feeling life.

Anything that is immediately present in experience is a feeling. Thus, it is not merely the case that emotional feelings accompany Objects, persons, and thoughts as I am aware of them, but even more that perceptions, thoughts, and feelings are all, in a sense, feelings; they all have common enough characteristics that they can be called by the same name and placed in the same category. All of them have a material aspect and an intentional aspect, and the intentional aspect is founded on the material in the sense that without the material aspect there would be no intentionality. I can and do sometimes have sheer material qualities that have no intentional reference beyond themselves – the vague spots and patterns, for instance, that I see when I close my eyes. These are, of course, objects present to pure consciousness, but they are not intentional objects in the sense outlined in the previous chapter – there are no "mental processes of experience" in addition to the material qualities which give them an "ontic sense"¹⁴⁴ (unless I think about them and recognize that they are purely private affairs with no significance – but such thinking is a further process of experience and is not contained in their original appearing). They are not "intentional unities" constituted by "multiplicities,"¹⁴⁵ for they are fleeting and have no stability; at most they are present for a time in "the continuous modification of the momentary perception in retention and protention,"¹⁴⁶ but if this be called a kind of intentionality, it is not the kind of intentionality I have been concentrating on and analyzing. Now feelings are material, and may or may not have concomitant noises that interpret the feeling as a feeling of something other than the feeling itself. Thus it seems that the most basic or primitive aspect of experience is feeling itself – broad, vague, massive, undifferentiated, and therefore not verbally definable. In percept and conception, feeling has become differentiated and more precisely apprehendable, but it is feeling that is basic or primordial.

Steinzor supports one part of this thesis quite clearly: "I don't think it is possible," he says, "for a human to feel without thinking. When I hear something unclearly communicated, I may ask, 'What are you feeling?' or I may ask 'What are you thinking?' It amounts to the same question."¹⁴⁷ Church supports and elaborates this view by saying that verbalized thoughts are crystallizations or clarifications of un verbalized feelings: "Until our thoughts have been formulated symbolically, they are only elusive feelings and impulses to action; once we have said them, no matter how imperfectly, we have objectified them and externalized them, and can work with them."¹⁴⁸

We have seen that Collingwood insists that there is an emotional charge attached to every perception. He goes farther to say that our "sensuous-emotional nature" has "the character of a foundation upon which the rational part of our nature is built; laid and consolidated, both

¹⁴⁴ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 164.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

¹⁴⁷ Steinzor, *The Healing Partnership*, p. 147.

¹⁴⁸ Church, *Language*, p. 98.

in the history of living organisms at large and in the history of each human individual, before the superstructure of thought was built upon it, and enabling that superstructure to function by being itself in a healthy condition.”¹⁴⁹

Now I want to note an important characteristic of all feelings. Husserl says that “The experience of a feeling has no perspectives,”¹⁵⁰ there is no “other side,” nothing else that might be presented to me when I am conscious of a feeling. But this should not be taken to mean that I am either conscious of a feeling or not, with no in-between. On the contrary, the fact that I am not conscious of a feeling does not mean that I am not aware of it or that I do not feel it. Feelings, thoughts, perceptions may all be more or less intense, more or less vividly present to pure consciousness; and I can, in a sense, “see” more of a feeling that is dim and obscure by focusing my attention on it, making it more vivid. Ideas occur in my mind on a preverbal level as well as fully verbalized; images can be dim and obscure, previsual or fully present and vivid. I can direct my attention to things and people in the external world either directly and exclusively, or partially, or minimally or not at all. This holds true for my feelings of my body as well – usually I simply take my body for granted and ignore it, but when I think about it, I can feel the tension in my fingers as I write, the pressure of my seat and my feet on the floor, etc. As for emotional feelings, I can go all day not knowing that I feel vaguely depressed and frustrated because I have not met my friend fully, but have averted my eyes and refused to recognize him as part of my reality – or I can come home and discover that I feel satisfied with my day, my accomplishments, my meetings with friends when I smiled and looked at them directly, hearing their words and sharing their thoughts and feelings and allowing them to share mine.

Not only do I sometimes discover that I have been thinking or feeling something of which I was not conscious, but I can often deliberately admit things or exclude them from the field of things of which I am conscious. If I feel frustrated or angry, I can deliberately ignore those feelings and try to occupy myself with something else. If I have a problem that I must solve, I can and do sometimes simply ignore it – and later be surprised when the answer occurs to me spontaneously, as if I had worked out the problem subconsciously. But I am not constructing the hypothesis of a subconscious, or subconsciously being aware, as a way of making conceptual sense out of reality, as Freud did. On the contrary, I am saying that I know that I am aware of things that I am not conscious of because sometimes I become conscious of them and recognize that they have been there all the time. A flash of anger in a confrontation with someone bursts as a new element on the scene, altering my subjective state, rearranging the relations between things that I have been thinking and feeling and doing. But when I become conscious of a feeling that was previously ignored, it does not disrupt my subjective state but rather remains related in the same way to the other things of which I am conscious, only now it and its relations are consciously noted.

Wakingly being conscious is only the top, as it were, of a broad range of ways of being aware; it is that area where things are most vividly presented and most clearly differentiated from other things. But the whole spectrum of ways of being aware ranges from vividly being conscious to being aware dimly and vaguely of thoughts and feelings indistinctly and obscurely present and off into oblivion, where I cannot penetrate. If the world spreads out endlessly in all directions from pure consciousness, the farther away things are, the harder it is to “see” them clearly. But the spotlight of attention does not illuminate equally all that is

¹⁴⁹ Collingwood, *Principles of Art*, pp. 163-164.

¹⁵⁰ Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 126.

closest to me. Some things are so close and continually present that I overlook them – such things as my bodily feelings and my pervasive moods. Global, vague, massive, but continuous feelings such as these are present as a background to what I am consciously attending to. They influence or color my perception of everything because they are continuously present. It is feelings such as these that constitute most of my subjective state, my so-called “state of consciousness” – and most of the time I don’t even know it.

I insist on this point – that thoughts and feelings as well as things and people are often present in experience even when I am not focally attentive to them – because it is so easy to ignore it. I can illustrate the importance of this in another way by asking “What is real, what is reality?” The common-sense answer, I suppose, is something like, “The real is what is there whether I want it to be there or not, and whether or not I am looking at it.” The answer from the pure phenomenological point of view is that what is real, what exists, is what is present to pure consciousness at any given moment – if something is not present to pure consciousness, it doesn’t exist. When I look at something and look away and look back again, that object first is, then is not, then is again. Someone who accepts the common-sense notion of reality while doing a phenomenological investigation would probably say that what is real is what is possible for him to become conscious of and that the object still exists even when he is not looking at it.

All of this makes sense in a general way, but calls for two comments. The first is that to accept any of these views while forgetting or denying that feelings (especially) can be present to pure transcendental consciousness while I am not wakenly being conscious of them, paying attention to them, is to have a false idea and false perception of the self. I say feelings especially – and this is my second point – because it is equally a mistake to go to the opposite extreme and say that all feelings exist all the time, only sometimes I am conscious of some of them and other times of others. On the contrary, sometimes a feeling simply is not there at all, on any level of being aware to which I can have conscious access. I can go about my business in the world feeling a little uneasy and then stop my running around and allow myself to become conscious of my feelings and discover what is bothering me. But sometimes I sit and deliberately pay attention to my feelings, consciously feel them, and do not discover anger, for instance – if I try maybe I can find something to get angry about, but as I discover myself I find no anger present. This means not that anger is really there anyway, but that at that moment it is not there, it doesn’t exist, it’s not a reality, etc.

If sometimes I am not aware of a feeling, let alone conscious of it, at other times it is present to me with great intensity. This occurs, for instance, when I feel a burst of anger or of joy, when the feeling thrusts itself on my attention with such intensity that I cannot ignore it. This fact points to another important characteristic of feelings – that they occur with varying degrees of force, of intensity. That is, it is not simply the case that feelings can be present to my conscious attention at varying levels from vividness to obscurity, but also they simply occur in varying degrees of intensity, regardless of the amount of attention. The more intense they are, of course, the more likely I am to notice them. But the point is that there are two variables here, the degree of attention directed to a feeling and the degree of intensity of that feeling itself, regardless of how much I am paying attention to it.

My whole subjective state is suffused with feelings, massive and undifferentiated and often ignored background feelings as well as sharp and vivid bodily feelings, emotions, and sensations. The whole range of feeling can be thought of as a *field of energy* – a good metaphor because it includes movement and activity. My feelings do not move from place to

place, but they come and go in the sense of gaining and losing intensity – they come into and out of being. Feelings are shifting, elusive. They seem to have a life of their own, coming into and out of existence, remaining for a long time or only briefly, recurring frequently or rarely. If this is so, how can we speak of the reality of feelings? I suggest that the reality of feelings consists in their intensity and in their duration. Reality in this sense is not an “either/or,” but a matter of degrees – a feeling may be more or less real. A short, intense feeling is quite real – but so is a day-long mood that I ignore most of the time. Intense and long-enduring or often-repeating feelings are the most real. In this sense, “real” means “having an effect.” The effect of my feelings is on my subjective state as a whole and, as we shall see, on my actions. A dim and fleeting feeling makes little difference to me; the intense experience of Saul on the road to Damascus changed the course of his life.

[2013] *The reality of feelings also consists in the frequency of their recurrence. I wrote the dissertation before knowing anything about Re-evaluation Counseling. Feelings can recur, can come up when restimulated. The more often they are restimulated the more real (in the sense used in the dissertation) they are: the more effect they have. The longer the duration, the more intense and the more frequent the recurrence, the greater the feeling's effect.*

Although feelings feel differently – even if I can't verbalize the difference, except in the grossest respects – they are not sharply isolated from each other; they pervade and interfuse each other. The quality of my good mood on a sunny, cheerful day may be enhanced by my feeling that I have successfully completed a task or have met my friend directly; or it may be clouded by feelings of frustration and anger, or simply by the pain of turning my ankle. Even more, a series or a cluster of feelings, each with its own distinctive character, can combine to form a single larger feeling, a feeling that has its own distinctive character as a whole, not just as a collection. If I try, for instance, I can become conscious of many different parts of my body, and they all feel differently; but mostly I am aware, if at all, only of a generalized feeling of health or ill-health. I can be conscious of my reactions to each of the details of a painting or a piece of music, or I can simply appreciate it as a whole. Each of my meetings with another person leaves me feeling a little – or sometimes a lot – differently, but they all combine to form my general impression of and feeling toward him or her. One day I am angry at that person, the next day I ignore him or her, the next day we speak deeply about things important to both of us, the next day we get high together and just have a good time – out of all of these and other encounters I get a generalized good feeling toward that person, a feeling that he or she is my friend, tempered by awareness of how we clash and enhanced by memories of the good times and the significant times. The relatively individual feelings combine into a more massive and less definable over-all feeling – which is felt as a unity of quality. And, just as the strings of a violin tuned to the perfect first and fourth will produce the fifth as an overtone when sounded together, so do the feelings of my relations with all whom I meet combine and produce in me a feeling of satisfaction and well-being, or of dissatisfaction and frustration and anger at myself and at them. Even when feelings are “mixed,” that is, contradictory, as when I both want to see someone and don't want to, each of them is different for occurring with the other, rather than remaining in relative isolation.

Since feelings pervade and interfuse one another, it should not surprise us to note that all feelings have some component of impulsion to action. *Feelings call for expression, for action.*¹⁵¹ By this, I mean that all feelings include some tendency to become manifest

¹⁵¹ Says James, “All feeling is for the sake of action, all feeling results in action, - today no argument is

outwardly by means of voluntary or involuntary bodily action. I never have a feeling without it having at least some minimal effect on my action. This is true on all levels, though the less intense the feeling, the less overt and immediate will be its expression. We have seen that sensations are the material element in perception, the bedrock without which there would be no perception, and that the intentional element in perception consists in that I am oriented with respect to action toward the intentional object. Thus, even at this level, there is a reference to action, though the action schemata are mostly latent when I am just looking around. But if an exceptionally intense sensation strikes me, say a sudden loud noise, I am more likely to react overtly, by jumping, for instance, or turning around to see what made the noise. Similarly with bodily sensation: the pressure on the bottom of my feet doesn't provoke any immediate action, although I know it means I can stand here safely. But if I have a sharp headache, I am likely to wince and groan and look for the aspirin. At the other end of the scale, my moods have a definite effect on the way I act, though they may not provoke any specific action as do intense sensations and bodily feelings. If I am depressed, all of what I do tends to have a lethargic, unenthusiastic character – I mope around or half-heartedly do my routine tasks. My mood is expressed in the general way I conduct myself. Or if my mood is one of hyper-activity, I will jerk and bounce around, running from this to that, doing what I do with almost feverish energy.

Emotions especially call for expression. To have an emotion is to have an impulsion to action, an urge to manifest it outwardly in some way. If I'm glad to see someone, I smile and pay attention to him or her, perhaps reach out physically. If I'm angry at someone, I tend to be short with that person, perhaps even nasty. If I cannot or will not express my emotions fully, then I am left feeling frustrated and isolated. If I don't express my anger, for instance, and pretend that nothing is amiss, then my mood turns sour, I start to feel disgruntled. Expression of emotions, not verbal declaration of ideas, is the most fundamental and most real way I have of relating to and being in communion with others. Mikel Dufrenne says that the level of expression of concepts is not the primary level of speech, but expression of feeling is:

. . . to arouse a feeling in someone else implies that I express a feeling myself, that I play on meanings which are no longer conceptual but emotional. Language thus serves less to name an object than to express myself, or more exactly, what language consists in here are the signs that accompany speech and serve to redouble its meaning.¹⁵²

“Speech” here is the concrete act of speaking and “language” refers to the elements abstracted from speech such as words and grammatical rules, etc. Dufrenne goes on to note another aspect of the expression of emotions, that they can be deliberately communicated through speech. This is a “fundamental and different mode of communication” from merely asserting propositions:

For if I expect that others will respond to my feeling, it is because I believe that they will have understood This sort of comprehension operates on a primary level of intersubjectivity that one can call emotional contact¹⁵³

A feeling fully expressed is a feeling that lives; an unexpressed feeling will slowly die away,

needed to prove these truths (*Pragmatism*, p. 215).”

¹⁵² Mikel Dufrenne, *Language and Philosophy*, tr. Henry B. Veatch, p. 81.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

become less available to my conscious attention, just as my body will slowly waste away if I do not exercise it. Expression of feelings, then, is necessary to make them fully real; an unconscious feeling may still exist, but if it is not expressed it does not become integrated with the rest of me. Its reality is of a different nature; it is in a sense outside of me, because I am unwittingly and unwillingly subject to its influence. Recalling our earlier remarks on reality, we can say that *intense feelings, pervasive bodily and emotional feelings and moods, and feelings, especially emotions, that are allowed expression are the most real elements in my subjective state – they are most really me.*

We should note, however, that regardless of whether I deliberately express my emotions they get expressed – we might say betrayed – to some extent anyway. If I am angry, I can try to hide my anger, but it shows in the reduced interest I take in people and in the way I carry my body and in my tone of voice. If I am happy, I show it involuntarily in the lightness of my step, my easy-going attitude, etc., regardless of whether I tell people explicitly of my happiness. Expression of emotions is, at bottom, an automatic function of the self; but I can augment that function by making an effort to let people know how I am feeling or inhibit it by trying to hide my emotions.

[2013] There is another way that feelings call for expression, particularly feelings of painful emotion. Painful emotions such as grief, fear, embarrassment, anger and boredom need to be released, or discharged. If they are kept bottled up, as it were, they interfere with our ability to think clearly and respond appropriately to stimuli in our environment. If they are discharged through crying, shaking, laughter, vigorous and abrupt movement or interested talking, they dissipate and cease to have an inhibitory effect. See Chapter 19, “The Overlooked Adaptation,” in my book, How To Be An Excellent Human, and the theory and practice of Re-evaluation Counseling.

Also note that it is not only emotions that call for expression, but thoughts and perceptions as well. If I hear a funny story, I express my reaction by laughing, but I also feel an impulse to tell it to others. If I think of something important that I haven’t thought of before, if I “perceive” significance in some situation or state of affairs that I experience, my impulse is not to keep it to myself but to tell others. If I see a beautiful sunset or an interesting tree or, in general, anything that catches my attention, I want to show it to others. This impulse toward expression is a function, it seems to me, of the fact that there is an “emotional charge” attached to each of the things of which I am conscious as I experience it. But even if the emotional charge is not strong enough to be noticed, there is still a fundamental urge to communicate with others, to express myself. If I have nothing important to say and am not feeling anything of great significance, still I tend to spend my time chatting with people about little things.

This fundamental urge toward expression of my subjective state points again to the fundamental relatedness of the self to other selves, for what is expression if not expression to others? Not only do I express myself, I understand others’ expressions of themselves, and I assume that they understand my expression of myself. I can distinctly remember imitating the facial expressions, manners of talking and moving, etc., of other people as a child, to see what it felt like. It may be idiosyncratic that I can remember that, but I suspect that it is a common occurrence in the lives of all of us as we grow up. Here again, the attempt to abstract from the whole of my experience and concentrate only on the self as I subjectively experience it proves impossible, for deep in the recesses of my subjective state I find evidence of the fundamental relatedness of the self to others.

B. The Self-Concept

We are now in a position to understand another important aspect of the self, one which is composed of both feelings and thoughts – I refer to my self-concept, my idea of myself. The self-concept is a concept like other concepts, consisting in its material aspect of words and pictures, both fully explicit and preconscious, and of a fringe which contains a vast variety of elements – latent action-schemata which are operative in my comings and goings in the world; knowledge-that of various kinds, including knowledge of what I can and can't do, what I do and don't like, etc., memories of where I have been and what I have done, how I have acted; anticipations of how I would feel and act in a variety of situations, should they arise, etc. My self-concept includes knowledge of trivial aspects of myself – that I don't like eggplants, for instance – and of aspects that are deeply significant – for example, that I have feelings toward my parents that have shaped the course of my life. It includes knowledge of my opinions and judgments that change from day to day as well as knowledge of my basic convictions and attitudes, which may be so pervasive and fundamental as to influence all or most of what I do.

What is peculiar about the self-concept is that its intentional reference, its reference to an intentional object, is to me. All other concepts mean, refer to, have as their intentional objects, etc., something which is not me; but my self-concept points to me, myself. In any single moment of contemplation of or thinking by means of my self-concept, this intentional reference is present in the fringe in the form of tendencies, latent or on the verge of being actualized, to think more about myself or to act towards myself in some way. Reflection on my experience as it occurs over a longer span of time reveals that, just as is the case with concepts in general, the intentional aspect of the self-concept consists of my being oriented to action regarding its intentional object, viz. me, myself. This happens in two ways, as I shall point out shortly.

The function of the self-concept is three-fold. It is the means by which I am conscious of myself; it governs my habitual routine actions; and it makes it possible for me to transcend myself and create myself. *The self-concept is the means by which I am conscious of myself.* This is obviously true in the case of being conscious of myself in the mode, “having myself in mind.” But it is also true in the case of immediate self-perception. We have seen that concepts merge into the noeses, the operative interpretations that are an indispensable element in any act or process of perception. It is no different with the self-concept. The self-concept in large part controls my self-perceptions; it governs what aspects of myself I can and cannot be conscious of. If I have been taught, for instance, that violence is evil, that to be aggressive, to hate, is something to be ashamed of, then I tend to deny my feelings of aggression, I refuse to be conscious of them, because I do not like to think of myself as evil or shameful. But that does not make them go away; it only makes it impossible or at least very difficult to be conscious of them. Carl Rogers has noted this aspect of the self explicitly in his systematic exposition of the psychological theory behind his practice. He uses both “self-concept” and “self-structure” to refer to

an organized configuration of perceptions of the self which are admissible to awareness. It is composed of such elements as the perception of one's characteristics and abilities; the percepts and concepts of the self in relation to others and to the environment; the value qualities which are perceived as associated with experiences and objects; and the goals and ideals which are perceived as having positive or

negative valence.¹⁵⁴

By using both “self-concept” and “self-structure” to refer to this organized configuration of perceptions, Rogers blurs the distinction between reality and ideas about reality, between being conscious of myself in the mode, “it itself,” and in the mode, “having myself in mind.” But in so doing he points out that the self-concept tends to be self-validating. I am conscious only of those aspects of myself which are included in my self-concept; other aspects of myself tend to be barred from the range of things of which I can be conscious and thus cannot correct my concept. If I experience anxiety when I get mad at people, it is because my self-concept does not include feelings of aggression. Or if my anger flares up violently, I may later say, “I was not myself at the time.” An incorrect self-concept is as bad as or worse than an incorrect image of the rest of the world, because most of the time I act on the basis of my concept of myself and of perceptions which flow from that concept, and not on the basis of immediate acquaintance with myself, my feelings, etc. An incorrect self-concept can lead to repression of feelings, a narrowing of my possible range of actions, perhaps to attempting to do things that I cannot do. Not until my self-concept has been corrected can I remedy these faults. It is difficult to correct my self-concept because it bars perceptions of aspects of myself that are not included in the concept, but it is not impossible. Other people can tell me things about myself that I had not noticed. In extraordinary situations, I may become conscious of my limitations, as when I try to do something that I thought I could do but fail; or I may find out that I have greater potential than I thought when I successfully accomplish something or act in a way that seemed previously beyond my capabilities. Or I can practice a kind of epoché with regard to my self-concept and try to be conscious of myself unencumbered by prejudices and habitual ways of thinking about myself. Indeed, the investigation of myself that I have pursued and which I am reporting in this paper is just such a project. It is difficult to correct my self-concept, but not impossible; and the difficulty should not blind us to the necessity of doing so if we are to learn who we are and how to live well.

The self-concept governs my habitual and routine action. It includes all kinds of action-schemata which become operative in the many typical actions and action-patterns that I perform every day. I know how to move my body – I can walk, talk, touch my nose with my eyes closed, etc. I know what to do with most of the things that my culture has produced, as well as with things of nature. I know how to deal with people in everyday ways, with my co-workers, the people I live with, the man who runs the candy store, etc. My self-concept includes knowledge of my capabilities and preferences, and this knowledge is operative when I make more or less everyday choices – I know what kinds of movies I like, what kinds of sports and leisure activities I like and am good at, as well as those that I dislike or am not good at. My self-concept also determines to a large extent my habitual pervasive attitudes and ways of relating to the world and other people, as well as being determined by them. If I believe myself to be uninteresting or not proficient at ordinary conversation, I tend to be shy and withdrawn; if I have an image of myself as talkative and gregarious, I tend to be talkative and gregarious; etc.; and vice-versa. In these habitual, automatic ways, I am oriented to action regarding myself; this is part of the intentionality of the self-concept.

The self-concept makes it possible for me to transcend myself and create myself. By means of my self-concept, I can “see” myself, I can become self-conscious. Here I refer not to self-perception, i.e., perception of my empirical self (I cannot perceive I-the-perceiver, the transcendental Self), but to being conscious of myself in the mode, “having myself in mind.” I

¹⁵⁴ Carl R. Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*, p. 501.

can be conscious in that way of all of the aspects of myself, including both the empirical self and the transcendental Self. I can reflectively think about myself, “see” myself in a broader context, most importantly the context of what I could be but am not. I can envision different possibilities for myself, note that I habitually act in a certain way, but could act differently. By virtue of envisioning different possibilities, I have a choice, I can decide to start acting in a different way, within the limits imposed by the laws of nature and the force of habit. (See the discussion of habit in Chapter Five, “Action.”) If I become conscious that I am shy and diffident, for instance, I can decide to start being more assertive. I can thus change myself, create myself to be differently from how I used to be. In the act of “seeing” myself, I transcend myself, for the I that “sees” (the transcendental Self) is not myself, which is “seen.” Because I transcend myself in this way, I can create myself to be different or decide to remain as I am. Which indicates that in some sense, I *am* myself. This ambiguity is explored in more detail in Chapter Six. Self-creation is founded on the self-transcendence of being conscious of myself in that the former would be impossible without the latter. If I never become conscious that I am shy, I can never decide to be more assertive. I may, of course, simply become more assertive without thinking about it, but in that case the new quality of myself lacks the sense of being deliberately chosen and initiated; I have not created myself, but have simply changed. Of course, self-creation may be trivial or of immense significance or anywhere in between. To decide that I really ought to learn to like eggplants is trivial, it has little effect on my life; to decide that I ought to stop being afraid of life, the world, other people, etc., and start to meet and greet them openly and with enthusiasm will have a profound effect on all that I do and the pervasive feeling I have of and about myself. This is the other way that my self-concept has intentional reference to me, myself.

To put the matter a little differently, by virtue of my self-concept, I evaluate myself. By knowing who I am, what I am doing, how I am being, I can judge that I am being or behaving well or poorly, appropriately or inappropriately, etc. I can “see” whether I am being effective in achieving a fulfilled life or not. Self-evaluation can occur at various levels of awareness. I can deliberately engage in the self-transcendence of being conscious of myself and choose my future self in the full knowledge of what I am doing. Or I may only fleetingly be conscious of something that I do, a typical action perhaps, and simply feel a little bit good about it or bad about it, without pursuing the matter further. I am always more or less conscious of myself; I always have at least a dim and vague idea of who I am and what I am doing. Only in cases where I am intently absorbed in a task or ecstatic contemplation of something do I lose this sense of myself. Whether my self-concept is present to my attention fully or only marginally, there is always some feeling, some emotion, correlative to it, and this feeling is largely evaluative. If I am explicitly conscious of myself, the evaluation may rise to full embodiment in thinking; most of the time it is present as pervasive feeling, obscure and accompanying all that I do and am conscious of. Evaluative feelings or thoughts are present in my experience constantly – thus they are another of the most real aspects of myself.

Finally, I want to note one more aspect of the self-concept. I have said that for the most part the material qualities of my concepts don’t matter; what matters is how their intentional aspects orient me to action. But in the case of the self-concept, the material qualities give an important clue to understanding the nature of the self. Sometimes the material quality of my self-concept consists of representations or memories of how I feel in certain situations, what I typically think or have actually thought, how my environment appears or appeared to me. Thus I know myself from my own point of view, from the inside. But sometimes the material quality of my self-concept consists of pictures of myself from the outside. Sometimes I have daydreams of conversations or activities with others and I imaginatively see the whole scene

from some external point of view, I imagine how I look doing or saying something. Thus, I know myself from the point of view of the other, from an Objective point of view. Not only do I know myself both from the inside and from the outside, but I evaluate myself from both of these points of view. I know that smoking cigarettes makes me feel bad, so I evaluate my addiction to them negatively – this is from my own point of view. But I also know that it is improper to smoke in church, that if I get roaring drunk I make a fool of myself, etc. – this is from the point of view of other people. Also when I am actually in interaction with others, I judge myself not only on the basis of how I feel, but often even more on the basis of the impression that I imagine I am giving them, that is from (what I take to be) their point of view. Also, it is not infrequently the case that someone will point out to me something about myself which I had overlooked entirely but which is obvious from that person's point of view – that I am acting foolishly or selfishly, perhaps, or that I performed some task effectively or comported myself well.

Knowledge of myself and evaluations of myself from the point of view of others are thus integral elements in my self-concept. But my self-concept is an integral element in who I am; it governs my self-perceptions and my habitual activity, and is the indispensable ground of self-transcendancy and thus self-creativity. Thus, we see again that *the influence of other people is an integral element in the self*. I am who I am, in part, because of the way I relate to others and appropriate their perceptions and judgments of me.

Chapter Five. Action.

I act all the time; I am always in flux, in process, doing something.

(I use the terms “action,” “to act,” etc., to cover all of my doing, whether it is, to use Schutz’s terms, covert, purely mental (e.g., going over something in my mind, thinking to myself), or overt, “gearing into the outer world.”¹⁵⁵ Action, as we shall see, can be deliberate, done on purpose, or purely habitual and automatic, with no forethought, or anywhere in between. What distinguishes action from mere behavior is the possibility of deliberate intervention or control, even if this possibility is not actualized, as in the case of purely habitual action. Thus, the beating of my heart, the involuntary knee-jerk reflex, etc., are not actions.)

That I am an agent is one of the most central features of the self. We have seen that the intentional aspect of both percepts and concepts consists in that I am oriented to action regarding their intentional objects; my emotions call for expression, and my moods and pervasive bodily feelings have a continual influence on the style of my activity; and much of my self-concept consists of action-schemata, knowledge of what I can and cannot do and what I should and should not do, and evaluative feelings and thoughts regarding what I do. Thus, all of the elements of the self which we have considered so far relate in one way or another to action. Since this is the case, it seems curious that action is extremely difficult to describe from the phenomenological point of view. When I am acting, doing things out in the public world or thinking to myself, my attention is focused on the objects of my action, the things or people or concepts that I am dealing with, not on the character of the action itself, or on the noetic and subjective elements of my experience of action. The case is exactly parallel to trying to observe and describe transitive states of mind; if I stop to pay attention to what I am doing, I am no longer performing the action that I want to investigate. Instead, I am performing the action of trying to observe and investigate it. Even when I stop and try to retain an experience of action that has just passed, I find it difficult to “see” all of what was there, because the vividness of the retention depends on the amount or degree of attention in the original experience – the more attention, the more retention, i.e., the more can be called back to mind. Nevertheless, persistent and repeated observation of myself over a long period of time, coupled with non-phenomenological reflection on (thinking about) myself, has revealed that I am aware of and can become conscious of what happens when I act in various ways. I can become conscious of the feelings and thoughts (which merge into operative interpretations) that accompany my action, and thereby learn to apprehend and characterize my action.

There are three kinds of feelings and interpretations concomitant to my action. I can become conscious of impulses to action, of the broad emotions and moods that occur correlatively to my action over long periods of time, and of specific feelings and interpretations that accompany specific actions or types of action.

There is a specific type of feeling that I call “impulsion to action.” This kind of feeling is like a “least action;” it is action in an incipient stage, not yet fully realized. If I actually do what I have an impulsion to do, then the impulsion itself is, as it were, drowned out by the action-experience, with its focusing of attention on the objects of action, and is overlooked. I become aware of impulses to action when I don’t do the action – my attention remains fixed

¹⁵⁵ Schutz, *Collected Papers I*, p. 67.

on the impulsion, not on the object of the action.

Impulsions to action arise from two major sources. The first is bodily feelings. Many bodily feelings are appetites – I feel hungry, so I eat; I desire a cigarette, so I smoke one; I feel restless from being inside all day, so I take a walk; etc. Other bodily feelings are painful and lead to trying to reduce the pain – I have a headache, so I take aspirin; I have a stiff back, so I exercise; etc. The other major source of impulsions to action is my emotions. Emotions, as I have said, call for expression in action – I feel angry, so I want to hit someone; I feel a little lonely, so I look for somebody to talk to; etc. Thinking, the other major component of my subjective life, does not lead to overt action unless it is accompanied by a noticeable emotion. If I am merely idly thinking, I do not feel any strong impulse to tell others what I am thinking, but if I think of something that excites me or something relevant to a goal that I want to accomplish, I feel a stronger impulse to tell others or to do overtly what I have thought of doing.

It is worth noting that feelings are expressed in action in structured, patterned ways. No matter how angry I feel toward someone, I do not ordinarily hit that person. I may attack him or her verbally or refuse to cooperate with him or her, or even try to turn others against him or her, but I don't actually strike that person. Thus, just as I introject attitudes about the world and images of myself from others and from my society in general, so I learn acceptable and unacceptable ways of expressing emotions. Emotion always leads at least to impulsions to action, if not to overt action. Emotions call for expression, and if I persistently refuse to express certain kinds of emotions, then they tend to remain hidden from my conscious attention which, again, does not mean that they don't exist. As a child I was taught, in various subtle ways, that it was no proper for me to cry – as a consequence, I have had to learn how to cry in order to get in touch with my emotions.

Another kind of feelings that accompanies my action is the broad emotions that arise correlatively to the course of my actions over a period of time. Church says that “in general we are aware of ourselves only in terms of the total feeling states that accompany behavior”¹⁵⁶ A total feeling state is not the feeling of an individual action, but the unity of feelings arising out of a whole sequence of actions – all the individual feelings associated with individual actions combine over a period of time to form a larger feeling with a character all its own. To become conscious of this feeling is to be reflective, to “look around” when there is a pause in my course of actions and notice how I am feeling in general. In this way I become conscious of my feelings of action on a broader scale than single actions; I approach my actions from the opposite direction from impulsions to action.

Finally, there are specific feelings and interpretations that arise concomitant to specific actions. There are two types of emotional-interpretive complexes, corresponding to two types of action, deliberate and habitual. Actually, most of my action is neither purely deliberate nor purely habitual; I am going to abstract these two extremes as ideal types, but most action falls somewhere in between.

Deliberate action is action that I envision or plan beforehand and then decide to do and go ahead and do according to my plan. The distinctive feature of deliberate action is that my attention is split up between the objects with which I am dealing (things, people, concepts, etc.) and my plan, design, or project which I have in mind. The initial creation of a habit is

¹⁵⁶ Church, p. 110.

an example: I must plan out ahead of time the sequence of actions that I want to do and then do them, being always guided by my plan. The more habitual the sequence gets, as we shall see, the less I have to attend to it for it to get done. Another example is a meeting I once had with a friend of mine whom I see infrequently. I had in mind that I wanted to meet him as deeply and fully as possible. I kept my attention on him, looking at him and listening to what he was saying, as well as being conscious of the emotions and attitudes he was expressing. Correlatively I tried to be as conscious as possible of my own feelings and tried to express them well and fully. Occasionally I would have a flash of self-consciousness, “seeing” what I was doing, comparing that with my ideal, and feeling exhilarated because I was living up to my ideal, acting according to what I had in mind as my goal. This was one of the clearest and most intense experiences I have had of a *sense of agency*, a sense of *I-doing*, a sense that included deliberate action according to a set of maxims, the reflective knowledge that I was so acting, and the exhilaration (an evaluative feeling) of doing so. My attention was devoted to my friend and to myself to the exclusion of extraneous thoughts and things in my environment. Thus I was more fully conscious of each aspect of the experience, by virtue of having a clear idea of what I wanted to be doing, than I am when my attention is dispersed over the whole field of objects present to me. All of the elements of the experience concatenated into a continuing sense of vitality, activity, and well-being.

Similar to this sense of agency is the sense of myself I get when I am in the process of making a decision. When I am making a decision, straightforward action is stopped; I am hung up between contemplation (in the mode, “having them in mind”) of two or more possible courses of action that I might take. I do not have so much a sense of agency as a sense of frustration of agency – but this too yields knowledge of myself as agent. Again in the situation the crucial element is that my attention is split up. I compare the possible courses of action against each other and against various criteria. Perhaps I must also rank the criteria in order of importance. I am conscious of how I feel toward each possibility, of images of myself in each of the conflicting possible situations, of thoughts of the past and anticipations of the future. I have a very painful sense of the frustration of action, and a clear sense of myself as the one who is making and must make this decision. When there is no decision to be made, my attention is out in the world, absorbed into the things with which I am dealing; but when a decision hangs up action, I become acutely conscious of myself, because my attention can no longer be out there in the world.

Most of my action does not partake of this sense of agency so acutely; but in all but the most unthinking, routing, habitual action there is some dim glimmering of this sense. William James calls attention to one variety of this ordinary sense of agency:

And has the reader never asked himself what kind of a mental fact is his *intention of saying a thing* before he has said it? It is an entirely definite intention, distinct from all other intentions, an absolutely distinct state of consciousness, therefore; and yet how much of it consists of definite sensorial images, either of words or of things? Hardly anything! Linger, and the words and things come into the mind; the anticipatory intention, the divination is there no more. But as the words that replace it arrive, it welcomes them successively and calls them right if they agree with it, it rejects them and calls them wrong if they do not. The intention *to-say-so-and-so* is the only name it can receive. One may admit that a good third of our psychic life consists in these rapid premonitory perspective views of schemes of thought not yet articulate.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ James, *Psychology*, pp. 156-157.

We may extend his remark and speak of the intention-to-do-so-and-so which is present in the fringe of my experience whenever I engage in more or less deliberate action. (“Intention” is used here in the ordinary sense of having a design, project, or purpose, etc., and should not be confused with perceptual and conceptual intentionality although there is some parallel in that all forms of intentions and intentionality involve a kind of pointing beyond what is immediately given to some other state of affairs.) The more fully this sense of I-intend-to-do-so-and-so is present, the more deliberate is the action, the more there is a sense of agency, of I-doing. This sense of agency is the means by which I apprehend certain of my actions as my deliberate doing.

There is another type of action, which is also my doing, but in another sense, the sense merely of I-and-not-someone-else-doing. This is habitual action, action in which I am relatively unaware of doing the action – my attention is directed elsewhere. In the most extreme cases, such as going through my routine of getting up in the morning, my thoughts are usually quite unrelated to what I am doing, I may be thinking of what I am to do that day, or remembering my dreams, or imagining something else altogether. I am aware of my environment only in the most minimal way. It is often the case that I think of doing something not included in the routine – that I want to take a certain book with me that I normally leave at home, for instance – and then realize after I have done the routine that I forgot to do that one nonroutine action. The habitual routine does itself automatically; there is little or no sense of agency. Habitual action is prereflective action – or perhaps postreflective, in that I can, if I want to, remember initiating the routine, but now that it is established I no longer have to think about it. Habits that I have deliberately initiated are me in a double sense: they are me in that it is I and not someone else who does the habitual action, and they partake in a residual way of the original deliberate initiating of them. Habits that I have simply fallen into, without deliberate intent, lack the residual sense of agency; they are me only in a single sense.

Most of my action is neither purely deliberate nor purely habitual. When I do my tasks and interact with people in an ordinary, everyday way, my action is habit-like in that it is typical – the things I do I have done before and will do again, according to the same patterns; I know how to do them and I don’t have to think about what I’m doing or am conscious of myself very much. But my typical routine and semi-routine action is also somewhat deliberate in that I do have some vague idea of what I am doing and why. When I am at my job writing computer programs, I am often paying attention only to the program in front of me and to the envisioned goal of what I am to have the machine do, how I should construct the program in order to achieve the goal, etc. Action here is less habitual in that my attention must be directed to the job in front of me and not into far regions of daydreams or extraneous thinking. But I am not conscious of myself to any great degree; I am aware that I am doing what I am doing only vaguely, and I don’t pay much attention to how I feel – except intermittently, as when I throw down my pencil in disgust or complete a section of the program and sit back to enjoy the feeling of accomplishment. In fact, most of my daily actions are of this semi-routine, semi-deliberate type. I go to the store to buy certain things, I prepare and eat dinner, I read my books, etc., but all without being aware of myself very much. Much of my interaction with people occurs this way, too. I nod and say hello to people on the street; I chat about the weather or politics or theology or what-not; I discuss my job with my co-workers; etc. In all of this there is a certain minimal level of my subjectivity involved, but it gets expressed in a straightforward, unreflective way. Sometimes I come home and feel slightly empty, out of touch with myself, after having been unaware of myself throughout the

day.

What are the kinds of attendant subjective elements involved in habitual, routine or semi-routine action? I shall use the term “attitude” to refer to the inner, feeling and thinking side of action of this sort. By being aware of my attitudes, I am aware of my semi-routine, object-oriented action. Church uses the term “attitude” much as I do. All specific schemata, he says, “are subsidiary to more general patterns of orientation which we might call attitudes; these show up both in the evaluative coloring of the environment and in the way we carry ourselves, in our personal style.”¹⁵⁸ An attitude is an object-oriented complex of feelings, interpretations, and action-schemata. To perceive an object, a state of affairs, a person, or myself as evaluatively interpreted is to have an attitude toward that object, state of affairs, etc. Attitudes include intentions (in the ordinary sense) with respect to my actions and expectations of how the object will behave, knowledge of what to do with it, or with respect to it, perhaps theoretical knowledge of its place in the general scheme of things. But more importantly, an attitude includes feelings toward the object, person, state of affairs, etc., feelings of liking or disliking it, approval or annoyance, etc. Evaluative feelings such as these of course lead to expression in typical actions, or at least to impulses to action. Routine use of a dictionary, avoidance of eggplants because I don’t like them, giving material aid to civil rights groups, eager pursuit of a woman – all these are the expression of attitudes. Attitudes are the “inside” of routine and semi-routine actions; such actions are the “outside” of attitudes.

Attitudes may arise out of my own contacts with people and the world and my reflection on my experience, they may be deliberately adopted; or they may have been absorbed through imitation of my parents or my peers or instilled in various subtle ways from my society as a whole, that is, they may be unreflectively and undeliberately adopted. Often times different attitudes, gotten from different sources, are in conflict – I enjoy talking with my black friends, but am occasionally very conscious that they are “colored” and am made uncomfortable by their actions.

Both routine and semi-routine action-patterns and attitudes can be changed; and a change in one leads to a change in the other, for they are the outside and the inside of the same thing. Attitudes, for instance, may be deliberately adopted, “put on.” I may deliberately put on an attitude of interest in someone’s work, not because I am interested, but because I want to be polite or because I want something from that person. If a group of my friends have distinct political views, I may adopt those views myself, in order to keep their friendship. This sort of thing may lead, of course, to a masking and frustration of my truer feelings, sometimes to the point where I am no longer conscious of them, but only of those that I have adopted. It is very difficult to remain cynically adopting an attitude that conflicts with another feeling. Either I will drop that attitude or will repress the feeling. Of course, not all deliberate adoption of attitudes is cynical in this way; many of my own deepest attitudes toward life and other people have been adopted as a result of lengthy reflection on myself and my situation.

I can govern my actions and behaviors from the inside by adopting attitudes; I can also govern them from the outside by adopting or changing my habits, or my typical routine ways of doing things. Habits and routine actions have a sort of inertia – the longer established and more often repeated they are, the harder they are to change. This puts a very real limitation on the freedom of the self. (See the discussion of freedom in Chapter Seven, Part B, “The Self in Relation.”) In order to change a habit I must keep in mind the new habit that I want to

¹⁵⁸ Church, p. 37.

substitute for it and keep watching that I do not revert to the old one. I must exert an effort of will. In cases like this, the element of thought is crucial, for if I forget to think about it, the old habit will tend to reassert itself and take over. James goes so far as to assert that keeping an idea before the mind is all that an effort of will consists in:

The essential achievement of the will, in short, when it is most ‘voluntary,’ is to attend to a difficult object and hold it fast before the mind . . . and it is a mere physiological incident that when the object is thus attended to, immediate motor consequences should ensue.

. . . This strain of the attention is the fundamental act of will.¹⁵⁹

I don’t agree that this is all that is involved – I can have the idea of not smoking cigarettes firmly in my mind, but unless I want to stop smoking and keep overcoming my impulses to reach for a cigarette, the mere idea will not stop me. Nevertheless, James is correct in asserting that if the idea were not there I should make no change in my actions at all – for then I would be absorbed into the action itself or into something else and would be carried along by force of habit.

Attitudes may be more or less trivial, or more or less central to the self and to my feeling of who I am. Here, as with subjective processes generally, the marks of the importance of an attitude in the context of my self as a whole are duration and intensity [2013] and frequency of recurrence. An immediate reaction of dislike at a mother scolding her child in the subway is a fleeting and mild attitude, one that may lead to no more action than wrinkling my brow; it is thus a trivial occurrence, one that has no deep meaning or reality for me. But my attitude toward my own mother’s scolding me may have a pervasive and important influence on my life, shaping my attitudes and actions toward all the women that I meet. That I don’t like eggplants and never eat them is a repetitive but mild attitude-habit; that I don’t like racism and give material aid to organizations that oppose discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, etc., is a more intense, less merely repetitive attitude which will have more influence on my life than my tastes in food. The most influential attitudes are the most pervasive – whether I eagerly accept novelty and other people or whether I fearfully retreat – and the most intense – having faced death in a traffic accident I tend not only to drive more carefully but to appreciate the everyday details of life more than I used to.

Finally, we should note that it is a fundamental characteristic of the self to form habits and that my habits are a very basic element in who I am. I myself must do much more investigation before I am sure of this, but it seems to me that whenever I perform some action, overt or covert, I have a tendency to repeat it unless something else intervenes. In other words, everything that I do, if not already a habit, is at least incipiently the beginning of a habit. This can be seen in the case of making judgments. Recall Peirce’s example of first seeing a clean surface and then seeing that it is dirty. If I had only one perception of the surface, if I never returned to it, I should go on believing that it was clean; I should automatically go on holding to my original perceptual judgment. Schutz, summing up Husserl’s discussion of the typicality of the world of everyday life in *Erfahrung und Urteil*, notes that “what is experienced in the actual perception of an object is apperceptively transferred to any other similar object, perceived merely as to its type.”¹⁶⁰ In other words,

¹⁵⁹ James, *Psychology*, pp. 393, 394, emphasis omitted.

¹⁶⁰ Schutz, *Collected Papers I*, p. 8.

when I make a perceptual judgment as to the characteristics of something before me, I habitually believe that judgment to be true of all other objects of the same type, unless further experience disconfirms my anticipation of such typical conformity. If it is not disconfirmed, it becomes my “lasting acquisition.”¹⁶¹

Whether or not it is true of *all* my actions that they are at least incipiently the beginnings of habits, it is true that most of my overt and covert action is habit-like in that it follows typical repeated patterns. It is a basic characteristic of the self to form habits – that is clear even if I myself am not yet sure exactly how basic it is. Since this is the case, it follows that a basic element in the composition of the self is the totality of my habits. Habitual action is what I do most of the time; thus, the concomitant emotions, moods, feeling states, etc., are pervasively present in my subjective state, forming a large part of who I am.

My habits are fundamentally me, as Natanson says, following Mead, and my deliberate action is I happening, me in the making.¹⁶² Because my habits are stable, I am stable and continuous. Not only do my habits make up me as I have been in the past, but I can rely on them to be me in the future, for they have inertia and repeat themselves again and again. Contrary to what Sartre says,¹⁶³ the past is not totally inefficacious; I know that I shall be more or less the same person tomorrow as I am today because of my habits.

There is one more type of action, which I shall mention briefly for the sake of completeness, a kind of action that is in a class by itself – ecstatic action. My action is ecstatic when I am acting with no idea, no mental concept, of what I am doing. It is similar to habitual action, except that in this case I have never done this action before, it is something completely new. This kind of experience happens most intensely when I am conscious of what I am doing (in the mode, “it itself”), but not letting being conscious of it interfere with the action. In ecstatic action I surprise myself, I just let myself happen, I discover that I can do things I never thought of before. Examples of ecstatic action are improvising dancing or spontaneously making a joke, or improvising music. I heard someone say, after hearing a Moby Grape record, “He couldn’t have known what he was doing!”

With this, we have reached the end of our description of action. But a doubt arises. We have described the subjective and noetic elements that accompany different types of action and give to these different types their distinctive character. But what of the self that is the agent? Who am I who act? Surely we should be able to apprehend and describe the self which initiates action and does it, no matter what the type, the self which is the source of action. But try as I might, I cannot find any element present to pure consciousness which is an agent. Emotions, bodily feelings, and impulses to action provide the motivating force, as it were, but they do not do any action. My conceptual map of the world and my operative perceptual noeses channel and guide action, and my self-concept governs my typical style and range of action; but they do not initiate action, they are not the source of action. When I act in habitual and routine ways, my action is done automatically, I do not have to pay attention to it. But even in the clearest cases of deliberate action, where does the initial aim come from, who or what does the envisaging of the goal and plans action leading to the goal? We rule out causal and psychological explanations. These are interpretations that may or may not have some truth, but we are concerned simply with reflectively “seeing” what happens when I act,

¹⁶¹ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 160.

¹⁶² Maurice Natanson, *The Journeying Self*, pp. 17-19.

¹⁶³ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 33.

and such purported causal factors are not elements in the actual experience of action. I look around in vain for any object present to pure transcendental consciousness that is the agent, the doer, the source of action.

I am in the same situation as when I tried to become conscious of the Self which is itself conscious. Now, as then, I find no such entity, no such object in my experience. And yet action is done, I am always in action, there is always activity of some sort going on. To live is to act; cessation of action is death. The process of learning how to cope with the world is a process of channeling action into useful patterns, reducing the element of randomness. But action itself always is – even in my sleep I dream and my heart beats. Action wells up from some source inside of me, from somewhere, I know not where – when I am writing, the ideas occur to me and get expressed in words; the most I can do is accept all that happens and pick out the significant parts. I learn to guide and channel the ... shall I call it creative urge? Just as the transcendental Self, I-who-experience, is a kind of ultimate, something which there is no way to get “behind” to make it an object of which I can be conscious in the mode, “I myself,” so it seems that the self as agent, as that-which-acts is a similar kind of ultimate. I cannot become conscious of I-who-am-aware, and I cannot become conscious of I-who-act.

Let us make the obvious judgment, then (for surely I am a single person who both experiences and acts), and say that the transcendental Self is both witness-consciousness and agent, both that-which-is-conscious and that-which-acts. It is what can never become an object for me, and it is the source of all my action. The transcendental Self is the unintuitable core of the self, the wellspring of all being conscious and all action. It is that to which the empirical self is present as object and that whose action is channeled and patterned through the empirical self on its way to effective actuality in the world.

(As I mentioned in Chapter Two, this is Husserl’s view. Numerous others have come to essentially the same conclusion. To mention only one of the most recent and one of the most ancient: Whitehead says that the most fundamental characteristics of each actual entity, of which the human self is one, are consciousness (“prehension”) and activity (“creativity”);¹⁶⁴ and the unknown authors of the Upanishads, ancient mystical-religious-philosophical texts of India, state that the Atman, the innermost Self of each person, is both pure transcendental consciousness (“the unseen seer, the unheard hearer . . .”¹⁶⁵) and pure activity, the ultimate life-energy (“When the life goes out of it, this body dies, but the life does not die. This finest essence . . . : that is the real: That is the Self: That *you* are”¹⁶⁶.)

With this, we approach the end of our quest for the self. I have described the major components of the self from a subjective-phenomenological point of view, and have noted the curious but indispensable presence in absence, being in the mode of not being, of the transcendental Self, I-who-experience-and-act. Now we can summarize these findings and present a coherent picture of the self.

¹⁶⁴ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, see Part I, Chapters II and III.

¹⁶⁵ Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, III.vii.23, in *Hindu Scriptures*, tr. R. C. Zaehner, p. 55.

¹⁶⁶ Chandogya Upanishad, VI.xi.3, in Zaehner, p. 110.

Chapter Six. The Composition Of The Self.

I shall divide the summary of the findings of my own phenomenological investigation into the nature of the self into two parts. In this chapter, I shall review the major components of the self, leaving out much of the detail of the previous four chapters and paying particular attention to the functions of each type of component. In Chapter Seven, I shall describe typical ways in which the different types of elements of the self interact, how they function together such that the self is a unity, and make some concluding remarks. Let me remind the reader: the only way you can be sure that what I say is true is to examine reflectively your experience and “see” with absolute evidence the structure and composition of your self. Otherwise, all you’ll have upon reading this is one more person’s opinion. Of course, I strongly suspect that the general features of the self that you find – the types of elements composing the self and their functions and functional interrelationships – will be the same as I have found; but that suspicion will be confirmed (or disconfirmed) only upon your own investigation.

The term “self” denotes the same state of affairs as the terms “person” and “human being,” but the latter terms connote perception and conception of persons from an external, Objective point of view. “Self” connotes the person who I am (who each of us is) perceived and thought about from my own subjective point of view. In my phenomenological analysis, I (the author) have attempted to “see” with clarity just what is present in my experience as I reflectively apprehend it and which can reasonably be called “the self.” Now, the results of this investigation have, unavoidably, a certain one-sided character; I am more than what is available directly only to me. I am perceivable and perceived by others, and I am available to myself (in the mode, “thinking about myself”) from an Objective point of view as well. Much can be learned not only from observation of persons whom I meet in my daily life but from such disciplines as psychology, sociology, anthropology, biology, political science, economics, and even physics and chemistry [2013] and brain research as well. But such extensive investigation is beyond the scope of this essay; I have done only a phenomenological analysis of the self. Such an analysis of evidence of which I have absolute certainty is crucial if I am truly to obtain knowledge of myself; assertions about the nature of the self made from the standpoint of other disciplines must at least not conflict with what I can evidently “see” for myself to be true.

Some have objected that phenomenological analysis of my experience of my self may not, in fact, reveal the true nature of the self because it is well known that unconscious psychological factors distort perception of the self. This is a serious, but not crippling criticism of my project. Certainly, the accounts of the self found in psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis must be considered in framing a complete conceptual model of the self, and every effort must be made to become reflectively conscious of psychological prejudices and biases inherent in my experience of my self, just as we critically examine all prejudices and biases. Such critical examination of psychological biases is by no means impossible; indeed, the central thrust of Freudian psychoanalysis is to enable one to become conscious of memories, attitudes and interpretations that were previously unavailable to conscious inspection. I myself believe that I have had success in this area; but as I have stated, I regard my model of the self as tentative, open to correction, and such correction might well stem from further work in this area. Again, my project is limited; I have done only a phenomenological analysis of the self, and my model is of the self as experienced by me, not of the full nature of the self in all its aspects.

Now, James has noted that “Between what a man calls *me* and what he simply calls *mine* the line is difficult to draw.”¹⁶⁷ As a way of answering the question, “What is really me and what is not?” let me suggest this: We shall say that what is real is what has an effect, in this case an effect on me, on my experience and action. I mean to suggest no fundamental ontology, but only to provide a kind of conceptual shorthand for talking about the question and answering it. We can see that different elements of the self have different degrees of reality. Reality in this sense is a function of the intensity and the duration [2013] and frequency of recurrence of the elements of the self present in experience. The more intense or the longer in duration or both, the more real the element is, the more really it is me. In this summary, we’ll be concerned with differentiating the more from the less real elements of the self.

The self is a composite unity of diverse elements. But it is no mere chaotic jumble or motley collection. It has a structure, which is a functional structure. Each of the different types of elements has a function and is functionally related to the other types. The functions of the different types of elements and their functional interconnection are all related in one way or another to action; the function of a type of element is the way it contributes to my action. In this chapter, we’ll want to see what are the functions of the different types of elements.

I’ll briefly list the different types of elements of the self and then go on to say something about each. If I reflectively apprehend any single moment of experience, I find the following main classes of elements: thoughts, both purely ideational (without any admixture of external sensation) and as the noetic element in perception and other modes of experience; feelings, including external sensations, bodily feelings or sensations, emotions, moods, and impulses to action; the self-concept, my idea of who I am; and what can only be termed the “self-sense.” In addition, I note that I am aware, experiencing various objects or states of affairs, and that I am active, doing something, if only reflectively apprehending my experience. In any single moment of experience, the reality of the types of elements of the self can only be measured in terms of intensity; the more intense the element, the more really it is me.

When I apprehend my experience as it occurs through the passage of time, I can see that the types of elements apprehendable in any single moment of experience correspond to the following: enduring beliefs and convictions; typical and repeated perceptual noeses (and noeses ingredient in other modes of experience) functioning such that I experience typical and repeated patterns of perception of a more or less stable and coherent world (including myself); my body; pervasive moods; recurrent emotions arising correlatively to the objects or states of affairs, especially people, that I experience; my enduring beliefs and convictions regarding myself and my typical patterns of perception of myself; enduring attitudes (which contain conceptual, emotional, and actional components); all my habits and typical routine or semi-routine patterns of action; and my deliberate action. The reality of these types of elements is measured both by intensity and duration.

Thoughts and concepts, whether the result of deliberate thinking or not, may be present in any single moment of experience verbally or pictorially or in other sense-modes. Their character as being immediately present in experience I call their “material aspect” or “material quality.” If they are present with enough intensity to be attentively focused on and noted, they are fully verbal (words, phrases, sentences, etc., running through my mind) or visual (detailed pictures or *gestaltlich* outlines), etc.; if they are present only vaguely and obscurely, I

¹⁶⁷ James, *Psychology*, p. 166.

call them “preverbal,” “previsual,” etc., indicating that were I to focus my attention on them and bring them to mind more clearly, they would be fully verbal, visual, etc. But my thoughts are not merely subjective objects running through my mind. They have the peculiarity of referring to some state of affairs other than what is strictly present in experience as I apprehend them, something beyond themselves; in short, thoughts are thoughts *of* something else. I call this aspect of thoughts their “intentional aspect,” and that which they are thoughts *of* their “intentional objects.” When I think of my car, think that it is in the driveway, for instance, it is not simply the case that I have some mental object – the words, perhaps, “My car is in the driveway,” or a picture of it in the driveway. In addition, I know that I am thinking of something other than what is immediately present to the mind, namely the car itself in the driveway, and I need only go look out the window to see that my thought is correct (or not, as the case may be).

A thought that has a relatively clear intentional object I call a “concept.” “Car,” “self,” “neutron,” “premises,” “run,” “perceive,” etc., are all concepts. Mental states of affairs, such as idle noises or visual shapes, etc., which do not have clear intentional objects may be loosely called “thoughts” but they are not concepts. The intentional aspect of concepts, their reference to intentional objects, is found in their fringe, that obscure mass of feeling that is not clearly focused on and which surrounds the clearly intuited core, the “free water that flows round” what is focally apprehended, as James poetically puts it.¹⁶⁸ The fringe is composed of links or associations with a large number of objects, including other concepts suggested by the focal concept such as connotations, steps in reasoning, etc.; concepts of the surroundings or context of the intentional object; memories and anticipations of direct acquaintance with the object; typical knowledge of the intentional object, what it is, what it is good for, etc.; “recipes,” so to speak, for typical action relating to it, which I call latent action-schemata; and incipient impulsions to action. In any single moment of experience the fringe is difficult to “see” – exactly because it is the fringe, what is not focally apprehended. It, or at least its effects, becomes more clearly “visible” as I let the incipient associational tendencies become actualized, as I think more about the intentional object, for instance, or about its context, or as I perform some action that brings me to direct experience of it itself. Reflectively apprehending myself over periods of time, I have come to see that *the intentional aspect of concepts consists in that they orient me to action regarding their intentional objects*, either to thinking more about the intentional objects or to relating to them in some way in the mode “it itself” (or “them themselves”).

The intentional aspect of concepts is also their function. The world as I experience it is in constant flux; even stable and enduring objects such as rocks, trees, etc., are experienced by means of a changing series of perceptions of them, as I walk past or around them, touch them, etc. But concepts are (relatively) unchanging, stable. My concept of the typical characteristics of trees does not change, even though my direct experience of trees does. Concepts have, metaphorically the same relation to their intentional objects as does a map to the territory it represents. If I have a map I can orient myself and get around in, for instance, a city I have never visited before. Similarly, by virtue of having a concept of, for instance, my car, what its characteristics are, what it can do and what I can do with it, I can drive it, repair it, etc. As James says:

All our conceptions are what the Germans call *Denkmittel*, means by which we handle facts by thinking them. Experience merely as such doesn’t come ticketed and labeled,

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 157.

we have first to discover what it is. . . . What we usually do is first to frame some system of concepts mentally classified, serialized, or connected in some intellectual way, and then use this as a tally by which we 'keep tab' on the impressions that present themselves. When each is referred to some possible place in the conceptual system, it is thereby 'understood.'¹⁶⁹

When I understand something, I know what to do with it and am enabled actually to perform actions appropriate to it. Thus the function of my concepts – strictly speaking I should say my beliefs – is to orient me to action regarding their intentional objects.

Beliefs are concepts or judgments which I take to be true. I follow Peirce in distinguishing belief from its opposite, doubt (disbelief in something is belief in its contrary), in three ways. First, believing feels differently from doubting. Second, there is a practical difference in that I am prepared to act on what I believe, but not on what I doubt. Third, there is another practical difference in that when I doubt (or simply am curious – at any rate when I know or suspect that I don't know something) I am impelled to inquiry, the object of which is to attain belief and alleviate doubt. As Peirce says, "Belief does not make us act at once, but puts us into such a condition that we shall behave in a certain way, when the occasion arises. Doubt has not the least effect of this sort, but stimulates us to action until it is destroyed."¹⁷⁰

It is clear that what I believe is an integral element of my self, because the system of my beliefs has a constant effect on everything that I do. We can distinguish more and less integral beliefs; fundamental beliefs that influence all or most of what I do are more really me than mere knowledge, for instance, of where the mailbox is, knowledge which affects my life only intermittently and superficially.

It is important to note that the way we think of the world and what we believe to be true of it are highly influential factors in our perception of the world. My beliefs are present in my experience not only when I am clearly thinking of something, but every time I perceive something (or imagine it or remember it, etc.) and recognize what it is. There is an element in experience which Husserl calls "noesis" or "the noetic,"¹⁷¹ the interpretational, judgment-like fringe that surrounds or is present in experience with sensation and which functions such that I experience an orderly and coherent world of discrete Objects, people, events, concepts, institutions, etc., instead of a chaotic flux. Noeses are in the fringe of experience, so they are not easily reflectively "seen" and are generally entirely overlooked in the course of my unreflective daily experience. Imagine (or draw) the following figure: two squares, of equal sides, one slightly above and to the right of the other such that they overlap and the sides are parallel, with straight lines connecting the corners of one to the corresponding corners of the other [2013], *a Necker Cube*. At first, the figure seems to be a cube seen from above; but then it seems to be a cube seen from below, and the two alternate. What is strictly present sensationally is a bunch of lines; that we see the figure as a cube and as from above or below is due to the noetic element in the perception of the figure. As Peirce says, "a certain theory of interpretation of the figure has all the appearance of being given in perception."¹⁷² Such interpretive elements, noeses, what Peirce calls "perceptual judgments,"¹⁷³ are present and

¹⁶⁹ James, *Pragmatism*, p. 115.

¹⁷⁰ Peirce, *Selected Writings*, pp. 98-99.

¹⁷¹ Husserl, *Ideas*, pp. 228, 230-231.

¹⁷² Peirce, *Collected Papers*, Vol. V, p. 114.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 114-115.

operative in all but the rarest moments of experience. Perception is always a matter of sensation plus interpretation. As James says:

‘Ideas’ *about* the object mingle with the awareness of its mere sensible presence, we name it, class it, compare it, utter propositions concerning it In general, this higher consciousness about things is called Perception, the mere inarticulate feeling of their presence is Sensation¹⁷⁴

By virtue of the noetic element in perception (and in other modes of experience, such as imagination, conception, memory, anticipation, etc.) I do not have bare sensations but perceptions *of* something. When I go out to my car and get in, I experience not simply a series of changing shapes, colors, pressures, etc., but my car, itself – that is, I take a changing series of sensations to be perceptions of a single intentional object. Thus, percepts as well as concepts are intentional, they have reference to something beyond or more than what is strictly speaking immediately present in any single moment of experience. Just as in conception, the intentional aspect of perception is found in the fringe, the mass of indistinct feeling that tells me what it is that I am perceiving and which includes typical knowledge of what to do with it as well as incipient impulses to perform the typical actions appropriate to it. Thus, just as in conception, *the intentional aspect of perception consists in that I am oriented to action regarding its intentional objects*. The function of the noetic elements in experience is the same as the function of concepts; noeses contrive it so that I perceive an orderly and coherent world and am oriented to action regarding it.

Both conceptual beliefs and percepts may be true or false. This is clear in the case of beliefs; I may easily have a false idea of what a computer can do, for instance, or of the chemical properties of some substance. But consider: I am looking for my pen. I glance around the desk, the bed, the dresser, etc., and do not see it. Then I look again at the desk and see the pen next to a pile of books. Clearly my first perception of the desk was mistaken; the pen was there all along but I didn’t notice it the first time. My later perception corrects the earlier.

Note also that my beliefs merge imperceptibly into my noeses; what I believe to be true of the world or some aspect thereof influences my perception of it. If I believe women to be stupid and docile, for instance, then I tend to see them that way, to notice it when they act stupid and docile and not notice it when they exhibit intelligence or strength of spirit. It is often the case that unexpected perceptions force me to revise my beliefs about the world; but it is also the case that revising my beliefs can cause me to perceive differently.

It is clear that noeses are an integral element of the self, because they have an influence throughout my experience. Noeses function automatically, for the most part; they are analogous to my heart and lungs in that I have little deliberate control over them, but they are constantly present and functioning nevertheless. If they were different or absent altogether (as, we can surmise, in the experience of a new-born infant) I should be different. My noeses are thus very real elements in the self.

The bedrock of perception is sensation; without sensation there would be nothing for my noeses to interpret and thus no perception. Similarly, the bedrock of conception is the material qualities of my thoughts; were nothing present to my mind, I should not be thinking at all. Sensation is one type of feeling. I term “feeling” all that is immediately present in

¹⁷⁴ James, *Psychology*, p. 26.

experience, although clearly feelings can be differentiated according to immediately-experienceable qualities and according to their different functions. I categorize feelings into five types: sensations, bodily feelings or sensations, emotions, moods, and impulses to action. I distinguish bodily sensations from sensation in general because it is often the case that they seem to be intermediary between I who perceive and the intentional object perceived. This is clearly the case with respect to touch. When I touch the table I feel the table, of course, but also my fingers. When I smell I smell something – tobacco or perfume or something I don't recognize – I don't just experience states of my nose, although I can, if I wish, pay attention to my nose and not what I'm smelling. This medium-like quality of bodily sensations is least clear in the case of sight; I chiefly pay attention to the intentional objects that I see, not the sensations which are elements in the perception of them, and even when I do, as when I enjoy a beautiful sunset, I experience them more as aesthetic objects than media. I think it not unreasonable to suggest, on the analogy of the other sense-modes, that visual sensations be regarded as feelings of my eyes, just as tactile sensations and smells are feelings of my skin and nose. Of course, I sometimes experience my body directly, as when I enjoy the feeling of a full stomach after dinner or have a headache. But even then my bodily sensations are localized to some extent; when I have a headache, the ache is a state of my head, which can be regarded as the intentional object of an introspective perception of which the ache is the sensational element.

Other feelings have this same medium-like quality, a state of affairs I express by *The Principle of Correlativity: a feeling arises correlatively to the intentional object of which I am aware*. With respect to emotions, I do not feel admiration, awe, respect, disdain, etc., simply as vaguely directed feelings; they are ways of being aware of and in relation to something particular beyond themselves – in the cases mentioned, usually people. Moods, too, pervasive feelings of contentment or unhappiness, eagerness or lethargy, for instance, arise correlatively to an intentional state of affairs, which is just as pervasive – my world in general or the situation I find myself in, not any single thing but the broad character of all or most of what I am aware of and in relation to.

The final category of feeling is impulsion to action. Impulsions are like “least actions” or incipient actions. They are feelings of almost initiating an action and are noticeable chiefly when I nearly start to do something but hesitate, like stopping myself from reaching for another cigarette. Were they actualized they would issue in full action, the intentional object of which would then occupy my attention and not the feeling of acting. Impulsions also arise correlatively to intentional objects, as do other types of feeling, but they are distinguished by being media in a double sense. They arise correlatively to something experienced, but also to something (almost, at least) acted upon. If we regard experiencing as a somewhat passive process (although there is a lot of activity going on in the noetic functioning and often in active paying attention), then acting is the opposite, and impulsions to action are media in both processes.

Now, we must note that feelings, as I experience them, are not clearly differentiated, even though I can reflectively distinguish different types. They pervade and interfuse each other. Am I in a bad mood because I had an argument with someone or because it is a rainy, hostile day or because my body aches somewhere just below the threshold of conscious perception? When I am angry, is not the anger in part an impulsion to speak sharply to or hurt the person I'm angry with? Even visual perception of Objects includes knowledge of appropriate actions and incipient impulsions to action. It should not surprise us then, to note that all feelings have some component of impulsion to action, that *feelings call for expression, for action*. This

is true on all levels, though the less intense the feeling, the less overt and immediate will be its expression. Only when an exceptionally intense sensation strikes me, a loud noise, perhaps, or a sudden pain, am I likely to react right away, by turning my head or saying "Ouch!" Ordinarily my sensations provoke at most mental contemplation of what to do with the intentional object of the perception or continuation of the course of action in which I am already engaged. On the other end of the scale, my moods affect the over-all character of how I act, though they do not provoke any particular action. My depression or elation or boredom or interest, etc., is expressed in the general way I conduct myself. This happens automatically, although I can deliberately try to act in a way contrary to my mood, which amounts to pretending that I'm in another mood.

The same is true of emotions. It is useful to pay particular attention to emotions because their characteristics are like those both of sensations and moods, though not quite so extreme. They arise correlatively to intentional objects as do sensations and moods (in sensation we pay attention chiefly to the intentional object; in moods, to the feeling itself); and they call for expression in action (sensations, as elements in perception, provoke particular actions; moods provoke over-all styles of action). By saying that they call for expression, I mean that whenever I have an emotion I have some urge to make it manifest outwardly by means of voluntary or involuntary bodily action, such as facial expression, or talking about it, or tone of voice or gesture, etc., or perhaps some longer-range course of action. The term "expression" includes involuntary betrayal of emotion, statements about my emotional states (i.e., that I feel a certain way), and what is more usually called expression, deliberate or semi-deliberate acts such as alterations in tone of voice, gestures, vocabulary, etc. and overt courses of actions such as helping someone or hurting that person in various ways which reveal my emotions directly. Emotions are primarily (but by no means exclusively) media through which I am conscious of other people, and much of the action they provoke is expression to others. If I like someone, my liking is an emotion, and it provokes me to smile at that person, to pay attention to him or her, to help that person out or do something nice for him or her.

Now, the function of feelings to be media, both experientially and actionally, is something automatic, something that goes on whether I want it to or not. But I can by my deliberate actions either facilitate or interfere with their functioning. Again, it is useful to pay particular attention to emotion, where the evidence for this assertion is most clear. If I am angry, I inadvertently express my anger at least in the abrupt way I speak, the tense and agitated style of my movements, etc. I can try to hide my anger, deny it expression, and pretend not to be angry; I can even try to become not angry in this way. I can also express my anger directly by deliberately speaking harshly to the person I am angry with or by telling that person that I am angry and why. Also, obviously, my anger is in part the medium through which I am conscious of that person, and I can either try to deny that by pretending that he or she does not anger me or pay full attention to the feeling and what specifically (or generally) is provoking it. There is a functional correlation between emotions as experiential media and as actional media. The more I am in the habit of being conscious of my emotions, the more I am in the habit of expressing them, inevitably, and vice versa; it is often the case that I find out (notice) what I am feeling in the act of expressing it.

It is an experienced and experienceable fact that inhibition of the natural functioning of feeling leads to frustration and unhappiness. When I do not express an emotion and, correlatively, do not become conscious of it to any great degree, it is not the case that the emotion is not present in experience. It is, only I am not paying attention to it. The drive toward expression does not go away, but is channeled elsewhere, usually into feelings of

anxiety or disgruntlement. It is as if the energy that should have been expressed gets contained and goes sour. Conversely, when I express my emotions directly and fully, even if they are “negative” ones such as anger or hostility, I do not experience frustration, but a pleasant feeling of being in tune with myself. I can repress my emotions, i.e., refuse to be conscious of them, to such an extent that I do not even know they are there; if I do this long enough and thoroughly enough, their capacity for expression atrophies, just as my arm-muscles wither when I have a cast on my arm and cannot use it. And then, correlatively, my capacity to feel them has atrophied. If reality means having an effect on my experience and my action, then it is true, in the long run at least, that feelings that are allowed expression are more real than ones that are not. [2013] *But undischarged painful emotion can have an effect, sometimes quite pervasive or recurrent or both; hence they are quite real.* A feeling expressed is a feeling that lives; deliberate channeling of emotions into full expression promotes an overall feeling of well-being, just as inhibition of their natural functioning promotes unpleasant feelings of frustration.

Finally, let me note that in my experience *nothing is devoid of emotion*. In all of my perception, imagination, recollection, thinking and action there is, at least to some minimal extent, emotion present. This is another way of saying that everything I experience is experienced valuatively, as, at least, attractive or repellent. As such, there is some (at least) incipient impulsion to action involved in all experience, though it be largely latent, as in perception, or unparticularized, as in moods. I always experience some urge to express myself. If I see something that interests me, I tend to point it out; if I hear a funny story, I not only laugh but want to tell it to others. If I experience something with emotional significance, I express that emotion involuntarily, if not deliberately. Even when I am not feeling anything to any great extent, I chat about trivial things. It seems that the urge to express myself is a fundamental characteristic of the self.

It should be clear that the reality of feelings is a function of their intensity and duration [2013] *and frequency of recurrence*. A pervasive mood is not very intense, but influences the style of my action over a long period of time; a sudden flash of anger immediately alters the course of my action, even though it be gone a short while later. Moreover, in the long run, feelings that are allowed expression are more real than ones that are not, for the capacity to feel and express atrophies without actualization. But fleeting and mild feelings have little effect on my action; they are merely mine, not me. Thus, intense feelings, pervasive bodily and emotional feelings and moods, and feelings that are allowed expression are most really me.

There is another element of the self which is not present in every moment of experience but which I recognize, when it is present, as being an integral and intimate element in who I am. I speak of the self-concept, my idea of who I am. It is, in part, a concept like other concepts, distinguished only by being a concept of me, myself, rather than any of the other intentional objects of which I am aware. It is also highly emotional and valuational. It is by means of the self-concept (by means of being conscious of myself in the mode, “thinking about myself”) that I evaluate myself, my actions, attitudes, emotional responses, beliefs, etc.

The function of the self-concept is three-fold. It is the means by which I am conscious of myself, it governs my habitual routine action, and it makes possible the self-transcendence which is at the root of human freedom.

It is obviously the means by which I am conscious of myself in the mode, “thinking about myself.” It also plays a part in immediate perception of myself. Beliefs merge imperceptibly

into noeses, and as the noetic element in self-perception the self-concept governs what aspects of myself I can and cannot be conscious of. Thus, the self-concept tends to be self-validating, since the only perceptions I have of myself reinforce it. If my self-concept is mistaken, however, I am not in a hopeless situation, for new experiences can shatter my image of myself, others can tell me things about myself that I have not perceived, and I can practice a kind of *epoché* with regard to myself in order to see just how my self-concept is functioning in my self-perceptions.

My self-concept governs my habitual and routine action. Part of the knowledge included in the self-concept is knowledge of what to do in a vast range of typical situations, i.e., situations that recur and of which I have a stock of knowledge at hand, as Schutz says.¹⁷⁵ Note that an incorrect self-concept distorts perception of myself and thus of situations in which I find myself; this can result in actions that are inappropriate to a situation and do not achieve their goal or otherwise end up in frustration and unhappiness. The usefulness of having a correct self-concept is evident.

Finally, the self-concept is the means by which I can transcend and create myself. I transcend myself, i.e., am always more than myself, in that whenever I am self-conscious in the strictest sense, when I perceive myself in the mode “it itself” (there is reason for not saying “I myself”), I do not perceive all of myself. I refer not only to the “nihilating structure of temporality,” as Sartre has it,¹⁷⁶ such that I am not any longer what I was and am not yet what I shall be – both of those aspects of myself can be present in experience in the modes “remembering it” or (more or less emptily) “anticipating it” or “thinking about it” – but to the fact that whenever I perceive myself I do not perceive I-the-perceiver but only a variety of objects present in experience, some of which have or can rationally acquire the sense of being me, myself, and some of which lack that sense. In perceiving myself I transcend myself, for I cannot perceive I-the-perceiver. Now, all other modes of being conscious of myself are founded on and refer to or point back to being conscious of it in the mode, “it itself,” perceiving it, says Husserl.¹⁷⁷ My self-concept, my knowledge about myself, is founded on immediate acquaintance with myself. The self-transcendence in self-perception has an analogue in thinking about myself. By virtue of having a concept of myself I can compare myself (in the mode, “thinking about myself”) to envisaged possibilities of who I might be but am not. If I am tempestuous by nature, I can notice that, form a concept of it, and compare it with other possibilities, such as curbing my temper or being more tactful. In such comparisons I can and do evaluate myself and decide to keep on acting the same way or to change; I can and do then go ahead and do what I have decided to do. Thus, I create myself (at least in part), I exert a deliberate influence on my future or present actions. I transcend myself in that I always have the possibility of being more, or at least other than, what I am now, and I can envision my possibilities and, within the limits imposed by physical nature and habit, actualize them. The self-concept enables me to do so, that is, its function is to orient me to action regarding myself. As is the case with all concepts, its intentional aspect is its function.

There is one more element of the self which is present in experience at all times. It is the self-sense, a quite global, undifferentiated and pervasive feeling of myself, a feeling of being me. James alludes to it: “The basis of our personality . . . is that feeling of our vitality which,

¹⁷⁵ Schutz, *Collected Papers I*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁷⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, tr. Hazel E. Barnes, p. 34.

¹⁷⁷ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 314.

because it is perpetually present, remains in the background of our consciousness.”¹⁷⁸ It is the result of the confluence of all the other elements of the self, my bodily feelings, my moods and emotions, beliefs, evaluations of myself, and the feelings concomitant with my actions. It is what gives me a feeling of continuity, extending far into my past; is what lets me know, without thinking about it, when I get up in the morning that I am the same person who went to sleep here last night. It is present continuously, though most often unnoticed, in all my unreflective experience and most of my reflective experience, though sometimes I may be provoked to reflection by the loss of that sense, due to some extraordinary situation in which I find myself. Of course as I reflect on myself and attain a clearer and clearer concept of myself, my self-sense is altered as I myself am altered by my new knowledge, especially if I change my style of comporting myself or alter a particular typical course of action.

This exhausts the list of elements present in experience at any single moment. But something seems to be left out. At any moment, I am both aware and active. Is there nothing in experience to which I can “point” and say “This is the I-the-experiencer, I-the-actor?” In fact, there is no such object present in experience. I have mentioned that I-the-perceiver cannot perceive I-the-perceiver. Nor can I perceive I-the-actor; there is no object, nothing in my experience, nothing of which I am or can become aware, that is I. There is a lot which is me, as we have seen, but nothing which is I-who-perceive-and-act. This is a point that James makes in his celebrated essay, “*Does ‘Consciousness’ Exist?*,”¹⁷⁹ that Sartre alludes to in his talk of “nothingness,”¹⁸⁰ and that Husserl recognizes in his discussion of the “*Pure Ego*,” his term for what I call the transcendental Self, or I-who-perceive-and-act, when he says that “it can *in no sense* be regarded as a real part or phase of the experiences themselves,”¹⁸¹ where “real” means “experienceable.” Being conscious and being active appear to be pure functions of the self, where no specific object or type of object is the performer of the functions.

That is one reason why action is hard to grasp phenomenologically. Of the other aspects of the self, I can “see” an experienceable manifestation, some material quality, and the function that that type of object performs. But to try reflectively to apprehend my action burdened by the prejudicial expectation of finding I-who-act is bound to end in failure and may blind me to “seeing” what is in fact present in experience when I act. Moreover, when I am acting, my attention is focused on the intentional objects that I am conscious of and acting on, toward, or with, etc. The degree of attention in ordinary experience governs the degree of retention immediately and subsequently afterwards; if I was not at all conscious of the fringe of my experience when I was engaged in some action, then I shall not retain it or remember it. It was only upon recognition of this fact that I myself became able to disengage myself from my action as I was performing it or immediately afterwards in order reflectively to apprehend the whole of my experience of the action. Since I have become able to do that, and aided by reflection upon myself in the modes, “remembering myself” and “thinking about myself,” I have discovered that there are different types of action and different sets of subjective and noetic elements invariantly present in the experience of each.

I can become conscious of my acting, if not I-the-actor, by being conscious of my impulses to action, the envisioned goal, if any, of my action, and the specific interpretive elements and bodily and emotional feelings that occur concomitantly and correlatively to what I am aware

¹⁷⁸ James, *Psychology*, p. 191.

¹⁷⁹ James, *The Writings of William James*, pp. 169-183.

¹⁸⁰ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 21.

¹⁸¹ Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 156.

of and acting toward, on, with, etc. I am also aware of my acting by being aware of the broad moods and emotions that arise correlatively to it over longer periods of time.

There are two main types of action, each with its typical concomitant emotional-interpretive complex, deliberate action and habitual action. Most of my action is neither purely one nor the other, but it is useful to abstract these two extremes as ideal types.

Deliberate action is action that I envision or plan beforehand, decide to do, and then go ahead and do according to my plan. Its distinctive feature is, as the name implies, that I deliberate, think about what I am going to do, and then, guided by my plan, perform the action. My attention is split or oscillates between what I am dealing with and my plan. Concomitant to this split between the actual and the ideal (mentally envisioned), there arises a *sense of agency*, a sense of *I-doing*. This sense arises also when I am in the process of making a decision, in which my attention is split up between two (or more) envisioned possibilities of what I might do. The sense of agency arises upon reflective apprehension of myself as agent, when I think about what I am going to do or am doing or when my action is inhibited because I have not yet made up my mind. When I am unreflectively and straightforwardly acting, my attention is directed toward the intentional objects of my action; the self-sense and any dim sense of agency are present only marginally, unnoticed.

Most of my action is not completely deliberate, not fully rational, as Schutz would say;¹⁸² but in all but the most unthinking, routine, habitual action there is some dim glimmering of the sense of agency. James says that “a good third of our psychic life consists in . . . rapid premonitory perspective views of schemes of thought not yet articulate,”¹⁸³ a statement I would amend to include schemes of action not yet articulate as well. The more fully such a sense of I-intend-to-do-so-and-so is present, the more deliberate is the action, and the more there is a sense of agency. It is by means of the sense of agency that I apprehend certain of my actions as my deliberate doing.

If the sense of agency is absent altogether when I am doing something, then my action is either ecstatic or habitual. Ecstatic action occurs when I am doing something I have not done before but have no idea, no premonition, of what I am doing. Spontaneously making a joke or improvising music are examples. Habitual action occurs in the form of typical routines that I perform over and over again. I give no thought to what I am doing; the action performs itself, as it were, automatically. There is no sense of agency, and the action can be said to be mine only because it is I and not someone else who does it. In the most extreme cases, I need not even pay much attention to the intentional objects of my action; when I brush my teeth and wash my face in the morning, my thoughts are usually entirely elsewhere. It is a fundamental characteristic of the self to form habits; every action is, if not already habitual, at least incipiently the beginning of a habit, for I experience an impulsion to repeat everything I do unless something else intervenes, such as frustration or the intention to do something else.

Most of my everyday action is neither purely deliberate nor purely habitual, but rather consists of typical routines that are complicated enough to require some thought, but not so unfamiliar as to require full deliberation and rational planning. Cooking dinner, buying a book, taking notes in class are examples. Such courses of action are habit-like in that they are typical routines that I perform again and again and I don't have to think much about how to

¹⁸² Schutz, *Collected Papers I*, p. 28.

¹⁸³ James, *Psychology*, p. 157.

do them or be conscious that I am doing them. They are somewhat deliberate in that there is present in my experience of doing them some idea of what I am doing and why, some glimmering at least of a sense of agency.

I use the term “attitude” to refer to the inner, thinking and feeling, side of habitual and routine or semi-routine action. An attitude is an object-oriented complex of feelings, interpretations, and action-schemata such that I perceive the object valuatively interpreted and am impelled to act in a certain way regarding it. Attitudes include intentions (in the ordinary sense) with respect to my actions, expectations of how the object will behave, typical knowledge of its characteristics and what I can do with it, etc. Attitudes also include evaluational feelings, such as liking or disliking, approval or annoyance, etc., which find expression in typical actions or at least impulses to action.

Habits and routine actions have a sort of inertia; the longer established and more often repeated they are, the harder they are to change. I can, nevertheless, change them, either stop doing them or do something else or alter some part of a routine, and this in two ways. I can change my attitudes or I can change my actions, and a change in one invariably leads to a change in the other, for they are the “inside” and “outside” of the same thing. It is common, for instance, for a man in our society to experience and treat women as somehow slightly inferior to him and to think that they should properly be subservient to him. If I have such an attitude and wish to change it, I may begin by thinking of women as persons, just as I am a person, and not objects for my pleasure. Thinking of them differently leads to perceiving them differently and feeling differently about them and then to acting toward them differently. On the other hand, it is becoming more common for women themselves to demand better treatment; the more I am constrained to act toward them in a new way, the more, inevitably, I shall think and feel about them and perceive them differently.

In order to change a habit, in either of these ways, I must exert an effort of will, for if I do not the habit will continue out of its own inertia. As James points out, the crucial element in exerting an effort of will is being always conscious of the idea of what I want to do.¹⁸⁴ If I forget to think of changing a habit, it will automatically reassert itself and take over. Clearly, exerting an effort of will is a kind of deliberate action.

As with subjective processes generally, different attitudes and their correlative routine action-patterns may be more or less real elements of the self, and the marks of their reality are duration and intensity. Trivial attitude-habits like not liking eggplant have only a slight effect on my experience and action. The most real attitude-habits are the most pervasive, like being eagerly interested in life or cautious and afraid of it, and the most intense, such as severe claustrophobia.

All of the elements of the self function teleologically; they all contribute in one way or another to my experience and action. My beliefs and noeses structure my experience and guide and channel my action. To know what something is and to perceive it as what it is, is to know what to do with it. My feelings are the bedrock of my experience. If there were nothing immediately *there* to be aware of, I should neither experience nor act, but only behave, like an inanimate thing. My emotions and moods are media through which I am conscious of particular objects, especially people, and my world or situation as a whole. My emotions provide the immediate motivational force of my action, and my moods determine

¹⁸⁴ James, *Psychology*, pp. 393-394.

the overall style of my action from day to day. My self-concept is one of my most fundamental and all-pervasive beliefs and is a strong conditioning factor in my self-perception; the evaluational thoughts and feelings about myself that arise from the self-concept are prime determinants in the way I act. My attitudes, being combinations of belief, emotion, and impulsion to action, structure my experience and both motivate and channel my action. They are but the inside of my habits, my habits as subjectively experienced. My deliberate actions at least incipiently begin habits and are based on my perceptions, beliefs, emotions and valuations of myself and my world.

The self has a basic teleological structure, and it is but a flip of the coin whether we call the goal experience or action. Ortega says action: "Man's destiny . . . is primarily *action*. We do not live to think, but the other way round . . ." ¹⁸⁵ But my action itself seems to have a goal. I refer not to the particular purposes that I have in mind for deliberate actions that I perform, but the overall goal of the whole course of my action, a goal which is two-fold. In the first place, the goal is preservation of myself, my survival; my action basically functions to keep me alive and functioning. Says James, "Primarily . . . and fundamentally, the mental life is for the sake of action of a preservative sort." ¹⁸⁶ But even more, the goal is to feel good; I act to achieve satisfaction. Of course this goal is founded on the first in that I must be alive in order to feel anything. Whitehead states it succinctly: ". . . the art of life is first to be alive, secondly to be alive in a satisfactory way, and thirdly to acquire an increase in satisfaction." ¹⁸⁷

If we forget that experience and action are inseparable, an ambiguity arises. The teleological structure of the self is to be oriented to action; feeling calls for expression, for action. But now we see that, in a sense, the goal of action is feeling, that is, feeling good. What appears to be a vicious circle is mitigated only slightly by noting that whenever I feel good, an impulse arises to continue feeling good, that is, to continue or repeat the actions that resulted in feeling good. It is allayed even more, however, by remembering fundamental Socratic doctrine, that a person is made happy by performing well the function that is peculiarly his or hers. Now, the most fundamental character of the self is that it is aware and acting; cessation of experience and action is death. To put the matter in Socratic terms, the fundamental function of a person, that which by nature he or she does and must do, is to experience and act. Thus, that the goal of the confluence of the elements of the self is action in no way vitiates the claim that the goal of action is a kind of experience, feeling good. On the contrary, the two are strictly correlative; it is a natural result of the structure of the self that acting well is accompanied by the experience of feeling good, that performance of the proper functions of the self is its fulfillment. We'll see in the next chapter some of the ways this takes place.

¹⁸⁵ Jose Ortega y Gasset, *Man and People*, tr. Willard R. Trask, p. 23.

¹⁸⁶ James, *Psychology*, p. 20.

¹⁸⁷ Whitehead, *The Function of Reason*, p. 8 (emphasis omitted).

Chapter Seven. The Structure Of The Self.

A. The Self As One.

Though composed of many elements, I am one self, one person. I recognize that I am one in several ways.

Consider: When I adopt the phenomenological viewpoint, I find myself at the center of the world. The world extends infinitely in all directions from me.¹⁸⁸ I speak here from the phenomenological point of view; the question as to whether the Objective universe is finite or infinite, either spatially or temporally or both, is irrelevant, because what I *observe* from that point of view from which no extraneous interpretations are allowed to influence my observing is the world extending away from me, in all directions, without limit. There is no clear-cut end to the world; it fades off into misty indeterminacy where I cannot clearly see, but no matter how far I travel in any direction, and no matter how long I wait, the same state of affairs is evident. No matter where I am located in Objective space and time, I am always and everywhere at the exact center of the world revealed to me. At this most fundamental level, then, I am one in that I am at the center. Placing in abeyance the belief – at this level, irrelevant – in the reality of other persons who are equally centers of their worlds, I find that I am one because there is only one center of my world, the world revealed to me in my experience; that center is here, where I am.

It may well be that this fundamental state of affairs is founded on the fact that I am (in part) a body, physical and Objective. For the empirical phenomenologist it is sheer speculation to try to imagine a disembodied moment or stream of experience. I suspect that a disembodied self would still find itself at the center of its world, but I do not assert that because I have had no first-hand evidence. It is clear, however, that by virtue of being embodied I find myself in one place, here, as opposed to the many places which are there. Moreover, I experience myself as one thing among many. My own investigation of my experience of my body has only begun; it is an area to which calls for much more inspection than I have accomplished. The way I experience my body is quite complicated, because I experience it from the “inside,” so to speak, but my experience of it is pervaded with schemata based on how I take for granted that others experience me. Even in the beginning stages of the investigation, however, it is evident that I am located in one spot and that I am one in that I am not any of the other Objects around me. Alan Watts notes that “the ‘I’ feeling, to be felt at all, must always be a sensation relative to the ‘other,’ to something beyond its control and experience.”¹⁸⁹ His use of the terms “feeling” and “sensation” is loose, but it is clear that one way I know myself as one is by contrast to the many other physical things surrounding me.

¹⁸⁸ Describing the natural attitude, Husserl notes that “What is actually perceived and what is more or less clearly co-present and determinate (to some extent at least), is partly pervaded, partly girt about with a *dimly apprehended depth or fringe of indeterminate reality*. . . . Moreover, the zone of indeterminacy is infinite. The misty horizon that can never be completely outlined remains necessarily there.” Not only spatially is this true, but “so likewise is it with the world in respect to its *ordered being in the succession of time*. This world now present to me, and in every waking ‘now’ obviously so, has its temporal horizon, infinite in both directions, its known and unknown, its intimately alive and its unalive past and future.” (*Ideas*, p. 92).

¹⁸⁹ Alan Watts, *Does It Matter?*, p. 85.

There is another way I know myself as one by contrast to many. Leaving aside the question of the genesis of the knowledge, it is clear that I know that I have a zone of privacy, my subjective experience, which is not directly experienceable by anyone else. I take for granted that others have their own zones of privacy as well. I am one as against not only the many other physical things that I experience, but other persons as well, who experience and act in the world typically in much the same way I do. Many types of intentional objects that I experience have or can rationally acquire the sense, “me,” because they are me-and-not-someone-else, or at least mine and not someone else’s, in that only I experience them directly.

James speaks of this state of affairs as “personal consciousness.” We may read “experience” instead of “consciousness”:

The only states of consciousness that we naturally deal with are found in personal consciousness, minds, selves, concrete particular I’s and you’s.

Each of these minds keeps its own thoughts to itself. . . . Absolute insulation, irreducible pluralism, is the law. It seems as if the elementary psychic fact were not *thought* or *this thought* or *that thought*, but *my thought*, every thought being *owned*. Neither contemporaneity, nor proximity in space, nor similarity of quality and content are able to fuse thoughts together which are sundered by this barrier of belonging to different personal minds.¹⁹⁰

The same is true not only of thoughts, of course, but of all of my immediate experience; you don’t see the world from my vantage point, don’t feel my emotions and bodily sensations, don’t think my thoughts, etc.

I am one in contrast to many not only in single moments of experience, but continuously, over long periods of time, indeed throughout my life. My self-sense, vague and unnoticed but continuously present in the background of my experience, gives me a feeling of familiarity with myself such that whenever I think about it I recognize myself as more or less the same person that I have been. Most of the time I don’t think about it, of course; I simply feel like me. The self-sense is founded on the fact of continuity in my experience. There are no abrupt discontinuities in my experience, because everything I experience leaves its traces in the form of retentions, at least, and often memories. Even something that bursts abruptly into my experience, like a loud noise, is experienced along with the retention of what immediately preceded it. Says James:

Does not a loud explosion rend the consciousness upon which it abruptly breaks, in twain? No; for even into our awareness of the thunder the awareness of the previous silence creeps and continues; for what we hear when the thunder crashes is not thunder *pure*, but thunder-breaking-upon-silence-and-contrasting-with-it.¹⁹¹

Moreover, I experience myself as continuously me across lapses of consciousness, such as sleep. When I wake up, I recognize that I still feel like me because I remember what I felt like before. My memory is tied to the experience(s) of which it is a memory by “a continuous series of retentions,” as Husserl says,¹⁹² which provide the peculiar feeling of intimacy to

¹⁹⁰ James, *Psychology*, p. 138.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹⁹² Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 218.

which James refers regarding this point: Even where there is a time-gap, he says, “the consciousness after it feels as if it belonged together with the consciousness before it, as another part of the same self;” and he illustrates his point by giving the example of two people who fall asleep and wake up together. Peter remembers his own experience, not Paul’s, and vice versa, even though each may have a correct idea of what the other’s experience was:

He *remembers* his own states, whilst he only *conceives* Paul’s. Remembrance is like direct feeling; its object is suffused with a warmth and intimacy to which no object of mere conception ever attains. This quality of warmth and intimacy and immediacy is what Peter’s *present* thought also possesses for itself. So sure as this present is me, is mine, it says, so sure is anything else that comes with the same warmth and intimacy and immediacy, me and mine.¹⁹³

Even though I am constantly changing and my experience is interrupted by sleep or some other form of unconsciousness, I recognize myself (always in contrast to other things or persons) as continuous, as a state of affairs that endures through time.

I experience myself as continuous in another way. At any moment and over a period of time the various elements of my self are not sharply isolated from each other, but pervade and interfuse each other and have a reciprocal effect on each other. My emotions and moods, for example, arise correlatively to the intentional objects of which I am aware; they are present constantly as a shifting and dynamic background in my experience, “coloring” my perception of myself and the world and provoking me to act in various ways. My beliefs are constantly operative as the interpretive element in my experience; they contrive it so that I recognize significant patterns in what I am aware of. This recognition is no mere cold, intellectual process, but is experienced in the form of emotional reactions to what I perceive, imagine, think, etc. My self-sense and feelings of my body are present continuously, though often overlooked; my self-concept, including beliefs about what I am and am not capable of doing, exerts an influence on what I perceive as significant, and in what way.

The way the different types of elements of the self interact, combine with and influence each other such that they form a whole and not just a disparate collection of objects can best be seen by paying attention to the way they function together to promote the well-being of the self as a whole. The self, as I have noted, is a teleological unity, and the *telos*, the goal is two-fold: self-preservation or survival, and happiness. It is not unreasonable to think of the self as an organism, living and growing, with the many elements functioning to promote its health.¹⁹⁴

The health of the organism consists in the proper performance of the two basic functions of the self to which no particular experienceable object corresponds: experiencing and acting; all the components of the self contribute to my experience and action. When I experience the world and myself fully and accurately, when I am not blind to certain aspects of what is before me and when I recognize significance correctly enough to act fruitfully on it, then my action is effective and I can achieve the goals that I reasonably set for myself. The subjective

¹⁹³ James, *Psychology*, p. 138.

¹⁹⁴ Organism: “1. Biol. An individual constituted to carry on the activities of life by means of organs separate in function but mutually dependent; any living being. 2. Philos. Any highly complex thing or structure with parts so integrated that their relation to one another is governed by their relation to the whole (*Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1960 edition, p. 592).”

emotional concomitant to such proper performance of these functions is a specific emotional state called "happiness." It could equally well be called "pleasure," "satisfaction," "contentment," "well-being," "fulfillment," or "feeling good;" the label doesn't matter as long as we know what we are talking about.

We all have some acquaintance with the emotional state to which these words refer. Like all feeling-states, happiness is nameable, but virtually indescribable, except metaphorically; happiness is warm, full, tingly, etc., and unhappiness is the opposite. Happiness is also distinguishable from its opposite by its practical effects. If I am happy, I am content with myself and my situation, I experience no impulse to change myself, my subjective state or my surroundings. This does not mean that I experience no impulsion to action; I may well be impelled to continue doing what I am doing. The point is that I am not impelled to change what I am doing. If I am unhappy, however, if I feel pained or frustrated or unsatisfied, then I do feel an urge to change my situation, to alter it so that I'll feel better. Of course happiness may be more or less intense and more or less modified by an admixture of contrary feelings such as dissatisfaction, etc.

That the self is a single organism can be seen in the following way: when each type of component is performing its function well, such functioning facilitates the proper functioning of the other types of components and the health of the organism as a whole is promoted, that is, happiness is experienced. But when one type of element is functioning poorly, that has an adverse effect on the other elements and the organism is less healthy and less happy. It is not my intention here to outline how the components of the self interact in any great detail. That would involve too much involved description of particular situations and is not necessary to make the general point. I shall list only some of the typical ways in which the elements interact both harmoniously, so as to promote happiness, and inharmoniously, so as to produce frustration and pain. Remember that when I reflectively apprehend my experience, I find all the types of components interacting with each other all at once; but the limitations of language force me to speak of them one at a time, so what I say has unavoidably a certain abstract character.

We have seen that what I believe to be true of the world and myself structures my perception of the world and myself. Vice versa, my perception influences my beliefs. This happens harmoniously when my beliefs are true and my perceptions are accurate, and they reinforce each other in the direction of correctness. It is sometimes the case, however, that mistaken beliefs may blind me to certain aspects of what is before me, or to think I perceive something that is not there. Racial and sexual prejudice are examples of this. Although belief and perception generally reinforce each other, in cases of mistaken belief or perception or both, it may happen that unexpected perceptions cause me to revise my beliefs or that further learning which corrects my beliefs in turn yields different and more accurate perceptions. The more I find women acting competently in areas that I had thought were exclusively male domains, the more I am provoked to think of them as individuals equal in stature to myself and not as somehow inferior. The more I learn of the history of black oppression, the more I am enabled to perceive black people as human beings caught in a desperate situation and not as somehow alien.

Correct beliefs and perceptions enable me to act effectively. When I act on true beliefs, I am successful; when I act on falsehoods, I experience failure and frustration. It is obvious that the organism that is my self is healthier and happier in the former case than the latter. Moreover, in this area the self has a natural tendency toward health and proper functioning; it

is a natural function of the self to acquire and hold on to true beliefs and perceptions and to annul and discard false ones. As Husserl says, “the life of consciousness has an all-pervasive teleological structure, a pointedness toward ‘reason’ and even a pervasive tendency toward it – that is: toward the discovery of correctness . . . and toward the canceling of incorrectnesses”¹⁹⁵ Thus, the natural tendency of the self in this area is toward happiness.

The same considerations apply to my beliefs and perceptions of myself. The self-concept may be correct or incorrect or partially so, and it strongly influences the way I perceive myself. I treat the self-concept separately from beliefs in general for two reasons. First, it is all too easy to go through life with an incorrect self-concept and not even know it because it determines (in large part, but not completely) my self-perceptions. If my self-concept is really (for instance) only a concept of myself as I should like to be, only an ideal “picture” of myself that leaves out my faults, I may never think to question it because possible disconfirming perceptions are barred. I may enjoy thinking of myself highly, but I am likely to get into situations in which I act inappropriately, try to do something or behave in a way that I cannot. This produces frustration and pain; the functioning of the self-concept in this respect is a special case of the functioning of belief in general. The only different is that it is often harder for the self-concept to get corrected through disconfirming perceptions because it is highly charged emotionally. The self-concept is the basis of self-evaluation, and the pleasure of approving of myself (even though I am mistaken with regard to what I am approving) makes it harder to correct my idea of myself.

When the self-concept is correct, it contributes to my happiness in two ways. First, like all true beliefs, it facilitates my action. Second, I enjoy feelings of self-approval; or, if I do not approve of myself, at least I know what is wrong and in what direction to change myself. The feeling of self-approval based on an accurate self-concept – and this is the second reason for treating it apart from belief in general – is far more secure than self-approval based on a mistaken self-concept. A good and respecting self-concept is an inexhaustible source of energy and enthusiasm, and the opposite is true for a negative self-concept, one laced with disapproval of myself. But a really good and respecting self-concept is one that includes knowledge that it is accurate. If that knowledge is absent, I have no assurance that I shall continue to think well of myself; but if it is present my satisfaction is enhanced through being able to act effectively and through self-approval. In this dual way, a correct self-concept contributes to the health and happiness of my self. As is the case with belief and perception in general, the natural tendency of the self is toward harmonious functioning and the concomitant feelings of happiness.

Incidentally, we should not despair of the possibility of correcting the self-concept. Even though it generally determines perceptions of myself so that possible disconfirming perceptions are barred, this need not always happen. Others can point out to me aspects of myself that I have overlooked. Frustration of my plans may lead me to re-examine myself, just as surprising success may. And I can make a deliberate effort to “see” myself unencumbered by my habitual concepts and interpretations of myself; that is, I can adopt a phenomenological point of view with respect to myself, and this not only with regard to the general structures of the self, but also with regard to those features that are idiosyncratic to me. This paper reports just such phenomenological self-inspection.

I have already touched on the place of emotion in the over-all functioning of the self in

¹⁹⁵ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 160, emphasis omitted.

speaking of approval and disapproval of the self. Since emotions are an all-pervasive feature of my experience, their proper functioning contributes to the well-being of myself in several ways. The function of emotions is two-fold. They arise correlatively to experienced intentional objects; thus they reveal qualities of the object and of myself. Second, they call for expression, for some outward manifestation through bodily symptoms or overt action. The effect of these two functions is reciprocal; the more I pay attention to my emotions, the more I am likely to express them adequately, and the more I express them well, the more I am likely to be conscious of them. Indeed, if I am in the habit of expressing how I feel directly, my emotions are often revealed to me in the very process of expressing them. Conversely, if I do not pay attention to how I am feeling, I do not fully express my emotions. The less I do so, the more the capacity both to feel and express atrophies.

Since emotions reveal qualities of the world and myself to me, it is clear that when I pay attention to them I facilitate the process of gaining knowledge of the world and myself. When emotions are functioning well, that is, they facilitate the functioning of belief and perception, and the elements of the self interact harmoniously toward the goal of the well-being or health of the self as a whole. Conversely, when I do not pay attention to my emotions they do not perform their revelatory function as well, and the process of coming to know and accurately perceive myself and the world is inhibited.

The same is true of the other function of emotions, the urge to get expressed. If I make a deliberate effort to express them fully, I facilitate their revelatory function and thus facilitate knowledge. Conversely, if I repress them, I inhibit the revelatory function and reduce the possibilities of acquiring correct beliefs and perceptions. But there is a more direct way in which full performance of the expressive function contributes to my well-being and happiness. It is a natural tendency of the self to express emotions; if I repress them, the effort to hide them goes against the natural urge to express them. I have two contradictory impulses, each frustrating the other; and the felt concomitant of this state of affairs is pain. I am at odds with myself; it is as if the energy that should have been released is kept contained and churns around somewhere inside me, building up pressure and getting sour. Thus, in this area too, the natural tendency of the self is toward happiness; unhappiness results from inhibition of this natural tendency.

The effect of emotions and beliefs is reciprocal, especially with regard to the self-concept. Just as proper functioning of emotions facilitates self-knowledge, so self-knowledge facilitates emotional functioning. If I believe that I never get angry, that I am always affable and easy-going, then I tend to repress my hostile emotions, which leads to frustration and pain; but if my self-concept includes knowledge of that aspect of myself, then I tend to express myself adequately. It is all too easy to ignore and not express emotions that conflict with the image I have of myself as I should like to be. But it is more important to have a correct idea of myself as I should like to be. But it is more important to have a correct idea of myself than one that pleases me for some extraneous reason but is not correct, for the pleasure of thinking well of myself in that case is outweighed by the painful consequences of my ignorance of myself. An emotion expressed is an emotion that lives; unexpressed emotions cause frustration and inhibit spontaneous action. Again, when one type of component of the self functions well, the functioning of the others is enhanced, just as poor functioning of one diminishes the possibility of the others functioning well.

I have already alluded to the way deliberate action interacts with the other functions of the self in my talk of paying attention to and deliberately expressing emotions. The function of

deliberate action is to achieve goals. We have already seen that when I have correct beliefs and perceptions and when I am fully conscious of my emotions and express them well, I am able to act effectively. Conversely, through my deliberate action I can either augment or frustrate the other functions of the self. I can, for instance, make a deliberate effort to acquire knowledge of myself and my world. When I do so, I augment the natural function of the self to acquire correct beliefs and perceptions. I can influence my emotional functioning quite directly by making a deliberate effort to pay attention to how I am feeling and to express myself. I can, of course, act in the opposite way, against my natural tendencies, but when I do I experience the pain of conflicting impulses.

Since the function of deliberate action is to achieve goals, and since the overriding goal of the self as a whole is self-preservation and well-being or happiness, it seems that the natural goal of deliberate action is, above all, to promote my well-being. But it is notoriously the case that I can and do act contrary to my natural tendencies. Although happiness is the natural goal of the self, that goal is not rigidly “programmed in,” so that I have no choice about it. The self is not completely determined, biologically or any other way; I am free, although my freedom is not absolute either. I shall return to this point at the end of this chapter. It is clear, however, that I can attune my deliberate action to my other functions and facilitate or enhance them, thus promoting my well-being and the health of the organism that is my self as a whole.

Deliberate action is only one kind of action; there is also habitual action. The formation of habits is a natural and automatic function of the self, one that occurs whether I deliberately intervene or not. It seems to me, although my investigations in this area are far from complete, that everything I do, overtly or covertly, on purpose or unthinkingly, is at least incipiently the beginning of a habit, that unless something else intervenes – unless I deliberately intervene, perhaps, or unless the action results in failure or pain – I tend to repeat the action. In a fascinating note in the *Crisis*, Husserl remarks, “Naturally all activity . . . gives rise to its habitual acquisitions.”¹⁹⁶ He goes on to restrict his remark to the context of the acquisition of knowledge through observation and reflection, but I think what he says applies equally to all of my habits: “But all knowledge in general, all value-validities and ends in general, are, as having been acquired through our activity, at the same time persisting properties of ourselves as ego-subjects, as persons, and can be found in the reflective attitude as making up our own being.”¹⁹⁷ As I say, I think this is true of all my habits; as I reflectively apprehend myself (over a period of time, of course, not at any one moment) I find as elements of myself, as “making up my own being.” My habits, the repeated patterns of action that I perform.

Now, habits add a kind of secondary facilitation to the other functions of the self. The more I perform a pattern of action or comport myself in a certain way, the more habitual that pattern or style of comporting myself becomes. Habits have a kind of inertia, and the longer they have been in effect, the harder it is to “break” or change them. Thus, the more I make an effort to perceive accurately and to find out the truth, the more habitual the functioning of my correct beliefs and perceptions becomes. The more I pay attention to and deliberately reveal my emotions, the more habitual that way of being becomes. But habits almost equally well facilitate poor functioning; I can get into the habit of repressing my emotions or deceiving myself. If the self is functioning well, then the formation of habits augments that functioning. If it is functioning poorly, my habits augment that. But again we can see that the natural and

¹⁹⁶ Husserl, *Crisis*, p. 109.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

inherent tendency of the self is toward health and proper functioning, for habits continue of their own accord only so long as nothing else intervenes. One of the primary things that can intervene to stop a habit is pain or dissatisfaction. If some component of myself habitually functions poorly, sooner or later it is going to make me feel bad enough to experience an impulsion to change, opening the possibility of breaking that habit. So, although habits facilitate my other functions whether they be functioning well or not, functioning well facilitates the continuance of the habit, but functioning poorly tends to counteract the habit. The other elements of the self interact with the formation of habits, and generally in the direction of happiness or healthy functioning.

One specific way that this happens that is worth noting is the role that the self-concept plays. If I have an accurate self-concept and if I know that it is accurate, that is, if I have self-knowledge, then I can more easily change bad habits than if I did not. A habit is an automatic pattern of behavior that tends to repeat itself. Correlative to the “outside,” the behavior, there is the “inside” of beliefs, emotions, and impulsions to action – in short, the correlative attitude. Corresponding to the inertia of the behavior-pattern, there is an inertia of the subjective concomitants. For instance, I know that smoking cigarettes is bad for my bodily health; nevertheless, when I feel an impulse to smoke, I tend to envision only the immediate gratification of my desire and do not think of the detrimental long-range effects. Correlative to or “inside” the pattern of action is a pattern of being conscious (in the mode, “having it in mind”) only of the immediate gratification and not of the pain to come. In order to change my bad habit, I must exert an effort of will, and, as James says, the crucial element in exerting an effort of will is to keep the idea of what I want to do clearly before my mind.¹⁹⁸ But the more established the habit is, the more there is a tendency for the idea of the immediate gratification to arise before my mind and crowd out or overshadow the idea of the detrimental consequences. Clearly, self-knowledge facilitates forming good habits, for if I have knowledge of what is good and bad for me based on good evidence, I have a powerful ally in the struggle to replace the idea of the immediate gratification with the idea of what is better for me in the long run. The value of the kind of phenomenological investigation that I myself have pursued and am reporting here is evident. If I have knowledge of myself based on ordinary absolute evidence, to which I can at any time return, whenever I have doubts I can return to the evidence, reassure myself, and strengthen my resolve. Whether or not I pursue a phenomenological investigation into myself, my inherent tendency to acquire true beliefs tends to counteract my bad habits. Again we see that the natural tendency of the interaction of the components of the self is toward healthy functioning and happiness.

I think I have said enough to indicate in a general way that the self is a teleological unity. It is an organism composed of many elements, each of which performs a specific function, and how well each functions is dependent on how well the others function, and vice versa. The goal of each and the goal of the self as a whole is that of self-preservation and healthy, harmonious interfunctioning, the emotional concomitant of which is happiness, or well-being, satisfaction, etc.

I should emphasize again, however, that although the natural tendency of the self is toward health and happiness, it is not predetermined that this goal will be achieved. Some degree of deliberate guidance of my actions is needed to ensure (as much as possible in a world that constantly confronts me with novelty in the midst of repetition) that the goal will be achieved. No doubt people differ in the amount of deliberate intervention needed. Some seem able to

¹⁹⁸ James, *Psychology*, pp. 393-394.

go through life cheerfully and unthinkingly being happy and taking things in stride; others must struggle long and hard to overcome ignorance and the inertia of bad habits. But all of us – if my analysis has general truth – have an inherent tendency toward health and happiness, a tendency that makes it easier, once a fruitful deliberate start has been made, to achieve that end.

B. The Self In Relation.

We have seen that the self is a unity, that I am an organism composed of many elements, each with its proper function, and that the elements function together to promote my health and happiness. We should not commit the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, however, and think that the self can be fully understood in isolation from its context. When I reflectively apprehend myself I find myself related to my surroundings in various ways. In particular, I find myself related to my world, to my fellow human beings, and to myself. To conclude this paper I shall describe briefly these three forms of relatedness. This is not an exhaustive or complete description; regard what I say as beginning notes pointing the way to areas for further investigation.

I am related to my world; indeed, as we have seen, I find myself in the exact center of it. But my relation to my world is not merely an external one, such that I could just as well be isolated from it and remain as I am. No, the effects of this relation are manifest throughout the “inside” of myself, to which only I have direct access. It is obvious, for instance, on an elementary level, that I experience the world that we all typically experience. My sensations are interpreted as being qualities of intentional objects out there, external to me and publicly available. Moreover, I never find myself not in the world. Even in moments of sheer introspection or abstract thought, if I reflectively apprehend *all* of my experience I find the pressure of my body against the chair or the floor, I find random noises, perhaps smells, all interpreted as revealing something external to me. I need not mention such extra-phenomenological considerations as that I need food, air, water, shelter, etc., to stay alive.

Not only do I experience the world, I act in it. The cardinal function of my thinking is to orient me to my world so that I can act and pursue my goals effectively. My senses contrive it so that I experience a relatively stable world and recognize significance in it; my perceptual judgments let me know, without thinking about it, what is before me, what it is good for, and what I can do with it. More than just abstractly recognizing that certain patterns of action are possible, I am impelled, through my emotional reactions to the world, to action of various sorts.

Although my perceptions reveal the world in which I live and act most directly, the effect my world has on me is revealed through my emotions and moods. Both exhibit the Principle of Correlativity; they arise correlatively to the intentional objects of which I am aware. Emotions arise, in general, correlatively to single objects or states of affairs, especially other persons. I'll treat them in more detail when I describe the relatedness of the self to other selves. My moods arise correlatively to my world or situation in general, not any one thing or state of affairs but the broad character of all or most of what I am aware of or in relation to over a period of time. Moods only sometimes occupy the focal point of my attention; they are broad, vague, all pervasive and continuously present. Their effect on me is great. Though not often very intense, they last a long time, changing for the most part rather slowly. They are thus very real elements in my subjective state, very real components of my self-sense. Because they make up a large part of who I am at any time, and because they arise correlatively to my world, we can see that I am related to my world in a quite intimate way. My world has an effect on me not just superficially, but deeply, continuously and pervasively.

My moods, of course, have an influence on my action. They do not provoke particular actions, but govern the over-all style of how I act. They are intermediary between the world

revealed to me in my experience and the world upon or in which I act. The same is true of my emotions, of course, and also of my noeses, which structure my experience into recognizable patterns and inform me of possible ways of acting. Let me make a tentative and somewhat metaphorical capsule summary of this state of affairs: I am the center of my world not just in the sense that it extends away from me in all directions without limit, but in that I am a point at which energy is processed. I receive energy from the world in the form of sensations; I process it or transform it through the functioning of my noeses, emotions and moods; then I emit energy in the form of action. I find myself at a point of energy-exchange, a point of dynamic tension between the polarities of experience and action. We may regard experiencing as a somewhat passive process; initially, the world impinges on me. The automatic functioning of my noeses, emotions and moods is activity, of course, but is not something that I do deliberately. The upshot of the energy-transformation, the automatic functioning of the components of the self, is impulses to action or overt (sometimes covert) action itself. I am at the point at which passive reception of energy gets transformed into active emission of energy; I am at the mid-point between two poles of my self-in-the-world, experience and action.

Just as I am related to my world, and not just externally, so am I related to other persons, and the influence of this kind of relatedness is found deep in the recesses of my subjective state. Relations to others are integral aspects of the self, and this is true not only in particular cases at particular times, but as a general feature of the self. Being-with-others is a fundamental mode of my being, a fundamental ontological characteristic of the self.

There is evidence for this assertion in all aspects of the self which we have considered, except perhaps with regard to those functions to which no specific experienceable object corresponds, experiencing and acting. I assume, with Whitehead, that every actual entity in the world is at least minimally aware and active.¹⁹⁹ That I experience and act does not distinguish me from other actual entities; the characteristics that make me a specifically human self and reveal the fundamental relatedness of myself to other human selves are found in the empirical self, specifically in the realms of thought, feeling, and the self-concept.

There is evidence of being-with-others as a fundamental dimension of the self in the realm of thinking and perception. Much of my thinking is verbal, expressed in language; indeed, were I limited merely to pictures and other sensory “images” for the material qualities of my thoughts, my intellectual grasp of the world and myself would be much poorer. But language is essentially an intersubjective phenomenon; it is public, shareable by everyone within the same linguistic community. We noted in Chapter Three that different linguistic communities

¹⁹⁹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, Part I, pp. 4-54. This is a speculative metaphysical assumption, not one grounded strictly in phenomenological evidence. A more coherent and adequate “picture” of the whole of reality is attained by assuming that every actual entity is aware and conscious, at least to some extent, than by assuming that some are and some are not. But note that Husserl believes that “an inanimate and non-personal consciousness is conceivable, i.e., a stream of experience in which the intentional empirical unities, body, soul, empirical ego-subject do not take shape, in which all these empirical concepts, and therefore also that of experience in the psychological sense (as experience of a person, an animal ego), have nothing to support them, and at any rate no validity (*Ideas*, p. 152, emphasis omitted).” That is, it is not inconceivable that there may be other kinds of transcendental Selves than the human kind. This essay is not the place to pursue this line of thought, however.

have (sometimes radically) different “pictures” of the universe and different modes of experiencing the world. Because my thoughts and concepts merge into the operative noeses of my perception and other modes of experience, my language has a significant effect on my experience. That is, the structure and quality of the world that I experience and thus the quality of the subjective feelings that arise concomitantly with my perceptions are fundamentally influenced by language. Thus, a fundamental characteristic of the self, one of the chief elements in my self-sense, is influenced by my language. Relations to other people, via the language that I share with them, are thus essential to my sense of who I am.

We have seen that my self-concept includes ideas about myself not only from my own point of view, but from the point of view of others as well. Since my self-concept is a fundamental determining factor in how I perceive myself and how I evaluate and feel about myself, a fundamental factor in my self-sense, it is clear that in this area also being related to other people is an integral element in my self.

We have seen that emotions call for expression. But what is expression if not expression to someone? Not only do I automatically and often deliberately express my emotions to others, I automatically and sometimes with deliberate effort understand other people’s expression of their emotions. Furthermore, much of my emotional life arises correlatively to my perception of other people. The strongest emotions – love, hatred, disgust, compassion – and the commonest and most pervasive – interest and disinterest, admiration and disdain – are ways I am conscious of others or media through which I am conscious of them. Thus, most of my feeling life is related to others, and much of the activity prompted by my emotions is directed to them. Indeed, we have noted that the urge to express myself is not limited solely to my emotions. I have an urge to express my thoughts as well, and to tell others what I see. Any time I have an idea that seems important or experience something with great intensity, I am impelled to tell others about it. It is revealing that in Plato’s allegory of the cave, the man who has gone outside the cave goes back to tell the others what he has seen.²⁰⁰ The urge to express myself, to let others know what I feel, think or experience is so pervasive that I am impelled to chat about trivialities if I have nothing important on my mind. The realm of emotions reveals my relatedness to others in much the same way that my moods reveal my relatedness to the world. My emotions are integral elements of my self; thus relations to others are integral elements of my self. And this is no bare, insignificant fact, but something that provokes me to act, to express myself.

Indeed, in a sense I have been taking such relatedness for granted all along. The decision to observe and analyze that portion of the world revealed to me which is subjective, available directly only to me, presupposes that I can and do distinguish myself from others, that I know what they can and cannot immediately experience. I have identified elements in my experience or classes of objects present to pure consciousness as being me, my self, by simply noting that they are me-and-not-someone-else. Such is the case, for instance, with my habitual actions. I do not deliberately do them, but I do them nonetheless, because it is I and not someone else that is the source of such actions. I know who I am, both in particular idiosyncratic ways and as a self with a structure common to all selves, by comparing myself to others.

Note that it is not illegitimate to take for granted that other selves, indeed the whole world, exist, for we are constructing a theory of the self grounded in phenomenological evidence, but

²⁰⁰ Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, 516-617, tr. F. M. Cornford, pp. 230-231.

we do not remain in the phenomenological attitude when we do so. Speaking strictly of what is reflectively apprehendable in experience, I should say that there is originary evidence of the relatedness of that complex of objects that I take to be me to intentional objects that have the sense “other persons.” But as Husserl notes more than once, when we step outside of the phenomenological standpoint, our findings remain and with exactly the evidence with which they were presented in phenomenological reflection.²⁰¹ In empirical phenomenology, the adoption of the phenomenological point of view is a heuristic device only, a way of finding out about features of experience ordinarily overlooked, and with absolute evidence. When we drop the phenomenological point of view and go on to interpret what we have “seen,” go on to incorporate our findings in a conceptual model of the self, we can speak of the relatedness of the self to other selves without further ado.

It is a fundamental ontological feature of myself that I am related in many ways to other people; on an ontological level I have being-with-others no matter what I do, even if I become a hermit. The most obvious manifestation of this feature of the self is the urge to communicate, to relate to others, to talk to them, express my feelings, thoughts and perceptions to them, to receive and understand their expressions of themselves, to judge myself in part by reference to what they think of me, etc. But this feature of the self is balanced by another feature of the self, equally fundamental, a feature that Ortega calls “radical solitude.”²⁰² In a manner analogous to, but not the same as, the way I am at the midpoint between the polarities of experiencing and acting, passivity and activity, I am always in a kind of dynamic, perhaps dialectical, tension between my radical solitude and my being-with-others.

I am radically alone because I am a self that only I have immediate and direct access to. No one else experiences the world from my vantage point; no one else experiences me from the inside, as I do; no one else can acquire my knowledge for me; no one else can perform my actions; no one else can live my life. I am fundamentally radically alone, but I am urged equally fundamentally to be in communion with others, to share as much as possible my solitude with theirs and theirs with mine. From the depths of my aloneness, I experience an urge to communicate with others, to share my life with theirs, to alleviate “that terrible loneliness in which one shivering consciousness looks over the rim of the world into the cold unfathomable lifeless abyss.”²⁰³

It is not within the scope of this paper to describe all the many ways I interact with others. The phenomena of adopting social roles, of intimate face-to-face communication, the subtle interplay between the urge to reveal myself and the urge to hide myself in my solitude, the wonderful ways cycles of energy are created between two and between many, the poignancy of their distortion and destruction – all these are areas for further investigation, further places to look in my on-going quest to know myself. In some of them I have made some progress; in others I have only just begun. I wish to do no more here, however, than to indicate that the self cannot be fully understood in abstraction from its concrete context of relatedness to other selves and that one of the fundamental tensions and sources of motivation for my life is just this tension between my radical solitude and being-with-others.

²⁰¹ Husserl, *Ideas*, pp. 8-9, 241.

²⁰² José Ortega y Gasset, *Man and People*, p. 46.

²⁰³ Bertrand Russell, *What I have Lived For*, Ramparts, April, 1970, p. 36.

I am in relation not only to my world and to others within it, but to myself as well. But my relation to myself is peculiar; I both simply am myself and transcend myself. Whenever I perceive myself, whenever I am conscious of myself in the mode “it itself,” I am always more than the self of which I am conscious, that pervasive mass of body, thought and feeling which is constantly present in my experience. I am more than myself for I am that which is conscious of myself, and *that* I, that Self which experiences and acts, cannot in principle be an object for me. I cannot perceive I-who-perceive-and-act.

But I can act on myself. By virtue of being able reflectively to apprehend myself in the mode, “thinking about myself,” which is founded on direct perception of myself, and being able to “see” myself as I am in contrast to what I might be but am not, I can create myself, at least in part. That is, I can decide to start acting in a different way, start doing different things, start comporting myself in a fundamentally (or only slightly) different mode. Correlatively my subjective state and self-sense will change. This is obviously true when I deliberately initiate a habit. My habits are fundamentally me, as we have seen, for they not only influence but largely are my mode of action, and their subjective correlates are a major component of the self-sense. If I start a new habit, I create a different empirical self, a different complex of objects subjectively available to me with the same sense, “me, myself.”

I can exert an influence, have an effect by virtue of my deliberate actions, not only on the empirical self but on the transcendental Self, or, if you prefer, on the way I experience and act as a whole. I can, if I wish, get so drunk that I cannot even stand up; I can ingest drugs of the amphetamine class that increase my energy and activity; I can take drugs of the psychedelic class that alter the way I experience the world and myself. That is, I can augment or inhibit those functions of the self to which no particular experienceable object corresponds. I need not take drugs to do it. By altering my diet I can make myself more or less vigorous and active; by exercising to the point of fatigue I can hinder my basic drive toward action; by meditating in various ways I can alter the way I experience things, my so-called “state of consciousness;” etc.

I am in the peculiar, ultimately mysterious, relation to myself of both being and not being what I am. When I transcend myself in a moment of self-perception, I am not myself which is perceived; and yet I *am* the empirical self which I perceive, and I *am* I-who-perceive-and-act, for I can make a change in either and when I do I know that I have changed. Words fail to catch this peculiar relation of transcendence in immanence which I am; the state of affairs that they are meant to refer to can be grasped in evident “seeing,” but it presents a roadblock to the understanding.

By virtue of this peculiar relation to myself I am free.²⁰⁴ Inanimate things, unreal objectivities, and even animate objects such as plants and animals that are not able (presumably) to be self-conscious are facticities, they simply are what they are and cannot change themselves. But I can change what I am, create myself; I am not limited to being simply what I am at any one moment. (This freedom is by no means absolute. It is limited not only by the laws of nature but by the force of habit as well – no mean force indeed!) And yet it is a fundamental and unalterable characteristic of what I am that I am free. As Sartre’s translator puts it, “The

²⁰⁴ This paragraph freely paraphrases Sartre’s often very obscure discussion in *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 21-45.

facticity of freedom is the fact that freedom is not able not to be free.”²⁰⁵ The self is an ultimate mystery, not simply something unknown, like how many stars are in the Andromeda Galaxy, but something inherently ungraspable in its totality. Not only can I not become conscious in the mode, “I myself,” of all that I am (for I cannot be conscious of I-who-experience-and-act), but I cannot even grasp all of myself in the mode, “thinking about myself,” for I am constantly changing and am always free to influence the direction of that change. How can I be sure of what I shall be in the future? I both am and am not what I am; I am free and yet not free not to be free.

Whatever roadblocks to the understanding that this state of affairs presents, it is clear at least that I am not limited solely to being what I am at any one moment or to what I have been throughout the history of my life. I can change myself, create myself; in short, I have a choice. Because I have a choice the whole realm of ethics has relevance to me. Normative ethics, within the Socratic framework that has motivated this quest for the self, is the discipline whereby I tell myself what I should and should not do in order to be happy and fulfilled. By virtue of the peculiar self-transcendence of the self to which I have at least tried to point, if I have not succeeded in fixing it in words that make much sense, I can take my own advice and create myself according to the principles that I determine, principles which, if followed, will yield happiness.

The determination of such principles is beyond the scope of this paper. Hence, abruptly, this must end. But one final word: At the temple of the Oracle at Delphi it was written, “Know Thyself.” Knowing myself is a task that will occupy me for the rest of my life, and I expect it to be a continually intriguing one. It has already been rewarding to me, both for satisfaction of my curiosity and for finding out how to live well, for I have been able to discover and put into practice various principles of conduct based on my analysis. It is fitting that I do not tell you what they are, for you must find out how to live your life for yourself.

If I have provoked you to turn afresh to yourself and to try once more to find out who you are, then my task has been doubly rewarded.

²⁰⁵ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, translator’s “Key to Special Terminology,” p. 630.

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