

The Ontology of Mental Events:
Lacan's Psychoanalytic Categories of the Self and the Ontological
Derivation of Qualia

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Submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of degree of Master's by
Research in European Philosophy

University of Wales, Trinity Saint David

September 2017

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Abstract

In this dissertation I examine the relations between qualitative and quantitative aspects of perceptual experience. I do this by examining the difficulties in delineating these concepts as discrete categories as they relate to apperception; in particular, it seems that contemporary analytic philosophy of mind, such as the theories of Chalmers and Nagel, do not provide a sufficient framework within which to define a subjective, qualitative realm of experience and an objective, quantitative realm. Furthermore, there are antinomic tendencies in analytic philosophy which appear to be insuperable without exceeding the 'terms of engagement' of that philosophical tradition, such as the causal-closure principle. I argue that the analytic tradition is unable to produce a suitable solution to the problem of qualitative experience. I, therefore, suggest that an understanding of the nature of the phenomenon can only be discovered in a semiotic method derived from a combination of phenomenological philosophy and Lacanian psychoanalysis.

I

Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the way in which qualitative experience is possible without recourse to dualistic or hermetic reasoning that would contradict much established scientific understanding. In the philosophy of mind, many of the principle arguments proffered to explain the appearance of ‘quality’ in experience rely on sound reasoning, but have contrapositions whose own reasoning is equally coherent. Those who have attempted to circumvent these antinomic tendencies, as I will show in the course of this dissertation, have done so principally by ignoring many of the difficulties involved. I suggest, therefore, an approach involving the thought of phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and social theory in order to escape the antinomic pendulum which prevents progress in the field. Ultimately, I intend to argue that empirical philosophy can not provide a satisfactory

solution to the problem of qualitative experience, intimately related to the problem of meaning.

The term 'qualia' in the title of this essay might present some degree of confusion in respect of its normal use in philosophical discourse. In many cases it is used as a technical term for the unqualified 'quality', or, 'what it is like' to experience. Often associated with epiphenomenalists, and other dualists of the substance or property variety, it is rejected, for instance, by D. Dennett as an unnecessary explanatory complication.¹ I do not propose to focus on this term so much as its sense: qualitative perception. In particular, how does qualitative perception relate to the structures of conscious being, and, to what extent do the structures of conscious being affect the way in which 'quality' is perceived? In this sense, by the word 'qualia' in the title I mean perceptual quality *simpliciter* and do not intend to endorse any particular philosophical position or tradition on account of my use of that term alone.

Even after hundreds of years of debate, when Descartes proposed the separation of mind and body into the categories of *res extensa* and *res cogitans*, the dispute between dualists represented by Cartesian philosophy

1 Daniel Dennett, 'Lovely and Suspect Qualities', *Philosophical Issues*, 1 (1991), 37-43 (38-9); Frank Jackson, 'Epiphenomenal Qualia', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 32 (1982), 127-137; Ned Block, 'Are Absent Qualia Possible?', *The Philosophical Review*, 82 (1980), 257-274.

and monists continues. To a large degree this debate, as I will discuss in chapter two, is antinomic. Neither those who argue for the notion of abstract qualities as real substance or properties of a distinct perceiver, nor who argue for the reduction of mental events to physical brain-states are able to produce arguments that are completely and satisfactorily explanatory. If, for instance, a complete reduction, such as that for which J. J. C. Smart argues, is granted, issues of the qualities of the phenomena and their apparent irreducibility to physical quantities as D. Chalmers and T. Nagel have noted will remain unresolved.² The physical reduction answers the question of *cause* in the sense of Newtonian mechanical causation, but it can not, in principle, do other than leave unexplained or eliminate elements which are not susceptible of that kind of causal explanation. On the other hand, according to Jaegwon Kim in his essay ‘The myth of nonreductive materialism’ the non-reductive methods of D. Davidson and H. Putnam lead inevitably either to the *effective* elimination of mental events or back to some form of reduction.³

2 Thomas Nagel, ‘What is it like to be a Bat?’, *The Philosophical Review*, 83 (1974), 435-450; David Chalmers, ‘Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness’ in *The Character of Consciousness*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

<<http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195311105.001.0001/acprof-9780195311105-chapter-1>> [accessed Sept. 18 2017].

3 Jaegwon Kim, ‘The Myth of Nonreductive Materialism’ in *Supervenience and Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 265-284.

In chapter two, I will demonstrate the failings of these theories. It is the contention of the present work that they have fundamentally misunderstood the true nature of the debate. By characterizing it as a dispute between a 'scientific' and 'non-scientific' world-view, as J. Searle also points out, even materialists have essentially adopted Cartesian categories of thought. But more than that, they have treated the issue as if there were already established an 'objective' reality over and above the 'subjective' reality of mental events/properties/substances. I argue that this is *the* crucial mistake made especially by Nagel and Chalmers regarding their arguments in favour of irreducible 'quality'; there is no 'easy' and 'hard' problem *viz.* Chalmers' paper 'Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness', there is only experience and the attempt to explain what is gathered through experience in a consistent and coherent way.

I suggest instead that the only way forward in the debate is to cease the attempt to reconcile mental events to a particular kind of interpretation of the 'physical' sciences. Whilst it is clearly possible to discover in the physical brain electro-magnetic and physico-chemical stimuli which correlate regularly with certain physical, emotional, or other reactive phenomena, it does not follow that experience is reducible to brain-content alone or to a

literal correspondence between external stimuli and internal physico-chemical responses. In cases such as links between serotonin and depression, for example, while the reasoning of the scientist is coherent in its own terms, an explanation which *prioritizes* a phenomenological explanation is just as coherent – it is no less, and perhaps more, plausible.⁴

My argument in this work will be that phenomenological and structural social relations outweigh and predominate over scientific research into physical brain-states. This is not to say that the physical sciences cannot make important discoveries, which would be a ludicrous argument, but simply that the structures of everyday experience are such that they are far more informative on the issue of the mind. I contend that this is because the scientist and the philosopher of mind (for want of a better designation) are not examining the same thing, and indeed, are not even operating within commensurable paradigmata; although, some of the terms, such as ‘quality’ and ‘quantity’, apply for both the scientific world-view and the phenomenologico-philosophical, which is one of the chief causes of confusion.

4 ‘Scientists, Linking Gene With Serotonin and Depression, Offer Insights to New Treatments’, *ScienceDaily*, 2006 <<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2006/01/060106131350.htm>> [accessed 30 September 2017].

To a certain degree, though not one explored in great detail here, it could be said of a great body of philosophical work in the philosophy of mind that it is in thrall to the original dispute between Platonism and Aristotelianism over the priority of matter. It is argued secondarily in chapter two, that Descartes adopted a Platonic position regarding the importance and essential reality of form over matter, whereas the modern materialist is merely returning to the scholastic appropriation of Aristotelian metaphysics, which maintains that the primary and most real form of substance is matter.

Finally, I argue that John Searle and Daniel Dennett do not succeed in escaping this problem. Whilst their positions are more nuanced than the more straightforward arguments of materialists or dualists, they nevertheless fall into the difficulty of regarding physical/material phenomena as possessing the power of arbitration over truth. It could not be denied that *states of affairs* must possess such power of arbitration in any dispute where a particular state of affairs is in question; however, the term *state of affairs* can mean many things and not necessarily the bijective truth-condition of the correspondence theorist.⁵

5 By this I am particularly intending to refer to the correspondence theory of truth maintained by John Searle in *The Construction of Social Reality*. A state of affairs I take to mean *any* experiential state in which there is some discernible structure such that it is possible in principle to determine whether

In chapter three, I argue in favour of the limited and cautious acceptance of the concept put forward by Varela, *et al.*, of embodied cognition. They proposed the notion that conscious action comprises many quasi-autonomous subsystems, which are sufficient to carry out most apparently conscious functions. As such, Varela, *et al.*, and their successors, such as Andy Clark, suggest that the notion of a ‘central processor’ or centralized control over cognitive processes is redundant.⁶ Moreover, I examine the theory of M. Johnson. He maintains that in addition to an essentially embodied existence, which involves an immanent acquaintance with reality initially unmediated by ‘proposition’ thought, perception of reality is conditioned by a series of neo-Kantian schemata. Johnson argues that the individual’s embodied reaction to the world is conditioned by what he refers to as ‘image-schemata’, taking the term from Immanuel Kant. These image-schemata involve such fundamental concepts as ‘containment’, which he proposes might ordinarily be supposed to act as a specific propositional belief about the world; however, he maintains that these schemata are non-

that state of affairs exists concurrently with a given situation or not. This leaves it open to structuralist and phenomenological interpretations of experience such as I intend to argue for.

6 Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson, Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991).

propositional forms fundamental to the way in which acting agents interact with the world.⁷

Contrary to Johnson's position, I reject the idea of image-schemata because of their neo-Kantian tendency to suppose the need for inherent internal structures to comprehend the structure of the world. I argue that they were unnecessary for Kant and remain unnecessary and unjustifiable today. In my final conclusion, I suggest that the need to regard fundamental modes of being in an essentially propositional way is because of the difficulty in separating the structure and influence of language, and social interpellation from more fundamental categories, or indeed, determining what those categories represent independently of those structures.

I then draw certain parallels between theories of embodied cognition and phenomenology. I suggest that whilst Varela, *et al.*, Johnson, and Clark prefer Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger's fundamental ontology appears to provide a more suitable framework for the analysis of the immanent categories (*existentialia*) of Being, for reasons given at length in both chapters three and five.

⁷ Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

Finally, I discuss the psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan. I suggest that Lacan's concept of the mirror-stage in the formation of the 'I' can be modified with the theory of J. P. Muller, who suggests that the initial stage in the formation of the 'I' is the semiotic relationship with the mother. Combined, I argue they can account for the arguments of R. A. Lynch, that recognition of the self presupposes recognition of the other.⁸

With this in mind I examine Lacan's categories of the 'self': the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real. I argue that Lacan's categories, in showing how a sense of self develops, can also be employed in conjunction with Heideggerian ontology and a broader linguistic structuralism than the one Lacan uses (chapters four and five), to lead to an understanding of the ontological status of qualitative perception.

Through the notion of the unification of the self as object, and its essential contradiction in the other (the initial real), and its movement to the symbolic, which is governed largely by linguistic structure, where interrelations take the place of the self-image or imaginary and its contradiction, the real, becomes the imaginary conditions in which the

⁸ Richard A. Lynch, 'The Alienating Mirror: Toward a Hegelian Critique of Lacan on Ego-Formation', *Human Studies*, 31 (2008), 209-221.

symbolic social links are no longer symbolic. It is within this structure that I propose to situate the sense of meaning and qualitative perception.

In the fourth chapter, I consider the roles of language and social interaction on the structure of the self. In the first place, I argue that F. de Saussure, sometimes referred to as the ‘father’ of structural linguistics for his role in explicating the nature of those structures, provided a framework which emphasised the synchronic structure of language over the diachronic.⁹ I follow the critiques of Saussure iterated by J. Derrida and also by V. N. Vološinov / M. M. Bakhtin. Unlike Saussure, who proposes an arbitrary but nonetheless fixed relation between the physical sound and the conceptualization it signifies and wherein all meaning in language flows from the abstract *langue* as opposed to the dialogic *parole* or ‘speech act’, Vološinov suggests that the linguistic sign is formed primarily in and through dialogue, or Saussure’s *parole*. Linguistic dialogue forms an important part of the conclusion of this work, since ultimately, it is through the linguistic sign that the symbolic relations of the world are transformed into internal as well as external relations (see chapter five).

9 Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de Linguistique Générale* (Paris: Édition Payot, 2016).

I then turn directly to interaction itself. Why 'directly'? Because everything prior to this deals with abstract and ontological categories; however, while ontological categories are of primary interest, it is also important to understand something of normative behaviour as well, which is why I consider the research E. Goffman, E. A. Weinstein, P. Deutschberger, and R. T. Serpe. As social psychologists they record and analyse observed behaviours rather than theorizing about abstract categories. It is useful, therefore, to take account of interactionist theories, which operate at the normative and ontic levels, to seek understanding of the way these normative behaviours and the general character of those behaviours could be seen to influence the structure of social being.

The theories of Goffman, *et al.*, argue that individuals in any setting attempt to establish what they refer to as 'face', and once established they perform numerous exercises in order to maintain or enhance it. Their concepts attempt to show how the expectations of others and the self within a social setting inform behaviour and attitudes down to the most minute details. Although I suggest that there is a tendency merely to render everyday life into a technical vocabulary, and treat these relations as if they were alien to the observer without performing the quintessential

generalizations of the social scientist, I nevertheless conclude that their study is heuristic in the sense that it demonstrates the predominance of interaction in the formation of particular social structures.

In the penultimate section of chapter four, I analyse the structural Marxist theory of L. Althusser. Here, I show how Althusser adopts the Lacanian categories of the imaginary, symbolic and real, and employs them as categories of social interpellation. Althusser proposes that it is through the interpellation of the subject by the ideological superstructure that causes him to surrender himself wantonly into alienation.¹⁰ In my final conclusion I employ this concept, without attaching to it those specific ideological dynamics in order to move towards a demonstration of the way structure itself can be seen to generate meanings, and thereby, ‘qualities’.

Consonant with the material presented over the first four chapters of this work, I will argue in chapter five for an understanding of meaning that considers the relations and interrelations of networks of signifiers to be its basis. I demonstrate how ‘meaning’, by its nature, always attempts to refer to something beyond itself. In structuralism, the relations of signs to other

10 Louis Althusser, ‘Ideology and State Apparatuses’ in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Monthly Review Press, 1971) <<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>> [accessed 25 September 2017].

signs provides the basis on which this kind of signification, i.e., meaning, can take place.

II

Antinomic Problematics in Analytic Philosophy of Mind

i. Overview and introduction to the problem of perception and elucidation of the heterogeneity and interdependence of the perceptual sign within an experiential nexus.

In this chapter I contend, firstly, that the difficulties associated with an analysis of perception are related principally to the peculiar status of perception, being both a response to external stimuli but also influenced by internal structures. Furthermore, that the categories of ‘quality’ and ‘quantity’ have been misunderstood by contemporary philosophers in a subtle way, but one which has led to a number of issues preventing the resolution of problems and perpetuating antinomic-style debates about their priority and reducibility/irreducibility. Secondly, I will show that the structures of the classical model, themselves marrying the structures of Cartesian dualism with Aristotelian materialism, continue into

contemporary theories of the mind, and are thereby obstructive in any attempt to find a solution to the problem of perceptual consciousness. In this, I am partially in agreement with J. Searle and D. Dennett that the persistence of classical categories leads to an antinomic oscillation and insuperable intellectual stalemate; although, I argue below that they are unsuccessful in attempting to discover a solution.

When the structure of perception is considered, it is seldom in isolation, or indeed, as a point of departure. It is difficult if not impossible to demarcate the proper parts of a perceptual field as constituents of a 'scientific' object susceptible of analysis, or to satisfy the ontological and epistemological concerns which have instigated the analysis. To know what a percept is, its physical mechanisms, its relations and categories, its ontological and epistemological essence, is only to understand a manifest structure whose roots extend beyond the mechanics of perceptual acuity. If, for instance, every particular function involved in the generation of a perceptual image were fully apprehended, what then would be known to the neuropsychophysicologist of the meaning of the forms given in perception?

There can be little doubt that such an endeavour must involve knowledge of the cranial nerves (oculomotor, ophthalmic, olfactory, trochlear etc.), they

would need to comprehend the roles of the hemispheres and the corpus callosum, the lateral geniculate nucleus, and visual cortex in ordering and interpreting the images transmitted through the optic nerve; it would also be useful to acquire an intricate knowledge of the operations of the amygdala, which controls emotional responses to stimuli, and the cerebellum, which is responsible for coordinating the sense of proprioception. Were the ‘image’ apprehended in this way, and every facet rendered into its ‘appropriate’ scientific vocabulary, it might (at least, in principle) be possible to predict every characteristic by its quantitative metric; however, might it not be possible, similarly in principle, that the *explananda* remain as residua of the *explanans* and the operation of the faculties pertaining to apprehension? Certainly, the Smartian suggestion, that science presents an inexorable tendency towards the treatment of phenomena of every kind as ‘physico-chemical mechanisms’ cannot easily be repudiated or dismissed.¹¹ Indeed, there is every reason to suppose from contemporary methodologies alone, such as the quantitative turn towards ‘cognitive science’ in preference to a general ‘philosophy of mind’,¹² that there is much to be gained by both biological and statistical methods in

11 J. J. C. Smart, ‘Sensations and Brain Processes’, *The Philosophical Review*, 68 (1959), 141-156 (142).

12 George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: the Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

interpreting and furthering understanding of perceptual apparatus and phenomena; it would be an act of the greatest futility to attempt to suggest otherwise. For, as Smart himself, and others, have pointed out, synonymy semantic or, in particular, descriptive is nonsensical if it is understood to mean that 'lightning *is* a certain kind of electrical discharge' implies that the terms on the left of the copula are semantically and descriptively synonymous with the terms on the right.¹³

There is scope, therefore, even under the most rigorous of scientisms for a multiplicity of interpretations. The principle, for the Smartian trope, also, in non-chronological fashion, followed by U. T. Place, D. Armstrong *et al.*, is the reducibility of all phenomena, including those which appear *to, through, within, or by means of* a mind, to the fundamental truth, or more *fundamental reality*, of physico-chemical description.¹⁴ If, as is implied by his suggestion that an experiential or perceptual report is to describe something logically coherent in itself, thus allowing the sensation to *be* something – just not a real or accurate description of an existing

13 J. T. Stevenson, 'Sensations and Brain Processes: A Reply to J. J. C. Smart', *The Philosophical Review*, 69 (1960), 505-510 (505); Smart, *op. cit.*, 144; Ullin T. Place, 'Is Consciousness a Brain Process?', *British Journal of Psychology*, 47 (1956), 44-50; David M. Armstrong, *A Materialist Theory of Mind* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968).

14 The semantic distinctions, such as those between state, event and process elaborated by Place (1972, 107), appear to make little difference to the notion described here. In each case, whether the analysis is of static atomic structures, synchronically judged events, or diachronically relatable processes, the result remains more or less the same: that which is susceptible of scientifically delineable analysis is of a more *real* nature than that which relies on this underlying process.

independent state commensurable with the extant scientific paradigm, – Smart believes that the nomological status of sensation is subordinate in every way to the physical, then it becomes clear that he accepts not only the ontological primacy of physical matter, a case against which it has been difficult to argue since Aristotle, but its ultimate nomological primacy.¹⁵ Whether there exists an explanatory gap, as intimated above, the narrowness and insufficiency of initial mind/brain process identity has been widely accepted. It is, nonetheless, towards the retention of physical nomological primacy at which almost all succeeding analytical philosophy has aimed, or at least, the reconciliation of the experiential world with the fundamental *reality* of that perceived by the aid of scientific knowledge and apparatus.¹⁶ It is not my intention to defend, or appear to defend, any kind of dualism; as materialism struggles to define the mental in physical terms, dualism struggles to define it in terms which facilitate a coherent structure of correlations between mental events and physical events. Whilst this most evidently applies to epiphenomenal, parallelistic, or Cartesian naive substance dualism, I would also not concede, for reason which will become

15 I will leave for now Davidson's arguments against the idea of psycho-physical laws (1980, 214-15). Whilst it is true that Davidson and others have developed these theories to accommodate difficulties inherent in a straightforward reduction (Cf. Kim, *The Myth of Nonreductive Materialism in Supervenience and Mind* (1993)), I will maintain that these advances, when taken together produce an antinomic dynamic oscillating between the mental event and physical event in such a way as to resolve neither. In this, as I mention below, I am supported by John Searle and Daniel Dennett.

16 Kim, *op. cit.*, 265.

clear below, to so much as a dual modality or different coherent systems of properties relating exclusively to the mental kind and the physical kind respectively.¹⁷

How, then, with the full set of neurobiological facts and the philosophical categorial underpinnings to support the exclusively physico-chemical interpretation of perception, is the apperceived ‘image’ to be broken down into its atomic components? Does a tree, or a shrub have a physical schema that relies on nothing that is not susceptible of physico-chemical decomposition and analysis? In what manner are those structures which rely entirely upon the act of apperception for their sense to be understood within this paradigm? Or, as Jaegwon Kim suggests, the reduction of ‘ethical expressions’ to “descriptive” or “naturalistic” expressions?¹⁸ It is, as mentioned above, not beyond the realms of conceivable possibility that explanations for these difficulties could be found to adhere to the principles of a quantitative metric, but no presently satisfactory answer has yet been supplied. The principle at issue here is simply that however an abstract or logical argument may function in assessing the physical aspects of

17 To a degree, this latter point can be supported by Davidson’s contention that there are no psychophysical laws owing to the absence of a predicate-language applicable iff the event to which it is applied is mental. (Davidson, 1980).

18 Kim, *op. cit.*, 265.

perception, there remains an explanatory gap between the qualitative and quantitative explanations – what I have referred to above as *residua*. An explanatory gap has been proposed by both D. Chalmers and T. Nagel,¹⁹ although I have explained below my reasons for believing that their antireductionist responses to physicalist theories do not present a dissoluble problem. I do not intend to expound this latter notion fully at this stage, rather to employ it as an illustration of the ambiguities in analyses of perception in general.

In general, physicalist theories of mind rely on a classical model of perception inheriting its categories from enlightenment and post-enlightenment thought. The classical model of perception is phylogenetically derived from the empirical theories of John Locke, and it is from him that it is possible to see a clear expression of the notion of an inverted Cartesian bifurcation between the internal structures and external structures of perception. Although, in a sense, the Cartesian duality of the *res cogitans* and the *res extensa* has been inverted returning, it could be argued, to the Aristotelian notion of the ultimate priority of matter over ‘secondary’ substances,²⁰ the essential dyad and, as D. Owens argues

19 Nagel, *op. cit.*; Chalmers, *op. cit.*

20 Aristot. *Organ.*; also, cf., Aquinas, ‘Praeterea, nihil est in intellectu quod non sit prius sensu. Sed in Deo non est ponere sensitivam cognitionem, quia materialis est. Ergo ipse non intelligit res creatas,

concerning David Hume, the motivation for a sceptical philosophical perspective are nevertheless preserved.²¹ The problem of the motivations for scepticism need not be of immediate concern, but it will be addressed in succeeding chapters for auxiliary purposes. It is the nature of the dyadic structure of the classical model and its influence on contemporary theories that needs to be explicated as a presupposition for the success of the primary argument of this chapter.

Each of these structural realms (internal and external) has a degree of independent coherence, and particularly, its own set of relations. The self-relations of internal and external structures render them edificial, fundamental components of the reality they conjointly represent. Internal and external structures operate as distinct but interdependent realms conjoined through categorial interrelativity. In external relations lies the essentially excitatory element to perception, the object, which, although it maintains its external relations independently of any perceiving mind, Berkeley's adage of *esse est percipi* being an exception to a general trend amongst enlightenment empiricists, it makes through its impression on the

cum non sint prius in sensu.' (*Quaestiones Disputatae De Veritate q. 2 Articulus 3*)
<<http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/qdv02.html>> [accessed 09 Sept. 2017].

21 Brian P. McLaughlin and David Owens, 'Self-Knowledge, Externalism, and Skepticism', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society: Supplementary Volume*, 74 (2000), 119-142.

perceiver a secondary image, or representation, of itself. As Richard Aquila has also suggested, there is some ambiguity, for instance, in Hume's understanding of impressions, as to what can form an impression; whether it is primary, and represents only immediate external phenomena, or whether the awareness of perceiving that phenomenon can be itself considered an impression.²² Aquila intimates that the certainty with which Hume dismisses the notion of a unified, simple perceiver suggests that impressions are only applicable to the immediately given within an external field of perception: 'For there is no contradiction in my claim that while my awarenesses are never... awarenesses of just the same objects, the awareness which *is* the awareness of these objects is always the same particular.'²³ To some extent, Aquila, in stating this problem, is merely restating the basis of the difficulty which presented to Hume his initial epistemological hiatus between the assumption of uniformity on the one hand and its demonstration on the other, and which Kant resolved to pursue in his *KrV*.

Hume, despite his clear enunciation of problems remaining from empirical philosophy employing categories inverted from rationalist

22 Richard E. Aquila, 'Brentano, Descartes, and Hume on Awareness', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 35 (1974), 223-239 (226).

23 *Ibid.*, 227.

doctrines, is unable to answer the epistemological puzzles he himself raises. Hume's assumption that the impressions of immediate experience are ordered through unexamined 'faculties' of 'ideas' and 'imagination', for the organizational schema which Hume generates in his *Treatise* is never proven to be necessary or essential but stated in the opening sections in an almost axiomatic fashion,²⁴ are rendered by Kant into an explicit internal/external structure. Indeed, it could be suggested that Hume's notions of 'impressions', 'ideas', and the faculty of 'imagination' are more akin to general abstract categories than divisions of *objects* existing within the mind. There is no description of the way in which these categories are inescapably connected with any mind in *particular*. That is not to say that these categories of representation are necessarily without foundation, merely that Hume has not demonstrated their empirical necessity as categories of mental representation.

For Kant, whilst the structure is far more complex, the solution is much more straightforward. By rejecting the idea of a *tabula rasa* and allowing that not all knowledge arises out of 'experience',²⁵ Kant is able to separate the concepts of 'intuition' from those of immanent 'sensation'. Thus:

24 T 1.1.1-4. (The edition of the *Treatise* I use here is second edition of ed. P. H. Nidditch (1888).)

25 *KrV*, B1. (For all references to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, I follow the Norman Kemp Smith translation.)

‘The explanation of the manner in which concepts can thus relate *a priori* to objects I entitle their transcendental deduction; and from it I distinguish empirical deduction, which shows the manner in which a concept is acquired through experience and through reflection upon experience, and which therefore concerns, not its legitimacy, but only its *de facto* mode of origination.’²⁶

Kant makes two significant conceptual distinctions. The first, as already mentioned, is that between the organizational structure of the ‘intuition’ and the ‘sensation’ of experience giving rise to it. The second is that between the two kinds of deduction, above, analogous to the *quid juris/quid facti* dichotomy of legal proof.²⁷ Through the Kantian internal/external bifurcation we can see clearly the interdependence of the internal and external structures of the classical model. In the internal are the *a priori* prerequisite categories, in the external the excitatory part of a ‘Ding an sich’. What does or does not cohere beyond the unification in perception of these two structural edifices is not important for our present purposes, it is simply necessary to note the character of the bifurcation, and now, the influence this has continued to exert in *almost* all analytic philosophy of mind.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, B117.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

This essentially bifurcated character of the episteme – that of an internal and external world of self-relations obtaining value in their coincidence – informs a mind-body dualism, which, though the inverse of Cartesian rationalism nevertheless retains the problematic categories of that tradition of thought.²⁸ No argument sensibly constructed could suggest that these categories enjoy a *telos* congruous with the Cartesian view of separate substances; for indeed, the self-sufficiency of the understanding, central to Cartesian epistemology, is diminished in the classical model so far as to exert influence only in an auxiliary way and over that whose form and veridical reality have been established in spite of it. However, neither do the ostensible differences between the Cartesian and classical understanding of the internal/external dichotomy constitute a radical departure *in principle* from the ontological structure of the Cartesian understanding of discrete mental and physical realms. Here, I follow John Searle in supposing that

28 Although the kernel of consciousness remains principally internal, its substance is, to a much greater degree, externalized. In Descartes' original thesis the theologically interpolated Platonic soul exerts a far greater influence in forming the *substantia animi*. The enlightenment model of the mind and its relation to the world by contrast emphasizes the foundation of ideas in the phenomena that form their substance, thus returning to the principles of Aristotelian scholasticism in the reassertion of the ultimate priority of matter – an interpretation also supported by Lacan, citing Aquinas' *De Veritate*: 'nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit [sic] in sensu' (2006: 61). Indeed, J. Carriero (2009) argues for a reading of Descartes contra Thomism, also U. Thiel (2011: 37-38). There could be some reservation over whether this reflects Descartes' views accurately, certainly it would be misleading if we supposed his position to be represented by 'nihil est in sensu quod non prius sint in intellectu'; however, his *reductio* method nevertheless represents an internalization of the mind and its priority in ascertaining perceptual acuity, which is inverted by the enlightenment thinkers in their adaptation and appropriation of Aristotelian materialism ('Sed in Deo non est ponere sensitivam cognitionem, quia materialis est.' (*De Veritate*)) It should also be noted that a significant proportion of sceptical empirical innovations, as well as being an attempt to integrate the new scientific methods into philosophical thinking, were a response to the Berkeleian hypothesis characterized roughly by a reversal of the Thomist principle ('esse est percipi').

whilst materialist theories of mind explicitly reject Cartesian forms, they do so because they accept those categories and the vocabulary that accompanies them.²⁹ Although Searle's views on the volition of analytic materialism are instructive for our present purposes, we should note at this stage that I intend to reject his solution to the problem, on the grounds that even when we adopt a single, undifferentiated vocabulary for all phenomena, including the mental, it does not dissolve any of the difficulties surrounding the nature of perception or consciousness in general (except for those relating specifically to Cartesian concepts).³⁰

It would be in error to suppose that because the mental in physicalist theories of mind has been sublimated under the physical paradigm that the problems of mental content are thereby resolved. Even were the realignment successful *in principle*, the initial dilemma which gives rise to both physicalism and dualism remains endemic. In essence, my contention is that physicalism can never satisfactorily accommodate the mental within

29 John R. Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992), 28.

30 We should also not underestimate the extent to which the Cartesian kernel is straightforwardly inverted in Locke and Hume. Descartes, for instance, in his first reply to objections to his meditations, argues that the 'idea' of the sun existing in the mind is the most real and objective vision of the sun, although related to a less reliable external object referenced by the designation "sun". In Hume, the assumption is directly reversed; objective knowledge is gained only through experiential means and cannot be derived from the ideas which are formed of these objects. This illustration is less directly clear in Locke, and later, in Kant, but the principle remains the same, and the principles which motivate their inquiries are similar enough to Hume's that it is not necessary to analyse them separately for the purposes of this paper.

a category whose definition has been adopted from a system that claims a categorial distinction between the mental and the physical³¹ and that dualism, or nonphysicalism, is unable to account for the mental in such a way that it does not appear to breach what the physical sciences claim to know about the laws governing reality.³²

An illustrative example of the stated principle can be witnessed in the work of the physicalist philosopher of mind Kim. Kim argues that there is no form of consistent non reductive materialism, suggesting that any such materialist must resort to eliminativism if he is not prepared to accept the tenets of reductionism.³³ He contends that, in conformity with what he calls the ‘causal-closure principle’, a nonphysical property can not act in a causal way upon a physical property. A physicalist theory must maintain this causal closure or it is by definition allowing elements efficacy of a nonphysical nature and is, therefore, at least, dualist.³⁴ Donald Davidson falls before this criterion; his notion of ‘anomalous monism’, that there are such things as psychophysical events but they are not sufficiently replicable, or in principle categorizable, so as to be called laws. In order to maintain

31 Following Searle, above.

32 ‘Claim to know’ is not intended as implied criticism of the sciences, it is simply a variety of epistemological ‘insurance’.

33 Kim, *op. cit.*, 267.

34 Kim employs a similar strategy against Dretske in his essay ‘Dretske on how reasons explain behavior’ (*op. cit.*, 285-308).

the principle of causal closure he needs to deny causal efficacy to mental events, as such Kim considers Davidson's theory to be a form of eliminativism: 'but mentality is given no useful work and its occurrence is left ... causally inexplicable.'³⁵ Similarly, functionalist theories and the idea of 'supervenience' are found wanting by Kim (as answers to reductionism). It is not necessary, and might serve only to delay further the drawing of preliminary conclusions, to relate in great detail Kim's critique of these concepts. It should be sufficient to say that his method is the same as before, the attempt to reconcile the mental and the physical inevitably leads, in pursuing causal closure, to the effective elimination of mental content to avoid dualism or the reduction of psychophysical content entirely. Although Kim presents what he feels to be the grounds for a solution to this problem within the strictures of the physicalist paradigm, relying on the notion of a local supervenience³⁶ of 'micro-' to 'macro-' extension of causal efficacy, which is not in principle epiphenomenal, it is not clear how he can claim, whilst maintaining causal closure, to allow for biconditionality in psychophysical dynamics merely by stating the need that all mental events have physical correlates.

35 Kim, *op. cit.*, 270.

36 That is, supervenience which holds only in contingent cases, unlike global supervenience, which pervades all possible worlds.

It is not important here to iterate every kind of physicalist theory to demonstrate the point we wish to make; functionalism, for instance, as a response to Smartian identity theory, criticises the identity theorists from within the categorial paradigm we intend to reject. They fail, not because their arguments are endemically antinomic, but because they are too specific as to the necessary physical-chemical brain structure required for certain phenomenal events.

It seems eminently plausible from this that regardless of the way in which scholars attempt to circumvent the limitations of physicalist doctrine, the natural (antinomical) vacillation between the mental properties and physical properties will likely continue indefinitely, as long as the categorial structure of their thinking remains the same. It would take too much space, here, to demonstrate every variable and accommodate every possible counter to the suggestion; however, the principle, having been shown to be feasible in general, provides a sufficient premise for what follows, and finds support from both Searle and Daniel Dennett.³⁷

³⁷ Searl, *op. cit.*; Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

i.1 The statement of the problem of qualitative perception from the perspective of analyticity and its failure to construct a superable challenge

Perception, in general, possesses both a qualitative and quantitative component. The question of the irreducibility of the one to the other, as we shall see, whilst useful heuristically is based on a category mistake. It has led thinkers such as David Chalmers and Thomas Nagel to attempt an ontological, as well as categorial, bifurcation between these two elemental representations of matter. They suppose that there are two issues that must be addressed: the nature of quantity, a problem for the scientist to solve, and quality or the ‘what it is like’ of experience.³⁸ It may, ostensibly, appear self-evidently true that perception revolves around ‘quality’, whereas scientific endeavour deals with ‘quantity’, or the reduction of multifarious phenomena to magnitudes of determinable and predictable kinds. To some extent, reduction does not mean reduction. In one sense, a reduction could be taken to indicate that each distinct part of the one category could be identified with a distinct part in the other (bijection), rendering the functional differentiation of each effectively meaningless; a *literal* identification of the two categories, however, would not be necessary in order for the term ‘reduction’ to apply. Whilst, certainly, the term implies a

³⁸ Chalmers, *op. cit.*; Nagel, *op. cit.*

decrease in the discrete parts of the reduced object, there is no reason unless specified to assume that it must be an indefinite decrease, or subsumption of every part under, in this case, a quantitative paradigm. In the case of the quantitative reduction here referred to, it is supposed that since all phenomena can be related, in principle, either to relations of number or to algorithms which determine the variable magnitude of quantity, that these magnitudes obtain priority over 'quality'.³⁹ 'Quality' takes on the form which, while being permitted its own discrete parts in the form of 'representations', ultimately supervenes on a layer of greater 'reality'.⁴⁰ There are, however, several concerns with this interpretation, which I will enumerate below.

Firstly, whilst the elements of the perceptual field are, as Aristotle well noted, in principle susceptible of representation either as 'quality' or 'quantity', each being a fundamental precept of Being in general, 'quantity' appears as both 'quality' and 'quantity' in perception.⁴¹ They are both, that is, categories 'of' and categories 'within' sensible experience. As such they function to order the sensible world according to its different kinds and

39 Cf. George Kimball Plochmann, 'Is Quantity prior to Quality?', *Philosophy of Science*, 21 (1954), 62-67.

40 J. J. C Smart, Armstrong, et. al. fall into this category of thinker. Ultimately, identity theory rests on the fundamental assumption that the degree of reality or unreality, or, more accurately, truth is determined by causal priority. It is this which I am attempting to illuminate here for future exegesis.

41 Aristot. *Met.* 5.1020b; also cf. *Ibid.* 13.1083a.

multiplicity as general inextricable facts of existence, but, as well as this general division of function they perform a normative function as well, that of the delineation of particular objects in experience according to their individual appearance and their number.

The unambiguous dichotomy of the sciences between magnitude, represented as number, and experience, that vague and subjective property of perception whereby complex objects are represented to the perceiver as irresolvable 'simples' each with their own self-referring analogy or 'feel', represents, in an important sense, a false dichotomy, an absolute distinction where there are only degrees. Each object of perception possesses the quality of number, in which sense, it is a fundamental category of experience. However, in theories influenced by this 'quality/quantity' bifurcation, the categories are applied in a way distinct from the perceptual realm in which they are discrete categories. This constructs an artificial problem of an irreconcilable anomaly, the presence of undefined *qualia* in a material world where the criteria for validation are observability and testability. The category of 'quality' must, since there clearly is an experience of such a phenomenon, belong to a paradigm entirely separate to that of 'quantity'. A choice presents itself of either subsuming 'quality'

under 'quantity' by reducing the one, categorially, to the other, which Chalmers and Nagel argue cannot be done, or admitting of something 'in addition to' the physical, namely, a 'what it is like' to be.⁴²

Secondly, the 'what it is like' of experience is by its nature self-referential. It is a feeling, or sense, derived from the praxical notion of agency, and adapted from a vocabulary of comparison and analogy. When the reference is transfixed by the relations given in the totality of experience, the 'what it is like' is a comparison between two qualities, i.e., 'redness' and 'blueness'. Nagel, however, claims that 'what it is like' refers not to a comparison between two experiences, but to a sense of 'how it is for the subject himself.' Nagel is right to suppose, as he does, that there must be an experience unique to the perceptual interface of the creature that experiences, its *umwelt*. Behaving as a bat behaves is not the same as being a bat.⁴³ Nevertheless, to ask the question 'what is it like?' or even 'how is it for that creature?' is not the same as asking 'how is it for me?'. In the latter case, an agent is assuming the existence of their own immanent *umwelt*, as well they might, but will only ever find in reply an answer of the form 'it is like *that*'.

42 Nagel sensibly leaves open the question of reducibility, suggesting that it might be found possible, in principle, under some future conceptual paradigm. He is, however, unable to account for what this paradigm might look like.

43 Nagel, *op. cit.*, 439.

Furthermore, it characterizes the problem as a 'likeness' in experience and an objective, non-experiential world; it is unclear, as argued above, that any such clear distinction is possible, even in principle: the 'objective' data form both a category of experience and a category of 'objective' reality. What this difference in the two senses of the adjective 'objective' means ontically remains a mystery. Nagel himself alludes to this mystery, recognizing the potentially insuperable difficulty of reaching 'an end point'.⁴⁴ He further claims that the conceptual framework enjoyed by contemporary thought is not sufficient to render a comprehensible quality-quantity relation that accurately encompasses both paradigmata.⁴⁵ What remains problematic is that his acknowledgement of the subjective-objective/objective-objective problem does not go far enough. Nagel continues to regard these categories as distinct, the one containing subjective experience, the other objective fact. For Nagel, the problem as it has been outlined here presents a problem of perspective, of the orientation of the agent regarding the phenomenon before him. In the sense in which there can be, for instance, a 'scientific' orientation towards a phenomenon, which seeks to explain its behaviour within a specified frame of reference, this is self-evidently not wrong. If, as

44 *Ibid.*, 443-444.

45 *Ibid.*, 447.

seems to be the case, Nagel intends to postulate a meaningful 'objective' category outside of the perceptual structures which lend contextual and categorial fixity to the phenomenon, it is not precisely clear what ought to exist outside of 'perspective' or 'orientation' in general. What could be said of the notion of category, beyond that which is understood through the operation and integration of the perceptual function with whatever exceeds its boundaries, if that is even a meaningful statement?

I understand this in a primarily epistemological way; it would be nonsensically solipsistic to suggest that categories do not exist in some form or other independently of this or that perceptual experience, but it would be equally nonsensical to speak of categories as entities independent of experiential features. The Kantian/Aristotelian table runs quantity, quality, modality, relation. Each of these, though not determined by experience, are conditioned by it to such a degree that it is incomprehensible to speak of them in terms of abstract reality. Essentially, it seems most likely that categories are categories of experience, and do not maintain coherence independently. It is in this way that Nagel, and by extension Chalmers, fails to express the problem in a way that is in principle resolvable. It does not seem likely, therefore, contrary to Nagel's speculation, that any future

vocabulary or system of thought can develop that will express the demarcation between a qualitative experience and quantitative descriptions of the world in a way that can overcome the problem in his terms.

i.2 Reformulation of the problem of perception from a phenomenological perspective

Nothing above should be regarded as particularly controversial. It should, however, be understood that if the phenomenon in perception cannot be related categorially in a way that persists outside of a perceptual system, then the totality of derivable states of affairs are inseparable from their experience.⁴⁶ Instead, the phenomenon can be taken by itself; perception understood, not as a category of being but as a fundamental mode through which its experience is manifested. Husserl, deriving his concept from two notions, the first, Brentano's ascription of 'intentionality' to mental activity, and the second, *ἐποχή*, or restriction to only the immanent qualities of perception, asserts that the study of immanent experience can yield a more fruitful investigation into the nature of mind.

Whilst Husserl's *ἐποχή*, which requires that the subject suspend the "transcendental" faculties in order to comprehend the pure intentionality of immanent experience, might recognise the essential strata of awareness with regards to perception it nonetheless fails to account for the inherent complexity of the sign. That is not to suggest that Husserl was unaware of

⁴⁶ John Searle in *the Construction of Social Reality* outlines, in addition to his already established categories of the individual mind, notions that extend these concepts into social categories as well.

the complex and multifarious relations of phenomena in “lived experience”, a great portion of his *Ideas* series focuses on the nature of these difficulties; however, his reductive phenomenology does illustrate the difficulty of approaching perception insofar as he considers experience reduced to pure quality to be the most fundamental.⁴⁷ Is “redness” an atomic particle of the image which contains it, or does the image, only once given, offer the opportunity for the intellectual abstraction of colour into a pure sign? Certainly, it should be noted that Husserl would likely argue that the fundamentality of pure quality is related to its dynamic noematic significance rather than any static relation to an objective image. Nonetheless, as will become clear, it is precisely the ambiguity of the ontological status of the percept, partly historical, partly innate, which suggests that a simplistic hierarchy of fundamentality could not fully ascertain the nature of the phenomenon.

In the scientific sense, the question of the deconstruction of any given object is a simple one, a proper part is any constituent into which the object

47 Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. William P. Alston and Nakhnikian G. (New York: Springer, 1990) [henceforth *Phenomenology*]; *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy First Book: General Introduction to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. F. Kersten (Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1983) [henceforth *Ideas I*]; *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. R. Rojcewicz and Schuwer A. (Lancaster : Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1983) [henceforth *Ideas II*].

is divisible whose characteristics and behaviours are uniformly definable, and which maintains its coherence independently of its object (albeit, in the Fregean sense, its *Sinn* will not persist). Although this definition may be nothing more than a self-evident abstraction from the notions of ‘part’ and ‘scientific method’, it would be misleading to suggest that context and focus were not significant in the delineation and decomposition of a whole into its constituents. R. G. Winther, for instance, defends the view that the parts that can be obtained from a whole will vary depending on a contextual framing: ‘Neither parts nor their relations... are pre-given. A partitioning frame is requisite.’⁴⁸ Furthermore, he proposes that all parts should be thought of as abstractions from existing wholes. To a degree, this echoes the concerns above regarding Husserl’s reductionism and the definition of parts.

Winther’s thesis of contextuality, in principle, can be accepted, the definition of part and whole being mutually dependent; however, as it pertains to phenomenological concerns, the variability of contextual frameworks (partitioning frame) and the definitional categories of phenomenological and physical/biological part-whole relations would not, for reasons I will make clear, necessarily appear to be commensurable

48 Rasmus Gronfeldt Winther, ‘Part-whole science’, *Synthese*, 178 (2011), 397-427 (402-3).

paradigmata. In the case of the (ap)perceived image, it is impossible to define an objective image and its experience or to take the parts of an experiential context, and decompose it into a structure whose parts retain their coherence independently of the image-object of which they form a part. Unlike biological parthood, where the parts are parts by contingent definition, in phenomenological parthood, the parts are ontologically contingent on the image-object in question. Moreover, the image-object is variable depending on factors such as, intentionality, state of mind, physical acuity, *et al.* As Merleau-Ponty indicates: ‘Once again, reflection – even the secondary reflection of science – renders obscure that which we believed self-evident [croyait clair]. We thought we knew what feeling, seeing, hearing were, and yet now they raise problems. We are invited to return again to the experiences they designate and define them anew.’⁴⁹ And, not only this but the question of the efficacy of awareness, of the categories of awareness, on perception. The scientific method is a means to escape an epistemological dilemma between empirical reality and the inherent ambiguity of perception, as such, scientific thought manipulates the given

49 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenologie de la Perception* (Paris: La Librairie Gallimard, 1945), 38, <http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/merleau_ponty_maurice/phenomenologie_de_la_perception/phenomenologie_de_la_perception.pdf> [accessed 07 August 2017].

through contextual definitions but does not need to question the given as such.

There is already present, therefore, in the given image not simply the atomic construction of sense-data passed and parsed through the activation and realization of nerve impulses but a conglomerate of superficially disparate but fundamentally connected elements. In other words, an atomic structuring of the image, audial, visual, sensory, remains too simplistic to account for a theory of perception, and perception as a physical/biological enterprise will only ever account for the mechanism of tropic production but not the perceptual image itself. To take a thought experiment from the Gestaltists, if we take any image apperceived by a subject, there are many strands and parts that compose this image, depending on the perspective and orientation of the perceiver.⁵⁰ Its structure, so far as it is *apperceived*, contains no *proper parts* except for those that are so in virtue of its qualities *qua* perception. No single fixed interpretation governing its perceived aspects is given, nor is an atomic deconstruction of the image possible; and, although a clear correlation between stimulus and percept can be

50 Kurt Koffka, *Perception: An Introduction to Gestalt-theorie* <<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Koffka/Perception/perception.htm>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

measured, its interpolation possesses dependencies that are not governed by a straightforward stimulus-response formula.⁵¹

With this understanding of the ambiguities of perceptual, or phenomenological analysis, and the attendant understanding of the categories of ‘quantity’ and ‘quality’ that we have explicated above, it is possible to discover a possible solution to the problem of the ontological status of perceptual artifacts and their concomitant associations. In order to pursue this in the way outlined in the introduction, it is first necessary to show why Searle’s proposed solution fails to resolve those difficulties.

ii. Searle’s and Dennett’s proffered solution to the problem of categorial classification

Much has already been explicated above regarding Searle’s recognition of the categorial insufficiencies of analytic philosophy of mind. According to Searle, materialist philosophy owes its state of inconclusive limbo to its failure to grasp, firstly, that the ordinary sciences do not require the perpetuation of the traditional Cartesian categories adopted from the classical model, and secondly, that ordinary linguistic categories do not necessarily reflect the state of affairs portrayed by a perceptive examination

51 cf. Weber’s law.

of the present understanding of the physico-chemical sciences. Dennett's position closely follows Searle's in this; he does not, as Searle does, develop the notion as a theoretical minimum, but he does nonetheless attempt the same method of supersession attempted by Searle.⁵²

Given the difficulties which he has outlined Searle explains why materialism as a doctrine is unnecessary. Briefly, there is some value in Searle's description of the apparently atomic structure of reality and its relation to evolutionary biology. It can hardly be denied that the boiling of water is *caused* by the movements of molecules governed by the laws of thermodynamics.⁵³ Furthermore, Searle proposes that the general character of atomistic and biological supervenience – in this sense, not only physically smaller components, but temporally, ontologically, and epistemologically more fundamental ones – should be extended to consciousness. Biological explanation allows for both explanation of the macro, logical, kind, and the micro, atomistic, kind. In the former, the explanation, such as in the standard theory of evolution, allows for the isolation of an element of adaptation and its assessment as it tends to comport the organism toward its environment or away from it. In the latter, only the mechanism by which

52 Dennett, *op. cit.*, 101-138; I will primarily focus on Searle in this chapter of the essay as he expresses the relevant position most clearly, and as a distinct thesis rather than a corollary.

53 Searle, *op. cit.*, 86-88; Dennett makes similar evolution based arguments in *op. cit.* (182).

the adaptation functions is of interest. From this, Searle takes the position that it ought to be natural for any philosopher of mind to assume that consciousness is simply another function of the natural world.⁵⁴ He states in conclusion:

‘And once you accept our world view the only obstacle to granting consciousness its status as a biological feature of organisms is the outmoded dualistic/materialistic assumption that the “mental” character of consciousness makes it impossible for it to be a “physical” property.’⁵⁵

It is not the present intention to reject the suggestion that evolutionary biology influences the manifestation of cognitive processes. To do so would be to make a claim which would be arrant nonsense. As Andy Clark has noted elsewhere, all natural organisms appear to possess a variety of *umwelt* related to the environment which forms their usual habitat; a non-evolutionary explanation for this, whilst not *impossible* would be somewhat improbable.⁵⁶ There are, however, several problems with Searle’s account. Most significantly, his departure from the dualist/monist paradigm is not as complete as he suggests. Whilst he achieves a partial escape from the concomitant categories of most contemporary analytic philosophy of mind by

54 Searle, *op. cit.*, 90.

55 *Ibid.*, 91.

56 Andy Clark, *Being There: Putting Brain, Body and World Together* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998).

speaking in positive rather than negative terms, the problems which gave rise to those difficulties nevertheless remain in place. By this, I mean simply that his description of biological systems at least describes something with clear and unmistakable truths contained within it; however, as I have attempted to show above, the principle of atomism and atomistic deconstruction is far from absolute. The sciences occupy territory, which, when they confine themselves to analysing *straightforward* facts, is rightfully theirs. It nonetheless seems far less certain than Searle would claim that the methods of heuristic deconstruction, conceptual and physical, employed in scientific endeavours can be extended so easily to the problem of consciousness. Despite of his attempts to recognize the 'subjectivity' of consciousness in order to reconcile the established character of consciousness with the paradigm of natural science,⁵⁷ the methods of the sciences are not equipped, as I hope I have shown above in (i.2), to supply the means for this reconciliation.

57 Searle, *op. cit.*, 93-100.

III

Psychoanalysis and the Structure of the 'I'

Actions, in general, when compared to the self-ascribed motivations of the actor provide a basis for assessing the 'state of mind' of he who has performed them. But even this relatively simplistic statement begs the question: What do we mean when we speak of being in a 'state of mind'? Or, more precisely: of what do actions and motivations consist, and, what are their relations to one another? As has been made clear above, the problems of the mind and those elements, even some of which have detailed neurobiological/histological explanations, involved in the generation of complex perceptual 'images' will yield very little from isolated interrogation. The representation of complex objects, in the scientific sense, as simplexes, in the phenomenal sense, being an illustrative example of this type of difficulty. Indeed, since Kant, and more recently Brentano, the Gestalt

theorists, and votaries of the contemporary notion of an ‘embodied mind’, there is a strong argument that the production of the perceptual ‘image’ is comprehensible not as a neutral or passive observance of objective states of affairs external to a perceiving unity but only as the product of a combination of psychological dispositions, both conscious and unconscious.⁵⁸ It is, therefore, necessary to clarify our understanding of the term ‘state of mind’ and its corollaries and dependents if a more general understanding of the ontological status of the ‘percept’ is to be achieved.

The mind, as Hume realized in a rudimentary way, is not an organ in itself, ordered into multifarious forms that await the input of particular events, the results of which are preordained by fixed and permanent structures. Neither should it be understood as an infinitely plastic collection of Derridan indefinite milieux; it is not that there are contents already present which specifically intervene to cause this or that set of behaviours, but that there are capacities, limits, and predispositions that form the basis of a *socialized* action.

58 Franz Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, trans. D. B. Terrell (London: Routledge, 2014); Koffka, *Perception: An Introduction to Gestalt-theorie* <<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Koffka/Perception/perception.htm>> [accessed 07 August 2017]; Wolfgang Köhler, *Selected Papers*, ed. Mary Henle (New York: Liveright, 1971); Lakoff and Johnson, *op. cit.*; Johnson, *op. cit.*; Varela, *et al.*, *op. cit.*

If, as it is the intended purpose of this chapter to demonstrate, perception relies on epistemic, and social, familial, and extra-familial interactions as much as on material objects, then an understanding of the qualitative component of cognition, the ‘percept’, can be determined in principle from the study of social cognition and the formation of belief systems. I do not make this claim lightly, but base it entirely on the available evidence. The gradual erosion of Cartesian objectivist idealism, and its replacement with an empirical account of perception and the subjective ideas arising from it has certainly inverted the Cartesian cogito, granting priority to matter over its abstract idea. However, this alone merely allows for the object that which it already possessed, and the illuminative possibilities of a study of the objective relations of the external and internal structures of perception without elements that examine the relationships to the world is limited, as shown in the previous chapter.

Furthermore, I base this claim on the arguments of contemporary philosophers such as Mark Johnson, who, drawing on the work of Merleau-Ponty, has argued, with George Lakoff, for an interpretation of the mind which relies on a combination of bodily ‘situatedness’ and metaphorical abstraction. Although, their work seems to suffer from two main difficulties:

the first is the explicitly neo-Kantian tendency to construct fixed internal forms around which the world is structured; the second is a failure to recognize fully the effect of higher-order understanding on lower-order concepts – they appear to subscribe to the notion that propositional thinking supervenes on non-propositional concepts without affecting the ‘quality’ of the base. Neither of these objections is prohibitive, both are ultimately related to their attachment to classical categories,⁵⁹ a fault for which Searle also criticises many contemporary philosophers of mind.⁶⁰ What is of interest is the notion of a fully embodied cognition. Finally, I base it on the experience of psychoanalytic practice, particularly in the developments of Jacques Lacan. In his development of the psychoanalytic method, originated primarily by Freud and Jung, Lacan combines the categories and clinical methods of Freud with the structural linguistic and anthropological theories of Saussure and Lévi-Strauss.

It is this final element which will form the most significant part of our argument. This chapter has two principal objectives. The first is to establish

59 Mark Johnson appears to have a different understanding of classical categories. It is true, as he claims, that the classical treatment of the categories of external phenomena has a rigidity which may well be unwarranted (*op. cit.*, xi), but he nevertheless retains the synthetic structure of apperception conceived of by Kant (i.e., *ibid.*, 164-6).

60 Searle, ‘The Bad Argument: One of the Biggest Mistakes in Philosophy in the Past Several Centuries.’ in *Seeing Things As They Are: A Theory of Perception* (New York: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2015) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199385157.003.0002>> [accessed 19 September 2017].

the general principles of cognition, not necessarily exhaustive principles, but those which are essential for determining how perceptual forms are apprehended qualitatively. The second is to demonstrate, through the categories of Lacanian psychoanalysis, how the dyadic structure of the intersubjective relation informs self-awareness through the internalization of the other and the representation of the body-self as an other, and acts upon the general principles in ways that inform the general character of those percepts as they are presented in lived experience. I will argue below that regardless of the clinical success or failure of psychoanalysis, the theoretical categories developed from Lacan, in particular those adopted from Claude Levi-Strauss, are useful in a full appreciation of the ontological status of the percept. Furthermore, I will consider the concept of the 'I', the self-referential locution, as a category in itself, and, as the *differentia* of the 'self' from the 'other'. Through phenomenology, theories of embodied cognition and analyses of the categories of thought we are able to discover general principles. Through psychoanalysis those general principles can be applied to the specific minds of individuals.

i. The meaning in embodied activity and the non-localized impetus of phenomena ascribed to subjective intuition in the classical model of perception.

i.1 The concept of embodiment as the overcoming of the tradition mind/body dichotomy and its limitations.

It was F. J. Varela, *et al.*, who originally proposed a model for generating autonomous networks or systems capable of assimilating and modifying their structure in compatible ways rather than attempting to predefine a set of higher-order symbolic relations as the foundation for an intelligent system.⁶¹ Functions are distributed throughout the system of connections; there is to be no prescribed rules as such, but localized functions relating only by incidence to a more general function.⁶² There is a sense in which environmental interactions, such as these operations and the histological example employed by the authors, reflect the arrangements of most natural ecosystems.⁶³ They are a confluence of individual parts ostensibly unrelated to each other, in that they are not *governed* centrally, but whose coexistence and repeated coextensivity produce a stable and, ostensibly, homogeneous system. From the perspective of examining the end result, it can appear

61 Varela, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 87-91.

62 *Ibid.*, 88.

63 This may seem a little unqualified; however, 'ecosystems' here simply refers to the dictionary definition of the term: 'A biological community of interacting organisms and their environment' (s. v. 'ecosystem', *OED*). And so, in a sense, what follows is little more than an elaboration of its dictionary definition.

that such systems require some form of coordinating principle in order to exist in the harmonious way that observation would suggest that they do. The implications of this analogy can also be read into papers by S. Wolfram and O. Martin, *et al.*⁶⁴

The question of complexes and simplexes in perception seems to emerge again here. In the previous chapter, we made two principal arguments which are of use: firstly, we claimed that ‘quantity’ and ‘quality’ were terms relative to the perspective and orientation of a perceiver rather than absolute terms that could be employed in a strictly scientific way without ambiguity and potential error; and secondly, that the concept of ‘part’ is phenomenologically and definitionally dependent on the ‘qualities’ of its whole.⁶⁵ Illuminating the problem of dynamic stable (‘self-organizing’) systems can be achieved by a degree of decomposition similar to other kinds of scientific deconstruction. As Varela, *et al.*, point out, just as a cell can be deconstructed into its self-containing components of cytoplasm, rough endoplasmic reticulum, etc., neuronal networks and ecosystems of organisms can be shown to consist of substructures, of which there are

64 Stephen Wolfram, ‘Computational Theory of Cellular Automata’, *Communications in Mathematical Physics*, 96 (1984), 15-56; Oliver Martin, Andrew M. Odlyzko, Stephen Wolfram, ‘Algebraic Properties of Cellular Automata’, *Comm. Math. Phys.*, 93 (1984), 219-258.

65 A similar, though not precisely identical notion, was put forward by Hubert A. Simon (1969) in relation to parts and wholes in evolutionary biology.

other substructures and so on, operating in the manner outlined above.⁶⁶ In essence, each complex network of units can itself be conceived of as a unit, that is, unitary. In other words, the structure of complex systems where the parts of that system are not necessarily inextricably linked in a physical way to their superior parts are susceptible of analysis under methods similar to those employed in the traditional sciences. The significance of this is that the aspects and functions mind can be formally associated with aspects and functions of the body through experimental means.

If the arguments that I suggest above are true, then it is possible to avoid certain of the consequences of the classical position, i.e., those accepted by Searle, which I reviewed in chapter I. This is the view that because every perceptual function can be mapped onto a bodily function then perception and its concomitant mental processes are resolvable under those structures, and the qualitative aspects of perception can be explained as emergent qualities of the system as a whole. Firstly, emergentism in general is a *non sequitur*; it is not clear why these irreducible phenomena, that in a scientific mode are susceptible of simplification, should appear in the way they do on account either of the complexity of a system or of the

⁶⁶ Varela, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 105.

system's capacity to receive and organize, e.g., photoelectric input and the translation of that input into something sensible. Certainly, a complex object might appear simple if it were obscured by distance or the spectral resolution of the viewer; that is not my meaning, all phenomena, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, are accompanied by a variety of meanings, intentions, orientations, and their residua. The difficulty in determining the nature of these things lies not in their physical structure, but in the relation between their physical structure and their phenomenological structure, which, based on the arguments we have made concerning the quantity/quality and part/whole relations, are not to be reduced by physical analysis and experimental methods alone. This critique applies equally to A. Clark, who will be examined in more detail below. In order to maintain his position that emergence takes place on account of the properties of the system alone, he maintains a focus on manifest behaviour and takes the rest as given.⁶⁷ Similarly, Johnson makes plain his feelings that: "higher" cognitive operations arise from the increasing complexity of the organism-environment interactions.⁶⁸

67 It may be that this oversimplifies his thought a little, but I believe his general position is as I have characterized it.

68 Johnson, 'Merleau-Ponty's Embodied Semantics – From Immanent Meaning, to Gesture, to Language', *EurAmerica*, 36 (2006), 1-27 (2). [henceforth *Embodied Semantics*].

Other developments in the field of embodied cognition such as those of M. Johnson and Clark have sought to expand this initial study both experimentally and conceptually. Clark records developments in the practical functioning of embodiment, whilst Johnson proposes a novel approach by attempting to connect ‘nonpropositional’ concepts to ‘propositional’ ones by means of metaphor and analogy. Later, it will be possible to see parallels between his approach to thought and language and Lacan’s.

i.2 The theoretical development of embodied cognition and image-schemata as a means to explain the appearance of higher level reasoning and self-awareness of perceptual experience.

Clark, speaking of the development of modern systems of artificial intelligence, similarly to the observations of Varela, *et al.*, makes the point that there was little or no progress achieved in attaining a degree of ‘intelligent’ autonomy from machines until it was decided to give those machines rudimentary bodies through which to interact with the world around them.⁶⁹ By autonomic processes, that is, unconscious in the

69 Clark, *op. cit.*; for an expression of the philosophical problem, cf., Hubert Dreyfus, *Alchemy and Artificial Intelligence*, (Rand Corporation, 1965) <<https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/papers/2006/P3244.pdf>> [accessed 20 September 2017].

colloquial sense, the body orients itself in multifarious ways towards its intended purpose. These processes, whether or not a specifically conscious thought may be involved, do not, according to Clark, Lakoff, Johnson *etc.*, require a 'central executive control'.⁷⁰ Clark, for instance, refers to the way in which someone orienting themselves to catch a ball does so not with a series of mathematically worked out trajectories, but by the unconscious process of aligning their body and moving in such a way as to ensure that 'the acceleration tangent of gaze from fielder to ball is kept at zero.'⁷¹ In essence, this represents, according to Clark the immanent interaction of body and world without the requirement for preliminary judicial interference from a unified *knower* as such. He argues, along with much contemporary work in robotics and cognitive science, that the belief that 'central thinking' must govern organisms' seemingly complex interactions with the environment is based on a fallacy: 'they take a complex phenomenon ... and look for a single determining factor. This is what Mitchel Resnick ... calls 'centralized thinking'.⁷² Instead, Clark suggests that most common actions, such as walking, navigating environmental obstacles, and even completing a 'jig-saw puzzle' are developed through a

70 Clark, *op. cit.*

71 *Ibid.*

72 *Ibid.*

process of ‘action loops’, where the actor *discovers* by trial and error more than by abstract reasoning the correct method of completion. Below, in a more complete exegesis of the principles of both Clark and Johnson, I will argue that whilst the principle which he establishes here of distribution of cognition is useful, much of the general theory of embodied cognition is lacking in firm philosophical foundations.

Johnson’s work is more a work of pure philosophy than the cross-over between philosophy and the sciences of Varela, *et al.* and Clark. His interest, not mechanistic to the same degree, is in finding ‘image-schemata’ that can explain how meaning can work within an embodied experiential structure. As a proponent of embodied cognition, he maintains, similarly to Varela, *et al.*, and Clark, that the mind works through a series of localized functions that are in essence related to some element of bodily action. Johnson explicitly separates propositional and nonpropositional ‘meaning’ into two different categories.

Johnson proposes that meaning is essentially constructed on a nonpropositional foundation. The first stage of this is the bodily distributed mental functions outlined at length above. The second is the abstraction from this of a series of image “Gestalts” or image-schemata. The final stage

is the representation of these ‘forces’ through the features of propositional language. The first stage, similarly to Clark, represents the body and mind as intricately connected through distributed functions acting independently and in concert to produce the necessary effect. He critiques what he calls the ‘objectivist’ view of meaning; Johnson attacks the notion that all significant epistemological facts can be represented propositionally in traditional linguistic forms and that a sufficient grasp of the underlying logic could grant a ‘god’s-eye-view’ of meaning (*i.e.*, Ayer’s claim that a sufficiently powerful intellect could grasp all the facts of logic and mathematics from first principles).⁷³ In contrast, he suggests that initial meaning is formed through the structures of immanent experience: ‘Imaginative projection is a means by which the body ... works its way up into the mind ... I want to stress the nonpropositional, experiential, and figurative dimensions of meaning and rationality.’⁷⁴

In the second stage, image-schemata, Johnson argues, with Kant, for the need for image-schematic structures to ‘connect concepts with percepts’.⁷⁵ Although he regards Kant’s understanding of image-schemata

73 Alfred J. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 85-6; Johnson, *The Body in The Mind*, xxxv-xxxvi.

74 *Ibid.*, xxxvii.

75 Johnson, *op. cit.*, 21.

as limited by his eighteenth-century understanding of ‘concept’, he does consider this essential connection between concept and *immanent bodily* percept to be the core of image-schematic structure. For example, the concepts of ‘containment’ and ‘boundedness’. These are immanent and pervasive experiences as three-dimensional bodies, limited in capacity, and this experience, according to Johnson, is internalized conceptually by the interpolative power of an image-schema.⁷⁶ It is the structure of the insuperable conditions of being, the brute facticity rendered into fixed schema through acquaintance with bodily experience. Indeed, these structures are specifically to be denied the subject-copula-predicate structure of an Aristotelian proposition. These schemata, Johnson further argues, should be considered as possessing generality as opposed to specificity – i.e., the type ‘triangle’, never the token ‘that triangle’. As Johnson points out, if correct, these schemata pervade most action in general.⁷⁷

As an attempt to unify, or discover an holistic basis on which to save the subjective from complete sublimation under the structures of distributed consciousness, image-schemata represent a means to present a version of

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 22-3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 26-7.

embodied cognition which retains a central *coherence*, if not a central *processor*, in the sense that a sense of self, as we shall see from Johnson's third contention, can emerge from its relation to these schemata.

For the third stage of his argument, Johnson proposes the extension of particular bodily-cognitive feats through image-schemata and metaphorical relationships. Through the example 'schema' of 'balance', Johnson explains, similarly to Clark, that the direct activity of learning to balance with the apparatus provided is achieved through an 'action loop' of repeated trial and error.⁷⁸ But balance as a term, and as a concept, can have multifarious meanings – *equilibria* of various kinds, for instance, can be said to be in balance. It is from this specific, learned action that a preconceptual gestalt or schematic image is formed. The conceptual schema here can be extended to all the other uses of the term 'balance' by means of a nonpropositional metaphorical leap; in conjunction with image-schemata, Johnson maintains that this final notion is sufficient to grant an explanation of general meaning.

There are some problems with Johnson's conception of image-schemata which we should note for our exegeses below. Whilst there are some shared

78 *The Body in the Mind*, 75; Clark, *op. cit.*

notions between Johnson's account of image-schemata, and the immanent structure of Being in Heidegger's fundamental ontology which suggest a grasp of the meaning of nonpropositional content from a phenomenological point of view, for instance, the concept of *horizons* of Being in Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, there remains, despite his attempts to avoid it, a sense of abstract reasoning.⁷⁹ In suggesting, for instance, the ideas of containment and boundedness as schemata, he cannot retain them as immanent schemata beyond their initial facticity. The reason for this is simply that, whilst the facts they represent are nonpropositional in the sense of being *merely* present and requiring no further understanding, his conception of the schemata draws on propositional content, which, by his understanding could only occur later. As schemata, Johnson is taking them to be something other than the mere conditions of being. The limitations of containment appear in a meaningful way only when there is something *outside* or *beyond* that an individual wants to do but is prevented from doing. The facticity of this circumstance is part of the structure of overall Being, but is what the encounter of an individual with this structure comes up against nonpropositional? The structure itself is, by definition, external to the

79 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John McQuarrie and Robinson, E. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), §. 7.

structures of propositional knowledge, but how can it be possible to isolate the internal structure in such a way as to delineate without a great degree of ambiguity what was or was not at one stage non- or pre- propositional content?

If, as Johnson claims as his third contention, propositional knowledge is derived from the metaphorical and analogical extension of image-schemata, it remains unclear why those schemata should be internalized as nonpropositional structures. Certainly, as an explanation in neuroscience of generalization given the premise of embodiment it would seem to be a useful tool; however, as a philosophical structure it needs to explain more than the mere apparent behaviours of individuals in relation to external phenomena in order to justify its position. Johnson's schemata are explicitly based on the Kantian schemata. Kant explains the need for such schemata thus: 'Obviously, there must be some third thing, which is homogeneous ... with the category, and ... with appearance, and which thus makes application of the former to the latter possible.'⁸⁰ There are numerous Kantian scholars, H. E. Allison records, who have wondered why Kant felt the need to include this chapter in his *Critique* at all.⁸¹ That, of course, does

80 *KrV*, B177.

81 Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), 202-3.

not automatically denude Johnson's schemata of a sensible purpose; however, as we have seen, whilst he may wish to apply the concept to a non-objectivist epistemology and ontology, the purpose served by the schemata is the same. In a sense, it is important to recognize the subjectivity of the Kantian scheme of categories; they are, in essence, internal mappings of external structures that provide the ground for knowledge and understanding of the world in general. The categories are necessary because they do not exist in a *sensible* form outside of the self. To speak of schematic 'bridge laws' for applying these categories to the 'percepts' whose phenomenal realization they are intended to govern, is to presuppose that they are lacking in their inherent phenomenal structure and, therefore, require an additional point of interpolation from that gleaned by the sense in ordinary experience. Why, however, need we more than the senses combined with physical and mental faculties in order to apprehend this structure?

That image-schemata are superfluous to the structure of an embodied theory of the mind should be clear from what has been said above. However, the full extent to which it is unnecessary to have these intermediaries between conceptualizations and their phenomenal structure or, in Johnson's

case, between the extension of meaning through metaphors and their base body-world structures.

i.3 The role and influence of phenomenology on embodied cognition, and Heidegger's fundamental ontology as a potential solution for some of the limitations of the theory.

The role of self-aware consciousness of the variety traditionally meant by the word 'conscious', whilst not eliminated as a possible mode of conscious being, is, according to the concept of embodied consciousness, not essential to the fundamental environmental functioning of an organism. It is worth noting that many of the ideas of embodied cognition are similar to if not directly based on the work of phenomenologists as much as cognitive scientists. Mark Johnson, for instance, cites Merleau-Ponty as a primary influence on his thinking.⁸² Whilst Merleau-Ponty is referenced not only by Johnson, but also by Clark, and Varela, *et al.*, as a principal direct influence, Heidegger is usually cited only in a reluctant or auxiliary way, if not left out altogether,. This may seem as something of a diversion, yet, whilst Merleau-Ponty has developed many explicit notions regarding phenomenological being and action in the world, Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*,

82 Johnson, *Embodied Semantics*.

if put to correct use might shed greater light on the nature of an embodied cognition.

It is evident from the more extended treatment of phenomenology in Varela, *et al.*, that their reasons for preferring Merleau-Ponty are concerned with Heidegger's perceived hostility to science. Varela, *et al.*, claim: 'still Heidegger considered phenomenology the true method of ontology, a theoretical enquiry into human existence (*Dasein*) that was logically prior to any form of investigation.'⁸³ However, in Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, what is being asked is not intended as a contradiction of scientific truth, since it is never approached. In asking about ontology, he is asking about the sense of Being as such, and therefore, about its existential categories (*existentialia*), and not about the specific forms of interaction that may be felt by this or that being within the modes connected with the fundamental state of *Being-in-the-world*.⁸⁴

It may be that to the cognitive scientist, who wishes to study the mechanism of embodied existence, Merleau-Ponty provides a more direct interface by addressing the modalities of embodied existence directly. By mapping the phenomenal ground of embodied experience, he provides a

83 Varela, *et al.*, 19.

84 Heidegger, *op. cit.*, §§. 9-12.

framework within which such analysis can take place. Nevertheless, it is not a point of necessity that the body be explicitly introduced into a phenomenological theory, or the scientific bases of phenomenological thought be examined. Varela, *et al.*, object that *Dasein* is 'logically prior' to any investigation. But this is precisely the ground from which this, present, work began; reductive reasoning seeks a ground that is not the *thing itself*, for physics this is the atom, for language a definition which explains the meaning of a word without reference to the word in question. There can be no doubt that the roots of the fact of phenomenal perception lie in biological structures, what remains in question is the character of the perceptual nexus that arises from it and the ontological foundations of the parts expressed within it. As Heidegger states: 'the "universality" of "Being" is not that of a class or *genus*. The term "Being" does not define that realm of entities which is uppermost when these are Articulated [sic] conceptually according to genus and species'.⁸⁵ The question is not of the structure of the parts which give rise to perception itself, nor is it of the ontic structures of daily life elaborated through the notion of embodiment, but of the way in which meaning, or qualitative experience, expresses itself in irreducible immanence.

85 *Ibid.*, §. 1.

Why is it relevant whether Heidegger or Merleau-Ponty is to be preferred? The answer is one of perspectives. Heidegger's principal fault is the hermetic character of his work; Merleau-Ponty, on the other hand, engages willingly with the sciences, which makes his theories easily adapted for such purposes. This can be seen, for instance, in his adoption and critique of ideas from Gestalt theory in both *Phenomenology of Perception* and *Structure of Behaviour*.⁸⁶ However, there are also weaknesses in this approach when applied, as we wish to apply them, to the ontological status of perception.

If we understand quantity/quality as we have understood them thus far, and ask which types of actions are insuperably connected with a phenomenal 'quality' of some kind, what is the result? It is an implied consequence of the embodiment hypothesis that action, in most cases, is connected to a situation, that is, an equation of immanent acting in such a way as to produce a result. If there is a 'feel' connected with an act, for instance, removing a pen from the desk, it is to be understood 'scientifically' as the confluence of disparate subsystems acting temporarily in such a way as to yield an 'apparently' unified field focused around the activity of

86 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenologie de la Perception*, 44; *The Structure of Behaviour*, trans. Alden L. Fisher (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), xxv.

picking up a pen. The force of their argument is undeniable, and it has the virtue of possessing *truth* in the ordinary sense, but it is not the *whole* truth. It could be seen in a superficial light as being nearly identical to Heidegger's own views on the 'worldhood' of beings-within-the-world: 'Being-in-the-world, according to our Interpretation hitherto, amounts to a non-thematic circumspective absorption in references or assignments constitutive for the readiness-to-hand of a totality-of-equipment.'⁸⁷ It is, however, on closer inspection the study of something quite different to the 'scientific' ideas of embodied cognition. It is the analysis of a lived, real existence (*existenz*). 'Ready-to-hand' and 'present-at-hand', here, are modalities of Being-in-the-world. As such, they are the categories within which objects (equipment) present themselves, but, more importantly, these are fundamental categories of the modes in which objects present themselves to be experienced. This is the crux of our quantity/quality notion. In whatever way the situation is examined there remain intractably two things, seemingly incommensurable as long as reductive reasoning is attempted, the *lived* simplex and the *atomistic* complex.

⁸⁷ Heidegger, *op. cit.*, §. 16.

In neither case can we find a satisfactory answer for the original question. In the case of embodied cognition, the answers which it can proffer are little different to those given by physicalists. It is a far more sophisticated account which avoids many of the antinomic dualities discussed earlier, but it is not able to satisfy the problem of how qualities emerge, as dealt with above. Searle's input into this, that the 'quality' of 'heat' is simply the subjective appearance of molecular energies, aside from seeming to replicate the demand of J. J. C. Smart that lightning should be understood as an electrical discharge or pain as the firing of c-fibres (in an overtly more complex structure), doesn't seem to aim at any kind of explanation.⁸⁸

In the case of Heidegger, his fundamental ontology preserves *in principle* the distinction between the atomistic mode of analysis and the phenomenological-philosophical mode. It grants an opportunity, then, for an analysis which can act in a conciliatory way to discover an holistic ontology. However, there is no inherent answer to the charges of scientific reductionism. Whilst his fundamental ontological structure, Being-in-the-world as the fundamental, initial and only state of the individual or *Dasein*,

⁸⁸ *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, 119.

which he elaborates in great detail, there is nothing that would *persuade* the cognitive scientist to adopt his categories and no bridge to the categories required by the scientist. I do, however, believe that the concepts of ‘worldhood’, and the modes of ‘being-within-the-world’ offer a framework which I will develop in my final conclusion, and which offer something of value in attempting to determine the ontological status of perception.

ii. The Unconscious and the Conscious in thought and action

The theory of the unconscious drives, according to the school of psychology known as psychoanalysis, informs many of the actions and desires expressed by individuals both towards objects and others. If there are involuntary actions, and if there are conflicts and tensions of reason and unreason, then there is an unconscious. The unconscious is to be understood merely as the figurative place in which those ‘thoughts’⁸⁹ hide which inform or influence conscious thought or action but are either incapable of conscious expression or, by their nature, are not susceptible of being expressed in a conscious way.⁹⁰

The rudiments of Lacanian psychoanalysis can be found in Freud. The principle categories around which all Lacanian developments resolve are to a greater-or-lesser degree, Freudian. It is possible to see *l’imaginaire* already present in his analysis of early stage (infantile) narcissism and object-cathexis.⁹¹ The self-reference or the recognition of aspects of a self-image, and later, in Lacan, a mirroring, which instigates and perpetuates

89 ‘Thoughts’ here represents a general and imprecise term. It would be more accurate, though lengthier, to iterate the types of unconscious ‘thoughts’ most of which would not ordinarily be considered ‘thoughts’ in the sense in which the word is normally used. Terms such as drives (and their many subtypes), instincts, repressed desires, etc. ‘Thoughts’ seemed an excusable expedient.

90 Sigmund Freud, *The Unconscious*, trans. Graham Frankland (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 90.

91 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. John Reddick (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 4-5.

self-referential desires which are eventually to a degree externalized into a desire for an object outside of the self are actuated by reference to that desire.⁹² Furthermore, there can be seen in the desire for the object in Freud, the beginnings of *le réel*, or the nuanced category encapsulating the imaginary anxiety of possession, the cathexes endemic to psychic aetiology, the negation of the self-image, and the *antagonism* of limitation.

For Lacan, when Freud's patient feels the 'loss 'de la fonction du réel', it is not simply an objective, manifest reality which he has lost, but the imaginary real that threatens his sense of his own self-image, his *ego*.⁹³ For Freud, on the other hand, it appears that *le réel* is simply reality, or a metaphysically actual state of affairs. It is this presumed metaphysically actual state of affairs, which Lacan claims is never adopted as an explicit principle but rather passively inherited through the scientific tendencies of late nineteenth century psychology, that Lacan critiques in his essay, 'Beyond the "Reality Principle"'.⁹⁴

According to Lacan, the concept of associationism, the mechanistic 'engram, and the 'associative link' of a mental phenomenon, that is linked

92 *Ibid.*

93 *The Unconscious*, 34.

94 Jacques Lacan, 'Beyond the "Reality Principle"' in *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006), 58-74 (59). [henceforth *Reality Principle*].

to an object through experience, produces an atomistic and objectivist framework. He claims that this framework has retarded the experimental progress of psychology by causing some of its results to be rejected without full consideration. It is the presumption of associationism, he suggests, to attempt to construct an atomistic theory of stimuli from the basis of scholastic naive materialism. The inevitable consequence of such a basis, he argues, is the adoption of notions remaining from earlier philosophical periods in which, among other things, the reliability of the senses was based on some absolute idea of fixed relations of internal and external structures. To hallucinate, therefore, is simply to be in error.⁹⁵

As an alternative to the metaphysical remnants endemic in Freud's account of the 'Reality Principle', Lacan proposes the methodology which it is my intention to analyse below. That is, one whose primary focus is the meaning of the linguistic sign and to whom it signifies something. In this essay, which is instructive in the fundamental principles to which he adheres, Lacan speaks of the structure of the linguistic sign as means of discourse, as, in one sense the analysand themselves.⁹⁶ It is through the

95 *Ibid.*, 62-3; The suggestion from Lacan is sardonic in character. The question is not whether an hallucination is real or not, but whether it conforms to the structures of reality as constituted through the categories of the self and other (*l'imaginaire, le symbolique, le réel*).

96 *Ibid.*, 66.

work of conversation and interlocution that the nature of psychoanalytic symptoms become manifest to the analyst.

ii.1 Lacan's categories of the self and their relation to conscious perception

The self in psychoanalytic practice attains a dyadic structure with the parent. According to J. P. Muller, the initial stage of a child's development is through the mirroring effect of an adult.⁹⁷ He suggests further that the interactions of mother and child form a rudimentary semiotic system of relations through which the child is able to acquire a primitive sense of 'subjectivity', a kind of proto-self. For Lacan, the first stage at which the child is able to attain a sense of 'unity' is the mirror-stage, when its perceptive capabilities through a combination of natural expansion and nurture are sufficiently advanced that it can recognize itself as a single body, a self. It is here too, that the first stages of an *ego* begin to develop: the 'ideal-I' and, to some degree its negation, its automatic negation, as to see the 'I' or self as an object is to see another and to begin to see *the* other. Hence, Lacan's meaning when he declares: 'Through these two aspects of

97 John P. Muller, *Beyond the Psychoanalytic Dyad* (London: Routledge, 1996), 21.

appearance, this gestalt ... symbolizes the *I*'s mental performance, at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination.⁹⁸

It is the act of seeing and associating its own disparate body-image which forms in its mind the image of a self, an *I* whose form unifies under its heading, according to Lacan, the disparate catalogue of individual elements into a single self-force.⁹⁹ The *I* can, on the one hand, form its own *imaginary*, its ideal self-hood through its recognition that it is a self, but it must by this token begin to see the potentially alienating forces of the *other* and objects outside of its own domain of control.¹⁰⁰ Whilst Lacan focuses almost entirely on this mirror stage and its immanent antagonisms, others such as Muller have cited and developed research which suggests that the primal stage of the development of the *I* is the stage of 'semiotic' interaction, which takes place between mother and infant from the very beginning. Alongside this, the mirror stage introduces to the infant its first notion of *self* and *other* by the means outlined in Lacan. But, it requires first the undifferentiated interaction and immanent internalization of the mother's semiotic interaction with her child. Adapting Lacan's description of the

98 Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function' *in op. Cit.*, 75-81 (76).

99 *Ibid.*, 78.

100 *Ibid.*, 79; Also, this is similar to a concept presented by Theodore Adorno in *Negative Dialectics*. There he is critical of Hegel and Hegelian philosophies for their post-enlightenment tendency to want to subsume the object under their theoretical control. (1973: 146-8)

discovery, idealization, and negation of the *I*, it should be understood that the mirror-stage is a culmination in a process leading to this conceptualization. The *I* is evident in the mother's interactions, though not immediately, and during the mirror-stage, the notion comes into force of '*I*' and '*thou*'. After this stage, there is not only the fear of a new lack of this *I*, but of the return to its lack.¹⁰¹ The mirror-stage, therefore, corresponds loosely and simultaneously to the Freudian narcissistic and object-cathexis stages, as expressed in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. To some extent, the above should help to answer the objections to Lacan's mirror stage of R. A. Lynch that the recognition of a *self* presupposes recognition of the *other*.¹⁰² That recognition is here taken as a fundamentally immanent part of the earliest every-day experience.

ii.1.1 Le réel and le symbolique

Some elements of Lacan's *symbolique* I will leave for the next chapter, which will consider the issues of language, social theory, and other elements necessary for a final look at perception in the concluding chapter. For now, I will simply outline the essential elements of *le réel*, which, as Žižek notes,

101 Muller, *Beyond the Psychoanalytic Dyad*, 75.

102 Lynch, i.e. 211.

bears many of the features of *l'imaginaire* owing to a variety of simultaneity of emergence and the symbiosis of the two concepts, and *le symbolique*.¹⁰³

S. Žižek describes Lacan's real as 'a paradoxical, chimerical entity which, although it does not exist, has a series of properties and can produce a series of effects'.¹⁰⁴ It is this combination of imaginary and imaginary-real that can be seen in the mirror stage of development. The real is that which forms a boundary, or limit, on the fulfillment of cathexes. It is not the metaphysical actuality of Freud's theory, but the end of the domain of indulgence of the desires of the self: 'When anxious, the subject is affected, as I told you, by the Other's desire ... The subject is affected in an immediate manner, which cannot be dialectized.'¹⁰⁵ Part of the presence of an other is the demand of the other that frustrates fantastical possession (*l'objet petit a*). The sense of the falling away of this object and the anxiety that results from this falling away brings an individual into the presence of *le réel*.¹⁰⁶

In *The Function and Field of Speech in Psychoanalysis*, Lacan urges that the particulars of an analysand's speech should be carefully and

103 Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 181-185,

104 *Ibid.*, 184.

105 Lacan, 'Introduction to the Names-of-the-Father' in *On the Name-of-the-Father*, trans. Bruce Fink (London: Polity Press, 2013), 55-91 (57).

106 *Ibid.*, 65-6.

scrupulously analysed, that it is the part of the psychoanalyst to comprehend the inexpressible through the expressible facility of human cognition.¹⁰⁷ It is here that the linguistic signifier/signified relation enters into Lacan's psychoanalytic theorizing: through the symbolic relation of language, inherently intersubjective, but also in the possession and command of the individual who employs it. *L'imaginaire* is thereby extended into intersubjective relations with the other, a synthesis of the imaginary and the real creating a new *symbolic* world of the sign.¹⁰⁸ Whilst, as T. Eyers points out, the signifier in Lacan is removed from the certainty it originally enjoyed in Saussure's structuralism, it also enters here into his notion of the symbol and the symbolic relation itself.¹⁰⁹

In a certain, important, sense, the conception that an individual has of themselves as a self, relies on their conception of themselves rather than a metaphysical *entity*. It has been said above that the idea of a central, processing *cogito*, a Cartesian or neo-classical 'I' as a metaphysical entity, is redundant; conceptually, all the processes often thought of in this way can be taken care of in a decentralized way. As Searle puts it: 'There are a lot of

107 Lacan, 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis' in *Écrits*, 197-268 (221-222). [henceforth *Speech and Language*]

108 *Ibid.*, 228.

109 Tom Eyers, *Lacan and the Concept of the Real* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 37.

systems inside the body that do complicated and apparently “intelligent” information processing but have no mental life at all.’¹¹⁰ Through the psychoanalytic categories of Lacan, and the initial dyadic structure of interpersonal relations becoming, later, Lacan’s *symbolique*, we can see how a unified concept of ‘one’s own self’ is possible.

110 Searle, ‘The Connection Principle and the Ontology of the Unconscious: A reply to Fodor and Lepore’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 54 (1994), 847-855 (848).

IV

The Roles of Language and Social Interaction in the Structure of the 'I'

In the previous chapter, I briefly discussed the nature of the signifier with regards to the views of Lacan. Here, I will expand more fully on the role of language, and more specifically, on linguistic structure and the fundamentally interpersonal essence of the speech act as a strong influence on qualitative perception of the world as a whole. I will draw not only on Lacan's interpretation of the analytical dialogue, between analyst and analysand, but also on M. M. Bakhtin and V. N. Vološinov to show how a naturally evolving linguistic dialogue is fundamental to any social group and ultimately influential on how those groups perceive the 'qualities' with

which they become acquainted as a member of that group. I will then turn, finally, to the problem of social structure and social interaction, as both informative in itself and inextricably dependent on the nature of linguistic dialogue. Within the remit of this discussion will be the structural anthropology of C. Lévi-Strauss and also the social theory of Althusser; from Lévi-Strauss' essay 'The Effectiveness of Symbols' and L. Althusser's interpolation of Lacan's psychoanalytic categories in 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', I will argue that the structure of an organized self represents the interpolated structure of the society in which they exist. As perceiving entities, these facets of life inform an 'I', which, whilst it may appear independent, and, as I will show below, as free as any element in a system composed of a finite number of variables, it is immured within a socio-linguistic structure that, in an analogical sense, *is* the thing itself.

As a *propositum minor*, it might be tentatively suggested that whenever a syllable is uttered, it is done so under the duress of conditions on which the utterer depends so completely for their being that they are, for all intents and purposes, utterly insuperable. In order for something to be meaningfully spoken aloud, there are several essential presuppositions

whose conditions need first to have been met. Firstly, there must already exist a conceptual framework in which a speech act is framed. In order for speech to occur there needs to be a structure of belief in which an individual is constituted within some state of being that enables them to conceive of more than would be possible on an undifferentiated, purely instinctual, level. While this certainly requires a great deal more evidential argument, I take the principle from the position that the conscious being of an individual is constituted beyond their inherent faculties.

Secondly, the speech act presupposes not only, as F. de Saussure suggests 'at least two individuals',¹¹¹ but generalized social interaction whose complexity is measured as a function of time and the extent of the network represented by its social structure. This, I will take to be the principal argument of Bakhtin/ Vološinov's socio-linguistic theories.

Thirdly, a relation needs to exist between the speaker and the listener that renders the concepts and ideas expressed by speech intelligible to both speaker and listener; were this condition not met, then, as I will elaborate below, even with a phonemic and graphemic structure that is identical in every way, the words which they form will be unintelligible.

111 Ferdinand de Saussure, *A Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris (London: Duckworth, 1983), 11.

Below, I will fully explicate the need for these conditions, and show how they can be satisfied through those theories and concepts that I have outlined in the first paragraph. This demonstration is an essential preliminary to the main aim of this chapter, which is to show how language and social interaction inform the structure of the 'I' and, thereby, the perception of 'qualities'.

i. Signifier and signified as constitutive of symbolic relations and Bakhtin/Vološinov's neutral sign as introducing plasticity to the meanings of signs.

The twentieth-century structuralist and post-structuralist paradigmata, although with some antecedents in earlier social theories such as E. Durkheim, and, depending on interpretation, K. Marx, has as its chief influence the posthumously published work of Ferdinand de Saussure. I will provide a brief outline of Saussure's linguistics as represented in *Course in General Linguistics* in order that when we present the notions of Bakhtin and Vološinov's theories their impetus and the reasons for preferring them will be clear.

For Saussure, the speech act is represented by the duality of the sign. The division is between sign as physical form and conceptual realization, or,

between the physical form of the sign and its psychological signified. Thus, for a standard sentence as a function of some phonological pattern $S(a)$, there exists a psychological/conceptual referent such that $C(a)$ satisfies the conceptual conditions of $S(a)$: $S(a) \rightarrow C(a)$.¹¹² With this framework, Saussure suggests that a communication network of at least two people creates a reflexive relation between physical and physiological elements on the one hand, and conceptual and psychological on the other that can continue to cycle between them indefinitely.¹¹³

The connection between the signifier and signified is a relation fixed, according to Saussure, by the forces of the existing psychological associations, history, and the arbitrary connections between a phonological pattern and a concept. These connections belong to the 'social' part of the language and stand beyond the capacity for any individual to create or modify.¹¹⁴ Saussure's structure is one of permanence and impermanence in a state of as close to equilibrium as possible. The *langue* or interpersonal rules governing the conceptual associations of a language are moderated by language in the act of being spoken given to varying degrees of competency,

112 This description differs from Saussure in one respect, that is, in representing the phonological pattern as a function of a sentence; however, it is difficult to see any normative situation in which it would not be so represented.

113 Saussure, 12.

114 *Ibid.*, 14.

differences in pronunciation, idiomatic variations, etc. The language is, thereby, an edifice that cannot be affected willfully by any individual or group of individuals, but whose symbolic relations remain statically and rigidly determined by extra-personal and extra-communal forces.¹¹⁵

i.1 The ideological sign and the plasticity of the meaning of the linguistic signifier.

The symbolic, or in Vološinovian terminology, ideological relation, is the relation that subsists between the object and its apprehension in the sociological milieu. The symbolic, as Lacan notes, constitutes intersubjective relations by allowing the imaginary of the self-sense to be extended into general associations with the other.¹¹⁶ Similarly, Vološinov suggests that the ideological sign ‘reflects and refracts another reality outside itself.’¹¹⁷ The variety of symbols is confined by the variety of relations into which individuals enter. There can be no direct association, unmediated by multifarious social facts. Whilst Saussure may have created the idea of the structural symbol, in this sense, as part of a broader structural hierarchy which determines aspects of the behaviour, beliefs, and

115 *Ibid.*, 71-4.

116 Lacan, *Language and Speech*, 229.

117 Valentin V. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 9.

spoken words of individuals, he has nevertheless been criticized for his insistence that the relation between the signifier and signified was fixed and immutable. This, and the arbitrary negativity of his theory of the sign, lead Vološinov, Bakhtin, and Lacan to employ the symbolism of the signifier/signified relation in a different way. Arguably approaching the nature of Derrida's critique, Vološinov intimates that this structure has reified an abstraction from the coalescence of different voices, and made primary what is at best secondary.¹¹⁸ Vološinov thereby intends to establish, firstly, the priority of the base in determining linguistic forms and meaning, and secondly, the fluidity of the structure through interaction and dialogue.

Moreover, Vološinov argues that the utterance belongs to the immanence of the social interaction, more than to the possession of an objective compendium of inherent 'normatively self-identical' linguistic forms.¹¹⁹ Against the notion of individualistic subjectivism he proposes an interpretation of the sign as a sociological element and a socially normative instrument of the utterance. There can be no such thing as an 'abstract addressee' lacking all social conditioning and relations to others since, in

118 *Ibis.*, 66; Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1976), 133-5.

119 Vološinov, 67.

such circumstances, there could never be any common ground on which to base the slightest comprehension.¹²⁰

Vološinov's linguistic theory is a fecund theory replete with suggestive concepts, and this exposition of his contraposition to Saussurian linguistic structuralism cannot represent the entirety of his theory, but perhaps enough has been accomplished in the above explication to allow us to present a critical examination of the nature of the ideological sign. The nature of the sign in Vološinov's theory is distinctly anti-idealistic. He requires of it three essential qualities: first, that the sign may not be '*divorced*' from '*the material reality of sign* [sic]'; second, that the sign '*may not be divorced from the concrete forms of social intercourse* [sic]'; and third, that '*Communication and the forms of communication may not be divorced from the material basis* [sic]'.¹²¹ The sign's symbolic or 'ideological' character, for Vološinov, lies in the nature of the interaction. Similarly to the nature of the linguistic sign in Lacan, Vološinov maintains that the sign's entrance into concrete reality for any individual depends upon its essential quality of being socialized. It is important to note that the totality of signs in structuralism and post-structuralism *become* the concrete reality, the real

120 Also, Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), §243.

121 Vološinov, 21.

as experienced through its relation with the imaginary. The real, beyond the structure of signifiers and signifieds retains a *noumenal* relationship to the system of signs. It is the real that doesn't exist, but which makes the symbolic *merely* symbolic.

Vološinov attempts to produce here a notion which is distinctly beyond the fixed and immutable relations, proposed by Saussure, between a real concrete sound pattern and psychological association of the conceptual equivalent from the sound pattern. Whilst it would not be denied that there are relations of an essentially physically correlative nature, the realization of post-structural philosophies such as those of Lacan and Vološinov¹²² is that not only are the relations of signifier and signified flexible to a large degree but that within the structure of language and its symbols, no actual base reality beyond these structures is available to the actors within the system.

122 It seems possible that one of the reasons for Vološinov's apparent production of a post-structural before this idea had become popular in European philosophy notion of signified and signifier in fluid, plastic relationships with each and undergoing the revisions of discourse is his explicitly declared intention of producing a Marxian philosophy of linguistics which implies the rejection of the fixed and immutable laws sustaining the epistemic structure of capital.

i.2 Dialogue as the basis for diachronic linguistic variation, and the self-relational quality of signification. The meaning of the sign as quality par excellence.

The question remains after Vološinov's argument about the more precise nature of variation within the meanings of the sign and its significance for the nature of qualitative experience in general. I believe that the notion of *speech genres* developed by Mikhail M. Bakhtin may help with the more thorough understanding of these concepts that it is the intention of this subsection to achieve. The idea of a speech genre, adopted from the concept of the literary genre, suggests that communities and groups, sections, and identities with those communities through the repeated endogenous acts of speech and meaning developed within their shared experiences and concerns creates the appearance of *genres* of speech within a single language where there is great variation in the use and meaning of the linguistic sign. He defines the concept of speech genre thus: 'Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable type of these utterances. These we may call *speech genres*.'¹²³

123 Mikhail M. Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Speech Genres' in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1986), 60-102 (60). [henceforth *Speech Genres*]

These *genres*, according to Bakhtin, are almost infinitely numerous and utterly *heterogeneous*. They involve all aspects of speech from ‘daily rejoinders’ to ‘the brief standard military command’.¹²⁴ Within the varied structure of *speech genres* in general, there are substructures and variations. Many such variations are derived from daily colloquial interactions within certain groups of individuals employing the linguistic, written and verbal,¹²⁵ genres appropriate to their situations. Similarly to Vološinov, he also considers that the meanings of signs can vary opposition, or as a result of antagonism between classes of speakers and with the variation of the linguistic sign would also come variation in the meaning of symbolic relations between individuals and their objects. Through this method, attempts for any *superstructure* to enforce a kind of monoglossia or to dictate the ways in which daily experience should be understood will invariably be met with heteroglossic failure.¹²⁶

This multiplicity of meanings, through antagonisms and, as he puts it, ‘centripetal and centrifugal’ forces, suggests, not perhaps an infinite variety in the sign, for its meanings are contained within a number of structures,

124 *Ibid.*

125 To a degree, avoiding Derrida’s indictment of Saussure for prioritizing speech over writing and treating writing as an inferior discipline taking all its advantages from speech.

126 Bakhtin, ‘Discourse in the Novel’ in *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, ed. Michael Holquist (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1981), 269-434 (271-2). [henceforth *Discourse*]

which, though malleable, are sufficient to ensure the commonality within the same language necessary for communications and to constrain the variability of meanings by the specific dynamics of the variability of signs and the shared experience of the community of speakers, but there is nevertheless heteroglossic variety within and between dialogic communities of the same 'unitary' language.¹²⁷

But what is 'meaning' in this context? It is not the 'meaning' of the 'identity-sign', or the 'correspondence theory of truth' understanding of what it is to mean something. That 'a', a statement or belief, means 'b', an external state of affairs, if, and only if, 'a' corresponds to 'b'. As Searle suggests in his book, *The Construction of Social Reality*:

"Correspond to the facts" is just a shorthand for the variety of ways in which true statements can accurately represent *how things are*, and that variety is the same as the variety of statements, , or more strictly speaking the variety of assertive speech acts.¹²⁸

Searle indicates, furthermore, that truth should be directly measured according to its accuracy in relation to some state of affairs.¹²⁹ In other words, there are objective facts, statements about objective facts, and the

127 *Ibid.*, 428.

128 Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (London: Penguin, 1995), 213.

129 *Ibid.*, 214-5.

relation aRb (see above).¹³⁰ Here, again, there is an example of the subjective/objective approach to literal truth critiqued in chapter two; it is the regarding of one type, the scientific, as possessing automatic priority over any other.¹³¹ Such a notion is ‘literally’ true, but it does not necessarily mean what its proponents suggest that it should mean, or that it represents the totality of the possibility of truth under those conditions. If the linguistic theory of symbolic relations just discussed in this and the previous chapter is correctly understood, it is that words and phrase, their meaning as signification, their structural relations, and signifier/signified relationship, are not atomic elements whose components are relatable to similarly atomic components of external reality. Such a construction would make no sense under the above paradigm.

In an important sense, ‘meaning’ here, whilst not denying the existence of ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ perspectives as such, does not subscribe to any theory which subsumes one or other under the other’s paradigm, or prioritizes one over the other, or adopts a notion of truth which attempts the literal relation of the one to the other. According to correspondence theory,

130 I am not thinking of Wittgenstein here. Simply a standard relation between the statement and its state of affairs. This is no doubt a simplification, but, as necessary as it is to include this illustration, it is not central to our thesis that full exposition of Searle’s position be included.

131 Cf. Searle’s discussion p. 213 of the ‘approximate’ distance of the Sun from the Earth. It is, literally, true in scientific terms. But the correspondence theory itself is limited to this kind of truth and attempts to reduce all other kinds to degrees to which they compare to an ‘objective’ state of affairs.

there are degrees of reality moving towards the precise calculation of states of affairs and their natural forces. This is the simplistic division of the subjective and objective senses of 'quality' and 'quantity' to which I referred in chapter two, which retains many of the aspects of the classical model; although, Searle at least recognizes some of these concerns, as mentioned in that chapter.

From the linguistic perspective, there is no clear atomistic relation of 'word' and 'object'. That is not, of course, the same as saying that no such correlation can ever exist. But the immanent relations of symbols predominate in such a way that the 'meaning' of any sentence, unless constructed in an explicitly propositional way, rarely has a directly corresponding object that can be taken as its complete meaning. The isolation of a single noun and stating that it relates to this 'material object' is not the same as stating that *all* sentences with an 'assertive' content correspond to a literal state of affairs, or that this state of affairs is not itself reliant for its being in some way on the symbols which purport to represent it. I take this position based on a reading of Lacan, Bakhtin/Vološinov, and Heidegger. Through a reading of these thinkers, it is possible to see how a qualitative perceptual framework is, at least, possible;

and, how 'meaning', which would be an objective relation in the sciences, is relative to the perspectives both individual/imaginary and intersubjective/symbolic. Moreover, it is the relations themselves that obtain 'meaning' in and through those relations, which are immanent for an individual who finds them preexisting and has no, even theoretical, existence independent from this *Da*, or, 'there', of Being-in-the-world, and thus appear to the individual who comes across them as absolute or objective truths.

i.3 Symbolic interactions as the essential, basic and insuperable mode of interrelation as such.

I do not intend to accept all of the conclusion of the notions of symbolic interactionism, the social psychological theory developed principally by E. Goffman; however, there could be an argument to be made that a natural corollary for treating linguistic dialogue as a symbolic interaction of sorts is that there should be a more general notion in which almost all elements of the individual are constructed by the force of social elements. This is the purport of Goffman's essay 'on face-work'.¹³²

¹³² Erving Goffman, 'On Face-work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements in Social Interaction' in *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face to Face Behavior* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 5-45.

Goffman suggests that individuals interacting within a society and within specific social groups within a society adopt a series of 'faces' appropriate to the situation, and appropriate to the way that it seems to them they ought to be perceived by another. A 'face', according to Goffman, is: 'the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact.'¹³³ To be 'in face' here is to be approximating social expectations within the context of operation, or to be behaving, generally, in a way consonant with maintaining a particular 'face'. The face is a means by which individuals become a social part of a grouping; to maintain this situation, and avoid being cast out of a particular grouping, *is* to exist within the strictures of the requisite 'face'. It is not the case that there is necessarily, except perhaps in certain supervenient circumstances, an intention to adopt a 'face', rather it is integral to social interaction as a whole. The maintenance of 'face' Goffman regards as 'a condition of interaction, not its objective.'¹³⁴

Under the structure of what Goffman calls 'face-work', the individual must work to maintain 'face' in any number of social conditions. All varieties of social interaction involve 'face' and 'face-work' to some degree.

133 *Ibid.*, 5.

134 *Ibid.*, 12.

The structure essentially forces the subsumption of the individual under the paradigm of the interaction or social situation. 'Face-work' is of the greatest social significance to the individual for, to maintain 'face', according to Goffman, is to maintain such elements as the impression of competence, suitability, etc. Goffman outlines two primary kinds of 'face-work'. The first is '*the avoidance process*' or the means by which a conflict or offence can be avoided in the first place and 'face' maintained by avoiding the event or events that would have challenged it. For example, if a situation cannot be escaped altogether then an individual may act as though no offence has been offered.¹³⁵ '*The corrective process*' is required if a potential loss cannot be avoided and a threat to 'face' takes place. For Goffman, the corrective process betokens a ritual of 'interchange', or, a process involving two or more actors and which he regards as possessing a high degree of symbolic character. For instance, in the exchange: "Excuse me!" and, "Certainly,"¹³⁶

There is a sense in which any discussion of the self beyond its presentation exceeds the scope of Goffman's proposal. Whilst the idea of 'face' and 'face-work' are suggestive, there are also respects in which they are to be found wanting. For Goffman, the 'face' is more like a mask, and an

135 *Ibid.*, 15-18.

136 *Ibid.*, 19-24.

implicit duality between the mask and the mask-wearer is maintained. As such the construction of self is partly a willed process, a concealment and an active engagement within a social milieu; there is also a sense of a presentation of a 'self' being evinced, which I will discuss below. All social interaction forms symbolic play to a degree; the self, the 'true' self, is beyond the reach of any appearance in a social context.¹³⁷ As Goffman suggests, the actions of a group who are no longer acting out a particular social performance are themselves a different kind of performance.¹³⁸ There are some structures from later additions to symbolic interactionist theory that I will consider before showing how this contributes to our idea of qualitative perception.

R. T. Serpe proposes in extension to Goffman's concepts, an explicit identity theory: 'Identity theory emphasises the relationship between self, society ... and role performance.'¹³⁹ In essence, the theory proposed by Serpe suggests, similarly to Goffman's, that 'identity', or manifest self as the only observable phenomenon, is a function of the structure of social relations and the degree to which any individual is subjected to two primary

137 I do not mean to suggest here any crude Cartesian notion pertaining to Goffman's theories. I merely point out that there is the performative aspect, and the self that feels the urge 'to perform'. (*Ibid.*, 44).

138 Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 202.

139 Richard T, Serpe, 'Stability and Change in Self: A Structural Symbolic Interactionist Exploration', *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 50 (1987), 44-55 (44).

categories, those being: commitment and choice. Under commitment, there is: interactive commitment, which indicates the ‘number of social relationships associated with a given identity’, and affective commitment, which indicates the “intensiveness” or affect attached to the potential loss of social relationships’.¹⁴⁰ ‘Choice’ informs the meaning of these interactions through the deciding process of committing or not committing to a given interaction. As Serpe suggests: ‘Choice is conceptualized ... as reflecting constraints which operate on any given set of identities.’¹⁴¹

The final category to be considered within the paradigm of symbolic interactionism is that of ‘altercasting’. This is the mechanism by which individuals within a social structure are encouraged by others within the structure to adopt specific attitudes, postures, or dispositions, i.e. ‘faces’. The concept of ‘altercasting’ supplies the original theory of Goffman’s with an explanation of the ways in which social structure operates to inform the structure of a performative self, thus: ‘It is only recently ... that greater recognition has been given to the idea that people bring personal purposes into interaction.’¹⁴² Weinstein and Deutschberger regard the performance of an actor as the expression of the synthetic realization of the intentional

140 *Ibid.*, 45.

141 *Ibid.*, 46.

142 Eugene A. Weinstein and Paul Deutschberger, ‘Some Dimensions of Altercasting’, *Sociometry*, 26 (1963), 454-466 (454).

roles of the actor, the attitude of the other in the situation, and the general social structure of the situation. They criticize Goffman for being unclear in his representation of the responsibilities of the performer and the one who witnesses the performance.¹⁴³ Essentially, they are recognizing an additional layer of confinement on the behaviour of an actor within a social structure. Such an actor is confined, firstly, by the expectations of the others within the social structure, secondly, by the interplay of 'choice' and 'commitment' as described above, and thirdly, by the interpersonal interaction itself and the dimensions within it of what Weinstein and Deutschberger refer to as 'Ego' and 'Alter', and which role is accepted in a particular circumstance.

There is, here, a degree to which the novelty with which these ideas are presented is overstated. They are illustrative in the sense that they represent the social confinements of being from an ontic perspective, but they nonetheless appear to reinterpret ordinary social conventions in a language that contributes very little more to the conception than if it were described in colloquial language. Perhaps this can be attributed to its being a theory of social psychology, and the need to represent within that field a certain quantitative aspect and theoretical aspect in order to demonstrate

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 456.

association commonly taken for granted. It does, however, present an opportunity for the expansion of the symbolic analyses conducted above.

As a basic fact of interrelation, it is assumed that there is in every case an obstacle to the complete satisfaction of the 'imaginary' (Lacanian/Mullerian) cathexes by the presence of the other, or, in symbolic interactionist parlance 'Alter'. The self and other, in meeting, are formed by the structures which predominate in their situation. A combination of the Lacanian subject, his 'imaginary' and 'symbolic' categories intact, with the social interactionist dynamics modifying the structure of the self in the multifarious possible ways implied above can be suggested. When taken together, these concepts allow for a self, which, adopting a perspective on itself may believe in the permanence and immutability of its structures, but in reality has a *locus* outside of its own sphere of personal control. It could be suggested, though in the succeeding chapter, that the belief in permanence itself arises firstly, from the fear of the self dissolving discussed in relation to Lacanian categories in the last chapter and secondly, the sense of concern for one's own being which Heidegger illustrates in *Sein und Zeit*.

It still remains for us to show how the confluence of forces within a social structure influences the self directly. In what has been shown above, the behaviour of the self is directed by social forces, those forces are impelled by a more general structure but the elements of that structure not relating to the ontic and normative forms are not discussed by Goffman, Serpe, Weinstein or Deutschberger. Whilst I will discuss in the following section an illustrative example of social structure and its relations to psychological categories through Althusser's structural Marxism. This should not necessarily be understood as an adoption of that theory.

As I will make clear, the general point can be made without conceding every element to Althusser's understanding. In particular, it is not clear what his unqualified references to a general base and superstructure would mean practically as these categories appear to suggest an homogeneous group, around which certain perspectives and purposes gather. It is not central to this thesis and so I will not develop this point as fully as it has been developed elsewhere;¹⁴⁴ however, it should be noted that the ontological structure does not need to represent a normatively homogeneous collection. Althusser, incidentally, claims that the base and superstructure can be defined by regarding the base as the structured relations of the 'economic

144 Frederic Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectics* (London: Verso, 2009).

base: the forces of production and the relations of production' and the superstructure to be the 'State and all the legal, political and ideological forms'.¹⁴⁵ Certainly, Althusser acknowledges difficulties in an homogeneous sense of the base and superstructure, proposing a multiplicity of contradictions eventually focussing into a 'unity' and coalescing into 'revolutionary rupture'.¹⁴⁶ But, if this is true then the *structure*, economic base, is contingent at best, and so it remains even then unclear how it can form part of the fundamental (pre-revolutionary) social structure. The base only exists when certain, unlikely, conditions conspire momentarily to create it.

145 Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (London: Verso, 1969), 111.

146 *Ibid.*, 99-100.

ii. The ideological-symbolic relation of the sign through the immanent psychological categories of the 'imaginary' and 'real' as represented through a social structural edifice.

To some extent, Althusser accepts many of the conclusions that have already been drawn above concerning the nature of symbolic 'reality'. The duality of the sign as both 'real' (symbolic) and 'unreal' (real), or, at least, the duality insofar as, if the sign has at bottom a physical correlate it can never be objectively apprehended as such, but only through the manner of its entrance into the symbolic relations of the linguistic and physical system of signs. This system is apprehended in Althusser through a general sociological perspective. He suggests that ideology, in general, as a pre-revolutionary phenomenon is a 'representational' device through which individuals represent their 'real' conditions 'to themselves'.¹⁴⁷ Ideology, for Althusser, primarily 'distorts' the individual's true reality; it manufactures through the presentation of hopeful elements purporting to represent truth a false image, and imaginary distortion of the 'real' conditions.¹⁴⁸

In Althusser's understanding of ideology, it is realized through multifarious 'Ideological State Apparatuses'. Through religious, ethical, legal, political, aesthetic, etc., i.e., according to Althusser, superstructural,

147 Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and State Apparatuses'.

148 *Ibid.*

various ideological positions are to be realized. These positions generally fulfill the purpose of the ideological interpellation of the subject. That is, the rendering of the subject within a certain ideological-symbolic interactional sphere of enacting specific roles. Ideology interpellates the subject; that is, it acts upon and through the subject and the subject thereby constitutes itself as subject of an ideological disposition. The *'category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function ... of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects.'*¹⁴⁹

It is by this mechanism, Althusser argues, that the individual is transformed into the subject, into the subject of ideology. In the sense in which Althusser claims that ideology is interpellation, or, what is the same thing, the means by which interpellation takes place, this is the transmission of the superstructure through the strata of social structure. It could be disputed whether such a monolithic exercise can be conceived as deliberate design, or even as coincidental process concerned only with the station of those involved in such a concept. However, there is a kernel here that is of use to our present purposes; it is not particularly relevant whether or not the application to which it is put in Althusser's work is accurate or not and therefore I do not propose to spend any time investigating it. I

149 *Ibid.*

propose instead to show how Althusser has interpolated Lacan, and then to show its practical relevance to a study of qualitative perception.

For Althusser, the original Lacanian categories we have reviewed become categories of domination by the elements of the distinct superstructure. Ideology is the means by which the superstructural forces discover that the subject can be interpellated without the need for force to be applied except in a few rare instances of ‘bad subjects’.¹⁵⁰ These subjects are persuaded through the ‘imaginary distortion’ of ideology to work for themselves, and to believe that it truly is for themselves.¹⁵¹ Ideology is communicated through the ‘material’ base; it is the fundamental mode of being within the non-revolutionary state.¹⁵²

The significant notion here is the quality of this ‘imaginary distortion’ and its principle mode of communication through the individuals, avoiding unnecessary theoretical abstractions. In a sense, the abstraction arising out of the communication of many individuals within the social structure as a whole forms the distinct superstructural edifice that supervenes on the economic base but also reflect and refract back upon it to produce the ideological state of the base in relation to its own inevitable abstraction of

150 *Ibid.*

151 *Ibid.*

152 *Ibid.*

principles of control. As A. Callinicos has also suggested: 'Factors such as national traditions and political and ideological institutions are not the mere epiphenomena of the economy, passive reflections of the development of the productive forces.'¹⁵³ It is, in one sense, similar to Lacan's 'symbolic'. The interpellative function of ideology takes place through and within socialization and interaction.¹⁵⁴ It is, perhaps, not difficult to see how this can present a more general notion of the sociological effects of symbolic relation on the formation and structure of the individual within a structural framework.

Through ideology, the sense of self becomes a being that is, in theory at least, capable of possessing the qualities and characters generally associated with it without the abstract internal structures of the classical model inhering within it. Althusser's subject exists in society as both, *in principle*, subject *qua* subject,¹⁵⁵ and subject as actual, interpellated subject.

153 Alex Callinicos, *Is there a Future for Marxism?* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1972), 60.

154 Althusser, *op. cit.*

155 The 'real' which never existed, but does, at least in principle, exist as a theoretical entity, and imaginary contra-imaginary, so to speak; Cf. Žižek (*op. cit.* 181-2).

ii.1 Lacan, Lévi-Strauss, Althusser – Structural parity and disparity.

To a degree, a large portion of what has been said so far could be read as an implicit criticism of the Hegelian/Marxian structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss. His rigid structure of Hegelian dialectical oppositions of the form: ‘thesis, antithesis, synthesis’ represents an initial influence for Lacan; however, over time, as J. Rabaté notes, he diverged from this position.¹⁵⁶ In his analysis of Freud’s case, *Dora*, it is possible to see his original adaptation of Hegelian notions along the same lines as Lévi-Strauss. Here, Lacan adopts Hegel’s notion of the ‘beautiful soul’, someone unaffected and apart from the symbolic connections and interrelations of broader socialization.¹⁵⁷

Lacan, unlike Lévi-Strauss requires structures that are ultimately beyond a straightforward objective/subjective categorization. He advises that there be no structure without a subject, and it is in the *immanent* meanings of interactions that structures are to be found; it is not through an analysis of the structures of meanings that interactions are to be understood, except insofar as those structures have been created by the self-

156 Jean-Michel Rabaté, ‘Lacan’s Dora Against Lévi-Strauss’, *Yale French Studies*, 123 (2013), 129-144 (133-4).

157 *Ibid.*, 134; Lacan, ‘Presentation on Transference’ *in op. cit.*, 176-185 (179).

same forces whose interactions they represent. To some extent, Rabaté suggests, Lacan would accept Derrida's indictment of Lévi-Strauss;¹⁵⁸ although, as Eyers *and* Žižek have noted, whilst Lacan does not accept the strictures of the fixed application of the signified in Saussurian linguistics, he is not a full Derridan post-structuralist either.¹⁵⁹

158 Rabaté, 143-4.

159 Žižek, 181-5; Eyers, 18.

V

Conclusion: The Immanent Meaning of Structured Perception

It has been the principal intention behind the present work to reconcile several different conceptions of the relation of self to world without elimination or reduction of those categories which are evidenced in common experience. The materialists have sought to explain the phenomena of subjective experience by reducing them solely to material-scientific explananda. Their efforts have focused, in this way, on attempting to reconcile the *actual* states of affairs as they appear in practice with the *ideal* states that their interpretation of scientific phenomena suggests *ought* to be the case were their ontologies correctly theorized. Whilst it would be unsupportable to deny the value of empirical and quantitative

scientific research on its own terms, practically and theoretically, materialism, and in a different way, John Searle and Daniel Dennett, would seek to reduce the ontological categories of experience to the categories of scientific explanation. Even as he rejects materialism for its retention of Cartesian categories, which leads to the belief in the necessity of discarding or limiting mental events, Searle adopts a theory of truth (correspondence theory) that measures degrees of reality/truth according as they tend to correspond to scientific categories.

In chapter two, I argued for an interpretation of the dichotomy of ‘quality’ and ‘quantity’ that avoids the traditional sense of ‘subjective’ as qualitative and ‘objective’ as quantitative. For, that distinction relies on an inaccurate sense of the categories of ‘quantity’ and ‘quality’; there is no sense in which the categories of scientific investigation lie outside of the general categories of experience themselves. It is only from within the experiential meanings of the words ‘quantity’ and ‘quality’ that an objective quantitative analysis can be opposed to a subjective qualitative analysis. These are never, however, discrete realms of which it can be said the one, subjective, is interpretive and by its nature less reliable than the other, objective, quantitative, empirical and data-driven. If this is so under certain

paradigmatic states, it is because the perspective governed by the object of analysis and its orientation in relation to the one who studies it demands that level of analysis. It is not, as I demonstrated previously, an absolute division of reality and its interpretation by an 'observer' of some description. Even such a division would, to some extent, presuppose an ontology predicated on the separation of mind and matter, the only resolution to which being, as Kim has suggested, eliminativism, reductionism, or by implication, dualism.

Against the background of antinomic oscillations between the various logically coherent positions in materialism and dualism; and scientific conceptions which mistake the status to which their own subject belongs. The understanding of a preexisting conceptual apparatus on which to found a general theory of perception is absent. It has, therefore, been necessary to attempt to construct an ontological framework consonant with our analysis of the perspectival nature of the relations of 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity', within which the potential ontological structure of qualitative experience and its features.

Whilst phenomenological analysis has a certain value in analysing the relations, lived experience, and categories of ordinary experience, it is, as

discussed at length above, unable to answer the objection of the empirical scientist who claims that its analyses are irrelevant for an investigation into the true nature of perception, and that they presuppose the 'real' quantitative base from which all experience derives (cf. Varela, *et al.*, for instance). Again, as a result of the empirical scientific perspective, the categories of experience and those of the real world are regarded in a similar way to that between an 'actual entity' and its 'reflection'. That is not to say, as Searle points out, that we do not have access to true reality, rather that its 'reflection' involves a degree of 'subjectivity'.¹⁶⁰

Searle, indeed, considers that 'subjectivity' can be divided into ontological and epistemic contingency. In the one, the phenomenon is supposed to depend on the awareness of an individual for its being; in the other, it is supposed to depend on direct awareness as the ground for its experience.¹⁶¹ These subjective categories, it seems, reproduce intact the traditional bifurcation between certain qualities of perception that are given to a perceiver from an irreducible perspective and the 'objective' facts independent of that 'subjective' experience. The significant difference between the traditional view and Searle's is that Searle supposes

¹⁶⁰ Searle, *Rediscovery*.

¹⁶¹ *Construction of Social Reality*, 8-12.

consciousness itself to be a biological phenomenon and thus part of the world of objective facts; subjectivity is a feature of consciousness in the same way that *auxin* is a feature of the biological structure supporting the execution of *photosynthesis* in plants.¹⁶²

My arguments in chapters two and three are not to deny that the categories of experience include subjectivity and objectivity as modes of knowledge, but rather that the ontological distinction applied by Searle in his ‘biological naturalism’ and assumed by Chalmers, Nagel and the materialists¹⁶³ relies on a categorial separation of experience and its corresponding objects that cannot be sustained in any detailed analysis of perception. Such divisions, including those to which we have also referred, of the nature of parthood are of heuristic value but do not obtain in a correspondence relation with an object, class, or state of affairs.

As I have, I believe, made sufficiently clear in what has preceded here, and throughout the rest of the chapters of this essay, there are other possibilities available that allow for the appearance in perception as a simplex that which is composed of many parts without mistaking the nature

¹⁶² *Rediscovery*, 229.

¹⁶³ I have decided in this work not to go through the minutiae of all the arguments made by analytic philosophers of one position or another for or against certain traditional perspectives in the field. To have done so would have taken up three quarters of the available space and achieved very little.

of the categories of ‘quality’ and ‘quantity’. Through an examination of Martin Heidegger’s fundamental ontology and its *existentialia* of immanent absorption in the world (*ek-stasis* in F. A. Capuzzi and J. G. Gray’s translation of ‘Letter on Humanism’)¹⁶⁴ and the structures of language, psychoanalytic theory, and social interaction it has been possible to produce the framework to which we have alluded, from which some conclusions can be drawn.

Due to the multifaceted nature of the subject, there remain some concepts yet to be explicitly demonstrated and given exegetical treatment. Below, I will show how the implications of the conclusions iterated above can lead, in combination with the notions found in Heideggerian ontology and linguistic and social structures, it is possible to interpret perception structurally as part of the immanent structures of being. And, how the possibility of this fundamental structure may yield, in a longer study, a more general theory of perception encompassing the ‘meaning’ of percepts and certain aspects of consciousness connected with apperception.

¹⁶⁴ Heidegger, ‘Letter on Humanism’ in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, trans. Frank A. Capuzzi (London: Routledge, 1978), 141-182.

i. The immanent meaning of structure.

Certain notions have been taken for granted until now, namely, the notion that the way the 'self' is constructed influences perception. Many of the arguments that we have reviewed and made have implied this strongly, but it has not been examined as a principle in itself. This is partly as a result of the difficulty of doing so without first having all the concepts involved available. Perception itself, furthermore, is ambiguous. The technical use of the term relevant to scientific analysis is not what we are interested in here, for, as we have seen, this can only supply us with limited answers to the limited questions which it enables us to ask. Neither is asking a question about 'meaning' or 'quality' as opposed to 'quantity' meaningful in itself until the characteristics of these categories are sufficiently understood.

Furthermore, to ask the question of 'quality' from within the hermetic closure of a purely phenomenological analysis could only present the same results that other such analyses, including those of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty have produced. They cannot uncover the ontological status of 'quality' as such from within an analytic framework,

which has already employed the fundamental concepts it wishes to study as a presupposition for the field itself.

It is, therefore, necessary to include elements that are more objective, relative to the hermetic quality of the phenomenological analysis. It is through this reasoning that the analysis of signs appears to introduce the possibility of interpreting the way in which phenomena come to be represented as a method through which signification and symbolic meaning can be examined exegetically. Our conclusions governing the traditional 'quantity/quality' and 'subjective/objective' bifurcations precludes the simple application of external biological features in understanding qualitative perception; however, the study of the structure of symbolic relations allows for an examination of the interaction between individuals within a structure of confinements and the natural mode in which individuals encounter the world.

It should be noted, first of all, that whilst the duality of the sign noted by Saussure as a physical/conceptual dichotomy has been modified above through the linguistic theories of Vološinov and Bakhtin, and through the mediation of Lacanian psychoanalysis and structural anthropology, the sense in which a sign can imbue multiple varieties of meaning remains. The

symbolic realm of interaction described in chapter four relies on structures, which themselves are not basic or simple. The sign contains within it the meaning of its relations with other signs in the same structure, with the relation of its structure to other structures, and to the individual who exists within the nexus of symbols. I do not take this statement to be adding anything to the concepts of structure discussed in chapter four; it is evidenced in Lacan, for instance, when he states: ‘Symbols in fact envelop the life of man with a network so total that they join together those who are going to engender him “by bone and flesh” before he comes into the world; ...’¹⁶⁵ To put it in this way is to reduce the word ‘meaning’ to a more straightforward form than the one implied philosophically. The irreducible meaning of the phenomenal experience, ‘quality’, cannot be understood if it is taken by itself; it seems to be possible, and I intend to argue in this section, that meaning is reducible to the system of signs which comprises it.

In this version, ‘meaning’ is the meaning of signification, of the sign’s referring to something beyond itself, which I have compared in chapter four to Vološinov’s use of the word ‘ideology’ as that which ‘reflects and refracts’ another reality beyond itself. If there is a problem with the Vološinovian

¹⁶⁵ Lacan, *Speech and Language*, 231.

model of ideology it is in its limitation to certain kinds of phenomena,¹⁶⁶ whereas symbols predominate in all relations with the other, and objects in general. It still requires a degree of clarification in this form. Lacan's subjective and intersubjective categories, it could be argued, can provide this clarification. Through his three categories *l'imaginaire*, *le symbolique*, *le réel*, and, as I suggested in chapter three, Muller's additions to the Lacanian framework, it is possible to see the formation of the subject through the imaginary, its externalization as the symbolic, and the real manifested as 'anxiety' or an imaginary loss of that which has been bestowed through imaginary relations (*l'objet petit a*),¹⁶⁷ an interpretation that I have noted previously is supported by Žižek.

The structure of these elements and their signifiers, for Lacan, is the structure, in essence, of presence and absence. The presence, on the one hand, of the self-image and everything that it can integrate into itself, and the absence, on the other, of the real, which can simultaneously refer to that which lies outside the domain of the imaginary, what Lacan calls the network of signifiers, i.e., symbolic in *The Function and Field of Speech in psychoanalysis*, and the contradiction of the new 'symbolic' imaginary by the

166 Vološinov, 10.

167 Lacan, *Names-of-the-Father*, 57-66.

transposed anxiety of loss.¹⁶⁸ Lacan suggests, as an example of the general pervasiveness of what he refers to as ‘the network of signifiers’, that ‘nothing can be grasped, destroyed, or burnt except in a symbolic way’.¹⁶⁹

From the Lacanian/Freudian understanding of the nature of self and other in their interactions and reactions, it is possible to see a theory of the constitution of the self as constituted through and within the preexisting structure of signification. Through the network of signifiers, meaning in action is conveyed to the other as well as to the self. To the self, this meaning signifies in relation to the supposed fulfillment of desire; to the other, it signifies through its symbolic relation, through its significance to them and to the signs of the structure in general. For this concluding chapter, what is of interest is not so much the form of Lacan’s theory as the notion of structure applied to the structure of the presentation of self. In this, everything that is presented is presented through the structure of signifiers; correspondence to a signifier is correspondence to a network of signs whose knowledge only betoken the truth of their relations, not of any *real* beyond its structure. This is supported particularly by J-A. Miller’s

168 *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 48-52.

169 *Ibid.*, 50.

interpretation of Lacan in ‘The Symptom: Knowledge, Meaning and the Real’.¹⁷⁰

In relation to the discussion of chapter three on embodied cognition, and the Heideggerian ontological framework that appears to support better the phenomenally consistent integration of these disparate functions, it should be noted that the realm of symbols relies on the immanent percept being already in evidence. In this sense, I mean to think of perception at its most basic in the Hegelian sense: ‘the thing *is*, and it *is*, merely because it *is*. It *is*’.¹⁷¹ It seems far from clear that such an immediacy ever exists in practice; like the *real*, it is that which must *in principle be* but whose being is never perceived as the *pure* signifier of itself, it is never *for-itself* or *in-itself* in perception but only exists within the system of interconnected signs, and their relations involve Being in general.¹⁷²

The symbolic structure of language is able to convey meaning by being a structure, by referring. When ‘quality’ is said to be irreducible, it is because reduction is a relation to something else, but more than a relation it is an

170 Jacques-Alain Miller, ‘The Symptom: Knowledge, Meaning and the Real’, *trans.* Dan Collins, *Fourteenth Working Days of the Freudian Field*, 1997
<http://www.lacan.com/symptom7_articles/miller.html>.

171 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *trans.* A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 58.

172 My view on this generally aligns with Hubert Dreyfus’ paper ‘Heidegger’s Critique of the Husserl/Searle Account of Intentionality’ (1993) who argues that Heidegger wants to escape the notions of intentionality and practice as they relate to a subject/object distinction altogether.

identification. A sign, however, refers only to itself in its context and to its relations in its context; scientific analysis from this perspective is also a context in the sense that the sign's relation to its simpler components or causal laws is its relation to another system of signs. An attempt to derive 'quality' scientifically in the way that scientific formulae or the diagrams of Gray's anatomy and the cellular components they portray are derived, is an attempt to determine the meaning of one set of signs ('qualitative') with a definition of 'meaning' which belongs to a different set of signs. Meaning always refers to something. 'Quality' is not self-referential, but it exists within a phenomenological-social system of signs whose 'meanings' are determined by their relations to the other signs in that system. I will further develop this in the succeeding section, and attempt to show how 'quality' can be understood meaningfully without the need for reduction, and in a way which does not need to cause the empirical scientist constant anxiety.

In addition to what has been said here, I propose a further interpolation of the signification of the sign. In order to understand how something can 'mean' in the way to which we referred above, it is necessary to understand the relative connectivity of the sign itself, and its relation in a nexus of

other signs to the relative totality of its sphere and the relation of a relative totality to other signifier networks. This is how I propose to construct a framework within which to find a sense for meaning, and, through this sense, 'quality'. Ultimately, it is the fluidity of the sign through language, social structure, interaction, and familial relationships which are of interest. Through these elements, as we have seen from our examination of Lacan, Muller, Goffman, etc. the individual is inculcated with the symbolic structure as it exists prior to his coming into it and after his leaving it. They operate at every level of conscious being, from the unconscious drives, to the ontological categories of existence, to the normative praxis of Goffman, *et al.*

I propose, therefore, an understanding that there are certain basic biochemical structures fundamental to all experience. These are the natural response mechanisms built-in to the biological organism, such as fight or flight, the 'pleasure principle' as enunciated by Freud (that is the 'principle' that develops from the biological precondition for the sensation, etc.) These are unconscious, not in the sense of psychoanalytical 'repression', but in the sense of lacking the capacity for literal expression, or integration on their own terms into a symbolic structure. However, these base impulses are sufficient only for primitive instinctual survival. So much, at least, is

ordinary biological science. It is the structures of interaction and of language which alter this awareness and give it expression. By giving something expression, we mean simply bringing it explicitly to mind. For this to occur, I suggest it must first exist as a structure outside of the mind; here, we can adopt Johnson's notion of the metaphorical extension of basic schemata into 'higher-order' understanding. I rejected his idea of image-schemata on account of its neo-Kantianism; however, there is a sense, as E. Sweetser suggests, in which language is extended beyond brute acknowledgement of facts, grunts and gestures, into a fully articulated language system by the use of sociophysical metaphor.¹⁷³

It is, I believe, possible that if there were space to carry it out, a full study of the metaphorical and metonymical relations of words could potentially yield a greater understanding of the nature of the relation of the sign and its concomitant structure. Nevertheless, the essential externality of the symbol and its interpellation by the individual (Althusser) seems to be demonstrated, first and foremost, in the sign's relative universal appearance, and secondly, in its fundamental character as a self-realization; that is, in informing the self-image, which, itself is an object relation and

173 Eve E. Sweetser, *From Etymology to Pragmatics: Metaphorical and Cultural Aspects of Structure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 31.

comes from outer, not inner, sense.¹⁷⁴ Through the process of social interpellation of the signs and their structure, the individual finds their primitive instincts sublimated under the structures of symbolic interaction and affected not simply by the inner modes of direct, illiterate and non-conceptual sensation, but through the ‘other’ in the social relation and the immanent relations and expectations of these interactions.¹⁷⁵ Language, contrary to the perspective of ‘correspondence theory’ is an expression that forms from the internalization of external structures, and the recognition of the most fundamental desires. In this recognition, there is an implied ‘action’, a change in which the perception now has not only the immediate *force* of its impression (if such a thing is possible as a discrete interval at all), but the relation of the response to the impression to the symbolic structure that surrounds it. The question of the inner relation, the instinctual basis, to the structural edifice as a whole drives the sense in which a sign possesses a ‘quality’. This, I believe, is further evidenced by reflection on what ‘quality’ *is* if it is not some meaning, and since we have determined through the analysis of Lacan and the others that meaning is

174 I take this as evidenced in the psychoanalytic theories of first Freud and then, building on Freud, Lacan. In particular, I am thinking of Lacan’s mirror-stage and our modification of it with the more recent concepts recorded and developed in Muller’s work.

175 Again, I take the sublimation of base instincts to be an entirely standard reading of the standard texts of Freud, i.e., ‘Beyond the “Pleasure Principle”’.

essentially structured, it seems a reasonable supposition to make to suggest the 'quality' is the internalization of the structure of meaning as it relates to a sign and its context within a relative totality.

ii. The relation of distributed cognitive systems to phenomenological meanings.

In chapter three I discussed the contemporary notion 'embodied cognition' developed in cognitive science, heavily influenced by phenomenological theories. These theories, as I mentioned there, provide an experimental framework within which to base the view that many of the essential functions of consciousness are carried out by quasi-autonomous subsystems of a wider structure.

The concept provided by the theories, differing in the aspects noted in (III) but with a common frame of reference, of embodied cognition proposed by Varela, *et al.*, Clark, Lakoff, and Johnson allows for an explanation of action that is not reliant on any Cartesian or other variant of a centralized cognitive processor. Knowledge, therefore, as was made clear in chapter three, is not, in the sense of an abstract reactive awareness, the driving force behind action. Instead, reactions to situations are governed by the sensory and reactive systems that are required in the given circumstances.

In this sense, it can be argued that the ‘mind’ is a collection of subsystems whose collective faculties make up the subject. Certainly, in the structural sense, this would appear to have some force behind it. Apart from the fact that the difficulty remains of the effect of complex structures such as social relations, linguistic dialogue, and psychoanalytical categories on perception and action. From the experimental perspective, it is possible to determine a set of explanatory minima, which is represented by the notion of embodiment. It is not necessary, experimentally, to extend analysis further than the independent functions of embodied cognition; however, it does not follow naturally from the concept of embodiment that the relations of those systems should form the whole sufficient reason for conscious beings such as exist and with the experiences they engender.¹⁷⁶ In Varela, *et al.*, for instance, they assume a layered system increasing in its complexity as a function of time, and repeated action and reaction scenarios.¹⁷⁷ Evolutionary dynamics, the emergence of more complex properties from simpler ones etc. Varela, *et al.*, state:

‘In a nutshell, the enactive approach consists of two points: (1) perception consists in perceptually guided action and (2) cognitive

176 Johnson attempts to provide a set of schemata in order to provide an explanation for more complex varieties of thought as we noted in chapter three. The flaws of this idea were also discussed there.

177 Varela, *et al.*,

structures emerge from the recurrent sensorimotor patterns that enable action to be perceptually guided.’

And so, the conscious self is held in place by its confinement within and concern for the body.

Firstly, while it is possible for an organism to exist in a system of a simpler kind than the one we generally inhabit, it is not precisely clear that it *must* be the case that the system as constituted by the structural features assessed above develops diachronically rather than synchronically. And, if these structures inhabit individuals simultaneously, then the question of what it means to perceive without the symbolic framework, and so without the framework of linguistic signs, becomes a question that cannot be answered.

They argue, from the experimental perspective that the results of studies demonstrating the immanent adaptation of the body to its environment and the apparent lack of central cognitive reason in areas where bodily experience has been denied show that ‘perceptually guided action’ means the distribution of those processes over the body.¹⁷⁸ However, a symbolic interpretation could also have been offered of, for instance, the experience of

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 174-5.

cats taught to be passive by being perpetually carried. In a symbolic version, the only difference is that the structure of their symbolic interactions with the environment is given priority. In this case, the *structural* relationship of the cat to its environment has been altered so that certain faculties are no longer employed. Both explanations assume that there is no 'central processor'. In each case, it is the force of bodily experience that informs it, but in the second, the possibility of these effects being produced through symbolic systems of representation rather than bodily non-cognitive systems is allowed.

It is not clear that there is a reason based solely on this, to assume that theirs is the correct interpretation. The accuracy of their experimental proposals can be sound whilst their interpretation nevertheless neglects to take into account the complexity of the act of perception.

Secondly, Varela, *et al.*, argue further that there is evidence of categorization occurring in interaction at the most fundamental level. They cite Rosch, for instance, who proposed that a basic level of categorization took place in the 'taxonomies of concrete objects'. According to Varela, *et al.*, categorization is the point at which cognition and the environment become

'simultaneously enacted'.¹⁷⁹ Following from what we said in the previous argument, it is not clear from their argument that cognition is enacted in the way that they propose even if their premises are accepted. If, in practice, even the infant behaves as if there are basic categories, it is possible that it does so simply because these categories exist. The infant performs many operations that would be nearly impossible without the ability to recognize categories. That these are functions of bodily interactions only demonstrates that categories are fundamental to interaction with the world, it does not follow necessarily that those bodily interactions are of the kind which Varela, *et al.*, suppose they are.

While Varela, *et al.*, are influenced strongly by Merleau-Ponty in their views on bodily interactions, I argued in chapter three that Heidegger's *existentialia* of *Dasein* are more useful in the present circumstances than Merleau-Ponty's readily scientific phenomenology; in the ontic sense, his study is able to accommodate the nature of more specific bodily interaction. In his *Structure of Behaviour*, he focuses primarily on a critique of the scientific position and a development of the ontic relations of organisms. In our case, however, we are not interested in the detailed, individual ways in

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 176-7.

which organism act in the world. It is the ontological status of those organism that is of interest.

Heidegger, in *Sein und Zeit*, through the concept of fundamental ontology proposes the idea that for *Dasein*, or, the ‘being-which-is-there’,¹⁸⁰ the fundamental state of being is the condition of Being-in.¹⁸¹ In the ‘*ontological-existential* [sic]’ sense, Heidegger suggests that *Dasein*’s sense of Being in its ‘state-of-mind’ is one, inescapably, of the ‘there’; that is, the ‘thrownness’ of its Being. In the most fundamental sense, the being-there of *Dasein* represents an immediate and insuperably pervasive concern that it is cast into being and must be distinguished from the ‘*ontologico-categorical*’ sense of Being of the present-at-hand whose being is, in all cases, related to *Dasein*. Our claims about the failings of Varela’s, *et al.*, theory can be made clearer in this light. I suggested that a structural symbolic interactionist interpretation of the experimental results to which Varela, *et al.*, referred would be possible, and, as a result that a different interpretation of the same experimental information was consistent with the results. By positing the fundamental state of Being as Being-in and, furthermore, the state-of-

180 The term ‘Dasein’, German for ‘existence’, is not translated by McQuarrie and Robinson, The word however represents the concatenation of two German words: ‘There’ (*Da*) and ‘Being’ (*Sein*). It has been translated by Capuzzi as ‘being-there’. My rendering is not more correct than this, but I wanted to emphasize that *Dasein* is the Being whose essence is to be *there*. In a sense, *Sein und Zeit* is primarily an attempt to understand *thereness* as such.

181 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §§. 28-30.

mind of *Dasein* as ‘thrown’ or experiencing the world through an immediacy that makes interaction as a being-within-the-world a fundamental and ever present *existentiale* of *Dasein*, Heidegger makes the scientific qualification of experience attempted by Varela, *et al.*, even more difficult to accomplish.

iii. Conclusions

It is possible, with what has been outlined so far, to reach certain conclusions about the way in which qualitative perception is formed. Firstly, it is possible to claim that a distinction between preconceptual and post-conceptual perception is meaningless. Such a condition is hypothetically plausible; however, perception itself does not retain in its present state, as a kind of record, an atomistically decomposable set of strata. As we have stressed, and attempted to demonstrate throughout this essay, the ‘image’ always appears as a *simple*, or collection of *simples*. Heidegger provides some elaboration on the way that the focus and concern of *Dasein* might affect these *simples*, as seen above. When taken together with the structural notions developed in chapter four, it becomes clear that whilst these structures are secondary to the primary, initial form of Being, they affect from the earliest stages every part of perception. The language, which is developed so early, and its ‘higher-order’ features could be said to supervene

on a brute base, but determining precisely what this means, when meaning is governed as Lacan, the linguists, and Althusser point out by the structures themselves is difficult if not entirely impossible.

Secondly, the meaning of qualitative perception, so far as it is possible to determine it at all, is found in the relations of signs, rather than in any kind of materialist or empirical/experimental scientific reduction. 'Quality', therefore, can be tentatively defined as the self-relation of the sign in a context of signification. In this sense, no 'quality' can be meaningful in 'objective' analysis as an independent object of study. I believe I have shown above how the sign, in its relations to other signs signifies itself *through* the totality of those relations. Any sign, within its own symbolic network, can be said to signify something in relation firstly, to the one to whom it is of concern, and secondly, to the totality of the network of signs. As we noted above, 'quality' would seem to be best described as the relation of the sign to the individual within the totality of a symbolic structure.

Thirdly, the superstructure of interpellated symbols is efficacious in its ability to influence the basis of brute sensation. As such, it has a pervasive and insuperable effect upon the '*original*' understanding so that for all intents and purposes that base no longer exists in its original form.

Appendix A: Lacan and His Reconceptualization of Freud

I intend to review here Freud's psychoanalytic theory alongside Lacan's, and to examine his notion of the 'return to Freud'. I will spend more time elaborating Freud's theory than Lacan's, as I gave more consideration to expositing Lacan than Freud in the main text of this dissertation. As such, to answer the question of Freud's influence on Lacan's concept of the imaginary, symbolic, and real, it is first necessary to relate the relevant parts of Freud's theory. I have made the explanations contained as brief as I thought could reasonably be accomplished without sacrificing too much important detail.

i. A brief overview of the Freudian psychical architecture.

It has become common knowledge that Freud divided the psyche into three principal categories: the *I* (*Ego* or *das Ich*), the *It* (*Id* or *das Es*), and the *Over-I* (*Superego* or *Über-ich*). Freud's categories applied to psychical

processes constitute the possible exclusive modalities of 'thoughts' occurring within the psyche. That many of the contents of thoughts consciously construed are immured within a psychological structure the smallest portion of which is 'aware' of itself, and which may be an unreliable witness to its own volitional state, is, similarly, uncontested and regarded as uncontroversial. The *Ego*, as the seat of a self-aware being, dominates in the Freudian contest amongst these categories. In the *Ego* and the *Id* there is a struggle between the drives of the *id* unmediated by the self-interest of the *Ego* and the cathectic instincts endemic in the *Ego*, which attempts to incorporate the unfamiliar object into its own structure through the process of object-cathexis. It is precisely this process – the longing of the *Ego* to maintain its control over the object -- that Freud indicates to be responsible for the conflicts witnessed by psychoanalysts between the repressed manifestations of drives and the *Ego's* part conscious part unconscious drive towards repetition and narcissism.¹⁸²

At the fundament of Freud's theory of psychological development lies the 'pleasure-unpleasure [*Lust-Unlust*] principle, or ... the pleasure principle',¹⁸³

182 Cf. Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings* (Penguin Classics: London, 2003), henceforth BPP; 'The Ego and the Id' in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (W. W. Norton and Company: New York, 1989), 628-658; *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (Basic Books: New York, 1995).

183 'Formulations of the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' in *ibid.*, 301-106 (301).

the tenet that all psychical energy initially comports itself in such a way as to avoid a painful and, where possible, achieve a pleasurable outcome. Repression is a function of the operation of this principle and forms a part of the unconscious, primitive stage in the development of the psyche. It is the *Ego* which both influences and affects the form of the repressed unconscious by attempting to reconcile its self-image, its pre-conscious or latent desires, with those that would contradict and, thereby, limit its perceived capabilities, and which is influenced and affected by it. According to Freud, antithesis should therefore be posited between the ‘coherent *ego* and the *repressed*’, not the conscious and unconscious.¹⁸⁴

This dual role of activity and passivity is played out more than once. Initially, it occurs internally as a consequence of biological, innate drives and the burgeoning consciousness system of the *Ego*, and then again with regard to the brute force of the external object and the *Ego*’s instinctive appropriation of its perceived *power*. But to achieve its aim the *Ego* must re-enact or repeat constantly the object that is outside of its sphere of direct control,¹⁸⁵ and in so doing, accommodate its elements of independence as a characteristic of the *Ego*’s will. In its encounter with the *real*, the external

184 *BPP*, 56-7.

185 Claude Levi-Strauss also observes this phenomenon as one of the principal constituents in the “medical” practice/ritual of shamanism (Levi-Strauss, 1963: 186-206).

object, the *Ego* must develop a new ‘reality principle’ to maintain its prior commitment to the ‘pleasure principle’, which, although it can now be delayed or forestalled, nevertheless remains the basis for the formation of cathexes.¹⁸⁶

Freud evidences his theory of repetition in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (*BPP*) with the example of a child re-enacting the disappearance of his mother by playing a game (‘Fort/Da’) the object of which is to cast his toys far away and declare in rudimentary terms that they are ‘gone’. According to Freud’s assessment of the child’s behaviour, it constitutes a representation of his mother’s disappearance and reappearance – a state of affairs over which he has no control. By this performative re-enactment the child converts his passive role into an active one.¹⁸⁷ Freud notes: ‘by this being active he gains far more thorough-going control of the relevant powerful experience than was possible when he was merely its passive recipient.’¹⁸⁸

Whilst the child’s play is susceptible of straightforward interpolation into the Freudian hypothesis that the drives of the *Ego* (*Ichtrieben*) are

186 Although we say, ‘prior commitment’, it should be understood that Freud regards the ‘reality principle’ as possibly more fundamental than the pleasure principle. It is, as is explained below, a point of contention between Freud and Lacan. It is, even under the Freudian auspices, a prior commitment in the sense that the reaction to it is only concomitant if the ‘pleasure principle’ is presupposed.

187 *BPP*, 53.

188 *Ibid.*, 74.

principally structured for the satisfaction of the pleasure principle through the mediation of the reality principle, Freud notices a pattern of behaviour in traumatic neuroses that defies such an explanation. In this case, he finds that the only possible result of the repetition of trauma is unpleasure, therefore it appears at first to defy that principle altogether. To integrate the phenomenon of traumatic repetition into his general theory of the psyche, Freud needs to reconceive his notion of how the drives function in relation to each other, and how they relate to the tendency to satisfy the pleasure principle. As a prerequisite to the reimagining the features of psychical construction, he first reassesses his theory cathexis formation.

Investment of mental energy (*cathexis*) is (re)-distributed, Freud suggests, according to the requirement to 'annex' certain *events* whose impacts would otherwise present symptomatically as traumatic. He adopts a distinction by Josef Breuer between two varieties of cathexes, a free-flowing variety that is able to realign itself to accommodate an incoming stimulus and a 'quiescent' variety that attaches itself to the stimulus. Cathectic realignment acts in this way as a defence against the consciousness system being overwhelmed by its stimuli. Freud speculates that traumatic neuroses occur when there is a failure to annex an event

leading to the ‘compulsion’ to repeat the event symbolically. The desire to repeat the traumatic event he supposes to be evidence against the idea that all drives tend towards satisfaction of the pleasure principle. The result of this, for the sake of preserving space, is the death drive. It is the fatalistic attitude of all organisms in regard to their existence (*Ichtrieben*) in an environment where death must come, and the need conditioned by the sexual drives (*Sexualtrieben*) to seek death in their own way: ‘The fact remains that the organism wants only to die in its own particular way; and so these guardians of life, too, were originally myrmidons of death.’¹⁸⁹

Before addressing Lacan’s ‘return to Freud’ and the way in which he attempts to reinterpret the Freudian psyche by employing concepts from sociology and structural linguistics, it is first necessary to understand the appropriate place of the death drives within Freud’s overall structure. Crucial to Lacan’s theories is the retention of much – including the death drive and libido theory – that other psychoanalysts, such as W. D. Winnicott, Ferenczi, Jung, &c., have tended either to minimalize or eliminate. The difficulties of interpretation arise from two principal sources, firstly from the ambiguity of the development of his theses, and secondly

189 *Ibid.*, 79; I will not expend more time on a description of the death drive as this seems superfluous in the present context. Freud’s justification of the existence of the death drive and their antithesis to the sexual drive can be found at length in §§. VI-VII of ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’.

from the highly speculative character of his discussion in sections IV, V and VI of *BPP*. In the former case, Freud develops his theory gradually over a great period of time but does not explicitly eliminate outmoded elements of his psychoanalytic concepts, as Raluca Soreanu notes.¹⁹⁰ In the latter, Freud himself acknowledges the speculative nature of his project. Much of it, indeed, suffers from a lack of direct verifiability, for instance, his attempts to trace the two primary categories of drive (*Sexualtrieben* and *Ichtrieben*) to the historical protozoic stage of life or his treatment of the movement and ‘transformation’ of cathectic energy as a quantifiably nomological phenomenon.

The death drive and its functioning within the Freudian psychological structure is particularly apt for misconstruction. It relies on a revision of Freud’s previous understanding of concepts that after his 1920 essay acquire broader metapsychological and, in Lacan’s hands, metaphysical signification. The motivation behind the concept of the death drive is, on the one hand, simple: it is the *Ego*, deprived of its sublimation to some other drive (i.e, the life drives) bringing forward its inevitable termination. In trauma, Freud suggests that it is the interruption of the process of the other

190 Raluca Soreanu, ‘Something Was Lost in Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*: A Ferenczian Reading’, *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 77 (2017), 223-238.

drives, so giving the *Ego* drives their free reign, which produces the effect of endless repetition. On the other hand, his theory of the death drive is highly complex, drawing on thinkers such as Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, and relying on a nuanced understanding of the totality of interrelations of the multi-faceted unconscious. It involves, as I intend to show below, an appreciation of the ontological difference; that is, between the ontic and the ontological, between that which pertains to specific instances of a category and the category itself.¹⁹¹

Taken as it is presented in *BPP*, an analysis of the libido theory's normative qualities appears to suggest several inadequacies. Its identification of libido with 'life' drives has been criticized as overly reductive and focussing monomaniacally on the 'erotic' drives, evidence for which can be seen in *The Ego and the Id* wherein Freud specifically identifies the 'erotic component' as an offset for the death drive.¹⁹² Freud's emphasis of the death drive, and its sole claim on the phenomenon of neurotic repetition, over the self-preservation drives and their exclusion from the *Ego* being taken over entirely by the sexual drives. His scientific

191 This takes an Heideggerian view rather than an Aristotelian/Platonic (Particular/Universal) view as the categories involved are fundamentally related to modes of Being.

192 *The Ego and The Id*, 655; for criticisms cf. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl and Faith Bethelard, 'The Hidden History of the Ego Instincts', *Psychoanalytic Review* 86 (1999), 822-851 (841), Soreanu, *Op. Cit.*, Henry F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (Fontana Press: London, 1994), 418-570.

methodology, as noted above, is questionable – though it is not necessarily fatal to his theory since evidence can be discovered beyond its biological facets and it does not depend thereupon for its veracity.

As the intention here is to present a correct general understanding of the place of the death drives and not to defend Freud against his detractors, I will only respond to the charges against him so far as is necessary to demonstrate this. Freud's apparent reduction of all motivation to sexual impulses has been widely criticised from numerous sources. As Soreanu points out, there is the general sense in which *Eρως* becomes *the* metaphor for the sexual drives, ignoring the tripartite division of the Greek understand of love including *ἀγάπη* (familial) and *φιλία* (friendship).¹⁹³ However, there is, *possibly*, in these critiques of Freud a common misunderstanding: a tendency to confound the vulgar/social understanding of *Eρως* and the biological/categorial. In the former case, it stands opposed in a social nexus to *ἀγάπη* and *φιλία* replete with symbolism imposed upon it by the structure it inhabits; in the latter, it is both a biological category (the 'life' or 'reproductive' drive) and a mode of Being (life reproducing its own conditions of existence). In any case, a distinction can be drawn between the

193 Soreanu, 227-228.

basis, the biological substratum denuded of its symbolic mediation, and the superstructure of the social – in this case, the terms are convenient for their etymology rather than their philosophical attachment to Marxist thought. The tendency to ascribe all human behaviour to two primary motivations may well be Freud's mistake as much as his interpreters, but it is possible to see how all motivations can flow from one (compound) source and yet become far more complex and diverse in their everyday manifestations. It takes little thought to imagine, for instance, how complex social relations such as the ceremonies surrounding romantic love and funeral practices can be associated with less complex drives which, deprived of sociological stimulation, would adopt a much less nuanced form of expression.

ii. Lacan's adoption of Freud and his conceptualization of the categories of the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real.

The kernel, though not the extraneous substance, of these observations is supported by Lacan's interpretation of Freudian psychoanalysis. It is precisely such an attempt to situate Freud's psychoanalytic concepts within the framework of, then, contemporary sociological and linguistic 'discoveries' and defend Freud against those whose attempts to preserve psychoanalytic theory against its critics led to the abandonment of what

Lacan sees as crucial elements of his theory. It is not necessary to go much further in assessing this aspect, as much has already been said about in the main text of my dissertation. However, I will comment on the significant influence of *BPP* on Lacan's thinking and the relation of his categories of the self (imaginary, symbolic, real) to Freud's tripartite conceptualization of the psyche.

Although he adopts his ideas from Freud speaking of a 'return to Freud', Lacan treats his notions differently. The biological substrate and mechanistic reasoning that Freud employs to demonstrate the validity of his hypotheses are lost in favour of an understanding of the real which is relative and structural. Relative in the sense that it is never 'brute' reality, an absolutely real basis. Structural in the sense that it is *structure* which gives it meaning and, thereby, makes it more than *nothing*.¹⁹⁴ It is the objectivism inherent in Freud's account of the death drive with which Lacan takes issue.¹⁹⁵ In Lacan's account, it is the relation between signs, the structure itself, not its empirical basis, which gives rise to the fundamentally traumatic character of the real. The conflict here, is between

194 Cf. *Reality Principle*; 'The Freudian Thing, or the Meaning of the Return to Freud', in *Écrits*, 334-363.

195 Andrea Hurst, *Derrida vis-a-vis Lacan: interweaving deconstruction and psychoanalysis* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 214.

the real as unrealizable other, and the imaginary, which presents the self as an object for itself (the *Ego*).

Whilst there remains such a thing as empirical reality the principal effect of Lacan's notion is that the absolute ground can never be attained; experience will appear only as *structure* whose signs appear already interpolated. It is in the symbolic realm of the sign that psychic life takes place, according to Lacan. In essence, it is the inter-subjective realm; the gaze-induced imaginary, that which sees itself as an object, and the real, which threatens to annihilate that self, account only for the individual. The symbolic represents the social nexus surrounding these categories. The world of unconscious representations as they appear in the only reality which is accessible.

The categories of the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real avoid the biological reductivism of Freud's theory by placing the psychical structure outside of the individual and, therefore, beyond the biological constitution of the human being. Though it is not removed entirely from it, its structure is no longer reducible to straightforward components. While the charge of over-reduction to sexual drives might still be leveled at Lacan, it is possible

to view these in terms of generalized primitive forces rather than its use in the normative (vulgar/biological) way.

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