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**Consciousness and Embodied Presence  
as Themes for an Ontology**

**Robert Donohue**

**A Thesis**

**in**

**The department**

**of**

**Philosophy**

**Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Consciousness and Embodied Presence as Themes for an Ontology**

**Robert Donohue**

This thesis supports Merleau-Ponty's view that only a revisioning of our ontology can get us beyond those conceptual dichotomies that prevent us from accounting for the presence of phenomenal experience in the world. It takes a phenomenological approach to questions concerning the localization, phenomenality, content and efficacy of consciousness when considered in its primary perceptual relation to the world. In examining the reductive functionalism of Dennett and the naturalistic dualism of Chalmers it argues that the eliminative or epiphenomenalist consequences of their approaches can be avoided when phenomenal experience, rather than being reduced or tied to the functional specificity of neural events, is understood as coinciding with the motile contours of our embodiment. Embodied phenomenality is understood to be constituted not only by conscious perceptual presence but by its merging with the presence of a past in somatic phenomenality. This merging marks to a greater degree the individuality of lived experience. A central supporting theme throughout is the self-reflexive quality of embodiment. This reflexivity is taken in its functional lineaments as the body's sensitivity to its own movements and then in the ontologically more fundamental sense in which Merleau-Ponty explores the inflection through which we experience embodiment in its active and passive modes. This reflexivity supports a view that perceptual experience brings us into contact with the things themselves and that a phenomenal presence to the world has causal efficacy.

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*To Claudine  
with whom I would ride*

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## **Chapter I - Introduction: Towards a Revisioning of Our Ontology**

Consciousness and the accompanying problems of the relation between mind and body, subject and object, have never been absent from the history of thought in the past four hundred years or so of the western tradition. The wider interdisciplinary engagement in these questions, however, is a current issue. The natural sciences and to a large extent the human sciences, which until relatively recently had been content to ignore, sidestep or defer to other disciplines the questions evoked by the self-evident fact of lived experience, now appear much more willing to take that fact seriously. This renewed focus now finds itself in a convergence of many disciplines: philosophy and psychology, biology, neuroscience, computational science, evolutionary science, anthropology, sociology. There is also some cross-fertilization of these disciplines in the western tradition, with thoughts about the nature of consciousness which come out of other traditions.<sup>1</sup>

Some approaches to consciousness take as their guiding principle a determination that the 'fact' of consciousness must have its fit within the already established framework of concepts used to explicate the natural order of things. Other approaches appear ready to allow a more radical conception. While yet faithful to the idea of a natural order, they are prepared to consider that the inclusion of consciousness within that order may necessitate a revision of our conceptualization of 'the natural' and how it is that things connect to and issue forth from each other therein. Finally there are those approaches that reject any possibility of accommodating consciousness to a natural order no matter how that order may be conceived. In these, the rift between subject and object, interiority and exteriority, is taken to be final, and one is left with two (impossibly) independent ontological realms. Respectively, these three alternatives might be broadly characterized as reductive naturalism, non-reductive naturalism and dualism.

Broadly construed, these are likely to be the most frequently encountered strands in the multi-disciplinary debate on consciousness and the mind-body problem.

Of the three, a straightforward dualism is by now probably the least likely to be accepted (or offered) as a probable solution. Despite the dualist contention that the mental and the physical must comprise two mutually exclusive realms, it remains evident from the actuality of our embodied experience that these supposed ontologically distinct kinds must interact. But then, if the dualist were to succeed in establishing how such an interaction takes place, wouldn't it end up being a theory that has more resemblance to a non-reductive naturalism than to the strict dualism it claims to uphold? An account of the interaction between mind and body would in effect see them as elements within a comprehensive causal system—and all that is really required of a naturalistic conceptual framework is that no phenomena appear without cause nor disappear without effect. A sufficiently radical naturalism would admit as fundamental (that is, non-reducible) both physical and non-physical properties with an expanded set of natural laws to govern their interaction. This in effect is the kind of solution proposed by David Chalmers in his recent work, *The Conscious Mind*.

Because a successful dualism would seem to collapse itself into a non-reductive naturalism, I will not be examining substance dualism. What I will be examining in closer detail is one version of reductive naturalism and one version of non-reductive naturalism.

Daniel Dennett's work, *Consciousness Explained*, will be taken as an example of the former approach, and I will attempt to show that this kind of explanation cannot satisfy a concern about qualities of lived experience that are likely to really matter to us. Then, as an example of non-reductive naturalism, I will look at David Chalmers' work, *The Conscious Mind*. Here, the hypothesis (what

Chalmers calls a naturalistic dualism) strives towards a closer approximation of what we are likely to include as essential qualities in our shareable descriptions of lived experience. Yet in a very important respect his is still quite a reductive account. Phenomenality remains as a real, non-reducible property, yet it is epiphenomenal. The 'fact of experience' allegedly makes no causal difference to self or world.

One cannot make any final claim that these offerings of explanation for conscious experience are wrong. It could be the case that much of what we believe to be essential properties of our conscious life is no more than an obscuring construct of words signifying nothing actual. On the other hand, given that these appearances of what is involved in the conscious life are frequently expressed as elements in the articulation of our deepest concerns, it may be of some benefit to regard these felt qualities as reliable pre-reflective clues directing us towards a richer appreciation of what the world holds out to us from among its possibilities. And then, we may not want to give up so much so soon.

For example, how is it that the coalescence of sense we bring to concepts like 'act' or 'agency' or 'volition', grounded in a felt quality of effort in many variant modes of experience, can be discovered as having no correspondence with anything real at all? If experience is the ground for these meanings and experience in this respect is illusory, then are these qualities to be found nowhere in the world? Is the world then really a kind of inert, dead thing—experience explained in terms of what has no experience, life explained in terms of what has no life? Or are these meanings born out of something communicated to us in our engagement with the world, before reflection generates a systematically closed loop of conceptual abstractions. For indeed, at least in theoretic discourse, these abstractions, by their very lack of an always in part enigmatic concreteness, have been thought of as representations and we seem then to have suffered a self-imposed exile from a

contact with the things themselves.

This should in no way be construed as a devaluing of reflection, for it is as integral to human experience as the pre-reflective ground that it tirelessly tries to retrieve and articulate in communicable form. It is only that reflection must just as tirelessly unravel the categories it has devised in order to expose them to contact again with the experiential ground they have originally been intended to express.<sup>2</sup>

If we take a Cartesian or Kantian dichotomy between thought and the things themselves as the starting point, as the original givenness from which reflection must establish its knowledge of the world, we feel compelled by the severity of this juxtaposition to seek absolutizing solutions. When the abstracted concepts of matter and mind, in their mutual exclusivity, foreclose the conceivability of their interaction, we are left with a turn towards some form of deductive idealism or some form of reductive naturalism.

Calvin Schrag describes how their polarized approaches absolutize one aspect of the given at the expense of the other.

"Idealism, after having absolutized interiority and activity, is unable to account for exteriority and passivity. Naturalism, after having absolutized exteriority and passivity, is unable to account for interiority and activity.

[...]

"Deductive idealism is destined to conceal the object; reductive naturalism is destined to conceal the subject. Neither subject nor object is permitted to show itself as it emerges from a more primordial level of experience. The conditions which give rise to objectification and subjectification remain unexplicated. The basic error of both idealism and naturalism is that their peculiar inquiry-standpoint is defined through the use of a bogus dichotomy. What is required is the elucidation of a commerce with the experienced world which is older than subjectivistic and objectivistic categories, which precedes the thematic constitution of both, and which undercuts the dilemma as it is traditionally formulated."<sup>3</sup>

In this post-dualist era of rapid scientific and technological advance it can appear as if finally there is no dilemma requiring resolution. But this is only because since the instantiation of the dichotomy, given its explicit formulation by Descartes, half of the ontological potential thereby divided has become so deeply submerged beneath successes in the one-sided momentum of a naturalistic project. The Cartesian juxtaposition of non-overlapping object and subject realms gave licence for a naturalistic project to pursue knowledge of a conceived pure object-world devoid of intrinsic properties or self-animating principle. As far as the project of a natural science was concerned, one pole of the Cartesian dichotomy could be deleted from any description purporting to be a fact about the real world. In the monistic materialism that arose, 'mind', insofar as it was considered at all, was no longer the equivalent half of a bi-polar ontology, but the tenuous epiphenomenal fringe of certain material processes. And yet, this monistic materialism continues to be heir to the Cartesian legacy—for it is that very dualism which it rejects that first gave to the naturalistic project the peculiarly stillborn world of the pure object.<sup>4</sup>

But what natural science has left aside has remained ever since a problem for philosophy and the arts to grapple with. "By treating mind and world as apposed subjective and objective poles, the Cartesian anxiety oscillates endlessly between the two in search of a ground."<sup>5</sup>

More recently, as the neurophysiological and cognitive sciences have awoken to the challenge of accounting for phenomenal experience, identifying it with neural events or functional processes in the brain, more specific Cartesian carry-overs can be discerned. The self-containedness of mind with respect to the body—that mind can exist without the body—is one feature of Cartesian dualism. Another, is Descartes' assessment of rational thought as the essential activity of mind. These features are still embedded in cognitive approaches that take the computational program as the model for mental processes while viewing these

processes as separable from any particular form of embodiment. Parallel with this, the neurophysiological view localizes and identifies mental processes (and whatever phenomenal states that may or may not accompany these) with particular regions of activity in the brain. The supposed containedness of a consciousness identified with these processes is illustrated in Hillary Putnam's "brain in a vat" thought experiment, which is roughly a materialist analogue of Descartes' "evil demon" fantasy where a disembodied mind could be fooled by a demon into believing that it had a body as well as a whole material world for this body to explore.<sup>6</sup> This kind of notion is also entertained by Dennett when he speculates on the possibility of downloading onto a computational matrix a human consciousness with all its accumulated experiences. He speculates as well that this computationally contained consciousness could acquire new experiences virtually identical in kind with former embodied ones when the science of synthetic stimulation is far enough advanced.<sup>6</sup>

This materialist tendency to view consciousness/mind/brain as self-contained, as the relatively autonomous local centre of operations for abstract representational processes only peripherally connected to the outside world, can be seen as a remnant of the Cartesian split between thinking and doing. What this view overlooks is that this supposed peripheral 'transparent' link between thought and world, this body, is rather very much at the centre of our original bond with the world; an embodied involvement that carries forward and retains the *sense* of our lived experience. Consciousness, in its pre-reflective engagement with the world, has its locus in this embodiment and is *about* this involvement. For consciousness, the sphere of engagement with the world is original as contrasted with its reflective stance towards that engagement. This latter reflection is an abstractive derivation grounded upon prior sensitivities that have the capable body be a presence to itself in the world. Consciousness, in this original grounding, coincides with embodied perceptual experience and is about this experience. It is not at first about a thought

of the world, nor even less is it about neural events. It is about the enactments of this body involved in the concreteness of lived situations. Merleau-Ponty has put it this way: "Consciousness is in the first place not a matter of 'I think that' but of 'I can'."<sup>7</sup>

The naturalistic stance, in abstracting from the fullness of evidence available to lived experience, affects very much the possibility of sustaining an appreciative understanding of our connectedness to others and to the world. The qualities of our lived experience of these no longer appear to have any basis in what is described as the real state of affairs. At the same time, the application of these naturalistic theories through techniques of external intervention operates on the assumption that things taken simply as material complexes are all that need be dealt with.

Yet, within the actuality of lived experience, there is no lack of evidence to support an hypothesis of the world as a field of interactions among entities that have *both* an intrinsic activity and an extrinsic relatedness to each other. And of course, in our everyday involvements with other people, this is already a tacit understanding. Our involvement with the other is not merely *to* a physical object but *with* another whose interiority is, like our own, a horizon opening out from a point of view, a focus for experiences. All the other's modes of bodily expressiveness are involved in our solid assurance of this other as having an intrinsic presence. In a vital sense, that expressiveness unfolding in the back and forth of mutual exchange is the immediate presence of each to the other.

A description that limits itself to an account in physical terms of what is happening in that bodily expressiveness will not fathom the full sense of what we find communicated therein. It is that overflow of sense, that intangible showing, which acquaints us with the other as also present within his or her own openness

to the world.

Our being affected by a sense of 'what it is like' to be the other in his or her situation issues out of that intangible dimension of embodied activity. It is this dimension of meaning that constitutes our connectedness to the intrinsic being of the other. For although the bare aurality, visibility or tactility of that interaction can be described without physical remainder—from its source in the gross movements of a stimulus object right through to the neural firings in one's own brain, that is not for us what this interactivity is about. It is about that surplus of communicated sense which resonates within our own experience of what it is like to be one's own body in like circumstances.

That surplus of sense, resonant in our own experience, wouldn't constitute evidence of an experienced life for the other if, by it, we had no likelihood of anticipating our ongoing interaction with the other within a horizon of shared or communicable experiences. Of course, our anticipations here can be mistaken. But often they are not, and indeed we rely on these anticipations in order to harmonize our lives with the lives of others. And then, it is no different with our anticipations based on an estimation of the objective character of things in their extrinsic relatedness to each other. These anticipations can also be mistaken—for their evidence is *also* drawn from within the horizon of shared experience, limited in respect to available perspectives or particular interests. But here too we find our anticipations often confirmed and we rely on these as well for our ongoing commerce with the world.

Thus, in either stance towards the other—relying upon those elements of experience which communicate to us the intrinsic presence of the other or upon those elements that inform us of our extrinsic relatedness to the other—we are accustomed to many of our anticipations being fulfilled, and this validates a



simultaneous knowing of the other as existing in both these modalities.

Just as we don't say "I believe there *might* be a body here before me" after having walked around it, seen it, touched it, perhaps inhaled its aroma, neither then do we say "I believe there might be something it is like to be this other" after having lived and spoken with, laughed and cried with this other. Our claims to know the other as both subject and object, as interiority and exteriority, as an intrinsic "for-itself" and an extrinsic "in-itself," have for us equal weight in the course of our lived experience. And even the manner in which both these modalities of the other are given to us, communicated to us with the sense of being beyond ourselves while yet and always from *within* the horizon of this own experience, gives us no more reason to doubt the actuality of the other as subjectively present than to doubt the other as objectively there. And if we must doubt, then we must see that either showing of the other is just as susceptible to interrogation.

What we cannot doubt is this own existence. In a sense then, we are again with Descartes. But we needn't find ourselves with only the bare thought of existence thinking itself. For the thought of being has no more weight than the felt heaviness or lightness of being, the pain or the pleasure of being, the hunger or the satisfaction of being.

In the reaches of these existential heights or depths, the thought that might doubt the existence of these qualities of feeling has little power. Thought is overwhelmed or overtaken and the sense of these blessings or afflictions is what has for us the concreteness of an embodiment. The thought of hunger is not itself hungry. But I am hungry. I may reflect upon my hunger but this reflection is not my original acquaintance with it. This lived and felt existence has a givenness that precedes any thought of it.

This hunger or this satisfaction I *feel* is the simple experience of what it is like *to be*; a presumed purely subjective quality. And my thought of this hunger or this satisfaction is the distancing that inflects these feelings, objectifying them. And yet this *objectifying thought*, which has me know myself as a body-object whose state, independent of thought, may be that of lack or sufficiency, has all along been taken as the essence of the subjective act, while this *felt* hunger or satisfaction, which puts me at the very root of what it is like to be this body, has all along been taken as nothing more than the material condition of a body object. (Somewhat thus are the intriguing quandaries in the aftermath of a Cartesian ontology).

There is somehow here an ironic symmetry that might see us beyond the rigid polarization of subject and object, interior and exterior, activity and passivity.

Thought, from inwardness, projecting outward the objects of its reflection, gives us the world and our bodies as objects, taken to be those objects existing independently of the thought that takes them now to be just so. And this body, before and despite the thought that conceives it in its outwardness alone, now in the want of some need perhaps, is felt as the within of this being without, an intensity free-falling further and further into itself . . . now turned back upon itself once more through a desire to be articulated in a telling of itself, projecting for itself from the within of this feeling a distance back to itself, to have this feeling as an object in this thought of itself . . . a thought that now knows this body as its own from within: a thought that gives itself back to its body.

But then, what precedes and what follows? Which is within the other and which is without? And what is it now that we would call 'consciousness' when it appears, in activity and passivity, as somehow the inside-out of itself, back and forth between one and the other? When language turns back to elucidate the concrete experience from which it arises, perhaps it cannot avoid having the 'as-if

quality of metaphor.

Evidentially, both the subjectivist and objectivist stances are addressing themselves to what is communicated in the full range of lived experience, but the terminological frameworks that are the habits of our reflection draw elements within the Gestalt of that experience to one or other terminus of a conceptual polarity. Thus, the objectivist stance draws from the having of experience in its concreteness the evidence for it as being a passive reception of impressions. But the concept of the passive, not containing any element of activity, has this experience appear to be fully determined by a given that is external to it. Conversely, the subjectivist stance draws from concrete experience the evidence of an active constitutive power that determines, by a configuration of meanings, a world for itself. But the concept of activity, not containing in its fundamental sense any element of passivity, has that experience appear to be completely bereft of a given.

A phenomenological reflection must try to draw these conceptually abstracted and diverging fields of evidence back into each other to recover a sense of how they commingle in concrete experience. If, still, this can only be accomplished metaphorically, then it must be a metaphor that strives to reinstate subject and object, mind and matter, in respect to their simultaneous origins. In this simultaneity, neither mode determines the other, but rather each is as one thing weaving through the duration of itself the emergent and retentive phases of its becoming. As if, along this curve it is at once the convexity and concavity of itself, encountering in the contours of its interactions the alternating rhythm of shaping and being shaped, of growing out of and falling back into itself.

An intriguing metaphor is offered by Elizabeth Grosz when, in her book, *Volatile Bodies*, she refers to Lacan's image for the relation between body and mind. He likens this to a Möbius strip. Grosz describes Lacan's notion in this way:

"Bodies and minds are not two distinct substances or two kinds of attributes of a single substance but somewhere in between these two alternatives. The Möbius strip has the advantage of showing the inflection of mind into body and body into mind, the ways in which, through a kind of twisting or inversion, one side becomes the other. This model also provides a way of problematizing and rethinking the relations between the inside and the outside of the subject, its psychical interior and its corporeal exterior, by showing not their fundamental identity or reducibility but the torsion of the one into the other, the passage, vector, or uncontrollable drift of the inside into the outside and the outside into the inside."<sup>8</sup>

If a metaphor of this kind can help to elucidate the structure of lived experience then we might articulate a thought of ourselves and world which is as fully dimensional as what is shown to us therein. We would not need to reduce one phase in the having of experience to the terms of a conceptually opposing phase. The re-integration of consciousness with embodied existence, of activity and passivity, is the manner by which Merleau-Ponty arrives at the notion of the 'body-subject'. He works to clarify how the body cannot be taken as just another object. "We must avoid saying that our body is *in* space, or *in* time. It inhabits space and time."<sup>9</sup> Drawing on Husserl, Merleau-Ponty remarks on the self-reflexivity of the body:

"When I press my two hands together [...] I can identify the hand touched as the same one which will in a moment be touching. In other words, in this bundle of bones and muscles which my right hand presents to my left, I can anticipate for an instant the integument or incarnation of that other right hand, alive and mobile, which I thrust towards things in order to explore them. The body catches itself from the outside engaged in a cognitive process; it tries to touch itself while being touched, and initiates 'a kind of reflection' which is sufficient to distinguish it from objects."<sup>10</sup>

What is suggested here is that we cannot in one and the same moment sense the same hand as touching and being touched. But from one instant to the next, by an inflection in the awareness of being this body, we know it as touching and being touched, active and passive.

"Insofar as it sees or touches the world, my body can therefore be neither

seen nor touched. What prevents it ever being an object, ever being 'completely constituted' is that it is that by which there are objects. It is neither tangible nor visible insofar as it is that which sees and touches. [...] the body is no longer conceived as an object of the world but as our means of communication with it [...]"<sup>11</sup>

The inheritance of this embodiment, granted us as inhabitants of this world, must also be the experiential ground from out of which reflection forms hypotheses concerning the interactivity of self and world. In the multiplicity of its incarnate forms the world communicates or shows itself to us. But it is not perhaps surprising that essential clues for a sense and sensitivity to the fullness of what may be gathered in that communication can be found *only* within the immediacy coincident with our actually being *one* of these bodies in the world. Hans Jonas remarks on the value of this dimension of evidence which resides only within the individuality of lived experience.

"[The] living body is the archetype of the concrete, and being *my* body it is, in its immediacy of inwardness and outwardness in one, the *only* fully given concrete of experience in general. Its actual, concrete fullness teaches us that matter in space, otherwise experienced only from without, may have an inner horizon too and that, therefore, its extended being need not be its whole being. Seen from the only true concreteness furnished to us, both pure "extension" and pure "thought" may well appear to be mere abstraction."<sup>12</sup>

These passages just quoted refer to themes that will figure centrally in the discussions to follow. In chapter II, the reflexivity that is afforded by the body's sensitivity to its own ongoing activities is suggested as being a more fundamental ground for the apparent continuities of conscious experience than would be the cerebrally located narrative fictions offered by Dennett. This 'drawing out' of the proximate correlates of conscious experience from a supposed containment in particular kinds of neural events to the mobile contours of a full embodiment may also have the advantage of allowing a non-reductive appreciation of intentional contents. In what Merleau-Ponty referred to as the primacy of perception, our

embodied awareness is immediately present to that which we encounter at every point upon the surface of this body in its movement. Though derivative modes of conscious activity may certainly be *representational*, our primary embodied *presence* has a qualitative character that precedes and informs subsequent abstractive representational tasks, such as language.

In chapter III, the theme of reflexivity is shifted through that inflection that constitutes for the lived body the paradox of its being its own other; of being the object of its own act and the subject of its own determinations. In the second chapter the emphasis is upon the body's *receptivity* to its own movements or acts; this receptivity being understood then as the 'attractor' around which further activity is articulated in the manner of a continuity. In the third chapter the emphasis is inflected through the 'inner passage' of the act (a metaphor borrowed here from Dorothy Emmet, whose efforts to elucidate the notion of efficacious cause will be important to the ideas presented in that chapter). Here, what has been acquired through an embodied receptivity and retained in conscious recollection or somatic habitudes, thus constituting the axis along which our habitual modes of activity are oriented, can become subject to the reflexive turning back of that selfsame activity upon its own antecedent formations in an effort of reform or re-orientation. This effort is engaged because the presence that is phenomenality has it matter to us that certain qualities of our experience be changed—and thus we consciously direct ourselves towards or away from the occasions when those qualities in experience may again be felt.

In perceptual experience, phenomenality and intentional 'content' coalesce in the topography of an individually lived experience. These contents are not reducible in the way that Chalmers describes because, in the original mode of perception, they do not coincide with representations cloistered in the confines of the brain. Rather, at the sensitive surface of the body, these 'contents' are the

things themselves as we encounter them, come into contact with and are present to them. The significance of these encounters for each individual cannot be appreciated without taking into account the affective phenomenality that shapes a sense of and animates an activity amidst the things themselves within this horizon of lived experience.

These ideas are presented in the third chapter in order to suggest an alternative to Chalmers' view that the content of experience and the phenomenal quality of experience can be handled separately. In that view, the meanings of the former are taken to be reducible to functional elements in physiological processes, and of the latter, though unreduced, to be epiphenomenal. In a phenomenologically oriented understanding, the content of experience is no more reducible than the phenomenality that is an inseparable correlative presence to it. The 'content' of perceptual experience or 'the things themselves' and the phenomenality inherent to embodied presence meet on the same ground whose expanse is a world horizon. In these encounters each affects the other, for they are not ontologically different kinds.

The above theme is taken up in the fourth and concluding chapter. There, I present some of Merleau-Ponty's reflections on our reflexive embodiment in its experienced capacity to touch and be touched, to see and be seen. From these reflections we gather a sense of how this inhabited presence to the world reveals the manner in which the world and everything within are akin to us in our presence.

Throughout this thesis, a guiding intuition is that spoken of in the passage quoted from Jonas. In many respects we might think of the perspectival quality of embodied experience as a limitation. We must forever extend our explorations to further acquaint ourselves with that side or aspect of things that we haven't yet

brought into our experience. And the things themselves, after we *have* paid careful attention to them, have a way of being very much changed by the time we get back to them or they get back to us. Indeed, an objectively conceived science is our closest approach to getting beyond the limitations of perspective in order to anticipate that which hasn't yet been experienced.

But in another respect, this perspectival quality of experience grants us, in the manner that Jonas relates, "the *only* fully given concrete of experience in general." The value of this fully concrete experience, its original givenness, is that it is always available as the source to which we must return. It serves as the constantly accessible corrective for more comprehensive conceptualizations that have begun to miss the point so far as a matching of the idea with what it is like to experience the world is concerned. So for example, something that matches the notion of "pure extension" or "pure thought" is pretty hard to come across in lived experience—and so we might suspect that they are indeed abstractions, grasping certain elements of the concrete while leaving others unaccounted for.

Objectivist and subjectivist systems have attempted to comprehend all of the world including one's own thought or one's own body in terms of a reduction to the concept of the one or the other. But either way, we still find ourselves within the experienced horizon of *this* embodied consciousness, in a world that continually departs from these opposing idealizations of it.

How could pure thought, as a sovereign constitutive power, be surprised by a pain or a loss or a need it cannot avoid? How could pure consciousness be so sharply altered or terminated by something as mundane as the impact of a heavy object—an object that was supposed to be not more than the ideality of an intending consciousness, yet an ideality to which that consciousness finally succumbs? From these imponderables of a purely active, constitutive subjectivity, the way leads out



through a conception of an intersubjectively constituted world. There, in a concordance of constituted idealities, a solidity, a permanence of 'objectivities' begin to coalesce. As intersubjectively constituted they are the realizations of creative acts, but for any particular being of consciousness these idealities present themselves as a given: realized objects already there to be experienced in a consciousness that discovers them for the first time. And further still, in wondering about the passing away of conscious being in a world that still remains and the succession of newborn conscious awakenings to a world already there, the intersubjective constitution of an enduring givenness begins to be conceived in what approaches a cosmological scale of durations. There endure givens that no individual nor known collectivity of conscious acts could change at will: the constancy of gravity, the spin of the earth, and indeed, this species-specific body with certain given capacities but not others. In all these a history of constitutive being begins to be delineated, and we can see the progressive movement out from the confines of a solipsistic pure subjectivity towards ever closer approximations of an experienced life-world.

On the other hand, the objective-naturalistic standpoint, lodged in the conception of the world-as-matter, whose fundamental property is not more than that of spatially extended objects with particular velocities, has only made tentative attempts to account for the discrepancies between the world as theoretically conceived and the world as experienced. The rest has been an explanatory/reductive project. Without doubt this has been due to the fact that, when applied in the field of certain endeavours, this conceptual framework has had tremendously powerful explanatory/predictive effect. And this is so because from the beginnings of experimental science as an ongoing project, assiduous effort has been applied to the careful observation of reliably recurrent features discovered within or coaxed into being within a consistently verifiable turning back to what can be experienced. Yet these observations have always been at the service of filling

out the abstract notion of an ideally determinable object-world. Elements of experience that don't conform to this ideal determinability have just as consistently been left out of naturalistic accounts of what is supposed to be really happening in the world.

The greatest puzzler of all for a naturalistic philosophy is the conscious presence that can concern itself with tasks, observe, find value and significance in that which it encounters, feel pain and pleasure—none of which are properties supportable as they stand in a naturalistic ontology. Chalmers' work is a good example of an effort towards revision of a materialist ontology within the naturalistic framework. In admitting the non-reducible character of phenomenal presence and its qualities, it moves towards a theoretical conception of the world that is more closely aligned with the world as experienced. Though it is in important respects quite reductive, it appears at least to be inclined in a promising direction.

We see then that from out of these initially opposed world-concepts there is a movement of convergence in search of a common ground. That ground is the same as that from which all conceptions of the world initially arise: our pre-reflectively lived engagement *with* the world. In this perceptually experienced life-world resides the full range of content and quality which would need to be acknowledged in an ontology that might draw back together what has been abstractively separated or eliminated in previous ontologies. It might be an ontology that admits the irregular as well as the regular, the determinable and predictable as well as the indeterminable and unpredictable, the invisible yet experienced act as well as visible hence observable behaviour. It might be an ontology that could appreciate the manner in which an embodied presence is, indivisibly, all that which Descartes saw as two essentially different kinds of thing in uneasy alliance with each other. There might be from this an appreciation that the world that gives rise to an embodied presence *to itself* is a world that is

fundamentally akin to this embodied presence.

It should be noted that the effort to elucidate the pre-reflective experiential ground doesn't mean that we should discount the evidence gathered through technological augmentations of our embodied sensitivity to occurrences in the world. Telescopes, microscopes, multi-resonance imagers do indeed constitute techniques of observation derived from the abstractive conception of an object-world. But this doesn't mean that they show us things that aren't there; only that they don't reveal all that is there. These techniques and what they do reveal are part of what the world affords us as realizable in bringing to visibility visibles never before seen. As we extend our sensibilities by these means, they too become part of our life-world, part of that to which we are a pre-reflective presence; and our experience of all this has a phenomenality our concepts attempt to describe.

There is, however, a manner in which these instrumentalities can end up telling us less rather than more. If they incline us to disregard those elements of experience equally accessible to us but inaccessible to those instrumental means, then they end up obscuring as much as they reveal. But to discount these further affordances in our ability to experience the world would be exactly the wrong thing to do. Merleau-Ponty writes:

"Our purpose is not to oppose to the facts objective science co-ordinates a group of facts that 'escape' it—whether one calls them "psychism" or "subjective facts" or "internal facts"—but to show that the being-object and the being-subject conceived by opposition to it do not form the alternative, that the world is beyond or beneath this antinomy, that the failure of 'objective' psychology is—conjointly with the failure of the 'objectivist' physics—to be understood not as a victory of the 'interior' over the 'exterior' and of the 'mental' over the 'material', but as a call for the revision of our ontology, for the re-examination of the notions of 'subject' and 'object'."<sup>13</sup>

A revision of our ontology cannot be viewed as a definitive, completable task. It proceeds in the manner of an ongoing task—the way in which Husserl spoke of the phenomenological project. If an ontology of the concrete would be an understanding of the kind of being that we are as kin to the world that bears us forth, an implicit understanding grounded in all that can be gathered in a pre-reflective apprehension of the life-world, then it is a gathering that must benefit by the contributive understandings of many—for the understanding itself is drawn from our ongoing engagements with others within the world horizon.

The effort to make explicit this lived understanding must always in some manner fix by the discontinuities, juxtapositions, inclusiveness or exclusiveness inherent to word and concept that which would not otherwise be fixed or parted. Yet there are surely themes that bear being spoken, not in definitive summation, but by continually renewed approach. The role of such an understanding would be appreciative: descriptive rather than explanatory. Yet it would have a bearing upon what we take to be an explanation's range of applicability. In as much as an understanding of the kind of being that we are is gathered in as full a sense as can be brought forth from lived experience, then we may appreciate what it is that an explanation fails to account for or eliminates through reduction.

To make explicit the phenomenality of our unmediated contact with the world through the medium of concepts must always be purposefully tentative: an attempt to carry reflection forward along the boundaries of conceivability, receptive to the manner in which the boundedness of concepts is supported by the contours that shape the foldings and unfoldings of the things themselves; to trace these foldings and unfoldings through moments of inflection when, in the thought of this, one concept must be carried into its opposite. This, in some manner of being spoken, is revealed by this inflection in our own becoming, which gives to our embodied situated presence an activity and passivity which cannot be parted.

On the purposeful, attentive, yet tentative nature of revisioning our ontology, Merleau-Ponty writes:

"[Reflection] must question the world, it must enter into the forest of references that our interrogation arouses in it, it must make it say, finally, what in its silence *it means to say*. . . . We know neither what exactly is this order and this concordance of the world to which we thus entrust ourselves, nor therefore what the enterprise will result in, nor even if it is really possible. But the choice is between it and a dogmatism of reflection concerning which we know only too well where it goes, since with it philosophy concludes the moment it begins and, for this reason, does not make us comprehend our own obscurity."<sup>14</sup>

## **Chapter II - From the Conscious Brain to Consciousness Embodied**

### **1. The body as surface between internal and external pandemoniums.**

To lead into this commentary on Dennett's approach to consciousness, I will begin with a description of the body's situatedness which doesn't really assume more than would this view of the body as seen from a naturalistic standpoint. By this I hope to illustrate that even from *within* this standpoint certain features of embodied motility point towards features of phenomenal experience that do not require the kind of reduction that Dennett applies to them.

Stepping back from a consideration of the standpoint of the experiencing subject, I will approach this hypothetical subject (held for now in suspension) from the outside to observe and consider the organism, as do the physiological sciences, from the standpoint of an observation of physical processes. This, in its fundamental moment, is the perspective from which Daniel Dennett undertakes his inquiries.

To begin, there is the external environment of the organism—those things that stand to it as the given conditions, the sources of stimuli which will impinge upon it. Considering the human organism in particular within the heterogeneous field of everyday living, it will often be observed that when humans come together, there is a lot of stimulus exchange going on; through gesture, sound (though not properly called "sounds" in objective terms), tactile or olfactory means. Then there is the fabricated environment, initially put in place by humans, though subsequently serving to put humans in their place. Stimuli having their source in the structured maze of the technological institutional environment are quite instrumental in establishing and sustaining patterns of human movement. Finally, the natural environment as climate and terrain, inhabited by the diversity of plant and animal

species—and the firmament, which by the rhythm of diurnal, lunar and seasonal cycles produce nested hierarchies of stimuli that very much affect patterns of activity in living organisms as well as changes in the inorganic setting that organisms inhabit.

All these concrete forms of the given converge upon any particular human body—this body replete with its receptive surfaces and articulated limbs permitting sensitivity to and movement amidst all that surrounds and meets it. Thus moving about, this body can situate itself favourably within these surroundings to which it has a sensitivity. This body can set itself up for the kinds of interactions with surrounding others or things which have value for this body as a living whole, either for itself as individual or as a supporting/supported member in a community. Some perceived need is attended to and often appeased by the oriented interactions that this body engages in.

The body, as a mobile receptive surface, can utilize, accompany or divert itself from that with which it comes into contact. In its most fundamental contours, there is an attraction that prolongs the stay of this body here or an aversion that precipitates its movement elsewhere.

From the standpoint of regarding the organism as displaying a surface exposed to the panoply of events in its *surrounding* sphere, the body is a singular focal integrity determined by the surrounding and impinging conditions of its environment to respond in ways appropriate to its continuance as a body, living and whole.

Yet in regard to questions concerned with how such responses or interactions arise and are executed, this story about the surroundings convergent upon the body is only the half of it, for the body is not only surrounded by the given that is exterior to it. The body, which at its surface is engaged in these interactions, encompasses

its own interior, also given. All that meets the body from the surrounding world in some manner traverses this surface.

There is this image then of the organism as presenting a surface that faces the surrounding world. But unlike, say, a virtually homogeneous block of wood (whose surface may be equally exposed to all the same influences as the organism), this body has a composed surface whose various structures and textures absorb differentially the various kinds of material flux which impinge upon it. And upon absorption, this flux, refracted and transformed by the traverse of this surface, undergoes a translation into electrical or biochemical impulses. These travel then along afferent or ingoing pathways, coalescing and reverberating within the central arena dedicated to *these* kinds of electrochemical translations of the flux, diverging then along efferent pathways, pushing outward to effect a motion in the organism as a whole.

To flesh out this image of that which is internal to the body, it is probably important to note that the brain/central nervous system isn't alone in transforming elements of the external flux arriving at the body's surface. The respiratory and digestive systems also constitute different yet primary modes in the transformation of elements from the environment into resources for the organism's continuance. Their modes of transformation are no less crucial in sustaining the body in motion. All of these systems are interdependent, mutually supportive, and none can continue to function without the others. Neither can one system diverge from its habitual functioning without affecting the modes or 'moods' of the others.

Dennett is concerned with investigating what can be discovered about consciousness through a knowledge of events and processes in a part of one such system of the body's interior. This is the central arena of the nervous system, the brain, where the flow of input translations from the surface eventually coalesces,



cavorts and subsequently, generates an output.

Traditionally, it had been hoped that the idea of such a thing as a singular, conscious agent at home, so to speak, in the body might be corroborated by the discovery in the brain of a central unit, a 'prime focus' that would stand to the rest of the system as the 'observer' of all that the system conveyed as input. This observation point or central awareness (in some manner describable as such) would then be positioned in the system in such a way as to organize and edit the input and control the output.

However, no such central processing unit has ever been located in the brain. Yet even if it were found, nothing more would be explained about how *this* tiny material homunculus is any more likely to be an observer, the subject of experiences or initiator of intentions, than would be the whole living organism in which it is but an interdependent part.

Instead, Dennett offers what may be a much more likely description of how it is with the ensemble of neural events and processes. A comic yet concise depiction of this state of affairs is shown in *Consciousness Explained* by a figure labelled the "neo-laffer" curve.<sup>1</sup> In this depiction we have a clearly delineated input and output. But what happens in between is another matter altogether. There is no apex nor focus nor 'finish line' where all the afferent impulses converge for the synoptic benefit of an 'interior observer', now experiencing in a sharply tuned conscious field a simple succession of incoming data. There is no interior centre where a central knower or meaner gets 'the whole picture', assesses it in view of appropriate stratagems in order to direct again to the surface just this stream of efferent intendings.

Because nothing fundamentally new would in any case be explained by the

hypothesis of an interior homunculus, let us grant at least an initial plausibility to something like the 'pandemonium' of interior processings which Dennett describes as a 'chaotic tournament' of competing nodes of excitation.<sup>2</sup> And yet, the resultant of this pandemonium is to effect a directed intentional pulse back towards the body's surface where it culminates in, say, a sounding out, a gesture, a movement towards or away from some object in the surroundings wherein that body is situated.

The question here is not to establish at the outset how consciousness, as an accompaniment to higher-order cerebral processes, finesses the abstractions for a theoretical projection upon the world. Rather, it is to fathom how these latter modes of consciousness are rooted in the pre-reflective lived situation of a body in the world, and understand that meaning for a being in the world does not commence suddenly at the onset of abstract thought processes.

At times, this body is able to seclude itself from any of the exigencies to which situatedness is prone, allowing for itself in a still space the possibility of a reflection abstracted from concrete immediacy—a projection back upon an already lived experience of the world. By the time that reflective space is enabled, this body, up till now experienced by being this desire or revulsion, this pain or joy, is already in possession of a richly articulated texture of meanings. These meanings are concerns or valuations which cannot but infuse the reflective moment with the very motives for its occurrence and its interests.

That is why, in what follows, I will try to show that Dennett's focus on what may be described as the fictive or narrative locutions of consciousness are not its founding moments, are not the originating activities of a self born into the world. The attempt to ground or place an apparent unity of conscious experience within these bounds is indeed to invite the suspicion that this unity is after all illusory—for narratives often are little more than virtual productions, idealizations.

I will want to show, following such people as Merleau-Ponty and Straus, that the unity of experience is more than a free-floating abstraction, that rather, it is founded in an embodiment from which experience is inseparable and in which motility, perception and emotion are the founding moments. That is why, in the effort to place consciousness, I will always be returning to such seemingly physical yet primordially experienced phenomena of living bodies moving towards and away from objects in the world.

Returning to an image evoked by Dennett's characterization, we see something like this continually occurring: surrounding flows of the world pandemonium meeting and traversing the body's refractive threshold. These flows are translated into pulses along the sensorium's inflowing pathways, coalescing and reverberating in an interior pandemonium, sorting, clustering, resolving themselves without consciousness into nothing more significant than a shifting matrix of waxing and waning potential differences that rise and subside like an unruly surf. Only some of these crests will rise again to break upon the body's shore where their momentum will be expended in the form of an accomplished act.

But this act *is* something quite definite. Its contours are embedded in the trajectory of a unified organic whole—a unity that is composed or completed at the surface of the body. Poised at the fulcrum of an external and internal pandemonium, this surface does not fly apart, for there at the surface, it all comes together in the focus of a simple or indeed a complex motion whose unison and significance are given evidence by the sustained integrity of a body that lives through the accomplishment of the act.

Now *this* act itself enters the body's field of possible receptivities. Now *these* receptions of the kinesthetic body's reflexive relation to itself sink back beneath the surface, translated into pulses that are again taken up in the melee of opportunistic

neural events. And now these are no longer incidental bits of an incoming random flux. They are excitational contours, which in their direct descent from acts accomplished at the surface, become an axis around which an otherwise chaotic neural flux begins to gravitate.

Dennett does refer to this kind of feedback loop while describing the characteristics of pandemonium neural processing engaged in communicative intentions—how, for example, an already spoken utterance influences the field of possible utterances that will succeed it. He notes first that such intentions arise as effects of these processes rather than as their cause. Subsequently though, these effects "emerge as a product, and once they emerge, they are available as standards against which to measure *further* implementation of the intentions."<sup>3</sup> Yet while Dennett recognizes this kind of reflexivity, he does not appear to accord it the weight it may indeed have in grounding the integrity of ongoing conscious experience.

The import of the body's reflexive sensitivity to its own acts is that it shifts the locus of intentionality, of 'aboutness' or significance, from the atomistic events of the brain to the ongoing acts of an embodied whole. And indeed, the lived sense of our experience is that it happens 'out here' through all the initiatives and accommodations that this visible, touchable body surface engages in while facing the world surrounding it.

The accomplished act does not in any lived sense 'matter' to the brain—it matters to a living being for which the brain is but an instrumental part. It cannot be in any self-contained sense that the brain can be said to "care about" or even to "know" its status in relation to its world. And so, it isn't as if the brain, within the compass of its specific modes of processing a particularly 'monochromatic' kind of input, can constitute for itself a "caring-about" anything while the rest of the

organism remains but a transparent appendage to that neural concern. The allusion to the brain's activity as being concerned or being 'about' something is an allusion that could just as well be applied to the activity of the heart, lungs, or stomach. As Erwin Straus puts it in the title of Part III of *The Primary World of the Senses*, "Man thinks, not the brain."

Again, in relation to this theme of the significance of the whole versus the functioning of parts, Drew Leder summarizes Straus in this way:

"Straus attacks the physiological psychologists who would attempt to explain animal movement [...] as a summation of causal reflex arcs. He points out that it is first and foremost the entire animal that moves, not its motor units. And it moves because it is a being in relation to an experienced world, seeking desired goals, drawn to or repelled from a situation. I move my right arm to pick up an object of interest. The act must be understood in relation to its meaning, not as an amalgam of discrete muscle firings. [Nor, by extension, as an amalgam of discrete neural firings]. This is as true of unplanned locomotion as it is of consciously chosen acts; unlike the falling rock, the dog who jumps away from an ongoing car still shows an existential grasp of the situation and an ability to respond to meanings."<sup>4</sup>

Studied then in relative isolation, the neural processes of the brain provide no windows to the dimension of intentionality which finds our experience as being about the world. The arena of neural processes is not co-incident with the space nor the temporal durations in which there is an existential grasp of lived situations. Like the muscle firings that do not contain a knowledge of what these responses are for or about, or like the retinal image that does not include a perception of this image as 'something at a distance', neither does the cluster of neural firings in itself encompass a meaning or experience of anything about the world.

Richard Zaner draws our attention to this quote from Straus:

"The muscle, the motorium, cannot move by itself, for no world and no open space is at its disposal. Just as little is the sensorium capable of moving

itself, for, taken by itself, it lacks a motion apparatus. Neither motorium nor sensorium can move itself, but I *can* move myself. Spontaneous motion can be propounded of a living being as a whole, not of any single part of it. . . . In fact, the individual sense does not perceive, the experiencing person does so by means of one or several of his senses."<sup>5</sup>

If an appropriate weight is given to what experience means by being the experience of the *whole* organism in its motility, then we see that the body's receptive capacity to attend not only to the surrounding world in general but to its own doings in particular sets up a chord of 'attracting' impulses that affect the outcome of subsequent clusterings of otherwise random neural events, modulating their relative strength, persistence, recurrence.

The particular quality of the body's accomplished act, its singularity as a completed contour shaped by the body as a persistent unity, the irrevocable character of the act such that it is *just this* done which cannot be undone, and the succession and pattern of such acts, become an 'attractor' around which the pandemonium of interior parallel processings coalesce.

It isn't that particular kinds of experience can occur unaccompanied by certain structures of neural events; rather, it is that neural events alone cannot account for the having of and the lived sense or quality of experience. Neural events and processes could be likened to the back end of a loop, one of an interdependent complex of systemic switches within the body which complete or break the circuit of a flux continuously flowing from the surrounding to the interior of the body and out again. But the pivot around which this flux is sustained is the living entity, the subject of experiences.

If, following Dennett, we attend to the neurophysiological conditions, taking these to be *the* material source of actions, we find no evidence therein for a 'centre of operations'. Nothing in the internal architecture corresponds to the hypothesis

of a central meaner or intender. Consciousness cannot have its role at this centre because the hardware has no centre.

Therefore, Dennett characterizes consciousness as "a serial virtual machine" implemented on the parallel hardware of the brain.<sup>6</sup> He suspects that "spoken language (and) writing play a major role in the development and elaboration of the virtual machines most of us run most of the time in our brains."<sup>7</sup> In particular, speaking to oneself is considered as the most efficient stimulus for keeping the conscious stream 'on track'.

But perhaps this spoken stream is not the ideal candidate for even a virtual unity of the experiencing subject. Particularly since the raw material for this auto-stimulation is those 'warring demons' or random content-fixations which Dennett refers to as memes. These memes, thought of as entrained patterns of neural firings, correspond to conceptual units. They are largely implicated in the pandemonium that is just as likely to throw quite contrary sense configurations side by side in the 'serially worded' conscious stream.

By contrast, the resonant impulses attendant upon the body's receptivity to its own acts may be an attractor that is much more powerful as a unifier of the internal pandemonium. This reflexivity is more primordial than language in a genetic sense—but also in terms of its pervasiveness and persistence as a content (or indeed, an initiator) of neural events. [If we contrast the integrity and continuities of experience in the waking state with the fragmentary and morphic qualities of dreamt experience when the body is in a dormant state, we get a sense of the importance of the body's motility and perceptual activity in generating the unitary quality of lived experience.]

Perhaps we could call the axial effect of this attractor within the brain's parallel

architecture the catalyst for a merely 'virtual' unity of the intentional subject. But if we look at the immediate source of this attractor—an actively engaged embodiment—there is nothing virtual at all about the unity of this body. Rather, it is something quite actual.

## **2. An abode for unreduced qualities of experience.**

If the body as a site of *physical* behaviours were the only evidence, then the existence of a conscious subject experiencing this body and its behaviours as its own could not be inferred from these third-person facts. But in fact, there is another kind of evidence and that is the first-person lived experience of one's body in its activity as being *one's* own.

For that matter, it would seem that it could not be other than that there *is* this 'additional' first-person evidence—for if there were not, there would be no observer who, in the act of observing, could gather the supposed grounding evidence of third-person observable facts.

This circumstance is of primary significance in initiating the project of a truly radical philosophical reflection, such as that initiated by Husserl. With Husserl, the presuppositions of the natural attitude are held in suspension so that these objectivizing modes of experience can be understood as having their foundation in the more primordial and heterogeneous structures of experience as it is inhabited.<sup>8</sup>

We do find ourselves in possession of this first-person evidence for the fact of consciousness. We also find ourselves with some measure of a capacity to articulate and describe (and feel an urgency to express or communicate) "how it is"



to *be* this inhabiting of experience. And when we do, we often find ourselves in accord with others about the felt quality of each our own lived experience. This experience exhibits a continuity and has the quality of a plenum—which is to say that it is not commonly felt to be interspersed with unaccountable holes or gaps. Furthermore, we experience the motions of our bodies and the trajectory of our thoughts as events that we can actively intend and align in accord with given circumstances and chosen projects. Also, our sensations appear to have an intrinsic quality or 'feel' to them. All of these qualities contribute to a sense that this experiencing belongs uniquely to this own persisting self—an identity across changes. This is not illusory, but an actual accomplishment: our effort appears to make a difference to states of affairs in the world.

Apart from circumstances of excessive physical and psychological oppression or distress, we might all recognize these qualities as applicable to the general character of our own experience. Such descriptions are not the incongruous reports of rare individuals, but are important elements in a shareable sense of what it is like to be. Dennett is willing to admit that these are commonly shared beliefs, but along with others who feel that the naïve beliefs of a folk psychology are susceptible to revision, he is ready to abandon all of the above felt qualities insofar as current models of neural structures and processes do not support them.

Of course, while in the grip of an illusion, it will always seem that nothing could be more real. And this is a particularly tricky set of illusions (if such they be) because it isn't just about some range of phenomena within experience, but about how it seems to us to be experiencing anything at all. In any case, one cannot reject a neurophysiological or a cognitivist model simply because it runs counter to commonly held notions.

Still, even illusions have their source—if they do not originate in the brain, then

perhaps they are elements of a social construct which enter the brain in the form of an invasion of self-styling memes. But isn't a construct something more than an illusion? To be caught in an illusion is to be left quite vulnerable. As illusory, a belief barely makes contact with things as they are. A construct, on the other hand, may be valued as an accomplishment, for as such, it allows a certain measure of success to further purposes that use the construct as a guiding matrix.

By way of analogy, the idea of a building can be a construct that works even though it begins in the individual or social imagination. It works, it endures because it has a certain fit with the world as given. In its particulars, the idea is not eternal or changeless and all of its instantiations are 'mortal'. The idea undergoes transformations and its instances need repair, renovation and finally crumble. But to the extent that the construct as idea endures and its instantiations successfully recur, it is because in certain essential respects they have their fit within a larger context: the world. Some of the construct's qualities will have to be in accord with the givens of gravity, the availability and malleability of materials, the physical/psychological needs of its inhabitants and so on.

Insofar as the felt qualities of conscious experience and the being of a self are attributable to a social or intersubjective construction, and to the extent that this construction is widely shared, workable, enduring, so too must *it* have some fit with our biological being and the context of this embodiment.

Cross-culturally, we may well recognize significant variation. Given that one of the felt qualities of experience is that it *is* the accomplishment of a self-directing, initiating agent, one might well expect constructive, creative variation in the modes of inhabiting a self.

Thus, in a culture where dream life and waking perceptions are closely

interwoven, the texture of continuity in experience is likely to be quite different than it would be in a culture where (presumably?) perceptions in the wakeful state override those of the dream state. And yet, such a variation does not leave the members of the former culture constantly confounded by the disappearance of persons (including oneself). Undergirding whatever experiential transformations that may occur, there is yet an essential core of identity and continuity that allows a person to be recognized as one and the same, with his or her own history of transformations from cradle to grave. It is one and the same embodiment that is sustained throughout these transformations.

These essential structures of experience which are cross-culturally enduring must be described and, if possible, explained rather than explained away. For these structures must, by their endurance, coincide with the concrete embodiment that this experience finds itself inhabiting within the larger context of a world.

If these core expressible modes of lived experience can be accommodated in some further understanding of how the brain works, then one might rest content with a closely contained understanding of where and how consciousness abides. If, however, these core modalities of lived experience cannot be accounted for within the narrower sphere of cerebral processes, then before these modalities are relegated to the status of illusion (and we trade our birthright for a copyright of maintenance modeled after the machine with its infinitely replaceable parts) it might be of some concern to broaden our search for the abode of lived experience.

As noted above, that abode is not finally containable even within the frame of an individual embodiment. To the extent that the structure of experience is shaped intersubjectively, it abides, is coincident with, the life of that community. To the extent that the structure of experience is shaped in the flux of an encompassing world, it abides, is coincident with, the life of this world, founding itself altogether

in a seamless communicativity.

Yet one can, in an individually lived experience, discern an originating impulse, a means to be in one's own way unique, and in the application of that unique manner of being, discover the world to be changed in an emergent specificity that answers to the act one has conceived. We may take this to be an experiential ground for the *description* of at least a proximate locus for conscious experience and the lived-through unconscious that weds consciousness to the habitual modes of its embodiment.

As to an *explanation* of this, that is another story. If there is any sense in speaking of an originating moment or 'activity' in the *nature* of things (with consciousness as an awakedness to itself for the possible realization of that event), then perhaps an explanation of *this* may forever elude us. For this motion, as self-generating, would have 'nothing behind it'. What can this mean? Or is it the very root of meaning—a simple undivided presence whose mode of bringing the merely possible into being is to have its own simple presence be meant or intended as something definite amidst the concurrence and concordance of that which has already been given.

If such a self-generating potential can be given any credence, it is nevertheless not a credence that will find any support in the conceptions of matter and a natural order as these are now construed. I will be returning to these questions subsequently—but meanwhile, I must return to Dennett's work in order to look at his reasons for viewing the shared appreciation of lived experience as being not more than a virtual reality.

As you can judge from my above speculations, it is almost impossible to avoid attempts to explicate even that which must appear as the confounding of all

possible explanation. So I cannot fault Dennett more than myself for the attempt to "explain consciousness." Dennett is certainly more qualified than I to comment on what the brain is likely or unlikely to include among its powers. So I hope I may be pardoned in this writing for what must appear at times to approach a kind of ranting.

However, I will remain concerned to ask if explanation as such must entail an explaining away of all vestiges of lived experience. When such a wonder as the living body with all its complex and emergent capacities is so close at hand, we must ask if that embodiment can give expression to those dimensions of experience that the brain cannot be found to accommodate. As crucial to consciousness as the brain is, it is also true that the brain cannot survive the loss of its body.

### **3. Heterophenomenology and phenomenology.**

As already noted, if we look at the organism in its physical behaviour, leaving aside all reference to first-person experiential accounts and relying exclusively on objective/third-person confirmable evidence, then there is nothing about these behaviours that would allow us to infer that they are caused by a conscious agent's activity. Nor even, for that matter, that these behaviours might be accompanied by phenomenal experience, non-efficacious, but there as epiphenomenon. Attending strictly to third-person observables, we would have to assume much less and remain faithful to the practical aesthetic of ontologic parsimony. Third-person observable behaviours could be the result of nothing other than preceding occurrences also third-person observable. In effect, we would suppose nothing more than that the behaving organism is a very sophisticated stimulus-response mechanism.

If this third-person inquiry is taken a step further in an attempt to understand the organism as something more than a "black box," then these investigations will begin to deal with the internal mechanisms productive of external behaviours—in particular, the structure and functioning of the brain. Yet here again, insofar as this investigation went forward in strict adherence to third-person observables, it can get no further than to correlate neurophysiological events with the body's physical or motor behaviours. If there is still a concern to account for phenomenal experience or the active intending of a subject, then as regards these qualities, any objectively observable internal mechanism is *still* a "black box"—as John Searle points out in the following passage:

"[...]most mainstream cognitive scientists simply repeated the worst mistake of the behaviorists: they insisted on studying only objectively observable phenomena, thus ignoring the essential features of the mind. Therefore, when they opened up the big black box, they found only a lot of little black boxes inside."<sup>9</sup>

So immediately, a third-person approach strictly adhered to is a dead end if one is concerned to account for the phenomenal qualities of consciousness—to account not only for physical behaviours, but for the awareness that accompanies these, and the meanings that weave together all the modes of this awareness. These qualities only turn up in attending to one's own experience or by attending to other people's first-person reports of their own experiences.

Therefore, Dennett takes the plunge by developing his *heterophenomenological* method. Yet he remains wary. Thus, he remarks:

"This simple step is freighted with implications; we move by it from one world of mere physical sounds into another: the world of words and meanings, syntax and semantics. This step yields a radical reconstrual of the data [...]"<sup>10</sup>

The heterophenomenological method uses the first-person account as a tool

to establish correlations between elements of phenomenal experience and neurophysiological structures/events. As a tool it is quite efficacious because, for the first time, it begins to delineate functional roles for a whole range of neurophysiological processes that would otherwise remain anonymous—since these might show no correlation with externally visible behaviours as, for example, memory or fantasy images, emotional states and so on.

But it is important to keep in mind that by this heterophenomenological method, the first-person account only has the status of a tool (that is, it can be set aside when it doesn't match the screw you're trying to turn). What is reported is not taken at face value as that which is to be confirmed/affirmed by way of evolving an understanding coincident with the contours of the experience as reported. Rather, the first-person account is considered valid only insofar as it reveals the kind of features that can be correlated with third-person observable structures and processes in the brain. The criteria for what will count as evidence for an explanation of what consciousness is *really* like remains bound to the realm of physical processes and events conceived of as occurring in a purely objective space.

Dennett claims that his heterophenomenology takes a neutral stance with "regard to the debates about subjective versus objective approaches to phenomenology, and about the physical or non-physical reality of phenomenological items."<sup>11</sup> Even if this neutrality is sincerely proposed, the statement of its terms would already constitute a discursive bias, implying that the "subjective versus objective" realms are mutually exclusive.

But in any case, Dennett's neutrality is more like a "tactic."<sup>12</sup> He offers the story of the 'Feenomanists' and their belief in the deity 'Feenoman'. The scientist studying these people's beliefs offers them a neutrality or even perhaps an

openness to be persuaded by their beliefs—but it is really only a ploy meant to elicit their trust in order that they may give an unreserved account of what they really believe. Dennett puts it this way:

"[...] our experimenter, the heterophenomenologist, lets the subject's text *constitute* that subject's heterophenomenological world, a world determined by fiat by the text (as interpreted) and indeterminate beyond. This permits the heterophenomenologist to postpone the knotty problems about what the relation might be between that fictional world and the real world. This permits theorists to agree in detail about just what a subject's heterophenomenological world *is* while offering entirely different accounts of how heterophenomenological worlds map onto events in the brain (or the soul, for that matter). The subject's heterophenomenological world will be a stable, intersubjectively confirmable theoretical posit, having the same metaphysical status as, say, Sherlock Holmes's London or the world according to Garp."<sup>13</sup>

And further on:

"Having extracted such a heterophenomenology, theorists can then turn to the question of what might explain the *existence* of this heterophenomenology in all its details. The heterophenomenology exists—just as uncontroversially as novels and other fictions exist. People undoubtedly do believe they have mental images, pains, perceptual experiences, and all the rest, and *these* facts—the facts about what people believe, and report when they express their beliefs—are phenomena any scientific theory of the mind must account for. We organize our data regarding these phenomena into theorist's fictions, "intentional objects" in heterophenomenological worlds. Then the question of whether items thus portrayed exist as real objects, events and states in the brain—or in the soul, for that matter—is an empirical matter to investigate. If suitable real candidates are uncovered, we can identify them as the long-sought referents of the subject's terms; if not, we will have to explain why it seems to subjects that these items exist."<sup>14</sup>

The heterophenomenologist doesn't take qualities of what it is like to inhabit an experiencing of the world as the original ground; a starting point for investigation *and* the field to which inquiry must constantly return. Rather, this is set apart at the outset as a fiction, set in juxtaposition to a supposed neutral stance aligned with a more fundamental 'real' state of affairs. The heterophenomenologist's distancing



from others and even his or her *own* experience is meant to be the taking up of a neutral stance—or, as Dennett says:

"That deviation from normal interpersonal relations is the price that must be paid for the neutrality a science of consciousness demands."<sup>15</sup>

But the point is that it is neutral only with respect to investigations whose method and conceptual underpinnings are already within a prior idealization of nature as pure extension, each element of which is an inert, passive in-itself. An idealization, a *View from Nowhere* (Thomas Nagel), a view conceived as being from the outside of everything and, as such, a view that cannot actually be lived or experienced—though the task that this ideal sets up grows out of lived experience.

As a way of knowing, this idealization has demonstrated great value. It has become a method by which the habits of nature can be abstracted from nature's spontaneities, the recurrent species of things abstracted from that which has these things be one of a kind. By disclosing these inertial tendencies in nature we gather how it is that not just *any* belief about the unfoldings of nature is tenable. That by attending to the habitual conditions of nature, to what in phenomenal experience has already been given again and again, we see that spontaneity and the singular act are indeed constrained, entrained in certain ways by the forms of givenness we find ourselves inhabiting.

The idea of a science is to know how the world can be *counted on* to work. By attending to strands and complexes of phenomena that stand in phenomenal experience as recurrently given, by systematizing/mathematizing these phenomenal types into patterns of relations between abstracted event kinds, there arises the possibility of prediction and control. These goals have come to the fore as *the* criteria for establishing the point at which subjective beliefs have been distilled into objective knowledge.

Yet it must be acknowledged that prediction and control are not the only purposes of 'knowing', nor are they the *only* guide to our familiarity with the world. These are not the only values that accompany the having of experience. Thus Andrew Fuller writes:

"This priority of 'the things themselves' (Husserl) over the will to predict and control is a basic presupposition of phenomenology [...] to investigate meaning on its own lifeworld ground."<sup>16</sup>

We do often wonder at and value the non-recurrent, the singular, the coincidental. We wonder at their appearance and are often intensely saddened by the impossibility of their return. We are moved towards the possibility of *understanding* these things in a way that can make explanation and control of them beside the point. These phenomena also have meaning for us—and indeed, because they are not accommodated within an order of phenomena that succeed each other predictably, we are led by this to a sense that there are within these things experienced intrinsic qualities. There are communicated to us in the phenomenal presence to the things themselves qualities that have no precedent but arise for no other reason than that this is itself and no other in no other time nor place. We sense that in this singularity there abides the possibility of initiating an act which emerges of and for itself—that an unforeseeable becoming has entered in the midst of the already given with a power to affect the habitual succession in a contextually specific, never fully generalizable way—a power that has observable consequences because it is real.

These are some of the qualities of a phenomenally gathered sense for being in the world that we risk losing if, for purposes of prediction and control, we are too ready to reduce the prior givenness of the phenomenal field to the terms of an objectivizing construct that arises *within* this field, is attentive to only certain aspects of its richness, and which is taken then as itself the prior ground from which the 'seemingness' of phenomena somehow arises. To quote Fuller again: "What is built

by abstraction from the lifeworld cannot be turned into the ultimate origin of one and the same lifeworld."<sup>17</sup>

Even if we don't altogether lose this phenomenal richness (for we still live as a presence to all that the phenomena offer), we end up with a lived sense of belonging to and participating in the unfolding of a world in a way that cannot be integrated with what we come to think of as "things as they *really* are"—that cannot be reconciled with many of the instrumentalities that model of reality provides.

For, by contrast, to the extent that our sense of the world is gleaned from an attentiveness to phenomenal types that follow a *predictable* order of succession, we are led to a belief that what happens with any given thing is a consequence only of the motions of other things upon it. Insofar as a thing *does* conform in a foreseeable way to these prior external conditions, nothing of an inherent activity is required to explain the behaviour of things themselves.

All that matters in observation applied to the purposes of prediction and control is to match those phenomena that will stand in external relation to each other as cause and effect. In particular, the project to control the outcome of events in the world will be concerned to uncover the means of predictably changing the state of one thing by applying to it a set of reproducible conditions external to it. Without that reproducibility and the external projection of conditions upon that which we wish to change in a particular way, there is no control. Furthermore, there is neither predictability nor control if these same conditions applied at anytime by anyone cannot be observed to produce the same effect. Hence, the third-person observable criterion for what will constitute an objective knowledge of how the world 'really' is—for that is how the world responds to us in the way we want it to.

And yet, for any application of this objective knowledge to the things

themselves, we are rarely surprised to observe that the resultant state of affairs is interwoven with a host of accompanying phenomena that have no known systematic relation to our expectations. These are the 'side effects', the 'incidental accompaniments', the 'coincidental occurrences'. It is part of the objectivist story that any and all of these must in principle be links in some pre-determinable chain of cause and effect—thus in their turn controllable should we be so concerned to apply ourselves to controlling them. But is this any less an article of faith than a belief in the irreducibility of the qualities of lived experience?

For it is also possible that these incidental outcomes hold some part of a clue to how things in themselves answer our acts in a manner that is specific to *this* situation—a situation as much for itself as it is for us. This situation, when viewed objectively, is one and the same for both—and yet, for each, it can be understood as having quite a different sense—so that this situation, in respect to its outcome, awaits a mutual resolution between *participants* before it is decided in its completion as an event just now occurring.

This outcome will certainly have within its contours of a foreseeable nature. Not *just* anything will happen. The situation is not absolutely different for each, for if it were, the encounter would not be unfolding in a world encompassing both. But at the same time, part of what unfolds will be a consequence of what in this particular convergence is *meant* by each; of how in this situation a mutual understanding or a refusal of reciprocal understanding infuses the 'objectifiable' conditions with a possibility of being decided one way or another—a possibility that could have no entry into the real if meanings, if the lived sense we have of things in this *experiencing* of them didn't matter.

To take either story alone as a sufficient understanding of how it is with ourselves in the world, (i.e., that either all occurrences can be reckoned in advance

in accordance with objectively determinate conditions or that any set of conditions can be neutralized by the initiatives of an intentional subject) would be an account having the form of an idealization, a construct abstracting certain phenomena from out of the content of lived experience while leaving others aside as irrelevant or non-informative.

From an experiential standpoint, there are no pure objects or pure subjects, but rather participants. As participants, we are engaged in the ongoing effort to gather a more extended sense of the compossible meanings of lived experience—of how all that unfolds in one's own and in shared experience, as either a given or a contribution, might be woven together in a fabric of mutually supportive meanings free of exclusions. As Husserl stressed, this is never a *completable* task—only that as an ongoing task it must involve a recognition that the 'objective' scheme of things no less than the 'subjective' constitution of a sense for these things is rooted in the prior ground of a pre-reflectively experienced life-world.

This experience is not containable nor discoverable in an objective nor a subjective interior space of neural or mental representations—a containment that would make *all* contact with the world a mediated one. Rather, this experience is lived in immediate contact with the things themselves, each an embodied unity of activity involved in establishing accommodations that constantly evolve the enduring habits of being together in the world while yet affording each to be in its own manner a becoming in accord with, but not finally limited by, the already given.

Phenomenology sees its task as uncovering or bringing to explicitness the invariant structures of this lived experience—before it is taken up, in a concern with more exclusive engagements, by idealizing constructs that project these more particular modes of being in the world. Wolfgang Köhler, who founded a gestalt theory of perception, expressed this by saying that "phenomenology is the field in

which all concepts find their final justification."<sup>18</sup> By contrast, heterophenomenology would be the maintenance of priority for an exclusively objective mode of final justification for all concepts or meaning.

And yet ultimately, the phenomenological field of life-world experience is not an alien territory for natural science. No less than with any other endeavour concerned with understanding, the physical sciences have as their final recourse an attentiveness to the things themselves.

It is in the happenstance of anomalous phenomena that observation and contemplation branch out to seek clues through a more open attentiveness to the things themselves in a manner less constrained by preconceived abstractions of what is there to be found. Though it is not perhaps an explicit taking up of the phenomenological project, it is nevertheless a method partaking in the same spirit. One's engagement with the anomalous phenomenon, set loose from the attempt to force its fit in an already established conceptual frame, becomes a correlative involvement between that which presents itself as given to experience and this active receptivity attempting to gather a sense of how this phenomenon can be *meant along with* all the rest of that which presents itself in experience. It wonders at how other constellations of life-world meanings might bring to light a confirmation of this occurrence as compossible with others in a richer conception of how it is with the world. The crucial element here is that the phenomena must be allowed to speak for themselves.

Meanings are not *just* "in the head." When we take them to be so we suspect that our interpretation of phenomena must first be purged of all sense configurations that refer to the having of *this* experience by me, here and now in order to render a fact about how things really are. But it is precisely in this own experience here and now that the things themselves will communicate what of

themselves they bring to *this* encounter. Whatever this communication may unfold, it is not restricted to any one model for interpretation embedded in the *habits* of *this* experiencing. The encounter, to be as fully dimensioned as possible a gathering of what may be communicated therein must, for this own experiencing, be an easing back and branching out from habits of conceptual application or set stances in the approach to things.

In this manner, the "distancing" (which in an objectivist construal is conceived as the relinquishing of subject-bound meanings) is not the attempt at some 'meta-experience'. It is not to confabulate a jump beyond the horizon of lived experience in order to view the world complete in itself as if from its outside.

Rather, the distancing is taken *within* the horizon of this lived experience by that freedom to move away from an habitual perspective upon phenomena from the standpoint of particular containment structures for the having of experience. We venture forth, *still* within the horizon of this experiencing—for it cannot be otherwise—and we discover that we also inhabit this wider ground for meaning. This horizon surrounds us in all directions—an horizon that is open to ongoing explorations. And from any arc of meant activity along the non-limiting circumference of this horizon another perspective upon the things themselves is gathered.

It dawns that this 'horizon' of appreciation for the compossible meanings of phenomenal experience is not just an analogical device for juxtaposing a meant world to a real one. The horizon is not just somehow the flicker of meanings locked within a non-meaning complex of neural firings. Nor is it the solipsistic construction of a pure subjectivity for whom the reality of any world at all (let alone brains) is thrown into question. These of course remain as possible construals—and to the extent that a further sense for experience is obscured by them, these construals

may impoverish the meaningfulness of a life whose world is thus greatly diminished.

Rather, this horizon of meant activity can now be understood as coincident with the world horizon in which, as embodied, we do indeed move and explore. Only in this coincidence can we leave behind the notion that meaning is solely a subjective after-effect, projected from an irremediably interior, private space and superimposed upon the in-itself of things. Rather, meanings arise, are shared or contested, are corroborated or invalidated through those interactions that carry forward our immediate involvement with the things themselves. The gathering of meanings is one and the same with the embodied acts that have us circle around the interesting other, receptive to this other by all the modes in which a having of experience is possible, allowing this other presence to be not only a forced response to our incessant impingements, but to be also a showing of itself, offered in the space afforded by our own stillness, awaiting, listening. With this, the things themselves may speak and contribute a further sense to any or all of the formations of meaning that we have already gathered from the full breadth of our life-world encounters.

In either an aggressive, controlling stance or an overly reticent or defensive stance towards the other, the possibility for a corroborative, correlative evolution of the world as meant among its participants becomes atrophied. Then indeed it will appear that meaning is only an imposition or a rigid structure to retreat within. It isn't that meaning or the aboutness of the world for us cannot be an excluding, interiorizing, deteriorating domain—only that it does not have to be thus. For these modes in the narrowing of experience are not coextensive with the open horizon of the world as inhabited.

In taking up a heterophenomenological stance we must limit to a very great extent the fullness of what might be communicated through our immediate contact



with this co-inhabited world. The breadth of life-world meaning these encounters may touch upon is siphoned off and reinterpreted—not now as the fruit of our presence to the things themselves—but as projected fictions 'somehow' phenomenally felt, though generated by purely physical, internal states. In themselves these internal states divulge no sense of being a meaningful communication given rise to in the mutuality of an encounter with the other. In themselves these physical states are construed as being reducible to nothing more, in real terms, than electrochemical resultants pushed out at the terminus of conduits 'awarelessly' channelling discrete impulses of meaningless incoming stimuli.

The world as meant is pushed into the tiniest corner of the world as real—and still it is not clear how this pure matter, moved only by causes that affect it from outside of itself, *matters* to itself. Apart from any difference it could make (for in any case, this material state is taken to be fully determined in a causally closed system of external physical relations) how is it that in all the world, just *this* particular kind and complexity of material state in the brain is "concerned" within itself to be *about* something that is not itself at all. We might just as well surmise that any material state is accompanied by this phenomenally felt within-ness representing the world and itself to itself—for no amount of material complexity finally adds up to the emergence of this kind of accompaniment. Ultimately, a science of objective space does not find itself in need of accounting for phenomenality and its attendant meanings as these stand in experience, for it takes its closed system of causal explanation to refer to a world whose fundamental nature has no echo of these qualities. Thus Dennett says: "But of course there has to be some "leaving out"—otherwise we wouldn't have begun to explain. Leaving out is not a feature of failed explanations, but of successful explanations."<sup>19</sup> In this context of explanation it also happens that the absence of a need to account for an unreduced understanding of these qualities coincides with the impossibility of explaining them as such.

So the experienced sense of things and of oneself as experiencing "fall out the bottom" of certain material processes and, so far as their unreduced sense is concerned, they keep on falling with no ground in the objectively construed world upon which to land.

A description of the physical states of the world contains no reference to colour, scent or sound. There is nothing in matter's complex structure that will be describable as the structure of its attractiveness, its threateningness or in any other respect to its value for itself or for the other. There is no process describable as now a painful one, now a pleasurable one, now in despair, now hopeful. What is phenomenally felt as the urge, purpose, choice and effort of our actions is taken to be an appearance with no entry into the world of real causes—but then, for what and for whom is this appearance?

The brain, as a complex of physical states and processes, as part of the world of matter, is also not a harbour for these kinds of phenomenality. And so, the heterophenomenological stance takes it that the appearances of phenomenality in no way entails that there are in fact intrinsic experiential qualities or 'qualia'. If there were, then I suppose we would not be speaking of 'appearances' but of our presence to the things themselves—where the feeling of what it is like to be having this experience of the other just is what arises for us now in the presence of that other.

But the physical brain has no room in its objective space for the occurrence of such a real embodied presence. That presence will be reduced to the functional relation of certain neural events to each other—where each such state somehow has a propositional content, an intentional state that has it be 'about' something other than it is in a strictly material sense.

Can this 'aboutness' after all be an intrinsic property of the neural event itself? Apparently not. But then it must be the extrinsic relatedness of many such events to each other that constitutes their 'aboutness'. But *for whom is* this an 'aboutness' if not for the whole embodiment of which these neural events are a part? At what other level of occurrence could this concern for aboutness coincide with the experienced content of that aboutness?

But now, at *this* level of embodied occurrence, it cannot be *just* neural events that add up to an experience that is for the embodied whole. Rather, every part of this body and the integrity of all these parts together in a unified activity are what constitute an involvement in this experience. At this level of occurrence the experience of what this body's activity is about in relation to the world it inhabits is ready to be taken up by a phenomenological description. At the level of this embodiment an account of intentional activity is no longer beset with the problematics of a theory of representation—of how one state of affairs can stand for some other state of affairs while not really being anything other than itself, while not resembling in any way the things it is supposed to be about. There is no longer the irremediable separation of consciousness from the things which it is a consciousness of. What this experience is about is precisely what is happening for this embodied consciousness in the presence of the things themselves. This *is* what it is like to be involved with the other in this situation and, as now being lived, this is what is important for us to understand as being either well or poorly meant.

But Dennett is locked in on the brain, to discover there an explanation for everything that consciousness is about. He is quite right in saying that there is no real phenomenology applicable to neural events. But it is the aim of this chapter to show that he is quite wrong to conclude from this that there is therefore nothing for a real phenomenology to be about. Dennett writes:

"[...] any account of pain that *left in* the awfulness would be circular [...] Similarly, a proper account of laughter *must* leave out the presumed intrinsic hilarity, the zest, the funniness, because their presence would merely postpone the attempt to answer the question. [...] We have to move beyond pure phenomenology if we are to explain any of these denizens of the phenomenological garden. [...] Finding a materialistic account that does justice to all these phenomena will not be easy. We have made some progress though [...] we have begun to break the spell, to dissipate the "magic" in the phenomenological garden."<sup>20</sup>

Later on in the book, Dennett imagines a conversation between himself and a rather timid anti-reductionist named Otto:

O: It seems to me that you've denied the existence of the most indubitably real phenomena there are: the real seemings that even Descartes in his *Meditations* couldn't doubt.

D: In a sense, you're right; that's what I'm denying exist. . . . There is no such phenomenon as really seeming—over and above the phenomenon of judging in one way or another that something is the case. . . .

O: But what about the *actual* phenomenology?

D: There is no such thing. . . . [The phenomenological text] isn't really about anything. . . . There seems to be phenomenology. That's a fact that the heterophenomenologist enthusiastically concedes. But it does *not* follow from this undeniable, universally attested fact that *there really is* phenomenology. This is the crux.

O: Are you denying that consciousness is a plenum?

D: Yes indeed. That's part of what I'm denying. Consciousness is gappy and sparse, and doesn't contain half of what people think is there.

O: But there's another problem. . . . You say it is only *as if* there were a Central Meaner, *as if* there were a single Author, *as if* there were a place where it all comes together! . . . I feel *as if* my pocket were just picked.

D: Well don't say I didn't warn you. You can't expect consciousness to be *just* the way you wanted it. Besides, what are you really giving up?

O: Only my soul.<sup>21</sup>

In an earlier paper, written in 1979 and entitled: "On the Absence of Phenomenology," Dennett writes:

"I am left defending the view that such judgements [i.e., judgements about the presumed phenomena] *exhaust* our immediate consciousness, that our individual stream of consciousness consists of nothing but such

propositional episodes, or better: that such streams of consciousness, composed exclusively of such propositional episodes, are the reality that inspires the variety of misdescriptions that pass for theories of consciousness, both home grown and academic [...]. My view, put bluntly, is that there is no phenomenological manifold in any such relation to our reports. There are the public reports we issue, and then there are the episodes of our propositional awareness, our judgements, and then there is—so far as introspection is concerned—darkness.<sup>22</sup>

I concur with Chalmers (from whom I pirated his use of this quote) when he remarks that Dennett's introspection must be very different than his own. And he goes on: "I find sensations, experiences of pain and emotion, and all sorts of other accoutrements that, although *accompanied* by judgements, are not *only* judgements—unless one *redefines* the notion of judgement or of "episodes of our propositional awareness," to include such experiences."<sup>23</sup>

Dennett believes that in the heterophenomenological step from physical facts to words and meanings, he is stepping from one world into another (see above; p. 38). But this is so only in the most provisional sense. If he really had entered the world of meanings then his concern would be with the world as it is meant—in which case he would become an actual phenomenologist or at least allow that there is something for actual phenomenologists to be concerned about. But as it turns out, he is not concerned *per se* with the world as it is meant. In establishing a causal account of how it is that consciousness seems to have the properties it does have for us, he is more concerned that this account should square with the descriptive categories of an objective space—a space where meaning, as a quality in the having of experience, has no fundamental lodging.

If we feel compelled to restrict our understanding to the constraints imposed by a physicalist conception of what constitutes the fundamental properties of things in the natural world, then we cannot avoid the kinds of reduction of the meant world that Dennett and many others propose.

Yet, what the reduction ends up calling a fiction, corresponding to nothing real, is indeed an intersubjectively corroborated body of affirmations about the nature of experience in a world of colour, sound and scent, whose qualitative variety touches us directly. The felt quality of such experience is not at all incidental to what we make of the projects and accomplishments of living. This sense is rather quite central to how we take ourselves and our world to be.

These unreduced dimensions of experience cannot be claimed as constitutive of the view from "nowhere-in-particular" nor the view from everywhere nor for that matter the view for all possible embodiments of experience. Rather, the reductions we are concerned to avoid relate to those qualities of experience which we live because of the kind of embodiment that we are.

It is at the scale of this familiarity that we inhabit our actions, their rhythm and tempo, their reach and significance. In a fundamental sense, this familiarity within embodied experience is what really matters to us. Whatever descriptions or explanations we evolve for other scales of process and event, whether internal or external, these ultimately refer back to what this will mean in terms of an ongoing experience lived as this embodiment in its daily encounters. It will refer back to what we are enabled to or disabled from accomplishing as embodied.

Thus, we look for an understanding of this experience which will credit it as disclosing our fundamental connection to the world. It isn't that simply by inhabiting this experience, I can never be in error as to its significance. Rather, it is to discover a way of speaking among ourselves about the manner in which our lived experience is rooted in the world prior to the inherited entrainment or reflective constitution of more specific or exclusive formations in the act of meaning. Of how this rootedness of experience in the world is ground for the possibility of discovering significance in a manner that is open to a wealth of compossible descriptions, all

initiated *within* this experiencing. Of how, prior to the conceptual bifurcation of knowing *subject* isolated from the world or known *object* isolated from experience, the body of the world is coursing through us in a situated awareness of itself as this embodiment. We look for a metaphor that will reacquaint us with the manner of being that this is—neither purely passive matter nor purely active spirit, but the concurrence of what can be ascribed to both these categories for being in a reflection upon itself.

The trouble with Dennett's explanation of consciousness, and of those others carried forward within like terms, is twofold. First, by viewing conscious experience as arising within the confines of the brain, we are led to all the problematics of accounting for how the felt qualities and meant significances pertaining to experience can be encompassed within events that are so unlike the occurrences that our experiences are about. Thus, in theories of representation which attempt to account for this, there is an initial separation of the workings of consciousness from what it purports to be about—beginning at the very root of any organism's relation to the world.

Second, holding to a materialist ontology, one must inevitably try to piece together an explanation of all that occurs in the world using only half of the ontological potential that a Cartesian conception, with tremendous consequence, had split into two mutually exclusive realms. From the time of that conceptual revolution until now, an objective physical science has been trying to work out the idea of a world composed of purely passive matter. This ideal of a dislocated objectivity (i.e., an objectivity that omits accounting for its own "perspectivity") has been pursued through consistent attempts to delete from observation, description and explanation any reference to experienced qualities and significances that could disclose an original activity locally participating in and non-locally co-evolving with an animate world.

In this chapter I have focussed primarily on the first of these stumbling blocks. In examining Dennett's theory I have tried to indicate how an alternative conception of consciousness as embodied holds more hope for an understanding of lived experience as an intimate contact with the world than do those theories that localize consciousness in the brain.

In the next chapter I will focus more on the second stumbling block, by way of a discussion of David Chalmers' hypotheses advanced in *The Conscious Mind*. There it may be seen that although Chalmers is dedicated to understanding consciousness as an irreducibly non-physical, fundamental property in the world, he still finds no way to avoid relegating it to the status of an epiphenomenal occurrence having no causal efficacy. Chalmers still cleaves to one half of a Cartesian legacy which stipulates that the natural world is a causally closed physical system. Chalmers has added a non-physical element to the world but he retains the former constraint on causality.

Under this constraint, consciousness is only ever parallel to but never infiltrates nor initiates the functionally relevant cognitive states and behaviours that it is a consciousness of. Consciousness in effect is seen as having no functional role but is only a bare phenomenal presence to the physically autonomous processes it arises from.

I will try to show that the phenomenality of lived experience and the functional significances disclosed within this experience cannot be so readily divorced from each other. This will involve a recognition that the causal efficacy of consciousness as lived activity seems inconceivable only because we are still struggling to overcome the notion that there really is such a thing as a purely physical object, movable (by who knows what) but in itself unmoving. Our consciously lived embodiment suggests that there is at least one kind of thing that is not so inert.



And by this body's arising from and communicative contact with the world's body, it may be gathered that neither can the world be so cautiously construed.

The final chapter will take up Merleau-Ponty's metaphor for the kind of thing the world might be—and we too as participants within it. It isn't really a question of conceiving never before thought of things. Rather, it is to find a way to fit back together qualities that we have thought so unlike that they must remain forever separate from each other. We sense that this is possible because all along, as experienced, these conceptually distinct qualities of the world have been lived inseparably.

## Chapter III - Efficacy and the Phenomenality of Embodied Presence

### 1. The reductions of naturalistic dualism.

The most important difference between Chalmers and Dennett—what sets their approaches apart as, in certain respects, radically different—is the resolve on Chalmers' part to take consciousness seriously. That is to say, he is not willing to redefine consciousness in order to eliminate or reduce those of its experienced properties that are most difficult to explain. Thus he directs our attention specifically to what is apparently the most intractable property of mind. He isolates *that* property and conceives it to be that alone which characterizes consciousness. Chalmers' intention in this is to focus our attention on the problem that really needs to be solved. But it will also turn out that this identification of consciousness simply with its most puzzling aspect, its experienced phenomenality, is fraught with almost as many reductive implications as Dennett's theory. Further, as with Dennett, Chalmers takes consciousness to be associated locally with the brain. Thus, for Chalmers as well, the containment of an experienced world within the orbit of neural events must remain particularly puzzling.

In his introduction Chalmers sets up the task, directing us to what still needs to be explained.

"We have good reason to believe that consciousness arises from physical systems such as brains, but we have little idea how it arises, or why it exists at all. How could a physical system such as a brain also be an *experience*? Why should there be *something it is like* to be such a system? Present-day scientific theories hardly touch the really difficult questions about consciousness. [...] I have assumed that consciousness exists and that to redefine the problem as that of explaining how certain cognitive or behavioral functions are performed is unacceptable. This is what I mean by taking consciousness seriously.

Some may say that consciousness is an "illusion," but I have little idea what this could even mean. [...] I find myself absorbed in an orange sensation, and *something* is going on. There is something that needs explaining, even after we have explained the processes of discrimination and action: there is the experience."<sup>1</sup>

Although Chalmers is prepared to work out a non-reductive explanation of phenomenal experience, we find him already suggesting that all kinds of things that are going on as contents for conscious experience are explainable without taking this experience into account. So for example, the discriminative processes involved in perception or the intentional states that carry forward the significance of behaviours can be looked at separately as functional processes operating under constraints of physical causation. Then, in addition, we will still need to account for the experience of these processes, which is, as it were, "left over" after these processes have been explained.

This manner of approach to the problem must already assume much about the kind of thing that a brain or a body or matter in general is: the kind of thing that can "do" all that we are conscious of doing but in such a way that this consciousness does not need to be figured into any causal explanation of such doings.

In the passages that follow, Chalmers says more about this methodological bifurcation of the mind-body problem. He will draw a distinction between two aspects of mind: the psychological and the phenomenal. By "psychological," Chalmers is referring to what are more commonly called cognitive states or processes.

"The division of mental properties into phenomenological and psychological properties has the effect of dividing the mind-body problem into two: an easy part and a hard part. The psychological aspects of mind pose many technical problems for cognitive science and a number of interesting puzzles for philosophical analysis, but they pose no deep metaphysical enigmas. The question "How could a physical system be the sort of thing that could

*learn, of that could remember?"* does not have the same bite as the corresponding question about sensations, or about consciousness in general. [...] Learning and memory are functional properties, characterized by causal roles. [...] This is a question for the sciences of physical systems. One simply needs to tell a story about the organization of the physical system that allows it to react to environmental stimulation and produce behavior in the appropriate sorts of ways. [...]

Just as most of the apparent metaphysical mysteries surrounding biology were disposed of long ago, it is fair to say that the mind-body problem for psychological properties is for all intents and purposes dissolved. [...] The phenomenal aspects of mind are a different matter. Here the mind-body problem is as baffling as ever. [...] The progress in the understanding of the mind has almost entirely centered in the explanation of behavior. [...] What remains is the question of why and how these psychological properties are accompanied by phenomenal properties: why all the stimulation and reaction associated with pain is accompanied by the *experience* of pain, for instance. Following Jackendoff (1987), we can call this residue the *mind-mind problem*. Current physical explanations take us as far as the psychological mind. What remains ill understood is the link between the psychological mind and the phenomenal mind."<sup>2</sup>

Can we leave it that phenomenal experience is simply a residual phenomenon? Or for that matter, can the animativity and directedness of living forms be fully comprehended simply in terms of material causation? If we want to claim that cognitive processes and their concomitant behaviours are fully comprehensible in terms of material events, then the conscious accompaniment will indeed appear to be functionally irrelevant. In this case, the *link* between the psychological mind and the phenomenal mind will have a peculiar one-wayness to it. If not for the physical organization, the phenomenal mind wouldn't be. In this way the phenomenal depends on the physical even though, for Chalmers at least, it cannot be characterized as physical. But the physical will in no way depend on the phenomenal for any of its workings.

In the passages quoted above, Chalmers has noted empirical grounds for believing that the problem of mind can best be approached by this methodological

division. But this isn't the central argument he will use to support his view that with mind we must consider two fundamentally different kinds of property. Chalmers' central support, using arguments for logical supervenience or non-supervenience, is that it is entirely conceivable (i.e., logically possible) that all cognitive and behavioural functions could occur *without* any accompanying phenomenal experience. Once this logical conceivability is accepted it becomes clear that none of the causal accounts of cognitive processes has really said anything at all about how or why they *are* accompanied by experience. Thus logically, consciousness is non-supervenient on the physical. There is simply no call to reductively describe or explain consciousness as an outcome in terms of physical events because once we have explained those events in those terms, we still have no reason for supposing one way or the other that conscious events are accompanying them.

The supervenience argument is primarily a thought experiment about possible worlds. The reference is not limited to the actual world where contingent natural laws have already fixed the concordance of things in a way that may not however be a logically necessary state of affairs for any conceivable world. For consciousness to be logically supervenient on the physical—and thus, reducible to a more fundamental physical state of affairs—it must be logically inconceivable that a world with a microphysical state of affairs identical to our own could be without exactly the same structure, distribution and quality of conscious events at the macro level.<sup>3</sup>

But Chalmers will urge that we can conceive of a world physically indiscernible from our own where there is absolutely nothing like an experience of what it is like to be anything at all anywhere at all. It is presumed that all cognitive functional states and behavioural states of the organisms in that world are identical to those of their counterparts in this world, but they have no experience of the felt quality of being in such states. To their own selves they are completely absent. Nothing is

"meant" in that world. Everything just happens. Chalmers proposes that all such cognitive processes and behaviours are conceivable in the absence of any felt presence to or concern about them.

"[...] we will always be able to understand processing without invoking consciousness. If consciousness is not logically supervenient, we should not expect to have to find room for consciousness in a system's organization: consciousness is quite distinct from the processing properties of the system."<sup>4</sup>

This distinctiveness, ensured by its non-reducibility to physical states of a system, will make of consciousness a non-physical property.

Dennett and other reductive or eliminative functionalists or physicalists are of course operating under the assumption that the real world is fully describable and causally explicable in terms of physical objects and events. For them there is no alternative but to reductively explain experienced phenomenal qualities in terms of physical quantities and processes.

This is where Chalmers parts company with Dennett. He will take the felt quality of experience seriously; an undeniably existent qualitative presence of mind to the world and as existent, deserving of an account that will take it as it stands. But Chalmers, like Dennett and like almost any number of modern minds, accepts that there can be and is such a thing as an unalloyed physical substance. As conceived and defined and lawfully ordered, this stuff cannot feel what it is like to be itself in the way we can when we are receptively or actively conscious. Therefore, Chalmers' proposal is that consciousness is something quite distinct; a non-physical property. In this sense it is understood to be a fundamental property and its relation to the physical would be accountable in an as yet to be characterized set of psychophysical laws—these laws themselves being as fundamental as physical laws.

"Fundamental features cannot be explained in terms of more basic features, and fundamental laws cannot be explained in terms of more basic laws; they must simply be taken as primitive. [...] To bring consciousness within the scope of a fundamental theory, we need to introduce *new* fundamental properties and laws. [...]

Here the fundamental laws will be *psychophysical* laws, specifying how phenomenal (or protophenomenal) properties depend on physical properties. These laws will not interfere with physical laws; physical laws already form a closed system. Instead, they will be *supervenience laws*, telling us how experience arises from physical processes. [...]

Given the basic physical and psychophysical laws, and given the distribution of the fundamental properties, we can expect that all the facts about the world will follow. [...]

To capture the spirit of the view I advocate, I call it *naturalistic dualism*. It is naturalistic because it posits that everything is a consequence of a network of basic properties and laws, and because it is compatible with all the results of contemporary science. [...] All that has happened is that our picture of nature has expanded. Sometimes "naturalism" is taken to be synonymous with "materialism," but it seems to me that a commitment to a naturalistic understanding of the world can survive the failure of materialism. [...]

Experience is not a fundamental property that physicists need to posit in their theory of the external world; physics forms a closed, consistent theory even without experience."<sup>5</sup>

And further on:

"Nothing about the dualist view I advocate requires us to take the physical sciences at anything other than their word. The causal closure of the physical is preserved; physics, chemistry, neuroscience, and cognitive science can proceed as usual."<sup>6</sup>

Here, the physical remains an autonomous domain. Nothing that happens in the world is thought to require for its causal explanation any account of consciousness—not even the functionally related perceptual and intentional states whose supposed reducibility to neural states makes of them blind links for the closure of anonymous causal sequences.

I will focus on this as the crucial lacuna in Chalmers' hypothesis: this supposed autonomy of performable function from the felt quality of those occurrences within the horizon of lived experience. The causal and explanatory irrelevance of consciousness entails that the lived sense of a causally efficacious act, of an effort that can be engaged in or abandoned in accord with the decidedness of a felt concern, is never more than an illusory quality of experience. Ultimately the "working out" of these felt exigencies is not an act. It doesn't make a difference to what will happen in any case. There is no point of entry for efficacious effort into the effortless functioning or disfunctioning of a causally closed physical system. Neural processes, given their cognitive function, are viewed as a stream of events parallel to a peculiar kind of non-consequential "stream" of qualitative experiences.

It is somewhat difficult to assess this parallelism. For Chalmers, "awareness" is the psychological or functional correlate of qualitative experience. So for example, if the awareness is perceptual, it corresponds to a set of neural events whose functional role is to provide directly accessible information available for the control of behaviour or for verbal report. But correlated with this functional perceptual event is a phenomenal experience. The functional awareness is described as not being about that qualitative experience—for then it would have to be understood as being somehow a content constituted from out of the phenomenal engagement—but *parallel* to it.<sup>7</sup> This correlative parallelism would be covered by a set of psychophysical laws called 'coherence principles'. The principle of structural coherence fixes the correlation between phenomenal difference-structures in experience and functional difference-structures in cognitive awareness.<sup>8</sup>

"In essence, this principle is being used as a *background assumption* to provide a bridge from features of physical processes to features of experience. If we take for granted the coherence between the structure of



consciousness and the structure of awareness, then in order to explain some specific aspect of the former, we need only explain the corresponding aspect of the latter. The bridging principle does the rest of the work. [...] So if the coherence principle is taken for granted, a functional account of visual processing serves as an indirect account of the structure of phenomenal color space."<sup>9</sup>

Here, it may be noted that the parallelism of the phenomenal and the functional is accounted for by coherence principles that make no allowance for reciprocal effect. All effects run through the lineage of functional processes. Whatever the felt phenomenal accompaniment may be, it neither augments nor deflects the physically based cognitive processes. In that way the phenomenal and the functional become merely indicators of each other because no new effect comes out of their simple correlation.

Chalmers notes that this structural coherence between processes and experiences might lead to a view that the latter are physically explained by the former. But he argues that the brute fact of this coherence does not explain the *intrinsic* nature of phenomenally felt qualities. The coherence principle only covers for the parallel relational structure of elements in the phenomenal and elements in the functional. Furthermore, nothing about the functional structure of awareness explains *why* there is any accompanying experience at all because there is no explanation of why the coherence principles hold in the first place.<sup>10</sup> These reminders would seem to protect against interpreting qualitative experience as being somehow constituted by or derivable from a physically quantifiable state of affairs. But the reading of this strict parallelism between phenomenal and functional properties of mind becomes much more ambiguous in a subsequent elaboration of the hypothesized psychophysical laws. Chalmers begins by asking the following question:

"If consciousness arises from the physical, in virtue of what sort of physical properties does it arise? [...] A natural suggestion is that consciousness

arises in virtue of the *functional organization* of the brain. On this view, the chemical and indeed the quantum substrate of the brain is irrelevant to the production of consciousness. What counts is the brain's abstract causal organization, an organization that might be realized in many different physical substrates.<sup>11</sup>

It may be noted though that however abstractly we take the notion of functional organization, it remains true in this scheme that function, as performing a causal role, is only ever instantiated in some concrete *physical* organization. So we are still talking about consciousness arising from physical properties (and again it will be noted, that for humans at least, this arising is localized in properties of the brain's organization). Chalmers' statement of a "principle of organizational invariance" runs like this:

"[For] every physical system that gives rise to conscious experience, there is some functional organization *F* realized by the system, such that it is naturally necessary that any system that realizes *F* will have identical conscious experiences."<sup>12</sup>

[This principle will] fail to establish a strong form of functionalism upon which functional organization is constitutive of *conscious* experience; but [it] succeeds in establishing the weaker form that I have called *non-reductive functionalism*, on which functional organization suffices for conscious experience with natural necessity. On this view, conscious experience is determined by functional organization, but it need not be reducible to functional organization.

[...] We have good reason to believe that the principle of organizational invariance is true, and that functional organization fully determines conscious experience."<sup>13</sup>

Chalmers recognizes how closely the invariance principle approaches a reductive functionalist view. The invariance principle would also follow naturally from that view. But Chalmers holds that this principle can be held independently of the reductionist position. He sees it as a way of combining functionalism and property dualism.<sup>14</sup>

In his non-reductive functionalism, consciousness arises from out of certain kinds of functional organization of a physical medium. It is an emergent non-physical property whose qualitative character cannot be predicted through a knowledge of the physical properties from which it arises and with which it must remain tied in inseparable association. Only the disclosure of fundamental psychophysical laws will cover for the brute fact of phenomenal properties; laws that would govern the condition of their emergence and the character of their relation to physical properties.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile though, all the dependency relations are uni-directional. Presumably, cognitive processes and behaviours are completely independent of the existence or non-existence of an accompanying lived experience. Consciousness on the other hand depends on physical function for its emergence and is fully determined in its structure by the correlative structure of physical processes.

Given these asymmetries, the characterization of functional and phenomenal properties of mind as parallel streams of events seems to lack any substantial fit with how things are held to stand. In Chalmers' property dualism, a more appropriate image might be that the relation of phenomenal to functional properties is like that between the tips of a comb's teeth and the spine of the comb. The course, continuity and closure of causal events run through the physical length of the comb's spine. The functionally related contents of experience are akin to the teeth of the comb, reducible to and determined by its physical structure. Being contents *for* experience, one could imagine them as projections along the spine of the comb, lancing "out towards" the phenomenal emergence that will arise from them. What remains is the supposed unalloyed phenomenality associated with each such prong. Perhaps that phenomenality is like the little "ouch" that hovers at the tip of each tooth as it pokes the scalp of a user. (Indeed, the "ouch" might just as well be associated with the tips of the comb rather than the scalp so far as any difference it makes as to what the comb or the body to which the scalp is

attached will next be caused to do). These phenomenal danglers don't even join up with each other—there is no causal lineage running through, joining up each phenomenal event to its successor.<sup>16</sup> They don't affect each other but simply arise as a naturally necessary correlate of specific functional states and it is only between or in terms of these latter physical states that a causal connectivity is enjoined.

Consciousness thus "deflated" to the presence of a pure phenomenality can only be understood as epiphenomenal. Chalmers wants to bring it into the fold of natural phenomena and yet there is really no opening left for it to be understood as a participation in the course of nature. In the following passage, Hans Jonas remarks on the peculiarity of epiphenomenal properties and the strangeness of their ambiguous relation to the rest of nature.

"Epiphenomenalism is meant to denote an effect which, unlike all other effects in nature, does not consume the energy of its cause; it is not a transformation and continuation of such energy, and therefore, unlike all other effects, it cannot become a cause itself. It is powerless in the absolute sense, a dead-end alley off the highway of causality, past which the traffic of cause and effect rolls as if it were not there at all. Even to call mind an "iridescence" on the material substratum would be too much, since in exchange for the appearance of an iridescence in the physical sense some quantity present in the preceding physical transaction will have disappeared, and again another will replace it on its disappearing in turn (and these successive replacements will be found to be quantitatively equivalent), whereas no equivalent is deemed missing from the material account with the appearance of the epiphenomenon. Thus the closed system of material causality is safeguarded as effectively as in Cartesian dualism, and yet mind has been made, by the stratagem of unilateral dependence, a part of nature which cannot tolerate its interference."<sup>17</sup>

Even if for the moment we go along with the notion that the phenomenality of lived experience is an emergent from some pre-existent pure materiality, there must still be something lacking in its conception if we cannot comprehend it as having any role to perform in the world; if it doesn't make a difference to what does or does not

occur in the world.

In her work *The Effectiveness of Causes*, Dorothy Emmet expresses the what-it-is we want to be able to comprehend of emergent or higher level properties.

'[Emergents] could be seen as Gestalt properties of organized wholes, and there is nothing surprising in saying that an ordered whole will have properties not deducible from those of its constituent parts when not so ordered. If we call certain functionings of an organism emergent capacities we do not only want to say that they are properties displayed by the organism as a whole, and not deducible from a knowledge of its constituent parts. We also want to be able to say that the higher level capacities can work on or perhaps in the lower level ones, not only making use of them instrumentally, but in some cases affecting how they function. [...]

[We] see that we do not only want properties of ordered wholes, but to see how ways of functioning at one level affect the functioning at others. We need not only order but efficacy."<sup>18</sup>

In a footnote adjoined to the first paragraph of the above, Emmet adds: "This 'play-back' distinguishes this kind of emergence view from epiphenomenalism, or the view of the mental as supervenient."<sup>19</sup> I don't believe Chalmers is quite content with the epiphenomenalist implications of his central proposals, grounded as they are in an acceptance of the *logical* non-supervenience but the *natural* supervenience of consciousness on the physical.

In what is perhaps the most intriguing section of his book entitled *Is This Epiphenomenalism?*, Chalmers takes note of a number of alternative proposals that attempt to avoid epiphenomenal consequences. Among these, two in particular stand out. In one, Chalmers notes that there seem to be only two classes of facts that do not supervene logically on the physical; facts about consciousness and facts about causation. He suggests that this coincidence may be ground for fertile speculation about some deeper connection between consciousness and causation.<sup>20</sup> Another approach is to note that physical theory has really nothing to

say about any intrinsic nature of the physical. All its basic entities are characterized relationally; the extrinsic relatedness of one entity to others, and those to others yet again ad infinitum, so that we delineate the outlines of a universal causal flux without being able to say anything directly about just *what* it is that all this causation relates. Just what is it, if anything, of the things themselves that is brought to their interrelatedness? Chalmers remarks that the only intrinsic non-relational property that we have any direct familiarity with is the class of phenomenal properties. For each of us, these lived properties are the only direct clue to what it is *actually* like to be anything at all. If something of this kind of property can be seen as a core attribute of substance in general and if this attribute in its actuality brings something to each thing's relatedness to other things, then what we begin to adumbrate for our exploratory imagination is an ontologically different kind of "thingness." In their more radical conception these intrinsic properties "realize" the extrinsic relational properties and undergird the physical laws that our current science postulates.<sup>21</sup> We could begin to conceive of a world, our own, where there is an efficacy, a potency in the things themselves. To reconceive the nature of things in something like these ways would delineate for us a manner of approach which may be affirmed by the manner in which the world meets us within the horizon of shareable experience. This will be taken up again in the concluding chapter.

Chalmers admits that he is drawn to the above strategy for extricating consciousness from the status of epiphenomenality.<sup>22</sup> But he treats this kind of proposal as a speculative aside. Meanwhile he will say that he doesn't describe his own view as epiphenomenalism; that the question of the causal relevance of experience remains open. Yet, in the same paragraph he notes that "the view implies at least a weak form of epiphenomenalism, and it may end up leading to a stronger sort. Even if it does, however, [he] thinks that the arguments for natural supervenience are sufficiently compelling that one should accept them."<sup>23</sup> As to the distinction between a 'weak' and a 'strong' form of epiphenomenalism, there is no

indication of just what Chalmers means by this.

Chalmers quite succinctly lists the four premises from which the argument for his view of a naturalistic dualism is an inference:

- "1. Conscious experience exists.
2. Conscious experience is not logically supervenient on the physical.
3. If there are phenomena that are not logically supervenient on the physical facts, then materialism is false.
4. The physical domain is causally closed."<sup>24</sup>

Given these premises, there doesn't appear to be any way to avoid epiphenomenalism. The second premise in effect isolates experience from its functionally significant content, leaving experience to be a bare phenomenal presence to processes of an altogether different kind. The fourth premise really clinches the epiphenomenalist consequence. We are given a naturalism wherein non-physical properties exist but the whole conception of how things happen in that world adheres strictly to a traditional materialist ontology. All of Chalmers' efforts to preserve the integrity of consciousness as experienced have in the end very little if any real effect. Consciousness does no work and the world would be in exactly the same physical state as it is without it.

The question I will ask in the following section is this: if we attend to the full range of lived experience and if we acknowledge that no evidence upon which to base a knowledge of ourselves and the world comes from beyond the horizon of lived experience, then is it really so evidently conceivable that cognitive processes and functional behaviours can continue to occur without a phenomenal presence to them?

## **2. Functional analysis and immanent causation.**

In this section I will look more closely at what Chalmers describes in the second section of his second chapter concerning "reductive explanation via functional analysis."

We encountered in the previous section of this chapter the premise that consciousness does not supervene logically on the physical. This premise is based on the supposed conceivability of a possible world that is physically identical in all its details to ours (including individual cognitive states and produced behaviours) but in which there are no conscious experiencings whatsoever.

Given the conceptual context in which the premise is made, the current point cannot be to argue for or against its logical validity. Since the Cartesian division of 'whatever at all there is' into two fundamentally different and mutually exclusive kinds, we have had a concept of one of these kinds, "matter," whose sole fundamental properties are physical mass and spatial extension. It contains no active principle and so could be counted on not to be doing anything on its own. A further pragmatic claim was that all bodies in the world are of this kind, and further still, that all of their motions occur within a causally closed system. This ideal situation would in principle give us a lot of leverage in knowing what just about anything would be up to next. Given our acceptance of the idea of such a kind of 'thingness' and a belief that it corresponds at a fundamental level to something that really exists—the entire visible world and every visible thing within it—the statement of supervenience premises, logical or natural, becomes possible. Without this prior conceptual separating-out of this ideal kind from an experiential ontologic wholeness, supervenience talk just wouldn't have made any sense and could not have been formulated. It is as Husserl wrote in *Phenomenological Psychology*:



"As scientific themes, nature and mind do not exist beforehand; rather they are formed only within a theoretical interest and in the theoretical work directed by it, upon the underlying stratum of a natural, pre-scientific experience. Here they appear in an originally intuitable intermingling and togetherness [...]

If one had always returned to the complete original concretion of the world, as it is always experienced in naïve originality, and if in carrying out methodic abstractions, one had never forgotten this concretely intuitive world as their field of origin, the absurdities of naturalistic psychology and socio-cultural science would not have been possible; one would never have been able to think of interpreting mind as a merely causal supplement to material bodies, or as a causal sequence paralleling that of physical matter. One would never have been able to regard human beings as psycho-physical machines or even as parallelistic double machines."<sup>25</sup>

By now, it is not even something with as broadly connoted possibilities as an efficacious 'mind' that is being set off as pendent upon or parallel to nature. For Chalmers who is, more than many, concerned to preserve for theoretical understanding the irreplaceable qualities of experience, 'consciousness' is no longer anything like the active, constructive, understanding mind as conceived by Kant, for instance. 'Mind' as such, traditionally construed, has pretty well fallen out of the picture. Though juxtaposed to nature and believed to be conjoined with only an infinitesimal part of nature's matter, mind, in that traditional conception, was taken to be an active power, applying its own perceptual and conceptual resourcefulness to a world-as-object there to be acted upon—albeit by no known principle of interaction.

The impossibility of conceiving an interaction between two absolutely non-overlapping kinds of thing has been an encouragement to those who took up the project of causal explanation along purely physical lines into the domain of what mind alone was formerly thought capable of accomplishing: the governance of adaptive or innovative behaviours. If even these can be traced without remainder through the links of physical processes, then the mind/body interaction problem

would seem to be eliminated. Yet there is still no conception of how an animative principle would at any point figure into this scheme; no accounting for how, from stasis, anything at all could of itself begin its motion or, once begun, might of itself change or cease the course of its motion. There remains, however, a recognition that if not immediately, then ultimately, such a principle is required.

In the physical object-world story, there is the hypothesis of a singular original impulse or expressed force—the "Big Bang." The whole story from then, through now, and on until the eventual entropic demise of all motion is thought to be nothing but the inertial consequence of that originally expressed force. After that beginning there is no allowance for any "further" initiatives that would bring into being novel implications; implications that would not otherwise have been possible given the singular conditions that constituted the one and only original state of affairs. But even that originally expressed force cannot carry the sense of a self-animating existent which alone, before all becoming, could all at once be the first and final efficacious cause of all that it must thenceforth become. In this story, the self-actuating principle is pushed back to a point of such singularity and ultimacy in respect to its cosmological consequences that one is pretty well forced to conceive of it in God-like proportions. But as purely physical yet somehow self-animating, what kind of vocabulary could we avail ourselves of in order to conceive of it? Prior to the originally expressed motion, could we describe of this purely physical singularity its awakening to discover in itself a protentive sense of urgency, desire, anticipation or concern within which it forms for itself the density of an emotive force, realizing the advent of an expressed motion as an act towards fulfillment of some felt lack or requirement?

This kind of vocabulary has no fit with the conception of what can accrue to a physical state of affairs. Something like this kind of vocabulary has evolved in attempts to articulate the structure of experience that inhabits the formation and

realization of lived-through activity. It is indeed this lived intuition that carries for us the sense that something like this self-animating potency is necessary before anything whatsoever can occur. And when this intuition is interwoven with the sense of an already given situation and embodiment, we begin to evolve a conception of another kind of "thingness" whose interactivity is a constant inflection; the one into the other of interiority and exteriority, activity and passivity, of moving and being moved. Here, concern is not deflected to a hypothetical first cause but rather remains as the ever present concern to appreciate the manner of an ongoing participation in the unfolding of this world now given to us in all its compossible modes of being experienced.

Nothing of this is possible in the physicalist story. Matter is only passive; it can only 'wait' to be moved. But even the laws that govern the inevitable pattern of physical consequences subsequent to the originally expressed force are not conceived as intrinsic to or evolving with this unravelling skein of materiality. Like an eternal set of Platonic forms, the natural law stands outside the material world of changes. Even if, as eternal, the natural law is thought of as existing prior to the original event, its only manifestation is as a set of *constants*—and so these cannot seem to cover for the occurrence of the greatest possible discontinuity: when absolute stasis becomes absolute motion. The governing constants can only kick in once everything begins to happen. Still, if the natural law is conceived as *sustaining* the patterns of material change, it may be interpretable (in its inimitable changeless way) as a power acting upon the world. But if so, then this is strangely parallel to the initial mind/body interaction problem that naturalism was meant to avoid. Here, on the largest possible scale, one is again faced with the problem of how a non-physical influence can bring about physical effects.

This is only a very sketchy excursion back to the beginning of things in motion and surely there are many variations to this story. It is only meant to

indicate that the hoped for explanatory advantages of a naturalistic worldview have not resolved the questions concerning activity or efficacy which the Cartesian conception thought to work around by setting apart two ontologically distinct domains. All that has happened is that the unconsidered questions have been pushed back to an event at the furthest possible remove from lived experience. From back there, the problem can seem more like a riddle rather than something of immediate relevance to our way of being in the world.

This, or something like this, is what happens to the world for us when it is conceived (and increasingly so) as an autonomous domain fully on one side of the ontological divide. Apart from the question of how it began, I suppose something like this is conceivable as a logically possible world once you have the idea of a fully passive material object. But if after all that deferral, an initiating cause remains unexplainable, why then prefer the peculiarly evacuated possibility of that logically conceivable world over the actually experienced world? This experienced world already includes this felt quality of one's own concern as animating an act that would otherwise have no call to be performed. True, we still have not *explained* the paradox of a motion that, beginning within itself, constitutes an act. But in the final analysis, the conceptual removal of the source of movement or creativity from its concrete experiential locus leaves one no better off in terms of a full explanation of how anything happens at all. Carl Hausman in his work *A Discourse on Novelty and Creation*, comments on how for example, the naturalist alternative is a choice that does not ultimately resolve the paradox it attempts to avoid:

"On this alternative, paradox remains. Yet its locus is placed outside the phenomena in which it initially appeared. [...] [On the other hand] to admit that finite acts of creation are essentially paradoxical is to face the paradox where it is initially presented—in the appearances of the origin of novelty within finite activities. [...] The creative agent as a self-causing cause, must be accepted in its own terms, without recourse to a hoped for principle of explanation or a source beyond the appearance."<sup>26</sup>

Unlike materialist naturalism, Chalmers' naturalistic dualism is an attempt to accept consciousness on its own terms. But as we have seen, only the barest minimum of what was once thought of as inherent to mind is left to consciousness. Constitutive activity, agency, efficacy vanish in the inexorable reduction to an explanatory domain that has no room for such participations. The irony is that the mere logical conceivability of a possible world physically identical to ours but devoid of conscious experience (a strategy initially intended to pick out the irreducibility of experience) ends up being, from a lack of any functional difference, virtually *this* actual world we inhabit with a mere phenomenal presence to it.

When Chalmers describes for us the apparently straightforward reducibility of cognitive and behavioural contents by functional analysis, what we are really being presented with is the abstractive movement from this concretely, experientially inhabited world to a possible world that confers the explanatory advantages of a certain kind of logical conceivability. 'Explaining' a sequence of behaviours or a succession of cognitive contents is given its most succinct form by paring away most of their experiential qualities of sense and significance until all that is left of their meanings are specifically delineable occurrences with a precise physical functionality. Here is what Chalmers has to say:

"For the most interesting phenomena that require explanation, including phenomena such as reproduction and learning, the relevant notions can usually be analysed *functionally*. The core of such notions can be characterized in terms of the performance of some function or functions (where "function" is taken causally rather than teleologically), or in terms of the capacity to perform those functions. It follows that once we have explained how these functions are performed, then we have explained the phenomena in question. Once we explain how an organism performs the function of producing another organism, we have explained reproduction, for all it means to reproduce is to perform that function. The same goes for an explanation of learning. All it means for an organism to learn, roughly, is for its behavioral capacities to adapt appropriately in response to environmental stimulation. If we explain how the organism is able to perform the relevant functions, then we have explained learning.

(At most, we may have failed to explain any *phenomenal* aspects of learning, which I leave aside here for obvious reasons. If there is a phenomenal element to the concept of learning, then that part of learning may go unexplained; but I concentrate on the psychological [cognitive] aspects of learning here, which are plausibly the core of the concept).

Explaining the performance of these functions is quite straightforward in principle. As long as the results of such functions are themselves characterizable physically, and all the physical events have physical causes, then there should be a physical explanation for the performance of any such function. One need only show how certain sorts of states are responsible for the production of appropriate resultant states, by a causal process in accord with the laws of nature.<sup>27</sup>

[A] complication is that many causal role concepts are partly characterized in terms of their effect on *experience*: for example heat is naturally construed as the cause of heat sensations. Does this mean that we have to explain heat sensations before we can explain heat? [...] It is somewhat paradoxical that we end up explaining almost everything about a *phenomenon* except for the details of how it affects our phenomenology, but it is not a problem in practice. It would not be a happy state of affairs if we had to put the rest of science on hold until we had a theory of consciousness.<sup>28</sup>

[But] whatever functional account of human cognition we give, there is a *further question*: why is this kind of functioning accompanied by consciousness? No such further question arises for psychological states. If one asked about a given functional model of learning, "why is this functioning accompanied by learning?" the appropriate answer is a semantic answer: "Because all it *means* to learn is to function like this. There is no corresponding analysis of the concept of consciousness. Phenomenal states, unlike psychological states, are not defined by the causal roles that they play. [...] Given an appropriate functional account of learning, it is simply *logically impossible* that something could instantiate that account without learning (except perhaps insofar as learning requires consciousness). However, no matter what functional account of cognition one gives, it seems logically possible that that account could be instantiated without any accompanying consciousness. It may be naturally impossible—consciousness may in fact *arise* from that functional organization in the actual world—but the important thing is that the notion is logically coherent. [...]

[There] will be a partial explanatory gap for any mental concept that has a phenomenal element. If conscious experience is required for belief or

learning, for example, we may not have a fully reductive explanation for belief or learning. But at least we have reason to believe that the *psychological* aspects of these mental features—which are arguably the core of the relevant concepts—will be susceptible to reductive explanation. If we leave worries about phenomenology aside, cognitive science seems to have the resources to do a good job of explaining the mind."<sup>29</sup>

I have drawn out the length of this quote for it is quite revealing of the kind of abstractive process that must be entertained as Chalmers leads his readers towards the next section. There, having already laid the groundwork for a meaning of "function" in autonomous physical terms, a clear-cut supervenience premise will declare the logical conceivability of cognitions and behaviours occurring in the complete absence of consciousness.

At every point in the above argument by Chalmers, consciousness hedges up to the physical functionality of cognitions and behaviours. Chalmers recognizes that it may well be naturally impossible that such functions are unaccompanied by experiences. But more than this, at several points he leaves open the possibility that such cognitive functions as belief or learning, for example, *may* require consciousness—in which case there would not be a fully reductive explanation of them. But at each point he sidesteps the possible relevance of experiential presence to causal function, arguing instead that for all practical purposes, we may take 'the core of relevant concepts' to be covered by the meaning of function in an exclusively physical nexus. One senses that Chalmers remains tentative about a possible effective role for consciousness, but that his theoretical stance nevertheless forecloses that possibility in favour of an explanatory interest.

As he says, it would be an unhappy state of affairs if the rest of science had to be put on hold until an adequate theory of consciousness was at hand. It is true that the science now engaged in *depends* on the notion of a physical system that is causally closed. But it is only when science is taken to be *primarily* concerned

with the predictive advantages of causal explanation that it must hold strictly to this dependency. Yet this may not be the only guiding ethos of science. This theme will be returned to again in the next chapter.

At one point Chalmers asks if we have to explain heat sensations before we can explain heat. One might reply that in a certain sense we must if we are concerned to regain an appreciation of how the world is akin to us through what is communicated to us in experience. But a more telling question here might have been, "Do we have to explain heat sensations before we can account for our response to heat?" For then it might appear that this experience of heat is crucial to constituting an act that involves a concern to avoid or prolong that sensation. Or if one were to imagine a completely different and extreme circumstance where an act of self-immolation is given the significance of a personal requirement, one would be extremely hard pressed to explain this behaviour as fulfilling a functional role in strictly physical terms.

Perhaps it is such acts, so counter to any notion of physical functionality, that most strike us as being the expression of an intrinsically motivated activity. There is in such an act a direct communication or appeal to others that speaks not of the physical behaviour as such, but of an intensity of feeling or concern that uses the behaviour only as its sign. The behaviour will be a shock to others, but again, what will likely move them is not the behaviour itself, but the suddenness of being thrown into an effort to grasp what that intensity of feeling or concern must be like—for otherwise, such a seemingly senseless behaviour can never be understood. When an act as extreme as self-immolation is such a blind alley in terms of physical function, it is almost as if its physicality has become the epiphenomenon, and the phenomenality of one experience as communicated to another has become the efficacious current. For those who by this are moved to act in turn, there may well be an alignment of this newly communicated concern with embodied acts that



function to transform a quite concrete state of affairs in the world. But the efficacy of these new acts doesn't proceed as a consequence of that annunciative yet non-functional behaviour. These new functional acts follow from the intensity of the initiating concern and they act upon those concrete circumstances that so moved the initiating concern.

The phenomenality of presence to self and world, experienced as an urgency or an appreciation leading into an effortful act can only be given a role in the causal story once we begin to consider the inadequacy of a conceptualization holding to causal closure among purely physical objects. One senses that an appreciation of what are possibilities for human behaviour must involve a much more diffuse and integrative understanding of what, in lived experience, can become unique associations of phenomenally felt values. The variability and specificity of these from one situation to another, from one individual or culture to another cannot be contained in a meaning for "function" that has been shorn of all but those features amenable to a description in terms of unit events establishing causal links in a linear chain of physical processes.

How for example shall we define the boundary of a function called 'learning' so as to make of it an isolable set of process event-kinds with a temporally containable role in a causal sequence culminating in a unit behaviour? Even before attending to the possible causal significance of experience, there are many questions that can be asked about the specifiability of 'function' and how it is taken up into causal explanation.

In *The Effectiveness of Causes*, Dorothy Emmet considers these questions. In an early chapter, she discusses "event ontologies." An 'event' is not a simple given in experience. There are a virtually unlimited number of ways that any given spatial-temporal region can be delineated as either a collection or series of distinct

events, a nested hierarchy of events within events, or indeed as the frame of just one event. Emmet gives this example: "Jones can be swimming the Hellespont, catching a cold, and counting his blessings. How many events are there?"<sup>30</sup> In terms of a specific interest, perhaps only the event of the swim or the event of catching a cold will be taken into account. But if all three are taken into account (and how many more occurrences describable within this frame could also be picked out), then how will these be woven together into a concise, linear causal story—for surely each element will contribute to how this situation concretely unfolds. Emmet, drawing from Whitehead, remarks on the contrast between notions of event and duration:

"An event is the notion of a bounded slice of some going-on in a particular spatio/temporal spread, and it can be bounded as a long event extending over shorter events. So on the one hand we can have events which are bounded and describable, but abstracted from their background. On the other hand we have durations which are unbounded and concrete, but only describable by being edited into events."<sup>31</sup>

Once an event is picked out as this particular boundedness it is treated as a unit *within* which there is no change. In that way it can be taken as representative of a set state or role in a causal succession of such events, each of which is fixed as "standing in a before or after relation to others." Emmet feels that what is missing from this account is a sense of occurrence or concurrence in a "tensed flow" of time. It cannot simply be a matter of unchanging unit events succeeding one another, but rather of the occurring that "comes into being, passes into another and passes away"—otherwise we have a "Zeno universe in which transition gets lost."<sup>32</sup>

In the concreteness of lived experience we are present to this tensed flow. In any particularized intentional or behavioural "state" we are yet able to discern experientially that it is entered into and carried throughout its phase by many interwoven threads of embodied activity, recollection, perception, anticipation.

Strands of this interwovenness, in entering and passing through this moment, may be unfolding and diminishing in a widely varied experiential context of lived durations and intensities. Yet in this moment, this intention or behaviour is this present fusion or confusion of "contributory" elements, experienced as having a unique compositional quality. From the objective view of an external perspective on function, this behaviour may not differ from any other performance of the same kind in terms of its causal role. But experientially, the quality of its enactment can enjoy or suffer a great degree of variation and these differences must be reflected in subsequent continuities or discontinuities either in respect to this behaviour or in other behaviours to which these significances have been transferred.

Returning to Emmet, we find her considering the notion of 'cause' in relation to a context of accompanying conditions. She describes how, in the standard model of event causation, *the* sufficient cause is picked out from among all other antecedent conditions in accord with some explanatory interest. This causal selectivity allows for nomic or lawful subsumption of an event under the rubric of a general kind. Yet, in the actual concretion of the world, no antecedent condition is absolutely irrelevant to what subsequently occurs. But, as Emmet points out:

'[The] greater the number of conditions included in the 'concurrence' needed to produce the effect, the more difficult it will be to produce a plausible law covering them all, and the more difficult to produce a number of sequences in which it is seen to be exemplified. The difficulty lies in the notion of a 'total cause'. 'Cause' if it is to be used as an explanatory notion, will have to be used selectively, where other conditions not included in 'the cause' are being taken for granted. [...]

This model (a Humean one) is plausible as an epistemology of causal relations within a hypothetico-deductive view of scientific explanation. It fastens on properties given in descriptions of events, and causation is a principle of licensing the prediction of similarities or differences of properties at different times. But 'events' here are edited descriptions of features of what is actually going on. [...] Event causation is a view contrived to fit these descriptions."<sup>33</sup>

This is very much like the kind of feature selectivity that we have seen Chalmers working his way through. He attempts to delineate an event-kind or function that will fit the role of 'cause', nomicly subsumable within the closed system of physical causation. It is this same trade-off he has to negotiate. In order to abstract a description of cognitions or behaviours that can enter into explanations with predictive potential, he must leave aside features that are experienced as being intimately associated with these same cognitions or behaviours but which resist being subsumed within the established conception of a lawful causal system.

Emmet goes on to remark that when the notion of 'act' has been taken up and considered in terms of intentionality, it is soon evident that the degree of antecedent complexity and situation specificity relevant to intentional description makes the category of 'action' or 'agency' radically resistant to the kind of event generality cited under general laws. This situation specificity is at its most radical when action is conceived in the context of transactions among *participants*. This pretty well ensures that the notion of agency causation will never find a fit within the standard model of event causation.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, as Emmet notes, "when events are described under intentions, they are seen as doings and not just happenings."<sup>35</sup> Indeed, as we saw earlier in a quote from Jonas, it is more than likely that the very notion of causation has its original ground in the experientially felt qualities of effort, efficacy, agency.<sup>36</sup> Given this experiential priority of the notions of efficacy and agency, Emmet contends that if the standard model of event causation cannot accommodate these features of experience, then perhaps that model has limited application, or indeed, no final adequation with concrete occurrence at all.<sup>37</sup>

Emmet's approach to understanding agency or operative activity as a real property of at least some kinds of things is to think of it as an emergent property. Earlier, I quoted her view that it isn't enough to take this emergent as simply a novel property of ordered wholes. Rather, we want to understand this emergence as

having efficacy; of being able to affect the functioning of "lower levels" of the systems wherein it arises. Emmet looks at a distinction between what had been called transeunt and immanent causation. If we understand a 'continuant' as something that shows a persistent character recognizable over time, then "when one continuant is seen as external to another and acting on it, this is transeunt causation. When there is change of state within a single continuant, this is immanent causation."<sup>38</sup>

We may look at a complex system as a continuant, but external actions upon the system would be regarded as affecting it in the manner of transeunt causation. Likewise, a system can be viewed as a complex of sub-systems or sub-continuants where "one component in the system can be distinguished as acting on others." This too would be described in terms of transeunt causation. But Emmet maintains that there is in organisms an emergent level of activity. Taken as a whole, change within the organism is co-temporal and co-variable. As well, there is the persistence of the organism as a whole through the course of its growth and development; an identity not simply carried across a succession of repetitions but through an emerging pattern of activities directed towards a future. Activity in this sense is ongoing; an internal temporal passage. We cannot so much view an act as 'producing' another act as its 'effect'; "the product is inseparable from the activity."<sup>39</sup> That an organism should persist "depends on an activity that passes from stage to stage, but is internal to the passage and not temporally prior to it."<sup>40</sup> These modes of change or transformation within a system can be referred to as immanent causation.

"[Here] the change is not fully describable through the action on each other of separate items, either external to the system or as constituents within it. Immanent causation in a living system may indeed call for interactions between constituents in the system, but these take place within an overall pattern of development. [...] A living system comes into action as a whole, and the macro-system uses its array of micro-systems."<sup>41</sup>

Further on, Emmet continues to develop her description of immanent causation:

"In intentional activity some bodily movements are consciously directed. I have said that such activity is not just an emergent Gestalt property of an organized system; it is an *activity*, a capacity, released indeed through the other levels of the system, but also taking initiative in acting through them. Action thus produces changes in the system as a whole, notably in directing its motion, and sometimes in affecting its chemical metabolism. This is immanent causation as change due to an operation within a system where the operant cannot be analysed as a distinct factor: one cannot say where the cause ends and the effect begins; one activity is causal as initiatory, but it fuses with the other which is the effect."<sup>42</sup>

Through this last segment I have outlined Emmet's discussion of event ontologies and her development of the notion of an immanent causation which might accommodate, beyond a succession of discrete events or happenings, our experientially grounded intuition of ongoing, efficacious activity. The point of this excursion has been to reconsider Chalmers' assertion that cognitions and behaviours can be constricted to the meaning of unit event-kinds with succinctly definable functional roles. In doing so we may indeed satisfy ourselves that a plausible causal explanation has been given. It will have the outlines of a general case and have its fit within a lineage of physical determinants—having thus the simplicity of a certain kind of continuity with what has come to be thought of as fundamentally passive material world. But insofar as this explanation is taken as the final word, "the real story," we will have left out an appreciative sense of how particular cognitions, behaviours, capacities are embedded in an active involvement. This involvement is continually a carrying forward or retreat from, a moving towards or away from those resonant significances that accrue to the unique contours of an individually inhabited experience.

In Emmet's account of an efficacy that proceeds as the movement of an integrated whole, the major theme of chapter II—the coincidence of the manner of

conscious being and embodiment—is again rejoined. There, through a critical examination of Dennett's reductive functionalism, it was argued that the qualities of conscious experience cannot be accounted for by focussing on the functioning of a single organ. Inspired by the approach of Merleau-Ponty, I proposed that the intentionality of consciousness can more readily be described in its complexity and significance through attachment to lived situations if we see it as coincident with the animate contours of a fully embodied existence, both passively and actively engaged. As Emmet says:

"We do not experience ourselves as ghosts in machines, whether intellectual ghosts or managerial ghosts pushing the molecules around in our bodies. We experience ourselves as embodied in our feelings, sensations and actions which take shape through the organism."<sup>43</sup>

Also described in chapter II is the manner in which, at the surface, the body's sensitivity to its own activities constitutes a self-reflexive trajectory around which the otherwise rudderless conglomerate of organic functions can be woven together in a directed or intended or purposeful act. Emmet speaks of the integrative, lived dimension of reflexivity in her description of "setting oneself" to do something.

"It is a recognizable state to be in, especially when one has to bring oneself, or hold oneself, to something difficult. [...] The reflexive here can be significant. There is not something in us causing something else in us, but something that we ourselves are doing with ourselves. [...It is] not a particular event in an internal chain. If, however, it is to be brought as a cause within the scheme of causal explanation as a relation between events, it would have to be represented in the latter way."<sup>44</sup>

To explain the act by way of viewing it as an isolable link in a chain of internal events is to lose for it the root of its own initiative, beginning within itself. The 'act' becomes the 'behaviour' with a discrete functional role. Its beginning falls outside of it, behind it, becoming the discrete functional role of the event that precedes it in an objectively unrecoverable past.

On the other hand, the act can be seen as internal passage, having the sense of an occurrent transition—of one phase of an effortful activity passing into and carrying through the phase that does not so much follow this antecedent phase but wells up within its duration as an ongoing initiative. These qualities of experience, recoverable for reflection, are nevertheless lost in the standard model of event causation. In that model, only the external relatedness of event to event, of function to function in an isolated causal lineage relevant to an explanatory interest in particular processes, is accessible to third-person observation and analysis. Agency causation vanishes in the invisible yet felt interstices between objectively describable events or performances.

With Emmet we are introduced to a view in which the growth and development of an organism are enveloped in an emergent pattern of activity. We are given a sense in which this activity is continuous, cumulative, integrative. In the ongoing project of living, activity is not fundamentally divisible into a succession of states with temporally abrupt beginnings and endings. Through the inner passage of the presently occurrent act, the topography of all that has entered into an individual's embodied experience is a Gestalt that the act inhabits and now extends. This topography is not just that which the current act is consciously drawing on. As embodied, the topography of accumulated experience will in great part be the somatic memory of that which, having entered experience in the mode of a conscious presence to what once occurred, has since been incorporated in the mode of an unconscious habit or ability of the body. This somatic memory is also involved in animating the course of current actions. These submergent elements of activity are manifest in the body as acquired habits or entrainments; in posture and gesture, in learnt capacities or skills, in individually varied surface topographies whose elements can be differentially reticent or open to particular kinds of engagement. Emmet writes:



"It looks rather as though the organism is an immined body which is a carrier of cumulative experience. In habit memory there is an entraining of the body [...] What one remembers can be a matter of what interests one and interest will have an element of affective concern. [...] The affective concern can continue and accumulate without the recollected memory, as in anxiety; to find a way of recall can then be a means of understanding the concern and getting it into perspective."<sup>45</sup>

This latter remark is important to bring to consideration, for an "effect" within the passage of activity is not an inert product but itself a furthering act. As lived-through act it can be the gathering ground of newly felt, newly appreciated significances. These in turn enter into and continuously affect the topography of conscious and unconscious significances already acquired. Thus, the animating Gestalt of accumulated experience, though it will have the inertial quality of tendencies with varying degrees of affective intensity, is not a finally fixed determinant of future acts. By either a gradual assimilative shift or by a more conscious effort to reform an antecedent complex of attitudes, habits or entrainments, the currently ongoing activity can reflexively re-animate its own past to be the present source of a self-transforming initiative.

This self-realizing or self-transformative efficacy cannot be accommodated in an objective conception where frozen unit events, each external to the next, are arrayed along ideally uniform stretches of an unalterable time past. The paradox of this view is that anything so objectively non-retrievable as a "real" non-existent past can so absolutely determine the concrete present. The past is only real insofar as it is retained in and for the present as a habit of involved, participant, inhabited becoming. All occurrence is presently occurring and it is only through lived activity, through the phenomenality of its presence to itself in its involvements, that these habits of being can be inflected by the concern that this capable embodied presence generates. This concrete presence and not the intrinsically vacant physical function (or Chalmers' even more abstract notion of a realized information space) is "the difference that *makes* a difference."

It is the ineluctable immediacy of this presence within receptivity and act that has it matter what next we must attend to or what next we must do. This experienced phenomenality is what is now, in varying degrees of intensity, suffered or enjoyed, thus animating the effort that might alleviate or extend such felt qualities.

But the character of this phenomenality within any inhabited act cannot be given a descriptive generality that matches the concisely delineated features of extrinsically functional behaviours. And so, behaviours as observed, cannot simply be interpreted as the outcome of a law-like succession of those kinds of physical events. The experienced phenomenality that is interior or intrinsic to the act must also be taken into account.

In this, one need not dispute what is after all most likely: that for any experienced 'state' there is a unique constellation of interdependent physiological states—including a specific neurological pattern, though not contained therein, for the organism must be comprehended as active through all its subsystems as a capable integrated whole. In attempting to envision an *embodied* consciousness one wouldn't expect anything other than this unison of physiology and phenomenality. But then, the radical fine-grainedness of these states must forever foil the kind of descriptive generality permitting the subsumption of successive states under general laws. Indeed, it is the radical context specificity of the encountered situation that enjoins or enlists an activity that can be as finely tuned to difference as need requires—and this difference is lived in the nuance of a phenomenal presence to the situation in its concreteness, drawing upon the Gestalt of significances gathered in the duration of a personal history.

What is disputed is that this embodied presence can, in its activity, be understood as simply a product of antecedent material causes conceived solely in

terms of the extrinsic relatedness of fundamentally inert things. What is argued for is that, in the presence to ourselves and world of conscious life, we have an immediate acquaintance with matter as also intrinsically motivated. My intimate acquaintance with what it is like to be this matter in this state is what very often matters to me and moves me. My effort is not at root accounted for nor even discernible in the objectively described condition of my body conceived as matter. Rather, my effort wells up within the lived experience of *being* this matter. This effort, in its embodiment as act, is communicable to others, though not in the delineation of this as an extrinsically determined behaviour. Rather, my effort as 'visible' to others and the visibility of their efforts to me is felt in the resonance of our intrinsic presence to each other through the reciprocity of our embodied interactions.

What is argued for, is that in looking for ways to describe such a thing as an embodied consciousness or an immined body, a kind of thing that is an ongoing inflective turning-about-itself of extrinsic relatedness and intrinsic presence, a self-equilibrating modulation of receptivity and activity, we have gone beyond the kind of thing subject to exclusively deterministic explanation—not because consciousness is something beyond the reach of those external determinations in which we discover certain effects of one body's impact upon another, but rather precisely because such a thing as an immined body is so very much affected in its presence to the impact of things that it cannot rest content to be pushed only from behind. Its effort can work against the inertial push of things by that reflexivity that acts upon itself to reconfigure the embodied imprint of its own antecedent conditions.

### 3. The individuality of lived experience.

The situated act has a correlative unfolding. As already noted, insofar as the givenness of a situation is taken in its concreteness rather than in a feature selective description, this radical specificity already defeats a practical (if not an in-principle) predictability for the correlatively specific responses of active participants. But in addition, the participants thus situated will be differentially affected by this given within each their own experienced phenomenality. The particular quality of each presence can be appreciated as animating individually variant approaches to the situation in which all now find themselves or bring themselves to be engaged.

The given, as this situated unfolding within a world horizon, must indeed communicate its contours to all those participants who cannot but now be this presence within it. This given situatedness stands as would a 'theme' within the now experienced phenomenality of each participant. Yet, for each participant, the ownness of a unique personal history is interwoven as variation upon the theme of the given. This individually lived, intrinsic phenomenality—a Gestalt of modalities (perceptual, recollective, anticipatory . . .) and affective intensities either consciously discerned or somatically inhabited—will make of the given an *occurrence* that is as much each one's own as it is an *event* shared. The situation in this convergence of participants is not, in respect to the intentional variation applied to it, a fully determinate set of conditions. It is constantly, as the focus of involvement, being decided in its multi-fold significance by the interactions that concurrently unfold it through an accord or discord of intentionalities. And so too, the situation is yet to be decided as to how it will be taken as a theme for future involvements, or if it will be taken at all. (For indeed, much of what might matter to us and may yet eventually make a difference to us in a situation can go unrecognized or be treated as insignificant. And in this lack of recognition, we are not affected by the situation in the same manner that we would have been had

these recognitions been made).

This cannot be taken as some sort of manifesto declaring a liberation from the constraints of the given. There are definite inertial continuities, which shape the sharper folds of a constraining givenness that abides with the things themselves and with us as we encounter them within the world horizon. Without needing to say that it is certainly an eternal constant, gravity is one such inertial continuity that first comes to mind. Facing certain acts, certain properties of the world force their significance upon us. But within the trough between these folds of constraint we sense in our activity a real efficacy. (And, for example, gravity is not a constraint whose folds are absolutely fixed for us. In augmenting the given capacities of our own embodiment, we move the boundary of our possible activities in relation to gravity—so that now we can fly and indeed, leave the planet). We recognize the difference we bring to *making* the worst or the best of a situation. Among participants, nothing is ever *fully* given and so neither are the situations in which we participate fully determined.

In a materialist ontology, such as Dennett's, or a property dualist ontology, such as Chalmers', where consciousness is at most epiphenomenal, this phenomenological variation from individual to individual, or the self-reflexive capacity of transforming the phenomenological topography within the individual, is not seen as making any difference to the outcome of events in the world. But for an ontology that may be foreshadowed in the attempt to ground a notion of the things themselves within the full range of manners by which we gather our experience of them, phenomenality may be understood as nothing less than the inscription of significance, value and efficacy within the very "physics" of bodies in motion.

The living body is not simply an external observable. It is also a sensitivity

inhabiting its movements, and these carry the intentionalities of this sole representative of a personal history. From an external observational perspective, our appreciation of the significance of behaviours devolves around an estimation of their meaning as functional or dysfunctional in relation to simple requirements for physical notions of sustenance and adaptive response. And then we may encounter in others or in ourselves many behaviours that are unaccountable in these terms. These may be seen as aberrations having no possible functional value and as reformable or enhanceable only through an externally applied physical intervention—even though the point of application for a non-coercive intervention may often be impossible to determine. (It is of course always possible to elicit or constrain behaviours in a much more predictable fashion if no limits are placed on the kind of coercive force applied).

Yet, through the inner passage of ongoing activity, the effort of finding significance is a continual working or playing through of the affective import of this individually experienced embodiment. At times lost and then again found perhaps in a newly appreciated constellation of values, the effort that involves itself in a harmonizing of meanings for the relation of self to others and world, may not always find its central or animating concern as that of attending to physically functional requirements. Insofar as these needs are laced into the folds of the given, they cannot ultimately be neglected if indeed part of one's concern is to survive. But in the interim, between extremes, other concerns may figure more prominently and our acts may reflect more upon concerns involved with identity, independence, intimacy, empathic consideration, honour or self-esteem, to name only a few.

In the struggle or setback or progression of this experienced phenomenality, the body itself is not simply a biological given. Its physiological themes are subject to a great degree of individual variation. The pattern of each body's sensitivities, as open or reticent, is also the shape of an affective phenomenality arising and

evolving through a history of involvements. As lived presence, this phenomenality is an animating concern. It is the affective ground within which the conscious articulation of significance and the intentionality of acts are rooted—either in the unreflective carrying forward of these embodied habitudes or in the self-reflexive turning back that would re-animate the configuration of these habitudes. These variations and potentials suggest that the meaning of embodied acts may not always be so simply aligned with a generic functionality related to what are conceived of as purely physical determinants. In her book, *Volatile Bodies*, Elizabeth Grosz conveys a sense of the individuality of embodied phenomenality and its non-reducibility to biological determinants. She writes:

"The surface of the body, the skin, moreover provides the ground for the articulation of orifices, erotogenic rims, cuts on the body's surface, loci of exchange between the inside and the outside, points of conversion of the outside into the body, and the inside out of the body. [...] These cuts on the body's surface create a kind of "landscape" of that surface, that is, they provide it with "regions," "zones," capable of erotic significance; they serve as a kind of gridding, an uneven distribution of intensities, of erotic investments in the body.

[...] It is also a mapping of the body's inner surface, the surface of sensation, intensities, and affects, the "subjective experience" of bodily excitations and sensations. This means that the ego is not a veridical diagram or representation of the empirical and anatomical body; nor is it an effect of which the body or the body's surface is a cause (this would make the ego and other relevant psychical agencies as rigidly determined by biology and biological processes as they would be if they were innate). The ego is not a point-for-point projection of the body's surface, but an outline or representation of the degrees of erotogenicity of the bodily zones and organs."<sup>46</sup>

"No part of the body is divested of all psychical interest without severe psychical repercussions. Human subjects never simply *have* a body; rather, the body is always necessarily the object and subject of attitudes and judgements. It is psychically invested, never a matter of indifference. Human beings love their bodies (or, what amounts libidinally to the same thing, they hate them or parts of them). The body never has merely

instrumental or utilitarian value for the subject."<sup>47</sup>

"No person lives his or her own body merely as a functional instrument or a means to an end. Its value is never simply or solely functional, for it has a (libidinal) value in itself. The subject is capable of suicide, of anorexia (which may in some cases amount to the same thing), because the body is *meaningful*, has significance."<sup>48</sup>

From this it may be gathered that the distribution of intensities in the phenomenality of a lived embodiment can have quite a different configuration for each individual: the tracings of a personal history. And so too, 'objectively' identical stimuli or objectively identical needs can have a very different resonance for different individuals (or for the same individual at different times) depending upon how this topography of embodied sensitivities has been shaped in the back and forth between active engagement and the contingency of encounters one has suffered or been blessed with in the course of this personal history.

It wouldn't perhaps at first be thought that something with so basic a physically functional meaning as the activity of taking in nourishment could be resonant with a range of felt significances that divert this activity from a concern for physiological needs, and have it instead stand in as the bearer of significance in support of other felt needs. The acts of a self-starving individual cannot be reduced to the dysfunction of some physical component implicated in physiological processes that have their linear culmination in eating behaviours. Rather than being simply a dysfunction in relation to physiological needs, these "behaviours" can also be appreciated as the quite active functioning of an *effort* to redress a dislocation, or illuminate an obscuration, indecipherability or impenetrability within the Gestalt of phenomenality which issues forth in the significance one brings to lived experience. The act of self-starving may be the manifestation of an interior struggle or the sign of an outward protest, but either way, its reduction to a description in physiological terms or its 'correction' by physical intervention cannot



finally give resolution to the concerns that initiated these acts.

In the passages previously quoted from Chalmers, he refers for example to 'reproduction' as a process amenable to concise functional description. But here again, the seeming functional succinctness of the reproductive *process* will rarely if ever be appreciated in its individually experienced human context if the content of those experiences involved in the reproductive *act* are taken to be reducible to the performance of a simple biological function. Indeed, among humans, the 'reproductive' act is very often, perhaps most often, not engaged in for the purpose of producing offspring. Right here, for an appreciation of what the act may mean to two individuals, a consideration will have to be given to all those life experiences of each partner which enrich or perhaps impoverish the meaning of this shared act; what from each is brought to the meaning of wanting, not wanting or not being ready yet to create a family. Or whether this act is felt as the further enhancement of an intimacy at many levels of shared experience or whether it is one of the tenuous threads that prolong a relationship otherwise lacking in shared experiences.

Being so intimate an embodied engagement, this act is at the same time an intensely experienced phenomenal intimacy, and the meaning of this intimacy cannot have its content reduced to the level of a specifiable physiological function. Sometimes it is upon reaching or before reaching this level of intimacy that a relationship falters or reaches a degree of intimacy beyond which one or other or both partners feel they must not go—even though neither has any other commitment and even though each may feel bodily attracted to the other. This may have nothing to do with any physical consequences of sexual involvement, but rather have very much to do with how that kind of involvement is interwoven with the whole topography of meanings and values felt in the phenomenal experience of each.

Sometimes a desired intimacy is stymied by a form of impotence. Beneath the level of conscious desire the body is unknowing of how to allow itself to be aroused. Again, there may be no physiological dysfunction, but rather it may have very much to do with the phenomenality of embodiment spoken of by Elizabeth Grosz. Retaining the sedimented contours of previously acquired experiences, the body is this topography of affective significances, partly an open terrain, but partly in regions blocked or frozen to flows of sensation in the context of certain kinds of engagement. This phenomenality, in presence now to an offering of intimacy and despite the conscious hope of its fulfillment, is instead experienced as a reticence or unease, a tenseness or anxiety. Whatever the experiential roots of this embodied reticence, it is the phenomenality of this recurring frustration or the distress that comes with the loss of what was a growing intimacy with another that moves the effort to consciously rediscover the contours of buried affectivities, to bring them to view in their shadow and light, to transform them from within so that the embodied phenomenality may again have the continuities of an open terrain, no longer blocked to possibilities of engagement offered within the horizon of shared experience.

The experiential roots of difficulties such as these may often be the result of what Rorty refers to as the "blind impress" of contingent occurrence upon all our behaviors,<sup>49</sup> the after-effect of earlier abuse, neglect or frustration suffered at a time when these encroachments or absences could not be avoided. Or, just as importantly, the impress of occurrences that have influenced the shape of phenomenal contours having an augmentative significance for our acts. The radical individuality of such shapings of a phenomenal topography is indicated in the following passage from Rorty:

"Anything from the sound of a word through the color of a leaf to the feel of a piece of skin can, as Freud showed us, serve to dramatize and crystallize a human being's sense of self-identity. For any such thing can play the role

in an individual life which philosophers have thought could, or at least should, be played only by things which were universal, common to us all. It can symbolize the blind impress all our behaviors bear. Any random constellation of such things can set the tone of a life. Any such constellation can set up an unconditional commandment to whose service a life may be devoted—a commandment no less unconditional because it may be intelligible to, at most, only one person.<sup>150</sup>

In this sense we must often find our acts determined in ways that we cannot fully command nor perhaps fully fathom. But the crucial difference for a phenomenally experienced embodiment (as opposed to the simple material complex) is that to the extent we suffer such effects, there may come a moment when it becomes clear that if these difficulties are to be dealt with at all, it can only be initiated through an effort that is decided from within: a determination that sets itself in motion. Again, very often, certain kinds of impasse, which are deeply entrenched in the affective phenomenality of habitual modes of embodiment, will require some form of therapeutic assistance to elicit a manner of approach to the impasse. But this is no longer a blind impress, rather it is a guidance actively sought and attended to. That assistance will avail nothing if it does not resonate with the effort of the one who acts to re-align the contours of his or her own lived experience.

In this phenomenality is born "the need to come to terms with the blind impress which chance has given one,"<sup>51</sup> to have the processes that blindly impressed one's own behaviors bear one's own impress.<sup>52</sup> It is, in a manner of speaking, the act of "giving birth to oneself."<sup>53</sup> In this sense, Rorty goes on, the drama of an individual human life can be something of a process of self-overcoming; to find "a way to describe that past which the past never knew, and thereby found a self to be which [one's] precursors never knew was possible."<sup>54</sup>

Overall, it appears that Rorty's view of this re-description or re-alignment of sayable significances is that it is arbitrary in relation to any supposed "true state of

affairs." And indeed, in a certain sense, one must take this as being so *if* we are to understand the self-transformative act of re-description as creative, as expressing something that is not already there, that is, if the intrinsic act is to bring a difference into the world in a way that the extrinsically motivated behaviour does not. But this need not mean that the self-transformative description or metaphor is founded on nothing more solid than a narrative fiction. As Rorty himself notes, there is a difference between the conscious life that tries to escape from contingency and the conscious life that acknowledges and appropriates contingency.<sup>55</sup> It must be in the latter sense that a well-founded self-transformative activity is taken. The newly won sense of significance is not necessitated as the only possible resolution of what has come before, yet it has the beginnings of its articulation in the reflexivity that inflects a phenomenally felt distress or need into the effort turned back to transform this from within the selfsame horizon of lived experience. When an initiating effort comes into being, the recognition and articulation of newly felt significance is no longer dependent only upon that which has come before. Rather, it emerges out of what this effort brings to its own antecedents. In the decisiveness of effort, the topography of that antecedent phenomenal experience, and so too the content of that experience, has already begun to be transformed. If an adumbrated sense of sayable meaning is rooted in this phenomenality, if in its own manner of reflexivity speech bears upon the experiencing that desires itself to be said, then in this sense it is not arbitrary but founded in the phenomenality that evokes it.

What I have tried to show by way of the passage from Elizabeth Grosz and these latter illustrations is that we cannot limit ourselves to Chalmers' approach in dealing with conscious experience. For him, it is simply a question of separating what he believes to be two distinct problems: the problem of the non-reducible phenomenality of experience and the problem of the functionally reducible contents of experience. I have been concerned to point out that in lived experience these

conceptually abstracted properties are never thus separable. The contents of experience are suffused with a phenomenality that is our presence to them.

#### **4. Bringing the things themselves and phenomenal presence to a common ground.**

If we recall Chalmers' example of learning as a process whose experiential content can be neatly reduced to its functional meaning in a physicalist causal story, then the following passage from Adrian van Kaam is very indicative of the kind of concern I have been attempting to express. He writes:

"I am learning the Greek alphabet. I can express this experience of learning in two ways which are fundamentally different. I may say, 'It is fascinating to learn that intriguing alphabet from that encouraging teacher whom I like so much.' So speaking, I experience my learning as my lived relationship to a meaningful situation with many elements which appeal to me. On the other hand, I may say, 'Learning is a function of reinforcement.' In this case I no longer consider my personal learning as a lived role within a full life situation brimming with a variety of meanings. I see it rather as a psychological construct which is subject to psychological laws and which fits into a neatly defined theoretical system. [...]"

In this latter perspective it no longer makes sense to state that learning is fascinating and that a teacher is encouraging. The only meaningful statement which can now be made is a statistical expression of the degree of reinforcement needed for a certain degree of increase in retention. [...] This viewpoint in turn leads to a completely new type of comprehension by which learning is seen as a quantifiable process of behavior, as simply-and-solely given. This shift in comprehension is the act of detaching the behavior of learning from the lived learning situation by no longer conceiving it in its concrete relationship to the whole situation. [...]"

Reflective theory implies an explicit, systematic attention to a selected aspect of a situation. It thus presupposes a shift of attitude, a second look. In behavioral science this means that I take behavior out of its natural lived context, out of the frame of my original world, and that I separate it from its life situation. From that moment on, this behavior appears as no longer

related to the individual living person. I can now manipulate it experimentally, empirically, and statistically within the artificial situation of a theoretical system or experimental design. I establish as it were a new abstract context, a world of constructs, an artificial space for this incident of behavior that I have lifted out of its situation. I can now relate it to other similar incidences of behavior which have been isolated in the same way.<sup>156</sup>

Certainly present-day cognitive research, in its application of experimental method, has been enabled by steady advances in imaging and other probative technologies to gather much more finely grained observations of physiological processes than could earlier behavioural researches. But nothing in principle has changed. The method of observation within the framework of physicalist or functionalist models is still looking at behaviours not acts. Only now, the behaviours observed are internal neural events. As John Searle was earlier quoted as saying, we have exchanged one big black box for a host of much smaller ones. These naturalistic approaches presuppose that an external observation of events in their extrinsic relatedness will eventually reveal all there is to know about the causal progression of such processes.

Furthermore, the sophistication of much of the technology of observation predisposes it to be narrowly focussed in an interrogation of very specific kinds of events. In this respect as well, the method of investigation is not in principle different from that described by van Kaam of the behavioural sciences. The controlled conditions of the experiments; the directives and constraints applied to the movements of the observed 'subject', the exposure of the subject to highly specific, repetitive and very often temporally minute stimuli without supporting context, the sterility and uniformity of a laboratory setting—all these factors have the effect of removing the individual from his or her integrative activities in a lived situation. The artificiality of the observational setting combined with the quantitative and qualitative abstractness of applied stimuli can only elicit a narrowly constrained range of responses. And so too, the phenomenality experienced in the exposure

to these stimuli must have a truncated quality.

In Dennett's *Consciousness Explained*, there are numerous examples of the kind of artificiality inherent to methods of systematic observation. One particularly simple example is illustrative; this is the method by which one can detect the blind spot in one's own visual field. Without moving one's head or averting one's single opened eye from a fixed stare at a centre point marked upon the page, one brings the page gradually closer to the eye until the large dot on the open-eye side of the centre mark vanishes from the still visible surface of the page. If the page is brought closer still, the dot will reappear.<sup>57</sup> It is remarkable to experience this vanishing and reappearing. But what does it tell us? It certainly tells us that from both the external and experiential standpoints this gap in the visual field is indeed there. What we experience in this set-up is given its physiological explanation in the observation that this blind spot corresponds to the place on the retina where the optic nerve exits the eyeball. But the point is that unless this highly unlikely situation is set up, one is likely to live one's whole life without ever experiencing this gap in the visual field. From an objective standpoint this gap is always there, but in the context of everyday embodied activity this fact has no experiential significance. The allowance of unconstrained movement and the interwovenness of our sensory capacities permit us to completely circumvent this physiological effect that might otherwise be a debility.

From such simple experiments as the above to the most advanced techniques of observation such as multi-resonance imaging of patterns of neural activity, one finds various modes of constraining the subject to attend to very particular and repetitive tasks. To be sure, a functional variable linking some element of the physiological process under investigation to some element of a reportable response can be extracted. But the character and spontaneities of an individual shaping of activity in the midst of an often richly textured, interactive or

participatory life situation is lost to these kinds of investigation. For this embodiment as an integrated whole, what is happening and being made to happen all at once in the midst of everyday involvements? And how, in such focussed investigations, can all these interwoven systems but one be left aside in an account of what it is like for us to be consciously embodied?

Perhaps at some point in the advance of observational technique, with some version of a portable, wearable MRI, it will be possible to scan the complete body in all its concurrent physiological processes with a fine-grained resolution. It would be something like a never absent candid camera, recording all the micro-events internal to an individual embodiment in the course of his or her daily involvements. Granted, this would provide a much greater insight into the integrities, variabilities and adaptabilities of lived responsiveness to complex one-of-a-kind situations. Yet even then, 'half' of the ontologically real goings-on would remain invisible to this externally applied observation: the phenomenally experienced presence accompanying the panoply of these integrated physiological processes.

Still invisible would be that inflection wherein the whole of this conscious embodiment, reflexively aware of itself as touching and being touched, acts upon the whole of itself to bring about a desired re-situating of its experience. Invisible would be the act (as contrasted with the behaviour), the effort (as contrasted with the response), the desire or concern (as contrasted with the instinct or program), the inflection (as contrasted with . . . nothing whatsoever). The immediate evidence for these intrinsic qualities would remain accessible only within the horizon of one's own presence in the act, in the effort, in the desire, in the inflection, which turns the experience of being happened to into one of making happen. All that the MRI suit will record is a succession of representations of physical states. Of course, the living scientist making use of these representations would, unaided, be sensitive to what the representations cannot reveal—the intrinsic presence of the other,



resonating in the contours of their interactivity. But then, this living observer-as-scientist, turning to the MRI data, might after all become convinced that evidently, from the ideally neutral standpoint of a fully mechanized gathering of data, nothing other than the recordable succession of extrinsically related events is really, in any fundamental sense, going on.

But would the mechanized data-gathering be any more neutral than the living beings who designed it?—or rather, would that machine just be absolutely fixed in its observational bias in a way that the living designer could never fully be?

The data-gathering bias inherent to mechanized techniques of observation comes about not because the investigator doesn't feel him- or herself to be a capable being. Rather, it comes about through alignment with a knowledge interest—a not unfounded concern to anticipate and control—wherein the abstract conceptualizing of causal closure in an idealized object-world simply has no accommodation for capable being. There is only allowance for a succession of *resultant states* of being and this conception is torn loose from the kind of evidence that would support an appreciation of agency or efficacy carrying forward the phases of its own being. The design of mechanized techniques of observation simply follows this abstractive conceptual bias. We allow that a device that can only report to us the extrinsic relatedness of events brought to visibility is adequate to a description of fundamental realities because an objective conceptual framework doesn't posit the need to suppose nor to look for any other kind of occurrence.

To look again at Chalmers' example of learning, one could wonder what the MRI makes of the encouragement the student feels in the presence of an encouraging teacher. The naturalistic story would proceed in something like the following manner.

When the student reports this feeling of being encouraged, the MRI will correlate it with some constellation of neural firings, reliably concurrent with this kind of report. However, because there is no such thing in the naturalistic conception of matter as "the state of its feeling encouraged," the animating value of this experiential state must be reduced to the functionality of the object-event with which this experience is correlated. For Chalmers it is a bit different. He posits the existence of non-reducible phenomenal properties and so, for him, the phenomenal *quality* of "feeling encouraged" is allowed to stand as a fundamental property of the student. But, in a deft conceptual coup, the 'aboutness' of that feeling, its intentional content, is severed from that phenomenality and reduced to the functionally organized set of object-events realized by those neural firings. For Chalmers, the reduction of this content is required because only in this way can it take up a causal role in the closed system of physical events. In Chalmers' bifurcated property-ontology, an intentional content that remained inseparable from the supposed pure non-physicality of an intrinsic presence could be given its causal role only at the cost of breaking open the closed system of physical causality—thus dashing the ideal of an absolute naturalistic determinability. So for Chalmers, as well as for Dennett, the phenomenal presence within experience counts for nothing in the causal account.

Meanwhile, intentional content is reduced to a set of micro-events that have no resemblance to a phenomenal 'aboutness' that we experience, nor to any of the interwoven significances that this phenomenality bears forth. It is the micro-events that are now seen as the exclusive vehicle of causal roles. With the causality of encouragement reduced to this level, it would hardly seem to matter whether we take these events to be 'representations' (adequate or otherwise) of some real state of affairs. These neural events could be a re-presentation of some real state of affairs that counts as 'encouragement' for conscious experience or they could be *just* a functional organization of neural events without accompanying experience,

and their behavioural effect is supposed to be exactly the same. This constellation of neural firings, whether representational or not, will produce a cascade of further events, all of which, independent of phenomenality, will be supposed to result in an observable macro-behaviour—say, the student now opening a book on the desk.

If we were to look at the situation in which the student has come to have this sense of encouragement, then most immediately this would involve a consideration of the communicative acts that have passed between teacher and student. Perhaps the teacher has spoken some words praising the progress of the student, or words that let the student see beyond the difficulties of the task at hand, or words that helped to ease some distress the student felt with other difficulties in his or her life. A smile, a pat on the back, the lending of a book, and certainly the teacher's own enthusiasm for what is being taught could all be ways of communicating encouragement. But these same offerings by the teacher could, on another occasion with the same student, have little effect. Or, with another student, these same offerings might be met with indifference or even hostility. The 'positive reinforcement' may be steady but these efforts of the teacher have no guarantee of always being met in the same way.

In their presence to each other, there is for each an experienced phenomenality unfolding in the immediacy of this current engagement. This phenomenality is for consciousness always an experiencing in the present moment and yet, at the same time for each a presence of their own past. Very little of this life experience may at this moment be consciously recollected, yet it is altogether still present as the topography of this phenomenality in its full embodiment. It is there in the relaxedness or tenseness of the body, in the distractedness or attentiveness of seeing, in the dullness or alertness of hearing, in the awakedness or incomprehension of tactility which, to the fingertips, can carry a sense of capability or discouragement in the apprehension of a skill. The body, alert and

poised in attentive engagement with a task, is experienced as a unison of the whole, and one's act, in the significance of its intending, comes forth in this unison with the assurance of a phenomenally felt capacity to do what now wants doing. Alternately, a discouragement or torpor of the body can be experienced as a malaise of the whole, and one's activity, the significance of its intending, falters in this phenomenally felt incapacity or uncertainty.

For each individual the texture and tenor of lived phenomenality can vary within this range between vibrantly felt capacity and densely felt incapacity. The periodicity and intensity of these phenomenally experienced variations can have a pattern of recurrence coincident with recurrent themes encountered in lived situations. Thus, the topography of an individual's phenomenality needn't be lived and expressed altogether from moment to moment as a constant. Rather, it is a topography that is lived as this pattern of recurrences over time. Different situations, when encountered, will have elements that are resonant with contoured regions within this Gestalt phenomenality of lived experience. The important thing to consider is that within the phenomenality of a self-reflexive being there is not *only* the waiting-to-be-happened-to that can affect a change in this pattern of phenomenally experienced recurrences. There is for this self-reflexive manner of being a presence that cannot but animate a concern to transcend, through an effort applied to itself, some still experienced antecedent condition of itself. It can be as simple as the effort to reach for a glass of water after having experienced and continuing to experience thirst. It can be delight in the effort to prolong a pleasurable encounter or project. It can also be a sustained effort, at times a difficult struggle, to reshape the pattern of more habitually lived experiential contours. It is, as Hans Jonas writes, this phenomenal presence that makes the difference. Here, Jonas speaks of living beings in general.

"There is inwardness or subjectivity involved in this transcendence, imbuing all the encounters occasioned in its horizon with the quality of felt selfhood,

however faint its voice. It must be there for satisfaction or frustration to make a difference."<sup>58</sup>

Jonas goes on to describe that it is "the mere element of effort which lifts bodily activity out of the class of mechanical performance" and that this effort cannot be understood without reference to the affective phenomenality of those needs, desires and satisfactions we experience as embodied.<sup>59</sup> It would appear then that it is through the animative qualities of phenomenality and effort that we must view the act as something more than a behaviour. The efficacy of the act, its making a difference in the world, arises originatively in a self-reflexive presence that can act upon itself.

To be sure, in the disablement of activity through injury, disease or severe distress, an externally applied and specialized knowledge of *how* particular physiological systems and elements thereof function and of how they can be returned to proper function, can be understood as valuable and desirable. In such circumstances, the individual who experiences this suffering turns through that inflection whereby activity acquiesces in a passivity that allows itself, as body-object, in the externality of its parts, to be *worked upon*. Indeed, in situations where surgery is required, the anesthetized body approaches a non-experiential object-like inertness. The anesthetic is needed because without it, the phenomenal quality of pain would be too intense to endure and the struggle to escape from being subjected to this pain would in any case make the operation itself impossible.

So we see that a functional knowledge, based upon a purely extrinsic sense of the relatedness of things, is not without value. But it cannot reveal to us everything we might wish to understand about the world and our consciousness within it. Thus, through the 'inner passage' of an active involvement in lived situations, the micro-functional operations of these extrinsically related organs composing our embodiment are not those things to which we must attend in order

to accomplish an intended act. It isn't the "how" of these functions that then concerns us. Rather, it is the *what* and *why* of that which our effort sets about to *do* by acting *through* these functions.<sup>60</sup> It is in this sense that Emmet described the *act* as immanent causation: the whole of a phenomenally lived embodiment, acting through the functioning of its parts (and indeed, within limits, affecting the functioning of those parts) towards some end that the whole, though none of the parts, intends.

In speaking of the somatically experienced body—the phenomenality of felt malaise or unison, of dullness or alertness, of the zones of reticence or openness—we see these affective qualities, these moods of our embodiment, woven into the receptivities and activities which gather and guide our ongoing perceptual experience. Our conscious intendings strive to be about this phenomenality. (Or indeed, at times, our conscious intendings may work at occluding distressing contours of our phenomenal experience. And our acts, either through substance addiction or addiction to diversionary tasks and so on may succeed briefly to submerge this distress. But the result is only a more torturously complex phenomenal topography, one that must in turn be dealt with). Our efforts to affect a change within ourselves or, through *this* reflexive change, affect a change in the world, can be conceived of as the inflection from a passive mode of experiencing this phenomenality into the active mode of *shaping* this experienced phenomenality. I'm afraid that these repeated attempts to articulate a sense for this kind of being that is an embodied presence have been rather drawn out. For really, what I have been attempting to elucidate, as much for myself as for any reader, is already contained in the insight of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty when they spoke of that reflexivity wherein the hand that is touched by the other hand touching becomes in turn the hand that touches the other hand now touched.

In the context of the encounter between student and teacher which we had

been looking at, it becomes apparent that at the level of a phenomenological description of lived significances, much can be appreciated as affecting a capacity to learn. Eventually, there is hardly any manner of incident or constellation of incidents shaping interwoven regions of a life experience that can be left out of an attempt to understand an individual's preparedness or unpreparedness to learn. There is hardly any manner of personal encounter, in situations not necessarily having immediate bearing on education, which cannot be viewed as affecting in some individual a sense of encouragement, discouragement, hope, despair or indifference. And the correlative of all these possible manners of being affected would be the manner in which each individual *met* and dealt with these incidents and encounters. If only in wondering what has inspired someone's passionate interest in a highly specialized field of endeavour, we will find ourselves tracing back through the contours of a personal biography to gather a sense of how that person was moved to initiate and sustain the effort to excel in their chosen field. All these considerations can be brought into the notion of "what it means to learn" and it may vary tremendously from individual to individual.

In a phenomenological understanding, the notion of 'effort', in a sense gathered from one's own pre-reflective experience, cannot be excluded from an account of learning, nor for that matter, from any other kind of activity. And clearly, effort is embedded in this selfsame phenomenal presence that first has it matter to us to undertake any action whatsoever.

Just as clearly, effort can hardly be understood as arising in a vacuum. It grows out of an embodied presence within a situation, and that presence already has the shape of an inhabited phenomenal terrain. These are all antecedent conditions, and for that reason, it will always be simpler to suppose, for purposes of causal explanation, that nothing new in the sense of a founding initiative need enter the story. The only clue that we have for suspecting that causality is not so

determinately simple and closed is that difference we feel between touching and being touched, between seeing and being seen, between making happen and being happened to. But this back-and-forth inflection is the pervasive motif of our conscious experience in its active and passive modes. The act of touching, the act of seeing, any mode of activity as just this "making oneself happen," are extrinsically invisible. As Merleau-Ponty pointed out, even to myself, touching is not among the things I can touch, seeing is not among the things I can see. Rather, touching and seeing are the intangible and the invisible that allow anything whatsoever to be tangible or visible, that allow the tangible and visible things to be touched and seen in their extrinsic relations to each other.<sup>61</sup> In accord with this sense of the act as an intrinsic efficacy, it can only be understood as an immanent cause. That is, the act will never be required for an explanation in terms of event causation, where 'events' are characterized by their extrinsic relatedness to each other. The act only makes its efficacy known within the phenomenal horizon of the one who acts. And in this sense, the act is that which completes the difference it makes within the one who acts.

When this difference, through the act, is made visible—say, in the movement of my body in a forward step—then an explanation that requires a visible to be the cause of a visible, an explanation that requires the referents of its terms to be counted among the order of things extrinsically relatable will, when observing this forward step, look back *through* the act as if it were not there. Instead, the explanation will trace its understanding of the step back along the lineaments of physiological function.

If from out of concern, you lift your arm to hold back a friend from crossing the road too soon, then naturalistic dualism, unlike a fully reductive functionalism, will at least grant a fundamental reality to the phenomenality of your felt concern. But your concern will not remain in any explanation of how or why your arm moved.



Similarly, the concern and then the effort the teacher feels in bringing forth encouraging acts for the benefit of the student will vanish in the functional account of causal elements involved in these behaviours. These behaviours in turn will be viewed as having their effect upon the student, but this effect will be read through specific channels in the physiological processing of input events, a processing that can be made visible. The pat on the shoulder or the vibrational pattern of spoken words will be reckoned as stimuli whose passage through the student's body is transparent until they culminate in neural events. The constellation of events thus produced are construed as being, in some manner, a structurally isomorphic or iconic representation of a pattern of events in the world external to the body. But the representational content of these neural events, observed in their extrinsic visibility, has no site for the attachment of semantic value. At most, they can be taken as syntactical structures, an information content, having no need of being interpreted as a meaning *for* anyone. Rather, this cluster of neural events, independent of any experiential significance, is seen as a functional element with a specific causal role in a pared-down lineage of antecedent and consequent events. Thus, in the always-pushed-from-behind succession of further neural firings, an efferent impulse is generated, whose issue is the motion of the student's hand to open the book on the table.

Nowhere in this functional explanation will the phenomenality of concern or effort, the felt significance of encouragement or learning enter into the description of what it is that caused this behaviour to occur.

And yet, the ability to *specify* a functional role for a great portion of these concurrent neural events requires some form of first-person report of a concurrently experienced phenomenal quality. Without co-opting this evidence from an experiential presence to a given stimulus, no functional role could be attributed to a particular cluster of neural events. Nor for that matter could entire sensory

systems be discovered in their functional significance without this correlative acquaintance with the phenomenally experienced value of these particular organ-devices. Thus, Hans Jonas writes:

"However complete the physiochemical analysis of the composition of the eye and of the processes attending its stimulation may be, no account of its construction and functioning is meaningful without relating it to seeing. [...] Not the most complete analytical record, down to the minutest detail, of the space-time data of an eye + optic nerve + visual cortex, etc., if such data be his only terms, would enable him to infer that in a given case an act of vision occurs—not knowing in the first place what "seeing" could possibly mean."<sup>62</sup>

If the localization and attribution of functional significance are so inseparably fused to an immediate acquaintance with phenomenal experience, then how can we give definitive certainty to a claim that this phenomenal presence is not implicated in the ongoing performance of these functions?

If, as Chalmers believes (and this is not disputed except insofar as he limits his structural coherence principle to a correlation between phenomenal events and *neurophysiological events*), a given structure of physiological events would *always* in this world be accompanied by a unique qualitative structuring within experienced phenomenality, then how can it be ascertained that, in the hypothetical absence of this phenomenal presence, these physiological events would unfold in exactly the same manner? For if they did not, then a phenomenally experienced presence would have to be understood as making a difference to physiological events as these issue forth in bodily behaviours. In effect, these could no longer be construed simply as bodily behaviours, but would need also to be appreciated in their possibility as effective embodied acts.

For Chalmers there is no common ground for the meeting of an embodied phenomenal presence with the things themselves as we experience them in order that these might interact in their mutual presence to each other. Phenomenal

presence is unreduced and, in a manner of speaking, 'embodied', but as if behind a glass wall that prevents this presence from animating its own embodiment. Meanwhile, the things themselves never come into immediate contact with this phenomenal presence, for this 'presence' has been tied to a particular functional arrangement of neural events that are supposed to be a representation of the things themselves. So we are left with a non-reduced, non-physical presence and a reduced representational event—two completely different orders of occurrence, the former somehow arising from the latter yet banished from the order of things which can be given the role of cause.

So, it must also be asked just what is meant by a 'content' of experience. We need to contrast embodied consciousness with neural consciousness to appreciate the effect these different approaches have on the notion of content.

For neural consciousness there is unavoidably a content in the sense of something 'contained'. First the brain is contained in an enclosed recess of the body. Then neural events are contained within deeper recesses of the brain. For any such set of internal events to be taken as a perceptual cognition of occurrences beyond these recesses—either within, at the surface of, or beyond the body—they must be construed as some form of re-presentation of the actual occurrences. The representational contents of these micro-events are removed from immediate contact with the things that they are supposed to be about. And so the content, the 'aboutness' that originally had the significance of something met in lived experience, becomes more readily figurable by reducing it to a functional role assigned to the micro-events themselves.

For an embodied consciousness in the primary mode of perceptual experience, a 'content' is not in the above manner 'contained in' a cognition. Rather, it is that which is met in the presence to and the engagement with the things

themselves. The same neural events as those mentioned above are still occurring in the brain. Only now, the significance of an encounter need not be wrestled with in an attempt to contain it within those isolated micro-events. Rather, those neural occurrences are inextricably interwoven with every other occurrence at and internal to the surface of the body. It is this embodied integrity that experiences itself as present in the encounter. It is a presence whose phenomenality has the merged qualities of both a conscious and somatically inhabited awareness. The sensitive and mobile contours of this body are already out here in the world. Out here, the significance for us of an experienced 'content' is coincident with the manner of our embodied presence to the things themselves.

If I feel the touch of a hand upon my shoulder, my experience of this is the unmediated contact of my shoulder with that hand. The hand, the touch, are not contained in my experience, but rather are what my experience encounters. What I encounter here has no need of reduction because it isn't something that is represented for my experience by some other kind of event. My embodied presence to the touch is right there at my shoulder.

Without question, the neural events that are occurring in my brain are implicated in my being able to feel this touch. No less relevant are the nervous system pathways that establish the connectivity between shoulder and brain, and these with all of my other limbs. No less crucial are all the other physiological systems that keep the brain and the rest of my body nourished and connected. However, my embodied presence to the world is not contained in any one of these systems, but is rather this whole 'thing', which in its presence to itself and the world, is no longer the kind of thing that a naturalistic ontology can fully describe.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, our perceptual presence to that which we experience includes the occurrence of neural events, but this presence is not contained by them. Rather,

our perceptual experience coincides with the manner in which this full embodiment comports itself among the things themselves.

Furthermore, these 'contents' or rather these things with which our perceptual experience is involved, do not just happen to us. Something shows itself to us in the communicability of the things themselves to each other. And we, immediately present to this showing, are affected by it. We may then, from out of a phenomenally felt concern or interest, call out to, move towards or bring towards us this element within our perceptual horizon. Or, affected in an adverse way, we may push it away or flee from it. Or, taking an interest in something, we can move ourselves around this 'content' of experience in order to make ourselves present to as many of its contours as possible. In this way we can explore the thing itself in the manner in which it is for us something present as visible, touchable, audible. And if this something engages us in an interactive involvement, we gather from the qualities of this involvement a sense of its own intrinsic presence resonating in our presence to it.

In every encounter there is a merging of that which shows itself with the phenomenality experienced in a presence to that showing. In the pattern and manner of approach, avoidance or indifference to the things themselves within the world horizon, there is the phenomenal topography of an individually lived history of involvements within that same world horizon. Though there is no mediating set of events between the presence touching that which is touched, this doesn't mean that the thing touched is reducible to a determinate set of facts that would define it for no matter which encountering of it. The non-reducible difference will reside with for whom it matters to be thus pursuing or resisting the encounter.

So too, the outcome of an encounter cannot be made fully determinate by reference to sets of facts pertaining to common visibles. Phenomenality, at the

surface and in the thickness of bodies in motion, an invisible to all but each embodied presence, carries its motions through the world. In the participatory immediacy that phenomenal presence allows, there can be in this moment a deciding of occurrence as it unfolds—a difference in the world that would never be found had that presence been absent. Husserl wrote:

*"Animation designates the way in which mind acquires a locality in the spatial world, its spatialization as it were, and together with its corporal support, acquires reality. Reality, namely, insofar as the mental in its co-givenness with the physically natural is not only co-existing with it but is united with it by real causality. [...] Accordingly, the objective experiential world as spatial world is not merely a unity of physical causalities, but of psychophysical causalities. Psychic effects pass over into the physis and thereby into the entire physical world."*<sup>64</sup>

In evolving a vocabulary for a revisioned ontology there may be ways of speaking of consciousness as not so much having its support in the body or of its effects passing over into the physical, in as much as these connote two distinct things operating on each other. Rather, it might be a way of describing a fundamental kind of unity that carries itself forward through a constant inflection of its undividedness. In the conclusion that follows, I will be presenting Merleau-Ponty's elucidation of this reflexivity and how it brings forth the manner of our contact with the things themselves. What evolves out of his description is a sense of the interwovenness of embodied presence with that to which it is present.

When conscious and somatic phenomenality are released from their containment in the thicket of neural events, becoming instead a quality of presence coincident with the animate contours of our embodiment, then, in this simultaneity, at this clearing whose horizon is the world's, a real sense can be gathered from our contact with the things themselves. Without this coincidence there is nowhere to relocate the quality of effort or act, nor indeed any other phenomenal quality while retaining for them anything like the significance they bear for us in lived experience.

## Chapter IV - Conclusion: Inflection, Perception and Dwelling in the World

We have seen in the preceding chapters that the task of filling out a sense for the revisioning of our ontology, a task grounded within the full range of phenomenality that lived experience affords us, turns greatly upon the reflexivity of embodied existence. In our own embodied presence to the world it is this inflection that turns through the gap between one's sense of the body-as-object being touched and the body-as-subject in active touching. Elizabeth Grosz remarks that for Merleau-Ponty it is the experience of this inflection, this Möbius-like "torsion or pivot"<sup>1</sup> around which is generated a bivalent sense of our presence to the world, which is utilized "to destabilize the structure of binary oppositions dominating so much of western thought."<sup>2</sup> This point of inflection, this reversibility unfolding and refolding itself in the gap constantly crossed and recrossed between what are *conceived* in opposing terms as mind and body, activity and passivity, interiority and exteriority, is the founding occurrence of this kind of being that our ontology has not yet described. Elizabeth Grosz writes:

"This impossible, excluded middle predates and makes possible the binary terms insofar as it precedes and exceeds them, insofar as it is uncontainable in either term. Perception is, as it were, the mid-way between mind and body and requires the functioning of both."<sup>3</sup>

This founding occurrence or excluded middle preceding and exceeding the conceptually derived opposition of mind and body is given a further sense through an insight of Luce Irigaray referred to by Grosz. Irigaray remarks on the symmetry of one's hands joined at the palms with fingers outstretched (as they would be in a gesture of prayer). Grosz relates that, in evoking this image (or indeed, in experiencing this sensation), a relation of tactile symmetry is revealed which moves beyond or beneath the tactile asymmetry of one hand moving across to touch the other hand now touched. For Merleau-Ponty, this asymmetry prevents the touching

and the touched from ever being experienced simultaneously; there is always "slippage," a reversibility that makes touching and being touched a transforming of the one into the other. But for Irigaray, where one hand does not impose itself upon the other, there is an indeterminacy in the experience of which hand is touched and which is touching—and yet there is tactility in this indeterminate simultaneity.<sup>4</sup> In light of this insight it may be gathered that this reversibility or inflection is the motion-of-itself through which our embodied presence constantly recalls to itself its ontic wholeness: a presence, which in its founding moment, is undifferentiated. Merleau-Ponty writes:

"I experience—and as often as I wish—the transition and the metamorphosis of the one experience into the other, and it is only as though the hinge between them, solid, unshakeable, remained irremediably hidden from me. But this hiatus between my right hand touched and my right hand touching, between my voice heard and my voice uttered, between one moment of my tactile life and the following one, is not an ontological void, a non-being: it is spanned by the total being of my body, and by that of the world; it is the zero of pressure between two solids that makes them adhere to one another."<sup>5</sup>

Grosz continues to explore the experience of simultaneity through Irigaray's insights in respect to earliest lived sensations within the womb. In consideration of this, we gather a sense of the corporeal genesis of presence in an undifferentiated experience of tactility, proffered by the mother's motions and the sonorities of her voice.

"[There] is neither the subjective touching of the toucher nor the objectivity of the touched but the indeterminacy of any distance between them. It escapes control, not being subject to the kind of voluntary slippage by which the touching hand becomes the touched."<sup>6</sup>

This is in some respects analogous to what Hans Jonas suggests may be the quality of presence or openness to the world abiding with vegetative life. There, the absence of self-uprooting mobility is correlative with a capacity to absorb directly those nourishments proffered by an environment touching the plant's receptive



surfaces. Here too there is a movement in roots and limbs seeking moisture and light, but this can only be quite local. So long as the plant lives, a distance never opens up between a need and its satisfaction. But that life, that openness to the world, ends when the contiguous surroundings are depleted of that which the plant requires.

Jonas goes on to describe that, with motility, life constitutes itself with a further degree of freedom. It is no longer completely dependent upon what its immediate surroundings can proffer. The distance that can then open out between a need and its satisfaction is correlative with its ability to move and to perceive expansively and so, differentially, across a spatial distance. Yet further, to cross the temporal distance between a need and its satisfaction, an emotive or animative power is essential. It is the affective quality of desire entwined with motility and perception which engages the creature in an effort to cross a spatial and temporal distance towards its goal.<sup>7</sup> Jonas writes:

"This ontological individual, its very existence at any moment, its duration and its identity in duration is, then, essentially its own function, its own concern, its own continuous achievement."<sup>8</sup>

From an undifferentiated tactile presence, life in movement and perception across distance discovers its own body among the things around it as objectives that its own embodied effort can reach across or travel towards to touch. At the core of this intercalated differentiation between touching and being touched, between effort and acquiescence, is the inflective turning of presence upon itself in a "voluntary slippage." Volition enters the gap between need and satisfaction when perception and motility allow the ability to differentiate and reach alternative objectives through an effort that can attain them by alternative means. Arising in the phenomenally felt quality of presence within a situation, concern inflects itself into an effort applied to some needs over others. In concordance with the individuality of lived experience, needs can be multiplied, simplified, postponed or

denied.

If, in a revisioning of ontology, we understand ourselves as the kind of being for whom effort is possible, then can we explain this? When taken in the sense in which it is lived—an initiating and sustaining reflexive power that begins with and acts upon the contours of its own embodiment *through* those same contours so that the whole moves the whole—we won't recognize it in any description of matter's capabilities as conceived in a naturalistic ontology. If in our current ontology we cannot account for matter as the kind of thing that is present to a touch and can inflect that sense of touch into an act of touching, shall we then only explain ourselves and our contact with the world in a way that pretends this phenomenality is not really there or that it is there but removed from any real engagement with the things it touches and is touched by? Or rather, we can recognize as our starting point the manner in which we do experience these things with a lived familiarity, trying to conceive how we, among the things themselves, are something more than can be fully explained. It is concerning this choice in the manner of approach to lived experience that Merleau-Ponty writes the following passage:

"To be sure, one can reply that, between the two 'sides' of our body, the body as sensible and the body as sentient (what in the past we called objective body and phenomenal body), rather than a spread, there is the abyss that separates the In Itself from the For Itself. It is a problem—and we will not avoid it—to determine how the sensible sentient can also be thought. But here, seeking to form our first concepts in such a way as to avoid the classical impasses, we do not have to honor the difficulties that they may present when confronted with a *cogito*, which itself has to be re-examined. Yes or No: do we have a body—that is, not a permanent object of thought, but a flesh that suffers when it is wounded, hands that touch? We know: hands do not suffice for touch—but to decide for this reason alone that our hands do not touch, and to relegate them to the world of objects or of instruments, would be, in acquiescing to the bifurcation of subject and object, to forego in advance the understanding of the sensible and to deprive ourselves of its lights. We propose on the contrary to take it literally to begin with. We say therefore that our body is a being of two leaves, from one side a thing among things and otherwise what sees and touches them; we say,

because it is evident, that it unites these two properties within itself, and its double belongingness to the order of the 'object' and to the order of the 'subject' reveals to us quite unexpected relations between the two orders. It cannot be by incomprehensible accident that the body has this double reference; it teaches us that each calls for the other.<sup>19</sup>

In his essay *The Intertwining—The Chiasm*, from which the previous passage and the ones to follow are drawn, Merleau-Ponty's primary concern is not to draw out from an experiential sense of the self-initiated act a revised notion of causality that could be implicated by the new ontology. Rather, more fundamentally, he wishes to show that the manner of 'thing' we experience ourselves to be cannot be understood unless we view our own reflexivity as interwoven with the kind of 'thing' the world is. He wishes to show that the communicability of the things themselves to each other resides in their being fundamentally akin to each other. And, as I have tried to show in the previous chapter, we cannot conceive of an embodied presence effectively interacting with the thing itself until we make sense of their encounter as occurring on this common ground.

We do not really have a word to refer to that which is a fundamental unity of subject and object or activity and passivity. We will speak either of mind or body, depending on what is the emphasis of our description. As residing together in the same individual, we are left with only a vague conception that somehow there are two different kinds of things here welded together. Perhaps the closest we come in English to referring to this fundamental whole is the word 'person'. Yet that word for us has an exclusive ring to it, for, in applying it only to human being, we disconnect ourselves from a sense that the fundamental kind of being we are is akin to the kind of being the world has. The naturalistic standpoint reconnects us in its own way but only at the cost of losing for us much of the sense of what we experience ourselves to be and draining the world of these lived meanings carried forth through the reciprocities of those that arise within it.

In his essay, Merleau-Ponty uses 'the flesh' as a metaphor to describe the fundamental unity of subject and object which we live as our embodied presence within the world. At first this metaphor seems to connote a particular kind of 'thingness', more on the side of 'matter' than 'mind'. Yet it has as one of its connotations the matter of that which lives and feels itself living. The inclusive sense that Merleau-Ponty wishes to convey by this metaphor is suggested by his description of the world as flesh. This may not be the only metaphor that could be used to 'encapsulate' a sense for the manner in which we are akin to the things themselves. But then, we see how we really do lack a common term to gather in one expression a unitive sense of body and mind or matter and spirit. Merleau-Ponty tries to place the use of this metaphor in the following ways:

"The flesh is not matter, in the sense of corpuscles of being which would add up or continue on one another to form beings. [...] In general, it is not a fact or a sum of facts 'material' or 'spiritual'. Nor is it a representation for a mind [...] The flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance. To designate it, we should need the old term 'element', in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth, and fire, that is, in the sense of a *general thing*, midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being. The flesh is in this sense an 'element' of Being. Not a fact or a sum of facts, and yet adherent to *location* and to the *now*. Much more: the inauguration of the 'where' and the 'when', the possibility and exigency for the fact. And, at the same time, what makes the facts have meaning, makes the fragmentary facts dispose themselves about 'something'. [...] we can show that the flesh is an ultimate notion, that it is not the union or compound of two substances, but thinkable by itself [...]"<sup>10</sup>

It is the coiling over of the visible upon the seeing body, of the tangible upon the touching body, which is attested in particular when the body sees itself, touches itself seeing and touching the things, such that, simultaneously, as tangible, it descends among them, as touching it dominates them all [...] What we are calling flesh, this interiorly worked-over mass, has no name in philosophy. As the formative medium of the object and the subject, it is not the atom of being, the hard in itself that resides in a unique place and moment: one can indeed say of my body that it is not *elsewhere*, but one cannot say that it is *here* or *now* in the sense that objects are; and yet my vision does not soar above them, it is not the being that is wholly knowing,

for it has its own inertia, its ties. We must not think the flesh starting from substances, from body and spirit—for then it would be the union of contradictories—but we must think it, as we said, as an element, as the concrete emblem of a general manner of being."<sup>11</sup>

What begins to become apparent in Merleau-Ponty's elucidation of the flesh as a fundamental kind, an element, is that we are no longer trying to conceive how systems of functionally related material *parts* could generate or be accompanied by a phenomenal presence, nor a phenomenal embodiment that could be brought to the positivistic determinateness of a total set of facts.

Rather, in the foldedness of the world upon itself, there is an upwelling and an indwelling that precede and exceed the facts—for it is the motion within itself that brings the facts into being, so that through us, the world becomes a thought of itself to be spoken amongst us, communicating its sense to us in the ways that we, as situated, become concerned to meet this turning back of the world upon itself. The whole of this together upwells, unfolds in a manner that is the in-between and encompassing of any partiality. And yet, the partedness and 'sequentiality' of this whole is there, infinitely divisible and reformulable, for the indwelling which, in folding back upon itself betwixt the folds that encompass it and the folds that it encompasses, is as much a *beginning* of motion as all the rest.

The directedness of this motion is born in a manner of sensitivity, and hence, of concern to be a resituating of its presence within all this which would otherwise only happen to it, which would only carry it along without its own participation. And yet, by its own inflection, folding upon itself betwixt the upwelling that pushes and the indwelling that stands to and meets this pressure, it has this own sense of capacity to participate, to act as well as to be acted upon.

Our embodied perceptual presence is at root, before reflection, a presence coincident with this embodied inflection back and forth; immediate presence to the

things themselves still resides between the thought partedness of things.

In our own manner of being, in a manner that often finds us asking 'why?', the sense of our active power is expansive so that, most intensely in these recent centuries past, our self-directedness is increasingly governed by reflection *upon* the immediate presence that is still ours among the things themselves. We attend closely to the contours of the things themselves as they press upon us. We look for recurrences shown to us within those motions in order that we might be ahead of them when they again occur. And we conceive the possibility of weaving our own acts between these recurrences, to join them in a matrix of harnessings that will establish our larger domain. Recurrence and reproduceability become for us the definitive essence of the motions of the things themselves: the object of our interest. We abstract recurrence from their motions and they become objectively more real for us when their motions conform in this way.

To our own presence among them, the things show themselves as the visible and the tangible which can be viewed in terms of predictable recurrence—and we also increasingly become for ourselves definable in these terms. The facts about the things themselves, the facts about ourselves among them are inclined towards, are woven around the verifiability of visible recurrence, and we lose a sense for the non-recurrent in between as clue perhaps to an indwelling spontaneity in the things themselves in their own situatedness, meeting the upwelling of the 'all-together' in their own manner of being.

Thus, facts are there to be found. They are afforded to us by the things themselves, yet always correlative to a particular concern we have in attending to them. Preceding and subtending our attention to objective fact, there is a presence to the things themselves, which in a pre-reflective immediacy not yet interpolated by fact, reveals them as always more than any set of facts could describe. In the

following passages, Merleau-Ponty describes how our perceptual presence, spun in the inflective turn between touching and being touched, weaves itself into the fabric of the world, discovering itself akin to that which is encountered therein.

"Between the exploration and what it will teach me, between my movements and what I touch, there must exist some relation by principle, some kinship [...] This can happen only if my hand, while it is felt from within, is also accessible from without, itself tangible, for my other hand for example, if it takes its place among the things it touches, is in a sense one of them, opens finally upon a tangible being of which it is also a part. Through this crisscrossing within it of the touching and the tangible, its own movements incorporate themselves into the universe they interrogate [...] the "touching subject" passes over to the rank of the touched, descends into the things, such that the touch is formed in the midst of the world and as it were in the things."<sup>12</sup>

And of the visible, he writes:

"Every visible is cut out in the tangible, every tactile being in some manner promised to visibility [...] every vision takes place somewhere in tactile space. There is double and crossed situating of the visible in the tangible and of the tangible in the visible [...]"

[He] who sees cannot possess the visible unless he is possessed by it, unless he *is of it* [...] We understand then why we see the things themselves, in their places, where they are, according to their being which is indeed more than their being-perceived [...] It is that the thickness of the flesh between the seer and the thing is constitutive for the thing of its visibility as for the seer of his corporeity; it is not an obstacle between them, it is their means of communication. [...]"

The body interposed is not itself a thing, an interstitial matter, a connective tissue, but a sensible *for itself*, which means, not that absurdity: color that sees itself, surface that touches itself—but this paradox (?): a set of colors and surfaces inhabited by a touch, a vision, hence an *exemplar sensible*."<sup>13</sup>

"If [the body] touches and sees, this is not because it would have the visibles before itself as objects: they are about it, they even enter its enclosure, they are within it, they line its looks and its hands inside and outside. If it touches them and sees them, this is only because, being of their family, itself visible and tangible, it uses its own being as a means to participate in theirs, because each of the two beings is an archetype for the other, because the

body belongs to the order of the things as the world is universal flesh."<sup>14</sup>

"We have to reject the age-old assumptions that put the body in the world and the seer in the body, or, conversely, the world and the body in the seer as in a box. Where are we to put the limit between the body and the world, since the world is flesh? [...] There is reciprocal insertion and intertwining of one in the other. [...]

One can say that we perceive the things themselves, that we are the world that thinks itself—or that the world is at the heart of our flesh [...] and it is indeed a paradox of Being, not a paradox of man, that we are dealing with here."<sup>15</sup>

In these passages one gathers an integrative, participatory sense of conscious presence in the world. The qualitative character of lived experience is not an epiphenomenal adjunct to functional processes whose substrate is physical through and through. The world is not an inanimate inevitability pushed, from the moment of some absolute beginning, through an already determined sequence of material outcomes including neural events. Rather, it is a world that is animated from within its own folds and we are participants in these motions now unfolding. If there is paradox in this, then it is no more paradoxical than an inexplicable initiative power that is posited as preceding the world in order to have set it in motion. As of itself active, this power, as mysteriously as an epiphenomenal consciousness, would somehow have to be outside a world conceived as pure extension. Given that this efficacious cause must somewhere be brought into an account of the world, it can more readily be brought towards conceptual understanding by attending to those involvements that acquaint us directly with a sense of the animate, a sense of the act, through lived experience. David Abram writes:

"Our most immediate experience of things, according to Merleau-Ponty, is necessarily an experience of reciprocal encounter—of tension, communication and commingling. From within the depths of this encounter, we know the thing or phenomenon only as our interlocuter—as a dynamic presence that confronts us and draws us into relation. [...] To define another



being as an inert or passive object is to deny its ability to actively engage us and to provoke our senses; we thus block our perceptual reciprocity with that being. By linguistically defining the surrounding world as a determinate set of objects, we cut our conscious, speaking selves off from the spontaneous life of our sensing bodies.

If on the other hand, we wish to describe a particular phenomenon without repressing our direct experience, then we cannot avoid speaking of the phenomenon as an active, animate entity with which we find ourselves engaged. [...] To the sensing body *no* thing presents itself as utterly passive or inert. Only by affirming the animateness of perceived things do we allow our words to emerge directly from the depths of our ongoing reciprocity with the world."<sup>16</sup>

If animateness is thus discovered to reside within the folds of the world and we, through perceptual presence, discover ourselves to be participants in the decidability of things yet to unfold, then the notion of a causally closed system may no longer be adequate for an appreciation of what can occur in this world. This would mean that the regularities observable in causal sequences could not be aligned with some notion of a transcendent natural law. Rather, these regularities would need to be viewed as evolving from out of ongoing involvements among the things themselves. The biochemist Rupert Sheldrake applies this understanding to ideas he develops for a theory of evolution, and he credits Charles Pierce with an earlier formulation of the concept. Sheldrake writes:

"If the evolving regularities of nature are not governed by transcendent laws, then could they not be more like habits? Habits develop over time; they depend on what has happened before and on how often it has happened. They are not all given in advance by eternal laws which are quite independent of anything that actually happens—and even independent of the existence of the universe. Habits develop *within* nature; they are not imposed on the world ready-made."<sup>17</sup>

Habitual regularities would be no less observable as recurrent features of the world's unfolding than would be 'lawful regularities'. But they would not fix this unfolding with a determinateness in principle which has us identify core qualities of our own experience as illusory. The task of revisioning our ontology through a

phenomenological description of lived experience may provide us with the means to conceive our world as one which, throughout the scale of its spatio-temporal unfoldings, has an inherent liveliness. We may then conclude that there is nothing that can finally be described as fundamentally inert or inactive in the being and becoming of this world.

In the naturalistic tradition we have lost the capacity to conceive for a theoretical understanding the likelihood of a fundamental activity or aliveness in the things themselves. If in every explanation applied to ourselves and to the world we arrive at processes which at root are nothing but the blind bumpings of things against each other, then it isn't because we have no inkling of the manner in which liveliness, effort and act, touch and vision enter into meanings for our experience of the world. Rather, it is because we will not allow ourselves to apply these perceptions to our science of things.

Perhaps there is a worry that in admitting these perceptions to a broader conception of the real, we will be relinquishing the vision of a universalizable control over how the world affects us—or indeed, in a somewhat darker vision, of how we affect each other. But then it is only the ontological narrowness of a naturalistic conception of the real that fosters this vision of a universalizable control. If all things as 'objects' were in themselves fundamentally inactive, then they would be ideally susceptible to external interventions. When we had fixed in generalizable form the pattern of their responses to externally applied pressures, there would be nothing left to the things themselves which could surprise us. There would be nothing left in the world to wonder about—and yet we wonder and try to imagine how that can be possible.

To conceive of the world as not fully determinate, to conceive of the individuality of phenomenal presence as making a difference in the world within

which it dwells, does not bring about the end of science. There are archaic habits of nature upon whose constancy we depend and whose consequences we cannot override. This doesn't mean that these constancies are eternal, yet they are certainly themes for prognostic sciences which can establish strong likelihoods within a certain range. The modelling of processes understood in functional terms can indeed be applied with effect. Of this there is no question. There would only need be a more concerned attention to the difference between benign and intrusive intervention—for no purely functional assessment will address all that will be affected by an intervention.

With the revisioning of our ontology in the direction of a phenomenological appreciation of the intersubjective range and depth of lived experience, there may be a shift in emphasis from explanation towards understanding, from an ability to control towards an ability to communicate. Each encounter can be viewed as not only that which would be predictable of determinate kinds, but also as that which unfolds as it does through the presence to each other of those present.

## Footnotes

### Chapter I

1. For an interesting blending of Buddhist philosophy and cognitive science, see: Varela, Thompson, Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1993).
2. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, "Reflection and Interrogation" (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1968), pp.3-4, 28-35.
3. Calvin O. Schrag, *Experience and Being: Prolegomena to a Future Ontology* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 7, 6.
4. For an illuminating account of the post-dualist Cartesian legacy, see: Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life: Toward a Philosophical Biology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp.13-17, 72-74.
5. Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1993), p. 141.
6. Gregory McCulloch, *The Mind and Its World* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.14, pp. 11-22.
7. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 137. On the continued survival of the Cartesian gap between thought and bodily experience, see also: Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, *The Roots of Thinking*, p. 279; Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind*, preface and pp. 25-29, 36-38; Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, pp. 250-51.
8. Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p.xii.
9. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 139.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

12. Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life: Towards a Philosophical Biology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 24.
13. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1968), pp. 22-23.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

## Chapter II

1. Daniel C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), pp. 109-11.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 237-241.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
4. Drew Leder, *The Absent Body* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 45.
5. Erwin Straus, "Aesthesiology and Hallucinations," *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology*; Rollo May et al., eds. (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1958), pp. 151, 154. [Note: My use of this passage borrowed from: Richard M. Zaner, *The Context of Self: A Phenomenological Enquiry Using Medicine as a Clue* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1981), pp. 97-98.]
6. Daniel C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), p. 218.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
8. For an interesting discussion of how the practitioners of an objectively grounded psychology disregard the dimension of their *own* activity as observing, theorizing and purposive while engaged in the construction of theories about *other* people's cognition and behaviour—thus leaving their own experience unaccounted for in the theories they construct—see: Erwin Straus, *The Primary World of Senses*, translated by Jacob Needleman (Glencoe, N.Y.: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 105-138, 158-178.
9. John R. Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Cambridge,

Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1992), p. xii.

10. Daniel C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), p. 75.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

16. Andrew R. Fuller, *Insight Into Value: An Exploration of the Premises of a Phenomenological Psychology* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 25.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 34. [Note: Köhler's phrase as quoted by Andrew Fuller.]

19. Daniel C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), p. 454.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 363-67. [Note: For brevity, I have only included fragments of this dialogue. All of the suspension points are mine.]

22. Daniel C. Dennett, "On the Absence of Phenomenology," *Body, Mind and Method*; D. Gustafson and B. Tapscott, eds. (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1979), p. 95. [Note: My use of this passage borrowed from: David J. Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 189.]

23. David J. Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 189.

### Chapter III

1. David Chalmers, *The conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. xi-xii.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25
3. *Ibid.*, see particularly pp. 35-38, pp. 47-50.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 296.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 126-128.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 275.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 275, 274.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.
16. In a way this is reminiscent of the traditional loss that women have borne in giving up any name for themselves or their offspring in the continuity of a matrilineal succession. Succession was viewed exclusively in patrilineal terms and the perception was also that all power and efficacy resided in that lineage.
17. Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life: Toward a Philosophical Biology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 128.
18. Dorothy Emmet, *The Effectiveness of Causes* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1985), pp. 106-107.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 131 (ftnt. 22).
20. David Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 150,152.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 153-155.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
25. Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenological Psychology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), pp. 40-41.
26. Carl R. Hausman, *A Discourse on Novelty and Creation* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1984), pp. 13-14.
27. David Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 44.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
30. Dorothy Emmet, *The Efficacy of Causes* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1985), p. 17.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 36,37.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 41,53.



38. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-87.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 100,101.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
46. Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 36-37.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
49. Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 23,32.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 37. (These phrases from Rorty's reference to a poem by Philip Larkin).
51. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 29. (Rorty's reference to Harold Bloom's use of this phrase).
54. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
56. Adrian van Kaam, *Existential Foundations of Psychology* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1966), pp. 39-40.
57. Daniel C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little, Brown and

Company, 1991), pp. 323-24.

58. Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life: Towards a Philosophical Biology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 84.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

60. John Dupré, *The Disorder of Things: Metaphysical Foundations of the Disunity of Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 152. It should be noted that when we do have illness or injury, our attention does then turn towards an interest in these micro-functionings. And at these times we may experience a phenomenal topography very much affected by this sudden awareness of what we can no longer take as a given: the body's healthy functioning. This does not necessarily mean that we will subsequently make our body's functioning our central concern, though this theme will certainly be less peripheral than it was. But also, we may be affected with a poignant sense of mortality or of the value of those relationships we have also taken for granted. Thus affected, we may begin to reshape the manner in which we experience the world.

61. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p.92.

62. Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life: Toward a Philosophical Biology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 90-91.

63. As mentioned previously, there is no greater difficulty in principle to the view that phenomenal presence coincides with an embodied whole rather than with particular physical events within that whole. For a naturalistic ontology both views are equally problematic. But with the former view we may be able to conceive of the manner in which we touch and see the things themselves. For a valuable insight into how embodied consciousness is imaginable as something other than a synthetic collation of disparate body sensitivities, see: Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1968), pp. 140-42.

64. Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenological Psychology*, translated by John Scanlon (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), p.101.

## Chapter IV

1. Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 36.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
5. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 148.
6. Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 107.
7. Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life: Toward a Philosophical Biology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 99-107.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
9. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1968), pp. 136-137.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 139-140.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 146,147.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 138,136.
16. David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More Than Human World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1996), p. 56.
17. Rupert Sheldrake, *The Presence of the Past: Morphic Resonance and the Habits of Nature* (New York: Times Books, 1988), p. 13.

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