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I would like to acknowledge my family: my mother and father, and particularly my sister, for her personal and academic support. I would like to acknowledge all of the Murdoch University lecturers and staff, particularly Professor Paul MacDonald, for his continuing support and guidance.

*I declare all of the work in this dissertation is my own.*

Heath Williams.

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**Another in the Mirror: Husserlian Phenomenology and Intersubjectivity.**

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4. Chapter 4. Husserlian phenomenology and simulation: assessment of the phenomenology of simulation and future directions for phenomenological research in intersubjectivity.

Note on references.

Some referenced works in this thesis are Kindle editions. In these editions the page number of the reproduced works is not always provided. I have provided the “Kindle location” and the section/chapter details for these references, when page numbers were not available.

All of Husserl’s works are followed by a bracket referencing the work and page number instead of footnotes. The key for these works is as follows.

- *Analysis Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis* – (ACPAS) Kluwer Academic Publishers: Dordrecht. Translated by A. J. Steinbock.
- *Cartesian Meditations* - (CM) Klumer Academic Publishers: Kindle edition. Translated by Dorion Cairns.
- *Ideas 1* – (Ideas 1) Routledge: Kindle edition. Translated by W. R. Boyce Gibson.
- *The Shorter Logical Investigation* – (LI) Taylor & Francis: Kindle edition. Translated by J. N. Findlay.
- *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*. (PCTI) Klumer Academic Publishers: Dordrecht. Translated by John Barnett Brough.
- *Phenomenological Psychology* - (PP) Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague. Translated by John Scanlon.

### *Chapter 1.*

*An overview of the intersection between contemporary cognitive science, intersubjectivity and phenomenology.*

This introduction will survey the contemporary intersection between phenomenology and cognitive science in theory of mind discussions concerning intersubjectivity. The first section gives a characterisation of classical cognitivism and its theory of social cognition, theory theory, and a brief characterisation of simulation theory, which was put forward to challenge theory theory. The second section is a detailed outline of the rise of the embodiment movement and its relation to phenomenology. I will also discuss the related concepts of enaction and embeddedness. I then move to highlight that the embodiment movement has given rise to two theories of embodiment – embodied simulation and interaction theory. Finally I will briefly touch on the phenomenological methodological innovations that Gallagher and other interaction theorists suggest before moving on to the methods and aims of my own thesis.

For some time in theory of mind philosophy the dominant model was what's termed classical cognitivism, which

“holds that our cognitive capacities should be understood in terms of computational procedures operating on symbolic, internal mental states, and thus, cognitive science should be focused on studying these internal states and processes... Cognitivism has been the dominant view in psychology and philosophy of mind since the 1950s. In fact, it has been so dominant that some have called it the only game in town.”<sup>1</sup>

Classical cognitivism has been mired by two problems – the first is the explanatory gap. In the empirical tradition this problem was brought to light by an influential article by Thomas Nagel which highlighted that, in regards to psychology, the physical/ objective

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<sup>1</sup> Spaulding, S (2012). “Introduction to debates on Social Cognition.” *Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*. Vol. 11. Pg. 432.

model of explanation, which relies on the adoption of a third person perspective on phenomena, fails to provide an adequate account of what it's like to have experience from a first person perspective. Nagel argued that if

“physicalism is to be defended, the phenomenological features must themselves be given a physicalist account. But when we examine their subjective character it seems that such a result is impossible. The reason is that every subjective phenomenon is essentially connected with a single point of view, and it seems inevitable that an objective, physical theory will abandon that point of view.”<sup>2</sup>

The second problem which has mired classical cognitivism is the problem of other minds, which asks how is it we can justify our belief that people have minds very much like our own.<sup>3</sup> For classical cognitivism the specific problem has been how we come to have knowledge of what other people are thinking, what their intentions are, and can predict their behaviour, as we seem often to be able to do. As an attempt to resolve the problem of other minds classical cognitivism has recently moved towards discussions of social cognition.

Classical cognitivism put forward, as a solution to the problem of other minds, a theory of social cognition - theory theory.

Theory theorists argue that we explain and predict behaviour by employing folk psychological theories about how mental states inform behaviour. With our folk psychological theories, we infer from a target's behaviour what his or her mental states probably are. And from these inferences, plus the psychological principles in the theory connecting mental states to behavior, we predict the target's

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<sup>2</sup> Nagel, T (1974). "What is it like to be a bat?" Reprinted in D. Dennett and R. Hofstadter (Eds) *The Mind's I*. Penguin Books: Somerset. Pg 393.

<sup>3</sup> Hyslop, A (2010). "Other Minds", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall Edition), Edward N. Zalta (Ed.) Accessed from [plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/other-minds/](http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/other-minds/)>. Section 1.

behaviour (Carruthers and Smith 1996; Davies and Stone 1995a; Gopnik and Wellman 1992; Nichols and Stich 2003)."<sup>4</sup>

For the last two decades the major debate has been between theory theory and simulation theory.

Simulation theorists, in contrast, argue that we explain and predict others behaviour by using our own minds as a model and "putting ourselves in another's shoes". That is, by imagining what our mental states would be and how we would behave if we were in the others situation. More specifically, we simulate what the others mental states could have been to cause the observed behaviour, then we use the simulated mental states, pretend beliefs and pretend desires, as input, run them through our own decision-making mechanism. We then take the resulting conclusion and attribute it to the other person.<sup>5</sup> Spaulding notes that this debate has stalled in the past few years and that progress has been limited to articulating various hybrid simulation theory – theory theory accounts.

In between this opposition, and in response to the tension created by the explanatory gap, a third term has recently been introduced - embodiment. In an influential work from 1991 Rosch et. al. argued that a deep circularity ensues as a result of the interdependencies between the cognitivist scientists views about cognition and their existence as an embodied being embedded in a life-world of social and cultural practices.<sup>6</sup>

They quote Dennett who stated at the time that every cognitivist theory currently defended or envisaged is a theory of the subpersonal level. Dennett goes on to say that it is not at all clear how a psychological theory - as distinct from a philosophical theory - could fail to be a subpersonal theory and as such completely inaccessible to conscious experience. They note that for Dennett, our conscious self-understanding presupposes notions such as believing, desiring, and knowing but *a priori* cannot explain them. For

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<sup>4</sup> Spaulding, S. (2012) "Introduction to debates on Social Cognition." *Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*. Vol. 11. Pg. 432.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid Pg. 433.

<sup>6</sup> Rosch, E, Varela, F J & Thompson, E (1991). *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. Kindle Edition. Section: "The theme of this book". Kindle location 240.



Dennett and many cognitive scientists, if the study of mind is to be rigorous and scientific, it cannot be bound to explanations in terms of features essential to our conscious self-understanding. Rosch et. al. argue this has the effect of deepening of the tension between cognitive science and conscious experience.<sup>7</sup>

Although the scientific, third person perspective may be adequate for other forms of science when "it is cognition or mind that is being examined, the dismissal of experience becomes untenable, even paradoxical."<sup>8</sup> Thus, in order to dissolve this perceived tension the embodiment movement returned to phenomenology. They note that "phenomenology was and still is the philosophy of human experience, the only extant edifice of thought that addresses these issues head-on."<sup>9</sup>

Rosch et. al., in order to resolve this tension, return to the work of phenomenologists such as Husserl, Merleau Ponty and Heidegger. The last two phenomenologists feature more prominently than Husserl. For Rosch et. al. Husserl was caught in his attempt to resolve the tension between science and the life-world and the "peculiar contortion" prescribed by the epoche fails to fully extricate itself from the relation between the two; represents the impossibility of such a project. They argue that "Husserl's turn toward experience and "the things themselves" was entirely theoretical, or, to make the point the other way around, it completely lacked any pragmatic dimension. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that it could not overcome the rift between science and experience..."<sup>10</sup> They note that Merleau Ponty and Heidegger stress the pragmatic, embodied context of human cognition.

Although Rosch et. al. seem to favour the latter phenomenologists in the above quote there is no doubt as to the worth of Husserl's original analysis of the relation between the body and intersubjectivity in contemporary discussions of social cognition. Because Husserl is a founding figurehead for the phenomenological movement, in my thesis I will

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. Kindle location 250.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Section: "The breakdown of phenomenology." Kindle location 329.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Kindle location 319 – 322.

be paying special attention to his work. Many accounts of Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity begin by countering the claim that Husserl's phenomenology is inherently solipsistic due to the nature of the reductions and the sphere of immanent experience they are designed to turn us towards.

Foreseeing the problem of other minds Husserl acknowledges that other people's experience is not given as identical to experience within the "primordial" sphere of our own self experience. If it was we would not be able to distinguish between our experience and the experience another person has.<sup>11</sup> However, for Husserl other people are pivotal in establishing two fundamental types of experience – our experience of objects and our experience of the lived body.

His intentional analysis of intersubjectivity is divided into two parts – the noetic and the noematic. The noetic aspects of intersubjectivity – the mode the other is given – Husserl terms appresentation. As I have noted the other's experience is not given directly or straightforwardly to us: for Husserl we experience others through the act of appresentation. Appresentation means that "the other is given *along with something else*, something which *is* straightforwardly present."<sup>12</sup> Other people are not the only type of objects which are appresented to consciousness. However, in cases of intersubjectivity the noetic act of appresentation is tightly correlated with the noematic content of other people in their bodily form.

In intersubjective situations of apperception the "something else" is the *body* of the other... I 'see' the other person as being 'co-present' with their body."<sup>13</sup> Thus Husserl founds his account of intersubjectivity upon an analysis of embodiment. Husserlian analysis of the body features in both of the theories of social cognition which are featured in my thesis – interaction theory and simulation theory.

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<sup>11</sup> Bernet, R, Kern, I & Marbach, E. (1989) *An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology*. Northwestern University Press: Illinois. Pp 155 – 156.

<sup>12</sup> Russel, M (2006) *Husserl: A Guide for the Perplexed*. Continuum:Hampshire. Pg 173.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Goldman and de Vignemont claim that embodiment is the spectre haunting the halls of cognition research. The opposition of the embodiment movement towards classical cognitivism is so strong that Goldman and de Vignemont go as far as to incorporate this opposition into their definition of embodied theories of cognition. For them, any account of embodied cognition must be clearly distinguished from and stand as a substantial rival to classical cognition.<sup>14</sup> Embodied cognition is “deeply dependent upon characteristics of the physical body of an agent, such that the agent's beyond-the-brain body plays a significant causal role, or a physically constitutive role, in that agent's cognitive processing.”<sup>15</sup>

Gallagher states more specifically that it is the influence of the structure or function of the design of the body on cognition that makes cognition embodied. For example, when discussing the embodied nature of a particular sort of cognition – perception – Gallagher reports Strauss who argues that the structure of the whole body is designed in minute detail for upright posture. The postural possibilities allowed by standing and walking allow and constrain what we can see and attend to. Thus, regarding embodied nature of perception, he concludes with – “these physical facts, which we live as we live our body, constrain what counts as affordances and thereby what counts as the” perceptual world.<sup>16</sup>

The embodied cognition movement is closely tied to two other theoretical notions – enaction and embeddedness. Demonstrating the close ties between the concepts of embodiment and enaction de Jaeger and di Paolo state that “for the enactive approach cognition *is* embodied action.”<sup>17</sup> As an example of the enactive approach, they focus on the activity termed sense-making. Take for example the process of identifying an object as a sponge. This involves imbibing or imbuing the object in question with a particular,

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<sup>14</sup> Goldman, A & de Vignemont, F (2009) “Is Social Cognition Embodied?” *Trends in Cognitive Science*. Vol .13, Iss. 4. Pg. 154.

<sup>15</sup> Wilson, R & Foglia, L (2011). "Embodied Cognition", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.) Accessed from [plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/embodied-cognition/](http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/embodied-cognition/). Introduction.

<sup>16</sup> Gallagher, S (2008) “Intersubjectivity in perception.” *Continental Philosophical Review*. 40: Pg 164.

<sup>17</sup> De Jaeger, H & di Paolo, E (2007) “Participatory sense making: an enactive approach to social cognition”. *Journal of Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*. 6: Pg. 487. Differing italics.

concrete historically grounded meaning – that of being a particular type of object – a sponge. We cannot do this by visual perception alone (after all, it may only look like a sponge but in fact be a dog’s chew toy) but it is only through the enactive processes like grasping, probing and squeezing the sponge through the movements of the body that we make sense of the object by correctly categorizing it. Characterising the enactive nature of this process of making sense out of an object de Jaeger and di Paolo claim it is “the outcome of a particular kind of encounter between a ‘questioning’ agent with a particular body... and a ‘responding’ segment of the world... Movements are at the centre of mental activity: a sense-making agent’s movements... are the tools of her cognition.”<sup>18</sup>

The embedded aspect to embodied cognition results because the body, our body, never finds itself dislocated from the world. The self not only has a spatial location in a physically constituted world – to be embedded means to find this world “at hand”. Gallagher draws on Heidegger’s analysis of circumspection to explicate embedded-ness. Circumspection is ‘that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use; and this has its own kind of ‘knowledge’” The environment and my pragmatic interaction with it offer certain affordances and this in turn shapes cognition. Gallagher states it is one of the necessary existential characteristics of the very nature of human existence itself to find oneself *in* the world – as in *in-volved* – in this way, and this explicates the way embodied cognition is always embedded. “The world, in this sense, is not a collection of objects to be observed or contemplated by the mind. Rather, in a primary way, we have our hands in it.”<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the embodiment movement relies on the analyses of a variety of phenomenological philosophers. Moreover, as a result of the insurgence of embodied considerations into theory of mind philosophy and cognitive science two theories have emerged. The first is a hybridization of embodied cognition and simulation theory – embodied simulation – and the second is interaction theory. As is consistent with embodied theories of mind both theories are closely related to the phenomenological

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. Pg 489.

<sup>19</sup> Gallagher, S (2008) “Intersubjectivity in perception.” *Continental Philosophical Review*. Vol. 40. Pg. 165.

tradition. Interaction theory has ties both to the theories that result from phenomenological analysis and to the methodology of phenomenology.

Embodied simulation is more involved with a close and exegetical reading of phenomenological analyses in order to determine areas of confluence between embodied simulation theory and phenomenological writings in general, but in particular with the writings of Merleau-Ponty. There has been much rich speculation about areas of confluence between phenomenology and simulation theory. Broome and Stranghellini speculate that embodied simulation's theory of the mirror neuron system corroborates the intentionality thesis as it is conceived by Brentano. Lastly, these authors also note, Gallese argues his embodied simulation theory provides a neurophysiological substrate for Merleau-Ponty's accounts of "embodied subjectivity" and thus further bridges phenomenology and clinical neuroscience.<sup>20</sup>

The embodiment movement is a part of the initial impetus towards a particularly vibrant strand of contemporary consciousness studies, which we might term "the hybrid project". The hybrid project, which we see in the diverse work of authors such as Gallagher and Gallese, Natalie Depraz, Dan Zahavi, and Dieter Lohmar and others. It involves a return not only to the analyses of phenomenologists but also a return to the methods of phenomenology and a rethinking of the methodology of both empirical psychology and phenomenology. Interaction theory is a product of the hybrid project. Not only do phenomenological analysis feature prominently in interaction theory but, in the writings of interaction theorists (such as Gallagher), there is a rethinking of the methods of phenomenology. This rethinking is based on a close reading of Husserl: based on it in an essential way.

Gallagher relies on Husserl's distinction of between a formal ontology and a material or regional ontology. Discerning the eidetic structures of a formal ontology requires eidetic intuition. However, regarding material regions pure intuition in the sense required above

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<sup>20</sup> Broome, M & Stanghellini, G (2010). "From Brentano to mirror neurons: Bridging phenomenology and clinical neuroscience". *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging*. Vol. 183. Pg. 245.

is unnecessary and, Gallagher argues, sometimes even problematic. As Husserl himself distinguished, the psyche, taken as an object of nature, has its own regional ontology, the study of which is the practice of psychology, considered distinct from phenomenology.<sup>21</sup>

The study of the region of psyche – psychology – is not a transcendental study. Thus, Gallagher’s argument is, it does not require a fully transcendental method. So if we take for example the phenomenological method of eidetic variation (which this thesis will discuss in some detail in chapter three) Gallagher argues psychologists need not be restricted to running through this method in the imagination or conception of the researcher alone. At least not in the study of a material region like the psyche. Gallagher argues that real life derivations might serve the same function as thought experiments regarding distinguishing the essential structures of material regions. He thus contrasts “factual” variation with the method of eidetic variation and claims that the former might fill the role of the latter. The sources of these real life factual variations are the results from empirical experiments and psychopathological case studies.<sup>22</sup>

Gallagher further argues that other methods of variation which don’t rely on purely imaginative variation may also be helpful in advancing cognitive science, i.e. computer and artificial intelligence modelling. He argues computer simulation models in the field of artificial life are a type of eidetic variation. “One can view simulation methods as technological extensions of one's imaginative capacity, providing a crucial link between phenomenology and the increasingly complex (nonlinear, dynamical, self-organizing) phenomena of the empirical sciences.”<sup>23</sup> Gallagher claims these technologically enhanced methods of variation may be necessary if phenomenology is to live up to its ambitions. These represent new forms of phenomenological method or, as Gallagher refers to it, they represent the “outsourcing” of phenomenological methods.

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<sup>21</sup> Gallagher, S. (2012). “Taking stock of phenomenology futures.” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 50, No. 2. Pg. 309.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. Pp. 309 – 312.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. Pg. 309.

This second form of outsourcing is of critical importance because of its links to the project of naturalizing phenomenology. Roy et. al. argue that these forms of computer modelling based on dynamical systems theory represents advances in mathematics that Husserl could not have foreseen and that some aspects of the phenomenological method can now be formalized in dynamical models. This procedure of mathematically formalizing phenomenological methods is a step towards the naturalization of phenomenology.<sup>24</sup>

What we are left with, after viewing the landscape of contemporary methodological forms of phenomenological method, is a fairly radically different view of phenomenology than the one conceived of by the continental tradition; Husserl in particular. My central concern in this thesis is the traditional phenomenological method - particularly description - as it was conceived by Husserl. My thesis is that Husserlian description and analyses is an underutilised methodological tool in the contemporary scholarly discussion of intersubjectivity, and one that simulation theory might need to adopt if it is to remain a viable alternative as a theory of social cognition.

The second chapter of my thesis will give a detailed account of embodied simulation and interaction theory with emphasis on the phenomenological analyses which in both cases form a backbone to these theories. I will then detail some of the points of critique of embodied simulation from the interaction camp, particularly the critique that there is no "experiential" or phenomenological evidence for simulational processes at all. I will detail how it is speculated that phenomenological description might be able to resolve some of the current points of debate between simulation theory and interaction theory, such as the personal/subpersonal boundary of simulation and embodied simulation, and the extent and nature of personal level simulation. However, the next chapter of my thesis also points to some of the ambiguities concerning the term phenomenological description in the context of contemporary discussions of intersubjectivity.

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<sup>24</sup> In Ibid, Pg. 313.

It is for this reason that a clear definition and characterisation of the process of phenomenological description becomes necessary. In order to evaluate whether or not we are able to phenomenologically describe simulation, it is necessary to discuss just what a phenomenological description is. For the sake of simplicity, I have narrowed my discussion only to Husserlian phenomenological description. There is wide authorship on certain elements of Husserl's method, i.e. the reductions and bracketing, however description is comparatively underrepresented in the literature. The third chapter in my thesis will give a definition of a Husserlian description and discuss three of its characteristic features. I will also provide numerous examples which demonstrate both my definition and those features.

The fourth chapter will begin with an assessment of the current existing accounts of simulation which resemble a phenomenological description. I will also assess the claim, made by Gallagher, that we find no phenomenological evidence for simulation. I will discuss the notion of phenomenological evidence. I will argue that, as yet, simulation theory has not even begun to utilise the most basic of Husserl's phenomenological method, particularly description, despite the emergent need for it, and ergo Gallagher's claim has been made pre-emptively. Furthermore, Husserl's mature theories on intersubjectivity are yet to be given serious consideration within contemporary discussions of intersubjectivity within the cognitive sciences, despite the overall recent resurgence of interest in phenomenology. I will argue that a return to the methods and analyses of Husserl may be able to advance the debate between simulation theory and interaction theory.

In conclusion, this introduction has surveyed the literature concerning intersubjectivity at the meeting point of cognitive science and phenomenology. It began with a brief outline of classical cognitivism and its concerns with the problem of other minds and the explanatory gap. I then detailed classical cognitivism's theory of intersubjectivity, termed



theory theory, and noted that simulation theory was initially put forward as a theoretical alternative to theory theory. This introduction discussed the rise of embodied considerations into discussions of intersubjectivity and detailed the connections between embodiment and the phenomenology of Husserl, Heidegger and Maurice Merleau Ponty. Lastly I discussed the relation between two theories of embodied social cognition - interaction theory and embodied simulation - and their reliance on phenomenological analysis and, in the case of interaction theory, innovation in phenomenological method. Finally, I have detailed the aims and layout of my own thesis.

## *Chapter 2.*

*What is it Like to Simulate Another's Consciousness? Simulation and interaction theory, the phenomenological argument against simulation and phenomenological description.*

In this chapter I will discuss two theories of social cognition, the first is simulation theory with emphasis on Vittorio Gallese's strain of this theory - embodied simulation. The second theory I will discuss is Shaun Gallagher's theory of interaction and direct perception. This chapter has four sections. In each section the interaction between phenomenology and contemporary cognitive science will be highlighted. The first part of this chapter characterises and discusses simulation theory and embodied simulation, with an emphasis on its functional characterisation and the neurological evidence provided for it (i.e. mirror neurons). The second part defines and discusses interaction theory and direct perception. This moves into a discussion, in the third part of this chapter, of the critique of simulation theory and embodied simulation by the interaction camp. Two avenues of critique I will discuss are, firstly, that the theory of interaction and direct perception explain mirror neuron activity and are theoretically preferable to simulation theory, and secondly the charge that personal level simulation is not affirmed by phenomenological investigation. In the final part I will argue that phenomenological description is a distinct methodological tool and that simulation theory and embodied simulation, whether personal or subpersonal, might benefit from closer adherence to phenomenology's descriptive protocol in explorations of intersubjectivity.

Embodied simulation, as its name suggests, has a dual genealogy – one half embodiment and one half simulation theory. Gallese characterizes simulation as the production of pretend mental states that match the mental states of others as closely as possible to enable mind-reading.<sup>25</sup> Mind reading is defined as the correct attribution of a mental state to another. Simulation theory claims simulation is constitutive of mind reading. Gallese explains that most simulation theories postulate a process of pretense.

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<sup>25</sup> Gallese, V & Goldman, A. (1998). Mirror neurons and the simulation theory of mind reading. *Trends in Cognitive Science*. Vol. 2, No. 12. Pg. 497.

"People first create in themselves pretend desires, preferences and beliefs of the sort they assume others to have. These are then fed into their own decision-making mechanism, which outputs pretend decisions that they use to predict the decisions of others".<sup>26</sup> Gallese states that in simulation the pretend desires and beliefs of the other are experienced as if they were our own but in an offline mode, which means that "the output is not actual behavior but only predictions or anticipations of behavior."<sup>27</sup> Gallese states that simulation is a functional notion which is assigned a causal role in the process of social cognition known as mind reading.

Gallese also endorses a particular strain of simulation – the theory of embodied simulation – although he does not claim it is the only type of simulation that contributes to intersubjective processes. Embodied simulation can be distinguished from other simulation theories because it is subpersonal and involves neither deliberation nor pretense.<sup>28</sup> Gallese follows Goldman and De Vignemont's taxonomy of versions of the embodiment theses and identifies embodied simulation as mainly falling into the class "representation in bodily format."<sup>29</sup> In discussing what exactly defines a format Goldman and De Vignemont state that the idea of a "format of mental representation is familiar in cognitive science, although there is no consensus about what formats there are or how to individuate them. Some formats are modality-specific: a visual format, an auditory format and so forth." Goldman and De Vignemont state that tokens of the contents of the formats possess characteristic features which in turn helps to distinguish the format.<sup>30</sup> Gallese gives as examples of the typical types of contents which we would need to represent in bodily format – representing the goal of reaching to grasp an object like a cup or the "emotions... such as disgust or pain, or a sensation, such as being

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<sup>26</sup> Gallese, V & Sinigaglia, C. (2011) What is so special about embodied simulation. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*. Vol. 15, No. 11. Pg. 512.

<sup>27</sup> Gordon, R. (2009) Folk Psychology as Mental Simulation. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Edward N. Zalta (ed.). Accessed from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/folkpsych-simulation/>.

<sup>28</sup> Gallese, V & Sinigaglia, C. (2011) What is so special about embodied simulation. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*. Vol. 15, No. 11. Pg. 516.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, pg. 513.

<sup>30</sup> Goldman, A & de Vignemont, F. Is social cognition embodied? *Trends in Cognitive Science*. Article in Press. Pg. 2.

touched".<sup>31</sup> These are the typical sort of contents which would be represented in bodily format. Gallese's thesis is that some simulations are embodied which means that they are represented in a bodily format.

As Gallese notes embodied simulation aims "to account for basic social interactions by means of a... theoretically unitary framework."<sup>32</sup> Gallese's theoretical framework is fleshed out by his use of phenomenological analyses. Gallese has advocated for the "phenomenologizing of the cognitive neurosciences".<sup>33</sup> Merleau-Ponty features prominently in Gallese's thought. Merleau-Ponty sought to overcome the traditional dichotomies of philosophy – i.e. empiricism against intellectualism; mind against body. He found the point of synthesis in the lived body's engagement with the world, particularly through the act of perception. Merleau-Ponty rejected the notion of an ideal, theoretical and disembodied mind and empirical notions like the mechanical, causal notions of the reflexive arc or unit of sense datum. Instead, for Merleau-Ponty, the self is a synthesis or dialectical process which overcomes these dichotomies in order to establish a meaningful world of experience.<sup>34</sup>

For Merleau-Ponty the body itself has a type of intentionality. For him there is an intentional relation not just between mental acts and their objects but between parts of the body and parts of the world. He takes as an example the phenomenon of a phantom limb (one that has been removed but is still "felt"). Noticeably phantom limbs (such as the hand) are still experienced "as a correlate of those aspects of the world which "speak to" the hand, namely, the piano to be played, the doorknob to be opened, and so forth. When the patient who experiences phantom limb restructures his/ her world in such a manner that the things no longer beckon to the lost limb, then the experience of it

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<sup>31</sup> Gallese, V & Sinigaglia, C. (2011) What is so special about embodied simulation. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*. Vol. 15, No. 11. Pg. 516.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, Pg. 515.

<sup>33</sup> Gallese, V. Neuroscience and phenomenology. (2011) *Phenomenology and Mind: The Online Journal of the centre of Phenomenology and Studies of the Human Person*. Pg. 34. Accessed from <http://www.phenomenologyandmind.eu/>.

<sup>34</sup> Flynn, B. (2012) "Maurice Merleau-Ponty", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* Edward N. Zalta (Ed.) Sections 1, 3 & 7. Accessed from [plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/merleau-ponty/](http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/merleau-ponty/).

vanishes." The phenomenon of a phantom hand demonstrates that there is an intentional relation between the body and the world. Merleau-Ponty's notion of corporeal intentionality "...is a notion which is formed in order to express the intertwining of the sensate and the sensible, their intertwining and their reversibility... rather than having the model of act and object, one has the image of a fold, and of the body as the place of this fold by which the sensible reveals itself."<sup>35</sup>

In a paper with C. Sinigaglia, concerning the notion of bodily representation, Gallese follows Merleau-Ponty's conception of the body schema. He states that our awareness of ourselves is constituted not only by an awareness of my body as always present but also as an awareness that this body is the source of power for action. Gallese quotes Merleau-Ponty when he writes that the body schema as a source of potential action "provides us with a way of access to the world and the object, with a praktognosia, which has to be recognized as original and perhaps as primary".<sup>36</sup> The body schema, which Gallese claims represents the minimal or core sense of self, also plays a key role in embodied simulation. Gallese claims that it "is not possible to conceive of oneself as a self without rooting this process of appraisal in the sharing of the same motor intentional horizon."<sup>37</sup>

Gallese also aims to provide neurological evidence for his theory of embodied simulation. Gallese is a member of the Parma group which discovered mirror neurons. His main source of evidence for embodied simulation is research on mirror neurons. Mirror neurons are a specific class of neurons discharging both during the execution and the observation of a given behaviour. Mirror neurons are located in the areas of the brain (are F5) that are responsible for the planning of motor execution. The insight of mirror neuron research is that the same neurons located in the area of the brain responsible for movement and action also fire when we perceive that same action. The motor system is reused during observation. Gallese "posits that the mirror mechanism implements

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, section 7.

<sup>36</sup> Gallese, V & Sinigaglia, C. (2010) The bodily self as power for action. *Neuropsychologia*. Vol. 48, Pg. 748.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, Pg. 752.

mental simulation primarily because brain and cognitive resources typically used for one purpose are reused for another purpose."<sup>38</sup> Gallese maintains that embodied simulation exploits the "intrinsic functional organization of the motor cortex" and "the notion of reuse of mental states represented with a bodily format provides a convincing simulational account of the mirroring mechanism... and its role in mind-reading."<sup>39</sup> Gallese adds that what "makes the activation of mirror neurons during the observation of the actions of others an "as if" process is... the fact that in spite of an activation of the motor system in the observer's brain, the action is not executed."<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, evidence for simulation theory is provided by studies on humans and primates which show that mirror neurons fire when only *part* of an action is observed. Simulation theory proposes the process of simulation is responsible for determining the goal of the action. As further evidence for simulation, studies suggest that overlapping areas of the brain are active when we execute, observe and imagine someone performing an action.<sup>41</sup> The mirror mechanism maps the sensory representation of the action, emotion or sensation of another onto the perceiver's own motor, visceromotor or somatosensory representation of that action, emotion or sensation. This mapping enables one to perceive the action, emotion or sensation of another as if one were performing that action or experiencing that emotion or sensation oneself. Gallese states that his theory of embodied simulation does not aim to provide a general theory of mental simulation covering all kinds of simulational mind-reading. Rather, it aims to explain the mirror neuron system and related phenomena. For Gallese the mirror neuron system is the sub-personal neurological substrate which underpins the process of embodied simulation. Gallese claims that the relational character of representations in

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<sup>38</sup> Gallese, V & Sinigaglia, C. (2011) What is so special about embodied simulation. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*. Vol. 15, No. 11. Pg. 516

<sup>39</sup> Gallese, V & Sinigaglia, C. (2012). Response to de Bruin and Gallagher: embodied simulation as reuse is a productive explanation of a basic form of mind-reading. *Trends in Cognitive Science*. Vol 16, No 2. Pg 100.

<sup>40</sup> Gallese, V. Neuroscience and phenomenology. (2011) *Phenomenology and Mind: The Online Journal of the centre of Phenomenology and Studies of the Human Person*. Pg. 30. Accessed from [phenomenologyandmind.eu](http://phenomenologyandmind.eu).

<sup>41</sup> Grezes, J & Dacety, J. (2001) Functional anatomy of execution, mental simulation and verb generation of action. *Human Brain Mapping*. Vol 12, Pp. 1 – 19.

bodily format and the sharing of motor intentional horizons is underpinned, at the neural level, by the mirror mechanism.<sup>42</sup>

Lately simulation theory and research on mirror neurons have come under close critical scrutiny and, in the third part of this paper, I will present some of the points of this critique that have stemmed from the interaction camp. Beforehand however, the next section of this paper will provide a brief outline of interaction theory and direct perception which, for Gallagher, constitute primary intersubjectivity.

Gallagher writes that an “important shift is taking place in social cognition research, away from a focus on the individual mind and toward... participatory aspects of social understanding...” Interaction theory is put forward in order to “galvanize” the interactive turn in explanations of social cognition.<sup>43</sup> Gallagher claims that simulation theory is still too tied to methodological individualism: understanding others depends primarily on cognitive capabilities or mechanisms located in an individual subject, or on processes that take place inside an individual brain.<sup>44</sup> Gallagher claims that the notion of mind-reading and simulation are still processes that occur within the confines of our own head and that they don’t incorporate a “second person perspective” or intersubjective perspective on social cognition.

The second person perspective is a core theoretical distinction in interaction theory. The second person or intersubjective perspective means the participant or co-experiencing perspective, referring to situations of reciprocal interaction that are characterized by some form of mutual relatedness and coupling of the partners. Fuchs notes that the “duality of the first and the third person perspective is an established opposition in philosophy of mind where it is mainly used to demonstrate the irreducibility of subjectivity as against a physicalistic concept of the world... However, in studies of social

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<sup>42</sup> Gallese, V. Mirror neurons, embodied simulation and the neural basis of social identification. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues: The International Journal of Relational Perspectives*. Vol. 19, No. 5. Pp. 519 – 536.

<sup>43</sup> Gallagher, S, De Jaeger, H & Di Paulo, E. (2010) Can social interaction constitute social cognition? *Trends in Cognitive Science*. Vol. 14, No. 10. Pg 441.

<sup>44</sup> Gallagher, S & Zahavi, D. (2013) *The Phenomenological Mind*. Routledge: Kindle Edition. Kindle location 5268.

cognition this duality seems insufficient."<sup>45</sup> Gallagher argues for the primacy of the second person perspective and interactions in social understanding. Interaction theory argues that the first person perspective and the third person perspective are both abstractions from the second person perspective, which underlies our everyday interactions with others.<sup>46</sup>

Gallagher terms the individual person an autonomous agent, however, the individual is viewed as an autonomous system – a co-dependent network of processes “able to sustain itself and define an identity as a self-determined system.” He adds that examples of this type of “systemic relation can be found on many different levels. Examples include... sensorimotor flows of neural and bodily activity, habits, social institutions and so on.”<sup>47</sup> The individual person is the primary (though not the only) type of autonomous agent or system that features in interaction theory theories account of social cognition. Individuals involve in coupling, regulated coupling and co-regulated coupling. Coupling is “the influence between a system’s variables and another system’s parameters”,<sup>48</sup> for instance keeping my dog on a leash so he cannot run away when I walk him. Regulated coupling is “changes that an agent makes to the constraints and parametrical conditions that influence the coupling between the agent and another system.”<sup>49</sup> An example of regulating a coupling activity would be moving closer to someone to hear them better during a conversation. If both individuals or systems regulate their coupling behaviour this is termed co-regulated coupling. Gallagher defines a social interaction as two “or more autonomous agents co-regulating their coupling with the effect that... their relational dynamics acquire an autonomy of their own. Examples: conversations, collaborative work, arguments, collective action, dancing”.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Fuchs, T. (2012) The phenomenology and development of social perspectives. *Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*. Published online – no Vol. or No. provided. Pg. 1 & 2 of 29.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, Pg 3 & 4.

<sup>47</sup> Gallagher, S, De Jaeger, H & Di Paulo, E. (2010) Can social interaction constitute social cognition? *Trends in Cognitive Science*. Vol. 14, No. 10. Pg 441.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.



Direct perception, along with interaction, constitute, for Gallagher, primary intersubjectivity. Direct perception is the theoretical alternative to simulation and attempts to account for many social processes we would otherwise consider as simulatory.<sup>51</sup> Gallagher roots his theory of perception in Husserl's analysis. Husserl claimed "that perception is the basis for abstract thought and, as such, plays a foundational role in our cognitive architecture. He treats perceptual knowledge, furthermore, as exemplary for knowledge generally."<sup>52</sup>

Both Husserl, and Gallagher following him, claim that perception involves kinesthesia - a pre-reflective and embedded sense of one's own movements. He claims that we do not have kinaesthetic sensations only when we move "but that such kinaesthetic sensation is implicitly connected with our perception of objects - the something that we perceive registers in a certain way within our kinaesthetic system."<sup>53</sup> The body can be divided into a series of kinaesthetic subsystems - the eyes, upper body and head and the lower body: these subsystems are continuous and can fulfil interchangeable roles in acts of perception. Each subsystem is connected with a distinct ability for self-movement. Together with presentational contents of the visual field, kinaesthetic sensations of eye movement form what Husserl calls the oculomotor system.<sup>54</sup> Regarding the oculomotor system specifically Husserl writes that "to every position in the visual field there corresponds a sensation of the position of the eye... and every visual line that the gaze runs over has a correspondence in a continuous kinaesthetic sequence".<sup>55</sup>

Regarding direct perception in intersubjectivity Gallagher states that "when we see someone else act in a certain way, our own kinaesthetic system is activated in a way that mirrors the perceived action. This, in part, is what allows us to understand the other

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<sup>51</sup> Gallagher, S & Zahavi, D. (2013) *The Phenomenological Mind*. Routledge: Kindle Edition. Chapter 5.

<sup>52</sup> Martell, T. Phenomenology and phenomenism in Husserl's *Thing and Space*. Published online at academia.edu. Pg. 1.

<sup>53</sup> Gallagher, S. (2005) Phenomenological contributions of a theory of social cognition. *Husserl Studies*. Vol. 21. Pg. 97.

<sup>54</sup> Drummond, J. (1979) On seeing a material thing in space: the role of kinaesthesia in visual perception. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. Vol. 40, No 1. Pp. 19 – 32.

<sup>55</sup> In Gallagher, S. (2005) Phenomenological contributions of a theory of social cognition. *Husserl Studies*. Vol. 21. Pg. 97.

person. Moreover, and importantly, this kinaesthetic activation is part of the perceptual process – part of the hyletic processes that underpin the noetic aspect of perception”. This is a point that Gallagher wants to bring into focus. “We are talking about transformations that inform the noetic side of experience, although, as we know, this is tightly correlated with noematic content. In this case, the fact that we are perceiving another human being, rather than something else, reverberates in the noetic structure of consciousness.”<sup>56</sup> This account of direct perception and its role in social cognition offers a theoretical alternative to embodied simulation. By acknowledging that we bodily mirror others bodily movements but claiming that this relation is kinaesthetic and is classified as a feature of the act or process of direct perception when it is directed towards the noematic content of another body Gallagher is cancelling out the need to postulate simulatory processes that would otherwise play a similar theoretical role.

Gallagher also claims that the process of direct perception may explain the activity of the mirror neuron system. Gallagher notes that mirror neuron activity is preceded by “activation in primary perceptual areas, e.g. visual cortex, corresponding to our seeing an action; this is followed immediately (30– 100 milliseconds later) by activation of” the mirror neuron system.<sup>57</sup> Gallagher argues that if we accept that perception is a temporally extended phenomenon then, given the extremely close temporal ties neurologically, it is entirely possible the activity of the mirror neuron system is a property of the act of perception. Gallagher claims one could argue that mirror neuron activity is part “of the processes that underlie intersubjective perception rather than the extra cognitive step of simulation. That is, we can regard these processes as underpinning a direct perception of the other person’s intentions, rather than a distinct mental process of simulating their intentions.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Gallagher, S & Zahavi, D. (2013) *The Phenomenological Mind*. Routledge: Kindle Edition. Kindle location 5273.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, kindle location 5279.

Both embodied simulation and interaction theory are theories with close theoretical and, in Gallagher's case, methodical ties to the phenomenological tradition. One of the issues I take up with the debate between these two camps is that at times the distinction between just any description given from a first person point of view and what counts as a phenomenological description is unclear. Furthermore, this lack of clarity result in a blurring of the definition of phenomenology. "In recent philosophy of mind, the term "phenomenology" is often restricted to the characterization of... what it is like to have sensations of various kinds. However, our experience is normally much richer in content than mere sensation."<sup>59</sup>

An example of the blurring of this distinction is when Gallagher claims that phenomenology "can serve as a useful diagnostic tool... If a patient walks into the emergency room and complains of headaches and blindness in one eye, the neurologist would be remiss to simply assure the patient that phenomenology is not always dependable."<sup>60</sup> In this example Gallagher is focusing on a 'simple' sense of the term phenomenology instead of a fuller traditional or 'rich' sense of the term.

If we interpret the term phenomenology from a rich perspective the neurologists' assurance is a non-sequitur; a valid response from the patient would be "I'm not doing any phenomenology". The patient is certainly giving a first person report of experience, but is this enough to classify this practice as the same as phenomenology? I think it's probably right to say that although we might classify these sort of average everyday reports as a possible element of the phenomenological method of description – a sort of piece of raw data - they certainly do not constitute the whole thing. They are the fragmented potential pieces of a phenomenological description; neither necessary nor sufficient for it. In the phenomenological tradition the term "phenomenology is given a

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<sup>59</sup> Smith, David Woodruff, (2011) Phenomenology. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.) Section 1. Accessed from plato.stanford.edu.

<sup>60</sup> Gallagher, S. (2012) In defense of phenomenological approaches to cognition: interacting with the critics. *Review of Philosophical Psychology*. Vol. 3. Pg. 203.

much wider range, addressing the meaning things have in our experience".<sup>61</sup> Smith states that such simple descriptions indicate the basic domain of study but it is only by abstracting from them that we begin to develop the science of phenomenology.<sup>62</sup> As the next chapter in my thesis will show, description, as Husserl conceived it, is a technical process which has specific features which distinguish it from merely any description of experience in the first person.

There are numerous references throughout the phenomenological literature testifying to the difficulty and lengthy amount of time and practice involved in phenomenological description.<sup>63</sup> This suggests that phenomenological description is not just any first person description and that we should maintain a distinction between the two. I rely on this distinction when I suggest that simulation theory is in need of greater phenomenological description. I think that simulation theory and embodied simulation could benefit, not just from theoretical use of phenomenological analyses, but also from paying more attention to what has been termed phenomenology's methodological "descriptive protocol".<sup>64</sup> In the next section of this thesis I will define Husserlian phenomenology and discuss its main characteristics, and discuss some of the practices involved, in order to understand how phenomenological description might benefit simulation theory and the debate between it and interaction theory.

Gallagher has also suggested that research on simulation can benefit from greater phenomenological description and he has also used phenomenological argument as a form of critique of simulation theory. He states that we can phenomenologically distinguish, for example, between the third person/allocentric perspective: I imagine seeing someone over there reaching for the glass, and the third person/egocentric perspective: I imagine being over there in their place doing the action "from the

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<sup>61</sup> Smith, David Woodruff, (2011) Phenomenology. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.) Section 1. Accessed from plato.stanford.edu.

<sup>62</sup> Smith, D. W. (2013) *Husserl*. Taylor and Francis: Accessed from eblib.com.au. Pg. 194.

<sup>63</sup> i.e. in Spiegelberg, H. (1975) *Doing Phenomenology: Essays on and in Phenomenology*. Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague or Reeder, H. P. (1986) *The theory and Practice of Husserl's Phenomenology*. Zeta Books: Bucharest.

<sup>64</sup> Brown, M. (2008) The place of description in phenomenology's naturalization. *Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*. Vol. 7. Pp. 563 - 583.

inside".<sup>65</sup> He claims that these phenomenological distinctions were not incorporated into the design of the latest research on simulation which suggests differing areas of the brain are active when we execute, observe and imagine an action. Simulation theory requires more concrete descriptions and examples which highlight and compliment the sort of structures outlined by Gallagher: examples which bare out distinguishing features.

Gallagher claims that phenomenological investigation provides an argument against personal level simulation. He states that "there is no experiential evidence that I use such conscious (imaginative, introspective) simulation routines. That is, when we consult our own common experience of how we understand others, we don't find such processes".<sup>66</sup> I will argue, in this thesis, that the notion of "experiential evidence" is one that needs to be unpacked before the above claim can be substantiated. The next essay of this thesis will unpack the method involved in a phenomenological descriptive investigation and the final concluding section will discuss Husserl's notion of phenomenological evidence before returning to assess this claim.

In the opening of Alvin Goldman's *Simulating Minds* we find the closest account resembling a phenomenological description of simulation but I will show, also in the conclusion to this thesis, that this account is inadequate and that, as yet, despite the theoretical engagement with phenomenological authors, simulation theory is yet to begin to seriously utilise the most basic of phenomenological tools, i.e. description. A reorientation of method is necessary if this is to be achieved.

Either way, subpersonal embodied simulation escapes Gallagher's phenomenologically based criticisms because if "simulation is subpersonal, and not something of which we would be aware, then phenomenology is not in a position to raise objections, since

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<sup>65</sup> <sup>65</sup> Gallagher, S. (2011) Fantasies and facts: epistemological and methodological perspectives on first and third person perspectives. *Phenomenology and Mind: The Online Journal of the centre of Phenomenology and Studies of the Human Person*. Pg 42. Accessed from phenomenologyandmind.eu.

<sup>66</sup> Gallagher, S & Zahavi, D. (2013) *The Phenomenological Mind*. Routledge: Kindle Edition. Kindle location 5279.

phenomenology doesn't give us access to the subpersonal domain."<sup>67</sup> Although he claims that phenomenology may not be able to provide descriptions of subpersonal processes elsewhere Gallagher states that "phenomenology can give us some clues about what might be happening... in low-level, subpersonal processes of social cognition."<sup>68</sup> Gallagher argues that the phenomenological account often "counts as part of the explanation of subpersonal processes. If a neuroscientist tells me that neurons in area F5 are firing, I have no explanation of what that means until she gives me some indication of what it correlates to on the personal level of experience or behaviour. In many cases the only way to define the explanandum is in terms of phenomenological description."<sup>69</sup>

However, regarding the subpersonal status of embodied simulation specifically even Gallese states that "our brain has developed a basic functional mechanism which I qualify as embodied simulation which gives us an *experiential insight* of others minds. The specific nature of such experiential insight is still very loosely defined, and there is a lot of very meticulous philosophical work in parallel with neuroscientific work to much better specify what we qualify as 'experiential'".<sup>70</sup> In the conclusion to this chapter I will discuss Husserl's rather meticulous work on intersubjectivity and sketch the preliminary directions this "meticulous philosophical work" might take today, based on my in depth discussion of Husserlian method and analyses of intersubjectivity.

In conclusion, the first section of this chapter gave an outline of simulation theory and embodied simulation with emphasis on both the functional aspects and areas of phenomenological influence within them. I also attempted to outline the neurological underpinnings provided as evidence for embodied simulation and simulation theory. The second section discussed interaction theory. I began with a delineation of core the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid. Kindle location 5239.

<sup>68</sup> Gallagher, S. (2012) In defense of phenomenological approaches to cognition: interacting with the critics. *Review of Philosophical Psychology*. Vol. 3. Pg. 205.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Gallese, V. Neuroscience and phenomenology. (2011) *Phenomenology and Mind: The Online Journal of the centre of Phenomenology and Studies of the Human Person*. Pg. 38. Accessed from phenomenologyandmind.eu. My italics.

theoretical notion of the second person perspective and a definition of interaction theory and discussion of the role of kinesthesia in direct perception.

This discussion moved, in the third part of this essay, into some criticisms levelled at simulation theory by interaction theory, i.e. the charge that direct perception is a better theoretical alternative and that direct perception better explains mirror neuron activity. Finally I discussed Gallaher's claim that we find no phenomenological evidence for the process of explicit personal level simulation. I have suggested, in the last part of this essay, that phenomenological description is a methodological tool that needs to be distinguished from just any average description derived from the first person point of view. I have also given some indications of the layout of the rest of this thesis. The next section of my thesis moves to an explication of Husserlian phenomenological description before returning, in the conclusion, to the relation between phenomenology and the current debate between simulation theory and interaction theory concerning intersubjectivity.

### *Chapter 3.*

#### *Definition and characterisation of Husserlian phenomenological description.*

In comparison to other areas of Husserlian phenomenology, the topic of description is underrepresented in the literature. There is, to my knowledge, no definition to date, nor is there extended characterisation or discussion on this topic. Description is often neglected at the expense of other more sophisticated phenomenological tools, such as the reductions. Husserlian phenomenology is often referred to as “descriptive”, and there is discussion as to *why* this is the case, i.e. why Husserl adopted a descriptive analytic method. But there is little to no discussion on *what* Husserlian description is. This section of my thesis will seek to address this gap, particularly with an eye to discerning in the concluding chapter how Husserlian phenomenology might be applied to the current debates between interaction theory and simulation theory.

This work begins by providing my own (broad) definition of Husserlian phenomenological description as: a description of the forms and structures of conscious experience. The introductory section of this work will unpack this definition. The next three sections will then provide some specific characteristics of Husserlian description. 1) Husserlian description begins at the level of the individual, actual experience, but that it then moves to the level of the description of universal levels of structure; the eidetic level. 2) Husserlian description ranges from focusing on the noematic or the noetic dimensions of experience and its goal is the exposure of the relations between these experiential poles. 3) Methodologically, Husserlian description *follows* the processes of intuition and analyses. I will finish with a discussion of the creative nature of Husserlian description.

The first term I will unpack from my definition is description. A description is a linguistic entity designed for communication. A dictionary definition of the term description is



discourse intended to give a mental image of something experienced.<sup>71</sup> The aim of a description is a similitude in mental content between communicators. In description we detail things and their properties to others in a way that they see those things with those properties in the same way we do. Etymologically, the word describe literally means to 'write down'; to copy or transcribe; a description implies some type of re-presentation. The aim of a description is to indirectly (i.e. via a representation) communicate what one person is seeing, hearing or thinking (for example) to another person just as they see or think it, without alteration or change

An important function of phenomenological description is to serve as a 'signpost' to phenomena. Understanding a phenomenological description means that readers of the described experience themselves experience the described structures of the experience, in an indirect mode, via a linguistic representation. A phenomenological analytic description doesn't need to decide on the designating terms of the components of the structure of the experience. Instead, it tries to make the readers perceive or imagine the experience grasped.<sup>72</sup>

The principal theme of Husserlian phenomenological description is conscious experience (*Erlebnis*). Taken in its broadest sense the term includes all mental processes.<sup>73</sup> Husserlian description thus has a fairly wide purview. Husserl describes experience as an immediate, pre-theoretical, "mental nexus", which knows only internally interwoven states. He notes that, even though experience is in flux from one moment to the next, it is interconnected and interpenetrated in various ways, and composes a real harmonious unity for each individual mind (*PP*, pg. 45). Pre – predicative conscious experience is the matrix of all our predicative and scientific knowledge.<sup>74</sup> Husserl states that "...precepts', imaginative and pictorial presentations, acts of conceptual thinking, surmises and doubts, joys and griefs, hopes and fears, wishes and acts of will etc., are, just as they

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<sup>71</sup> "Description". Merriam Webster: accessed online at [merriam-webster.com/dictionary/description](http://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/description)

<sup>72</sup> Schmicking, (2010). A toolbox of phenomenological methods. *Handbook of Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*. Springer Publishers, Pg. 6.

<sup>73</sup> Cohen, J. D. & Moran, D. (2012) *The Husserl Dictionary*. Continuum Books: accessed from [eplib.com.au](http://eplib.com.au). Pg. 71.

<sup>74</sup> Spiegelberg, H. (1975) *Doing Phenomenology: Essays on and in Phenomenology*. Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague. Pg. 177.

flourish in our consciousness, 'experiences'" (*LI*, Pg. 202). Husserl notes that the experiential world has an *a priori*, universal or necessary structure (*PP*, Pg. 42). The aim of Husserlian phenomenology is to abstract the content of an experience from the flux of consciousness, so that we may describe the various universal and necessary forms and structures of consciousness.

Conscious experience is essentially intentional; it refers to objects other than itself of which it is an experience.<sup>75</sup> The prototypical form or superstructure of consciousness is the intentional relation. For Husserl, the intentional relation is the defining architecture of conscious experience; "a fundamental characteristic of all psychic life which is given quite immediately and prior to all theories" (*PP*, Pg. 22). Smith summarizes Husserl's theory of intentionality as: "an act of consciousness is intentionally directed via a meaning toward an object." He notes Husserl's *Ideas I* is a "very close account of how reflection on our experience explicates the intentionality of consciousness".<sup>76</sup>

Intentionality is a relation which expresses itself in all aspects of conscious experience: in acts of judgement, expression, desire, through our embodiment and perceptual acts, and our engagement with the intersubjective world. We might put this metaphorically as, when viewed or seen from a holistic perspective, the 'shape' or superstructure of consciousness is intentionality. The purpose of phenomenological description is to detail how the arches, vaults, flying buttresses, bricks and mortar, etc. contain and compose this superstructure.

Thus, the first section of this essay has provided an unpacked definition of Husserlian phenomenological description. The topic of such a description is: the structures and forms of any mental event or its object. The prototypical or superstructural form is: the intentional relation. A Husserlian description seeks to linguistically communicate the structure and forms of these experiences as one person experiences them to another. This definition is broad enough to cover all cases of Husserlian phenomenological

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 178.

<sup>76</sup> Smith, D. W. (2013) *Husserl*. Taylor and Francis: Accessed from eplib.com.au. Pg. 238.

description but, because of this broadness, it is still perhaps a little vague. Therefore the next section of this essay will attempt to provide a more detailed account of a characteristic feature of Husserlian phenomenological description – that it begins with the description of individuals but proceeds to the level of the universal or eidetic. The next section also contains examples which demonstrate this feature, and the broad definition of Husserlian description provided.

Husserlian phenomenology contains numerous types or styles of description of the structures of conscious experience. It proceeds on different “levels” and in different “directions”. The most basic and elementary level is the description of precise individual examples of actual lived experience. As an example of this type of description I will firstly present a passage from Husserl’s discussion on the consciousness of internal time which represents “a typical example of Husserl’s descriptive analysis.”<sup>77</sup>

Husserl firstly begins by describing a single experience of an object which has temporal extension - a melody. After consideration however he is discontent with this example and isolates an individual tone for description. After a process of distilling and clarifying (via bracketing and the development of terminology) Husserl provides this precise description of the highly specific lived experience of the temporal duration of an individual tone. Notice how Husserl’s description “unfolds” its object – that is, through abstraction and analysis, Husserl discovers a complex structure to a seemingly simple phenomenal experience; he illustrates his “skill in finding great complexity where others see only simplicity.”<sup>78</sup>

He begins by noticing: “I am conscious of the tone and of the duration that it fills in a continuity of ‘modes’” (*PCIT*, Pg. 25). That is, the mode-of-the past: retention, or, the mode-of-the-now: perception. However, these modes present to consciousness “in a ‘continual flow.’” Husserl isolates the different parts or “phases” which compose the unified structure of this temporal experience:

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<sup>77</sup> Farber, M. (1943) *The Foundation of Phenomenology*. State University of New York Press: Albany. Pg. 516.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, Pg. 517.

"...one point, one phase of this flow is called "consciousness of the commencing tone"; and in this phase I am conscious of the first time point of the tones duration in the mode of the now. The tone is given; that is, I am conscious of it as now... However, if any temporal phase (corresponding to a time point of the tone duration) is an actually present now (with the exception of the initial phase), then I am conscious of a continuity of phases as "immediately past" and of the whole extent of the temporal duration from the beginning-point up to the now-point has elapsed. I am not yet conscious of the remaining extent of the duration, however. When the final now-point is reached, I am conscious of this point itself as the now-point and of the whole duration has elapsed (or I am conscious of it as elapsed at the beginning point of the new extent of time, which is no longer a tonal extent)" (*PCIT*, Pp. 25 – 26).

Thus in summary, Husserl's description reveals a complex phenomenological structure within the experience of the temporal duration of an individual sound such as a tone. Such an experience is organised around two phenomenological phases – the first time point of the tones duration in the mode of the now, and the final time point of the tones duration in the mode of the now. Once we have past the first phase we are continuously aware of a series of phases as "just past" and it is not until the final phase is past we become aware of the end of the temporal tonal extension.

Something that becomes immediately clear from this initial example is the analytic component to Husserlian description. Even the initial stage description of particular phenomenon involves an analysis of the structure of the phenomenon. All types of Husserlian description is preceded by analysis however. This means distinguishing the different parts, i.e. pieces, moments – in the above case, phases – etc. of what's being described. Husserl himself states that description means not merely the pure expression of what is "seen" but rather also "the most far reaching possible analysis of the seen into its parts to be unfolded intuitively" (*PP*, Pg. 21).

Another demonstration of Husserlian description beginning at the level of singular empirical experience can be found in the sixth logical investigation. Husserl is investigating the relations that hold between perceptual acts, which are given with a high degree of intuitive fullness, and expressive acts. As is methodologically consistent, Husserl always confines himself to beginning with the "simplest possible" case. He thereby begins with the phenomena of "naming". He begins with a singular example of naming his own inkpot; his purpose is to fully describe a singular example of "a relationship of static union, where a sense-giving thought has based itself on intuition, and is thereby related to its object." He describes, as an example of this phenomenon, "I speak... of my inkpot, and my inkpot also stands before me: I see it." What Husserl particularly wants to unravel or describe in greater detail is why in this case "the name seems to *overlay* the perceived object, to belong *sensibly* to it... The expression seems to be *applied* to the thing and to clothe it like a garment." (*LI*, Pg. 291).

Husserl's analytic description discerns there are two independent acts at work in this seemingly simple individual act of naming - the perceptual act and the expressive act. It is not word and thing that enter into a relation but these two acts. However, he also describes that what mediates the relation between these two acts and brings them into unity is a third act termed recognition. It is because the act of recognition has the character of a classificatory act, and the expressive act is one with the classificatory act, and again because recognition of the perceived object is one with the act of perception, that the expression appears, so to speak, as laid upon the thing.<sup>79</sup>

This far I have provided only examples of the description of the structure of individual examples of conscious experience. Although it begins at this level of description of individuals or singular experiences, demonstrated above, phenomenology seeks to move to a more universal or eidetic level of description. Eidetic description proceeds from the individual to a descriptions of species that the individual belongs to, in order to see if the same structures remain. However, the description of the species is methodologically

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<sup>79</sup>Farber, M. (1943) *The Foundation of Phenomenology*. State University of New York Press: Albany. Pg. 398.

based on the initial description of the individual; no adequate insight into general essences is possible without backing by specific individual actual examples as their intuitive foundation.<sup>80</sup> This point is critical for the proceeding discussions.

In the *Logical Investigations* Husserl proceeds, directly after the individual example of naming his inkpot, to show that, not only in this case, but that “in all cases where a name is applied intuitively to a thing” that the same relations between the acts outlined above remains. As the aim of this level of description is to move to a universal or eidetic level Husserl begins with a universal example. He begins with the example of the name red. However he does not mean the name red singularly and actually applied (in the way that he has just named his “inkpot”) but universally applied; as it is applied to all objects which deserve the name. This step thus involves some level of universalization via imaginative reconstruction; Husserl is asking us to go further than the instances of naming red as moments of the objects in our perceptual field and beyond, and imagine the name red applied universally.

Husserl describes the same structural relation between the individual example and this universal level when he writes that

“What here lies before us can be naturally described, with equal correctness, by saying that the name 'red' calls the object red, or that the red object is recognized (known) as red, and called 'red' as a result of this recognition. To 'call something red' – in the fully actual sense of 'calling' which presupposes an underlying intuition of the thing so called – and to 'recognize something as red', are in reality synonymous expressions” (*LI*, Pg. 293).

Methodologically, the level of description of individuals is associated with the transcendental reduction. The level of eidetic description is associated with the eidetic reduction. “We intend any descriptions we make to be valid for more cases than simply the one we are involved with at the moment. The way we get to such general validity is

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<sup>80</sup> Spiegelberg, H. (1975) *Doing Phenomenology: Essays on and in Phenomenology*. Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague. Pg. 62.

through the eidetic reduction."<sup>81</sup> With the eidetic reduction we must move from the description of particular "actual" or "real" instances to description which involves "fantasy". The aim of this step in the method is to discern invariant or essential structures that pertain to a particular species of experience. Practically this means repetitively going over many different examples of the particular type of experience we are describing in order to discern essential or invariant levels of structure. Husserl termed this process free variation in fantasy.

In free variation in fantasy, as it is involved with the determining of essences,<sup>82</sup> "what usually happens is that the writer... will project a single imaginative variant, but one that is strategic, crucial, and usually colourful, one that brings out a certain necessity in the thing we wish to examine."<sup>83</sup> For example the cube in *Thing and Space*. This example demonstrates many of the eidetic features of Husserl's theory of perception. As Husserl writes, as concerns discerning the eidetic structures of experience, free fancy assumes "a privileged position over against perceptions, and that, even in the phenomenology of perception itself" (*Ideas 1*, Pg. 136).

Husserl states essences are "...disclosed by way of example, but one which is ideally possible, conceived in unconditioned universality" (*PP*, Pg. 28). "It's not easy to capture the right imaginative variant, to pick out the dramatic, vivid example that shows a necessity."<sup>84</sup> As Husserl puts it, it will forever be a point "for lovers of paradox" that we need fantasy to gain eidetic insight (*Ideas 1*, Pg. 136), that "fantasy is the element for philosophical insight."<sup>85</sup> However, fantasy, as Husserl conceived it, has some very particular properties which make it ideal for the operation of ideation.

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<sup>81</sup> Sokolowski, R. (1985) The theory of phenomenological description. In D. Ihde & H. J. Silverman (Eds.) *Descriptions*. University of New York Press: Albany. Pg. 23.

<sup>82</sup> In *Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory* Husserl also states free variation in fantasy may mean co-intending the absent aspects of an object. Kluwer Academic Publishers: Dordrecht. Translated by J. B. Brough. Pg. 224 – 229.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

Fantasy is the species of mental acts Husserl refers to as "*Phantasie*". This species falls under the broad genus of "objectivating acts": an act which involves an intention towards an object, i.e. perception or judgement (most mental activity is objectivating). Husserl claimed that fantasy was a special modification of perception: that without perception there could be no fantasy. However, perception "presents" its object, presents it in a "lively fashion" (*leibhaftigkeit*) but fantasy, as it is a "re-presentation", is not as lively.<sup>86</sup>

Although fantasy representations are lower on the scale of liveliness in comparison to perception. Unlike perception fantasy is a "non-positing" objectivating act. Fantasy "suspends thethetic function"<sup>87</sup> of mental acts; we are indifferent to the existence of the objects which are the intentional target of fantasy. Because thethetic function is suspended, fantasy is crucial in moving from actual examples to ideally possible, universally conditioned examples. Another feature, which will become critical in my discussion of descriptive method, is that, unlike memorial re-presentation, fantasy involves no "temporal distance or gap experienced, as there is in the case of memory".<sup>88</sup> The experiences which we represent in fantasy, unlike memory, can be represented during any "moment of the now", and they therefore potentially retain a strong "retentional trace".

In *Thing and Space* Husserl gives us one of his most enduring descriptive imaginative variants – a cube. As he observes, we might use an actual example, say of a cube, before us presented in perception but, in the end, the cube as presented in the "fantasy" will do just as well (*T&S*, Pg. 10). Husserl uses various descriptions of a cube to ground his account of how we perceptually constitute a three dimensional object in space. For example, he describes the rotation of the cube. He observes that each square and its colour does not present itself in a single adumbration but as a gradation or manifold of adumbrations (*T&S*, pg. 85). When it first appears the square surface of the cube

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<sup>86</sup> Cohen, J. D. & Moran, D. (2012) *The Husserl Dictionary*. Continuum Books: accessed from eplib.com.au. Pp. 114 – 115.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.



appears, first as a vague line, then as a trapezoid.<sup>89</sup> Husserl describes in rigorous detail how

“The square surface first comes to proper appearance... as a slight indication within a rather unclear, “incomplete” presentation. The more the rotation proceeds, so much clearer becomes the presentation, so much more complete, and finally a high point is reached, in which the square “best” presents itself in this direction of change, such that further changes would again decrease the completeness of the presentation, progressing on again to slight indication and then to complete disappearance” (*T&S*, pg. 87).

Descriptions like this are the basis for and demonstrate a wider range of descriptive claims about the phenomenon of perception of a spatial object such as a cube, i.e. that at any given moment only one aspect (or adumbration) of the object appears. An object's aspects has innumerable apparent shapes. When one perceives that the object is slowly rotating in its place, or when one moves around the object, other aspects begin to appear in a continuous flowing stream of presentations.<sup>90</sup> Husserl's example of a cube, closely described with numerous variations, proves rich and vivid enough to demonstrate many universal structures of his theory of perception.

Husserl does not always walk us through the process of ideation, instead he often describes the results in what Reeder terms “reporting” or “summarizing” descriptions. For example, the following summarizing description makes eidetic claims about the nature of temporal conscious experience.

“Every actually present now of consciousness... is subject to the law of modification. It changes into retention of retention and does so continuously. Accordingly, a fixed continuum of retention arises in such a way that each later point is retention for every earlier point. And each retention is already a

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<sup>89</sup> Sokolowski, R. (2000) *An Introduction to Phenomenology*. Kindle Edition: Cambridge University Press. Kindle location 250.

<sup>90</sup> MacDonald, P. (2005) Husserl and the cubists on a thing in space. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*. Vol. 36, No. 3. Pg. 262.

continuum... Thus a continuity of retentional modifications attaches itself to each of these retentions, and this continually itself is again an actually present point that is retentionally adumbrated."<sup>91</sup>

Thus far this chapter has sought to show that Husserlian phenomenological description begins with the description of singular actual experiences but that, in seeking to discern the eidetic structures of experience, it moves to the more universal level of description and here often involves free variation or the presentation of descriptive examples imaginatively in "fantasy". In summary, we might consider the range from the singular to the universal as the vertical axis of Husserlian description.

Husserlian description also ranges horizontally - from the noetic to the noematic poles of experience. This is because the intentionality which characterises conscious experience ranges between these poles. A noematic description describes the presentational forms of the object experienced; a noetic description describe what I and anyone must do in order to let the object appear (Sokolowski). Ultimately, building on these bi-directional descriptions, the "task of phenomenology is to explore the correlations between noemas and their corresponding noeses, the intentional activities that constitute the noemas and allow the things disclosed to be presented to us."<sup>92</sup>

Sokolowski provides an example of a noematically focused description. He is describing "the acoustic presentation of a sentence". He specifically focuses on the dimensions of how the acoustic presentation of the sentence can and must present itself – its noematic dimensions. He states that, by excluding all transcendent relations, that it is the reduction which "turns objects into noemas". He describes:

"I must anticipate the end of the sentence as soon as I start the first parts of it. And although there is a continuum of sound and silence that extends through the utterance of the sentence, each word comes forward as a distinct, not a

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<sup>91</sup>Quote taken from Reeder, H. (1986) *The theory and Practice of Husserl's Phenomenology*. Zeta Books: Bucharest. Pg. 166.

<sup>92</sup> Sokolowski, R. (1985) *The theory of phenomenological description*. In D. Ihde & H. J. Silverman (Eds.) *Descriptions*. University of New York Press: Albany. Pg. 14.

continuous, part of the whole. Each of these words is such that it needs to hook onto other words and that it could have been replaced by another word."<sup>93</sup>

An example of noetically focused description can be found in *Thing and Space*. A fundamental tenet of *Thing and Space* is that the kinaesthetic activity of the perceiver plays a constitutive role in establishing the three dimensional experience of space which contains objects with identity over time. The kinaesthetic system is a noetic dimension of perceptual experience, thus Husserl's descriptions of this system is an example of a noetically focused description. Ultimately, however, the following discussion will show how Husserlian description seeks to reveal the intentional *correlation* between the noetic kinaesthetic system and the sensory visual field.

Husserl's lengthy deliberations and descriptions concerning this topic (*T&S*, Pp. 143 – 170) lead him to conclude that the relation between the kinaesthetic ocular motor system and the visual image field is non – essential, but that still a determinate relation pertains between a certain manifold of images and the corresponding certain manifold of kinaesthetic sensations when we engage in ocular motor movement. As Drummond summarizes, Husserl final (notational) description of the intentional correlation between the kinaesthetic ocular motor system and images in the visual field states that "within any given concrete perceptual situation, as the percipient actualizes a K-process, a *determinate* manifold of appearances is generated. Thus, the K-process K1-K2-K3-K4-Kn generates the connected manifold of appearances A1-A2-A3-A4-An."<sup>94</sup>

Thus, Husserlian description ranges vertically, from the description of the structures of precise examples of actual or "real" lived experience, to the description of the eidetic or universal structures of experience. However, it might also be characterised as ranging laterally or horizontally. That is – it describes the noetic and noematic dimensions of experience, and the intentional relation that pertains between them.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, Pg. 16.

<sup>94</sup> Drummond, J. (1979) On seeing a material thing in space: the role of kinaesthesia in visual perception. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. Vol. 40, No 1. Pg. 26.

The next half of this chapter will explore the methodological preparation involved in Husserlian description. Description is not the initial gesture in Husserl's phenomenological method. Even at the level of the individual it is preceded by two preparatory steps – intuiting and analyzing. Husserl states that "description refers back to intuition." (*PP*, Pg. 48) In Husserl the reader is invited to read every finding therein described as they read "a zoological or a botanical description, with reference to the object itself, and consequently as an expression of something seen which can only be understood by means of direct intuition."<sup>95</sup>

For Husserl intuition means directly or immediately experiencing the actual structures and forms he wants to describe. Intuitional experience has "the character of immediacy".<sup>96</sup> Hintinka puts it pithily that an "expression like "immediate intuitive truth" is for Husserl a pleonasm."<sup>97</sup> Certain types of experiences are naturally given with a high degree of what Husserl terms intuitive "fullness". "The work of intuition... contributes to the intended act, when authentically fulfilled, a genuinely novel element, to which the name 'fullness' may be given".<sup>98</sup> We can distinguish in any act involving intuition "degrees of extension, vividness and reality". These three axes serve to determine the intuitive fullness of a given object. The more characteristics or features of an object we are aware of, the more we are aware of the objects extension. The more sensate content the higher the reality. Lastly the extent to which our thinking of the object is analogous to the object itself then the more vivid our intuitions will be.<sup>99</sup> The greater the extent of fullness with which objects are initially given to intuition, then the richer our descriptions can be.

A prototypical type of intuitive act is acts of perception of sensate objects, "which is a privileged intuitive act – a primary intuition." This is because the characteristic property

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<sup>95</sup> Farber, M. (1943) *The Foundation of Phenomenology*. State University of New York Press: Albany. Pg. 210.

<sup>96</sup> Petutmengin-Peugot, C. (1999) The intuitive experience. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*. No. 2-3. Pg. 44.

<sup>97</sup> Hintinka quoted in MacDonald, P. (2000) *Descartes and Husserl, The Project of radical Beginnings*. State University of New York Press: Albany. Pg. 197.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, Pg. 200.

<sup>99</sup> Levinas, I. (1973) *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology*. Northwest university Press: Evanston. Pg. 70.

of perceptual acts is that it gives its object with a high degree of liveliness; in the “in flesh and bones” (*Leibhaftigegeben*).<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, the most intuitively full act is an act of reflection.

In reflection consciousness takes itself as its object. Reflection is characterised as an internal, immanent type of intuition and it is “privileged” even with respect to perception in that it achieves the highest level of fullness. For Husserl not only description but the entire phenomenological method moves almost exclusively among acts of reflection. The perception of consciousness, which Husserl calls reflection, “is a direct vision of something which is given... in perception as something absolute...”.<sup>101</sup> Unlike the perception of external things (which is always given in a series of adumbrations of profiles), immanent perception can in principle be given “adequately” (This thesis will discuss, in the final chapter, the notion of adequate evidence).

Husserl states that when reflective perception is directed towards consciousness “what is perceived is an absolute *self*, the existence of which cannot, in principle, be denied; that is, it is in principle impossible to suppose that it does not exist.” To say of a reflective perception “given in such a way that it does not exist would be nonsense.”<sup>102</sup> Thus, the intuitively full reflection on immanent consciousness, which forms the basis of Husserl’s method, brings with it a degree of apodicticity.

This essay has briefly outlined the analytic component inherent in Husserlian description earlier. What I want to draw out here is the relation between the three fundamental methodical components of intuition, analyzing and description. What I personally had often found most perplexing about the method is precisely *when* to move *from* intuitive experience *to* analysis and description. The problem is we can’t have the intuitive experience and analyse and describe it simultaneously. Our experiences are directed; we are engaged by them. Analysis implies some degree of reflection and reflection takes

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid. Pg.– 71.

<sup>101</sup> Husserl quoted in Ibid, Pg. 27.

<sup>102</sup> Husserl quoted in Ibid, Pg. 28.

time; involves a change in direction. We can't have an experience and analyse or describe it simultaneously because our experience changes fundamentally as we engage in analysis and description. It seems as "though the structure of the reflexive transformation most usually assumes the form of a constitutive recapitulation" which is non-contemporaneous with the experience itself.<sup>103</sup>

Regarding the relation between intuiting and describing in particular, as Petitmengin-Peugeot found when trying to train people in the method of phenomenological description, it is difficult, if not impossible, to live out an intuitive experience and simultaneously put it into words. Instead, we tend to vacillate between successions of periods of time in which the person silently relives an aspect of the experience, and of periods in which they describe the corresponding experience while they retain an "interior 'trace'."<sup>104</sup> My problem has always been that, if all of the above is true, then doesn't that mean that our analyses and description will always be of *memories* of experience? As soon as I stop having the experience and move into analysis or description the experience has stopped; it is now a memory and any analysis I carry out will be of this memory. What exactly is involved in the above mentioned "interior 'trace'"?

The solutions to this problem lies in two directions. The first is an understanding of the Husserlian framework on the consciousness of internal time and the pivotal phenomenological notion of retention – especially as opposed to the concept of memory. Memory is episodic and poses a duality with experience. In contrast retention "is the presence in the present, the "now", of the just – past."<sup>105</sup>

Retention is both a descriptive feature of consciousness and makes phenomenological description possible.<sup>106</sup> Retention forms a continuous unity between current temporal

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<sup>103</sup> Depraz, N. (1999) The phenomenological reduction as praxis. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*. No. 2 – 3. Pg. 100.

<sup>104</sup> Petitmengin-Peugeot, C. (1999) The intuitive experience. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*. No. 2-3. Pg. 46.

<sup>105</sup> Reeder, H. (1986) *The theory and Practice of Husserl's Phenomenology*. Zeta Books: Bucharest. Pg. 70.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

experience and past temporal experience. Phenomenology is not confined to the realm of memory; it has the entire sphere of experiences “held” in retention. This also illuminates why Husserlian description at the level of the individual often focuses on perception. Perceptual experience is continual as long as we are conscious and it thus presents itself closely constantly in retention, unlike other more fleeting conscious phenomenon like, say, anger. Anger, “reflected upon may dissipate, quickly modifying its content. It is not always available like perception”. (*Ideas 1*, Pg. 135).

As I have mentioned, fantasy is not as “lively” (or, intuitively full) as perception, although ideation in fantasy is (also as I have mentioned) based on prior individual examples which are given with a high degree of liveliness. Fantasy is also not given as continually as perception is, but still, particularly for the process of eidetic variation, it is continually available or accessible as a representative experiential mode. As a mode of thought it thus offers a strong retentional trace. This makes it invaluable for Husserl’s method.

Husserl coins a particular term for this “holding” or “grasping” of intuitional experience in retention for the purpose of analysis and description – *Nachgewahren*. Schmitz explains that what

“Husserl calls *Nachgewahren* is part and parcel of description, or rather of the descriptive phase which Spiegelberg aptly calls ‘analysis’. The term *Nachgewahren* refers to the grasping of a lived experience immediately after the experience itself, i.e., while the... episode is still given in retention. Phenomenologists need to habitualize their interest in their subject matters (types of objects and correlative experiences). During performing everyday tasks, skills, etc. in the natural attitude the latent interest awakes immediately after certain experiences, acts, etc. In this way experience or worldly comportment can

be analyzed without distortions, thereby avoiding the paradox of self-observation..."<sup>107</sup>

Correspondingly, at the level of the species and the universal, Husserl emphasises the intuition of essences which he refers to as the process of "*wesensschau*" – "essence viewing" or eidetic intuition. "Husserl claims that, besides seeing particular things and events in sensuous perception, we can *see* essences through a non-sensuous intuition that is founded on sensuous perception and is analogous with it."<sup>108</sup> The analogy between intuition of perceptual and abstract objects results because in both cases we do not speak or think about the object in an absent, empty way but the object is present and given to us, and plays a role in knowledge.<sup>109</sup>

Thus, to summarise this section, certain key details have emerged regarding Husserlian description. It is intimately tied with intuitive acts, of which perception is a key example. However, the most intuitive type of act is acts of immanent perception; reflective acts. Husserlian description requires the holding or grasping of experience in retention. Perception, because it is constant and therefore "highly" retentional, is an ideal candidate for description. At the eidetic level fantasy, because it is constantly accessible or available, also retains a strong retentional trace, which makes it invaluable for Husserlian description. The universal or essential level of description requires the non-thetic representations of objects in fantasy for eidetic variation and the grasping or seeing of essences in an act Husserl terms *wesensschau*. This is some of the "methodological hardtack" that comes with a proper characterisation of Husserlian phenomenological description.

The final part to this chapter will discuss the particularly distinctive language of Husserlian phenomenological description. Husserl uses a wide, specialized vocabulary.

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<sup>107</sup> Schmicking, D. (2010). A toolbox of phenomenological methods. *Handbook of Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*. Springer Publishers, Pg. 45.

<sup>108</sup> Cohen, J. D. & Moran, D. (2012) *The Husserl Dictionary*. Continuum Books: accessed from eblib.com.au. Pg. 90.

<sup>109</sup> Tieszen, R. (2005) Free variation and the intuition of geometric essences: some reflections on modern geometry. *Philosophy and Phenomenology Research*. Vol. 70, No 1.



Even in his descriptions of singulars given above, terms like intentionality, universal and essence, intuition, free variation, parts and wholes, etc. have specific meanings in Husserlian phenomenology, due often to Husserl's continual refinement and redefinition of terms commonly featured in the recent history of philosophy. This is a hurdle for researchers approaching his phenomenology. However, this hurdle hides one of the deeper interpretive problems for readers of Husserl's descriptive phenomenology, which I would term the *creative* nature of Husserlian description.

This creative nature springs, firstly, from the morphological nature of descriptive language and concepts. As Husserl states, there is a certain vagueness to the terminology a descriptive scientist (natural or phenomenological) must use. By vagueness Husserl means the terms are widely applicable and not domain specific. The descriptive practitioner develops morphological concepts which are expressed with terms like "notched, indented, lens-shaped, umbelliform, and the like— simple concepts which are essentially and not accidentally inexact". For Husserl morphological concepts "express the essential nature of things as drawn directly from simple intuition" (*Ideas 1*, Pg 142).

The vagueness of morphological descriptive concepts partly accounts for the creative nature of Husserlian phenomenological description. Husserl draws on considerable linguistic resources in his attempts to faithfully portray structural features of conscious experience – "the moment of the now, retention and protention" or "adumbration and profile", etc. are examples of phenomenological morphological descriptive terms and concepts which Husserl himself has had to coin and develop specifically for the practice of his phenomenological description. Also, due to its interminably vague nature, there is nothing that precludes continual further clarification and specification resulting in the continual construction and development of new morphological terms and concepts in the process of description. Morphological description is linguistically "generative".

Relatedly, the second contributing factor to the creativity of Husserlian description is its iterative or recursive nature. Husserl described his phenomenological enterprise as an endless process of corrections.

“The few works that he published in his lifetime look like “purely momentary states of rest, or ‘condensations’ of a thought movement that was constantly in flux” (Bernet, Kern & Marbach, p. 2)... Husserl’s thought on core phenomenological notions never stood still; he was, in his own memorable image, “an endless beginner”, and would be the first to open a new path when the woods became lost in the trees.”<sup>110</sup>

We see the recursive nature of Husserl’s method expressed in his descriptions in two ways. The first is the way Husserl returns again and again to identical themes – themes like the ego, intersubjectivity, phenomenological space and time – throughout the course of his lifetime. Each time Husserl reapproaches a theme he is searching for intrinsically earlier points in the order of reason. His terminology and position is subject to continual refinement in most areas of his phenomenological research. The iterative nature of Husserl’s work is because, as he explains, reflection has “very many levels and depth dimensions”; reflection, or, internal experience, is a “process of disclosure to be effected in ever new reflection” (*PP*, Pg. 21). Each new level or dimension of depth requires re-analysis and re-description. The “cross of corrections” which Husserl bears demands that a “conclusive, true actuality must come to light ever more purely, ever more completely.” (*PP*, Pg. 95)

Phenomenological description “grasps the continuous development” of phenomenological science. “Description is in fact the immediate experiencing of this development.” Ultimately, the *telos* of all scientific activity is the continual clarification and definition of

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<sup>110</sup> MacDonald, P. (2001) Husserl’s preemptive response to existentialist critiques. *The Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*. Vol. 1, Ed. 1. Pg. 2.

the respective objects of study.<sup>111</sup> For Husserl the iterative and endless nature of description results because of phenomenology's aim to realise the initial impetus that underlies all scientific activity.

Husserl's memoirs reveal that he spent a great deal of time in his daily meditations, interrupting them to write. "The process of daily meditation on a particular theme involved this resolute carrying forward of a train of thought, reaching an impasse, backing up, and then going forward again – a cycle of "endless corrections and revisions" repeated again and again..."<sup>112</sup> In this way a "thorough consciousness of one and the same world comes into being through revisions and corrections" (*ACPAS*, Pg. 143).

Thus, the practice of Husserlian description involves a lengthy, meditative, recursive process on a phenomenological theme. This process entails some of the methodical apparatus I have outlined. Husserl will not always "walk us through" this process; it is expressed, for example in the summarizing descriptions I have outlined above. As Reeder notes these sort of descriptions represent a sustained attempt to return to and describe a specific theme repetitively over time.<sup>113</sup> These reports are a distillation of several descriptions which have been gathered and compared, often internally by Husserl, over time.

However, the organisation of Husserl's "meditatively styled" works (such as *Thing and Space* and the *Cartesian Mediations*) gives the reader the impression that Husserl is walking or guiding us through this recursive process. Husserl characterised the recursive or "zig-zag" style of reasoning as the most secure (*LI*, Pg. 261). Recursive reasoning involves returning to that which is most obscure and wrestling with that until the

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<sup>111</sup> de Muralt, A. (1974) *The Idea of Phenomenology: Husserlian Exemplarism*. State University of New York Press: Evanston. Pp. 44 & 45.

<sup>112</sup> MacDonald, P. (2000) *Descartes and Husserl, The Project of Radical Beginnings*. State University of New York Press: Albany. Pg. 86.

<sup>113</sup> Reeder, H. (1986) *The Theory and Practice of Husserl's Phenomenology*. Zeta Books: Bucharest. Pp. 164 & 167.

problem has been clarified. "Digging in that which is most obscure and of uncovering problems which have not been seen or if seen have not been solved."<sup>114</sup>

In conclusion to this section, Husserlian description is in fact *creative* in nature, and this is partly accounted for by the morphological nature of phenomenological descriptive terms and concepts. Also, both the practical and linguistic aspects of the nature of Husserlian description entails a lengthy and potentially endless process of continual clarification and re-clarification of phenomenological themes. This also accounts for the creative nature of Husserlian description.

In conclusion, my characterisation of Husserlian description has had five major parts. In the first part I defined Husserlian description as a description of the structures of conscious experience. The second and third parts discussed that it ranges from the singular to the universal, and from the noetic to the noematic poles. In the fourth part I detailed some necessary methodological components which cannot be untied from description. Lastly, I have detailed that description is creative: the language of description is morphological and the process of description is recursive.

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<sup>114</sup> Dorion Carins quoted in MacDonald, P. (2000) *Descartes and Husserl, The Project of Radical Beginnings*. State University of New York Press: Albany. Pg. 86.

*Chapter 4.*

*Husserlian phenomenology and simulation: assessment of the phenomenology of simulation and future directions for phenomenological research in intersubjectivity.*

The final chapter of my thesis will discuss Husserlian description and the current debate between interaction theory and simulation theory over the question of the nature and extent of personal level processes in intersubjective experience. I will first outline that the existing accounts of simulation which resemble a phenomenological description are inadequate and that furthermore the one existing account of the phenomenology of mirror neurons, provided by Dieter Lohmar, already begins to raise questions for simulation theory

The second section of this chapter will address the claim that Husserlian phenomenology is not in a position to provide descriptions of intersubjectivity because of its inherently solipsistic nature. I will counter this claim by providing Husserl's mature position of monadological intersubjectivity. I will detail Husserl's notions of pairing and the resulting apperceptive transfer of sense and suggest advocates of simulation theory might do well to look into these analyses.

In the third section to this chapter I will assess the claim made by Gallagher that we find no phenomenological evidence for simulation theory. I will conclude this claim has been made pre-emptively. I will also suggest that, if simulation theory is to seriously engage with phenomenology and meet the ensuing challenges from other theories with phenomenological argument, it will need to reorientate itself methodically and contend with the concern of what counts as evidence in support of a theory. My central claim in this concluding chapter is that the debate between simulationists and interactionists needs to engage with Husserlian phenomenology if it is to proceed over the problem of the extent and nature of personal level processing. The final section to this chapter will summarise this argument.

As I mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis there is, in Goldman's historical introduction to simulation theory, the closest account thus far of a phenomenological description of simulation. However, this account is essentially only a collection of literary and philosophical examples of descriptions of various social phenomena which resemble simulation. The closest example in this collection to a phenomenological description of simulation is the description given by Nicholas Humphrey in *The Inner Eye*. The quote which Goldman provides reads: "we could ... imagine what it's like to be [others], because we know what it's like to be ourselves.... [I] make sense of [others'] behavior by projecting what I know about my mind into them."<sup>115</sup>

Goldman states this account is given in the first person. Despite its brevity, there is another reason why this account doesn't qualify as even the most cursory attempt to provide a phenomenological description of simulation which is evidenced in the full text from Humphrey:

"Here is an analogy. I live in a house on Chalcot Square. All round the square are other similar houses, into most of which I've never been. But I have no trouble in "reading" what happens in those other houses on the basis of what I already know about my own. When for example I see smoke coming from the chimney over there I make sense of it terms of what I know of the fire in my own hearth; when I see a light go on in that window, I make sense of it in terms of what I know of the effect of flicking a light switch in my own room... Then why not the same with other people, whose minds I have never been inside? Why should I not make sense of their behaviour by projecting what I know about my mind into them."<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Goldman, A. (2006) *Simulating Minds: The Philosophy, Psychology and neuroscience of Mindreading*. Oxford University press: Kindle Edition. Pg. 19.

<sup>116</sup> Humphrey, N. (1986) *The Inner Eye*. Faber & Faber: Kindle edition. Chapter 4. Kindle location 777.

As Sokolowski notes, good description might often use analogy.<sup>117</sup> There is provisionally no such reason why phenomenological description can't do so but by itself an analogy, followed by a rhetorical question and statement, is neither necessary nor sufficient for phenomenological description. Of course, neither Goldman nor Humphreys are attempting to provide a phenomenological description of simulation, these accounts are only the closest I've been able to find in the simulation literature.

There is, rather remarkably, a description of the phenomenological experiences correlated with mirror neuron activity. This account, provided by Dieter Lohmar, represents one of the few attempts to describe concrete lived intersubjective experience in the contemporary literature. Lohmar's work is an attempt to describe the phenomenological experiences which are speculatively associated with mirror neuron activity.<sup>118</sup> Lohmar states that "the fundamental conviction behind my analysis is that the performances of mirror neurons have an "internal view", i.e. they can be experienced by me and those experiences are accessible to phenomenological description."<sup>119</sup>

Lohmar states that mirror neuron activity may be correlated with the intersubjective phenomena he terms co-experiencing. Lohmar describes, in true phenomenological fashion, this co-experience by way of a specific and concrete example:

"if you see someone biting into a lemon, your own taste field becomes affected, you feel as if there was something sour in your mouth and react accordingly. We are co-experiencing a specific sour taste which is localized precisely in our mouth. The experience is confined to the sense-field of taste and it is simultaneous and coordinated with the other persons biting into the lemon."<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Sokolowski, R. (1985) The theory of phenomenological description. In D. Ihde & H. J. Silverman (Eds.) *Descriptions*. University of New York Press: Albany.

<sup>118</sup> At the present moment, because of the inability to accurately record single cell neuron activity in humans, all "neuro-phenomenology" of mirror neurons is currently speculative.

<sup>119</sup> Lohmar, D. (2006). Mirror neurons and the phenomenology of intersubjectivity. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* Vol. 5 – 6. Pg. 6

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, Pg. 7.

Lohmar describes some of the features of the phenomena of co-experience, i.e. that co-experiencing refers back to the ego and is not randomly directed. He states that when we are watching a film and the "bad guy" is beaten up by the "good guy" at the end, "then I do not feel with the bad guy. On the contrary, I like the fact that he is suffering". This description demonstrates that a feature of co-experiencing is that it remains "under the reign" of the ego."<sup>121</sup>

Lohmar also describes that sometimes co-experiencing comes attendant with co-acting. Lohmar describes how, when we are watching a movie which features a "cliffhanger" (where someone is dangling from a precipice of some sort), "there is a strong felt tendency to grasp something with our own hands. Sometimes our hands may unwillingly jerk, as if they were going to grasp and take hold." Similarly, during the scene in *Jurassic Park* where a dinosaur snaps at the legs of an actor, the audience reacts by drawing back their own legs.<sup>122</sup>

This preliminary phenomenological description already begins to raise questions for the phenomenology of simulation. Simulation is strictly defined as a co-experience in "offline" mode – that is, the actions of the other are experienced but not carried through or acted out on. That is, simulation is, by its own theoretical definition, never attendant with co-acting. However, Lohmar's account of co-experiencing suggests an attendant phenomenological continuum which ranges between the strict "offline" or non-action mode to online mode where we partially mimic the perceived action. As a cinematic example of co-acting with co-experiencing we might recall a performance by Clint Eastwood in *Million Dollar Baby*. As Clint watches a boxer on television, he shifts his feet and weight striking with the boxer on the TV, writhing and wriggling with the boxer, moving with the blows, looking for leverage and angle in a similar fashion. Of course, even this end of the co-acting continuum in co-experiencing is not full blown mimicry

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, Pg. 14.



(Clint does not move and swing identically to the boxer on television) but a “shadow” or, as Lohmar terms it, a “weak” mode of co-acting.

Given that Gallese’s theory of simulation depends on mirror neuron activity as its physiological substrate, if the phenomenological account provided by Lohmar truly is correlated with mirror neuron activity, then this phenomenological account suggests simulation theory will need to detail where it sits with regard to co-acting and probably even begin to incorporate cases of co-acting into its theory. Lohmar’s concluding remarks claim that “decisive progress” could be made through the continuing phenomenological description and analysis of phenomena associated with co-experiencing, co-acting, co-willing, etc.<sup>123</sup>

My thesis has focused on detailing what would be involved in using Husserlian description to settle some points of contention in the contemporary debate between simulationists and interactionists in the area of intersubjectivity. An objection might be put that phenomenology, especially as it was conceived by Husserl, is not in a position to provide descriptions of intersubjective lived experience. As recently as 1987 Dennett suggested that “traditional phenomenology is committed to a form of methodological solipsism; rather than investigating the mental life of others, the classical phenomenologist is concerned only with his or her own mental life...”<sup>124</sup> Of course, Dennett doesn’t know what he’s talking about when he refers to what phenomenologists talk about.

Dennett’s comment does reveal a complication for the practice of phenomenology regarding the description of intersubjective experience. Husserl himself was presciently aware of this problem, which he phrases, in the fifth *Cartesian Meditation*, as: “when I... reduce myself to my absolute transcendental ego by phenomenological epoché do I not become *solus ipse*; and do I not remain that, as long as I carry on a consistent self-explication under the name phenomenology?” (*CM*, Pg. 89). Husserl’s initial response in

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid, Pg. 15.

<sup>124</sup> Gallagher, S & Zahavi, D. (2013) *The Phenomenological Mind*. Routledge: Kindle Edition. Kindle location 5088. Introduction to Chapter 9.

the fifth *Cartesian Meditation* is to withhold judgement on the question of the possibility of the phenomenological study of intersubjectivity. Instead he proposes to “undertake the *task of phenomenological explications...* and carry it through in concrete work” (*CM*, Pg. 90) in the intersubjective sphere before coming to any conclusions.

Husserl’s account of intersubjectivity begins with an account of the transcendental ego structures. However, ultimately, his goal is a description of the constitution of intersubjectivity for transcendently reduced subjectivity and, founded on this, an investigation into the origins of intersubjectivity.<sup>125</sup> Husserl argues that an encounter with the other and our ability to interact with and recognise another embodied subject as a foreign subjectivity, is pre-empted and made possible through the very structure of our own subjectivity. This structure is revealed with clarity through the reduction to and description of the “sphere of ownness” or the “primordial sphere”.<sup>126</sup>

Husserl’s approach to the problem of intersubjectivity involves the prior stage of first providing “a definition and articulation of the primordial sphere” (*CM*, Pg. 108). Husserl’s methodologically “radical” approach to the phenomenological study of intersubjectivity provides the imperative to firstly “eliminate”, abstract or bracket consideration of the other in order to narrow the “phenomenological residuum” and examine the ego alone, in its “sphere of own-ness”. “We exclude from the thematic field everything now in question: we disregard all constitutional effects of intentionality relating immediately or mediately to other subjectivity and delimit first of all the total nexus of that actual and potential intentionality in which the ego constitutes within himself a peculiar ownness” (*CM*, Pg. 93).

The purpose of this stage of reduction is to loosen or slacken the intentional ties that ground intersubjective experience in order to see them clearly. However, this is not equivalent to reducing the ego to a permanent state of *solus ipse*. The very nature of

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<sup>125</sup> Russell, M. (2006) *Husserl, A Guide For the Perplexed*. Continuum: Hampshire. Pg. 171.

<sup>126</sup> Zahavi, D. (2001). Beyond empathy: phenomenological approaches to intersubjectivity. In E. Thompson (Ed.) *Between Ourselves: Second Person Issues in the Study of Consciousness*. Imprint Academic: Exeter. Pg. 160.

meaningful experience presupposes intersubjectivity, "which can as a matter of fact never be suspended; that fact is genetically and causally prior to the level of the phenomenological method, and it is not altered by the adoption of that method."<sup>127</sup>

What is revealed or remains after this particular type of reduction is that which is peculiar to the ego in its concrete being. "That which is peculiar to my concrete being is my being as a "monad.""<sup>128</sup> Husserl's account of intersubjectivity is founded upon his account of the monadological structure of the reduced transcendental ego. Husserl's account of the ego as monad represents his mature position on the ultimate stratum of the ego and forms an integral part of his phenomenological account of intersubjectivity. It also is an account which has been drastically undervalued in contemporary discussions of intersubjectivity and phenomenology within the debate I have been discussing.

The notion that the transcendentially reduced ego in its sphere of ownness can be conceived of in terms of a monad refers, in short, "to the idea that the ego is a self-contained complex of being, that it has "no windows", that it is an absolute self-founding origin."<sup>129</sup> Husserl's monad is "the ego in its full concretion, i.e. the ego in the streaming multifariousness of its intentional life along with the objects meant in this life and constituted for this ego"";<sup>130</sup> "the identical Ego-pole of my manifold "pure" subjective processes" (*CM*, Pg. 98).

"Taken in its concretely complete nexus... subjectivity comprises what we call the concrete pure subjectivity or the monad; thus in this context, "monad" is not a metaphysical concept but the unity of the subjective within the phenomenological reduction, to be explored in direct intuition by painstaking analysis" (*PP*, Pg. 165). Conscious experience, conceived of as a monad, is the real nexus of phenomenological experience, which has no real parts or causal relations; but it does have an internal

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<sup>127</sup> Farber, M. (1943) *The Foundation of Phenomenology*. State University of New York Press: Albany. Pg. 531.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, Pg. 530.

<sup>129</sup> MacDonald, P. (2007) Husserl, the monad and immortality. *The Indo Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*. Vol. 7, Ed. 2. Pg. 2.

<sup>130</sup> Zahavi, D. in Ibid, Pg. 3.

makeup which requires complex description – *though not a phenomenological description.*

After the sense of the primordial sphere as monad has been determined Husserl's account of intersubjectivity can begin. The monad is the centre of intersubjective interaction and processes. As Leibniz argued before Husserl, – “every monad is a mirror of the universe; in other words, it contains within its nature a *representation of the determinate relations that it has with other monads* in its proximate environs.”<sup>131</sup> For Husserl “the only conceivable manner in which others can have for me the sense or status as existent others... consists in their being constituted *in me* as others.”<sup>132</sup> Husserl writes that “I have found that the reduction can be extended... into the other subjects appearing in external experience to me, the exploring I” (*PP*, Pg. 165). In this way Husserl thought his phenomenology capable of escaping the methodological solipsism he was aware it might be charged with and providing phenomenological description and analyses of the intersubjective sphere.

However, this account of intersubjectivity is inextricably tied to Husserl's conception of the ego as monad. Although the monad has “no windows” (that is, no real causal relations with objects in the world) it “mirrors” the world; in intersubjective situations the other is given to me as a *mirror* of my own embodied self; the other and I thus have a shared “sense”. There becomes constituted an ego, *mirrored* in my own ego, in my monad - an alter-ego. “The other ... points to me myself; the other is a ‘*mirroring*’ of my own self and yet not a mirroring proper...”, for it is not exactly the same, not given in the same way (*CM*, p. 94). Husserl's account of monadological intersubjectivity implies that intersubjective processes involve a mirroring of each monad in the other.

Husserl asserts that this mirroring of the other involves a “pairing association” and a sharing or transfer of sense. Pairing is a “self-generating” process; a process of “passive synthesis”. Husserl argues that pairing occurs whenever two data are given intuitively

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<sup>131</sup> MacDonald, P. (2007) Husserl, the monad and immortality. *The Indo Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*. Vol. 7, Ed. 2. Pg. 4.

<sup>132</sup> Russell, M. (2006) *Husserl, A Guide For the Perplexed*. Continuum: Hampshire. Pg. 172.

and, although each datum is distinct, phenomenological similarity unites them. Pairing is consciousness of a likeness of two things: that they are the same kind. It is awareness of "likeness between one object and another co-intended object which nevertheless does not go so far as to identify them."<sup>133</sup>

"This 'pairing association' forms the basis for a quite natural transfer of sense, according to which the one is bestowed with the sense of other. Thereby a body which is similar to my own is 'paired', and the sense of being an 'animate organism' is transferred. This apperceptive transfer of sense give me reason to expect that the patterns of behaviour of the other to follow a discernable 'law of motivation', even if they are not entirely predictable."<sup>134</sup>

Thus, much like subpersonal simulation routines, the passive synthesis of monadological mirroring and the resulting apperceptive transfer of sense partly allow us to predict the patterns of behaviour of others.

In conclusion, Husserl was aware that his methodical approach might become charged with solipsism. However, in response he provides his account of monadological intersubjectivity, and the closer analysis involving mirroring and the apperceptive transfer of sense. I think Husserl's analysis opens up a rich field for simulationists to engage with. Many of the processes which Husserl outlines in his account of intersubjectivity could either be part of or replace parts of the simulation theory. Furthermore, Husserl's account is soundly grounded in his method. To summarise the first half of this chapter, simulationists have not yet begun to describe simulation, nor have they engaged with Husserl's mature analysis of intersubjectivity.

The next section of this chapter will assess Gallagher's claim that we find no phenomenological evidence for simulation. I will argue that this claim has been made pre-emptively. Something that has become clear through my discussion of Husserlian method is that, in describing even the basic level of an individual example of lived

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid, Pg. 175.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

experience, we can't simply expect to turn to the experience in question and quickly gain a good description of it in a short length of time. Instead, phenomenology requires a sustained turning of direction and deepening of levels of reflection. The only way to begin to determine the phenomenology of intersubjectivity will be to repetitively or "recursively" return to attempting to provide descriptions of concrete intersubjective experience over a lengthy period of time. As yet, no such sustained attempt to phenomenologically describe simulation is evidenced in the literature.

Gallagher goes as far as to term his argument against personal level simulation the "simple" phenomenological argument. He states that "when we reflect on our conscious experience when we encounter others"<sup>135</sup> we do not find simulatory processes at work. However, something I have emphasised is the technical difficulties of Husserl's reflective, descriptive method and the fact that the extent of levels of "depth" or dimensions of phenomenological description is practically an unanswered question. What "we" (that is, most of us) grasp in reflection is fairly shallow; not all reflection on experience is automatically phenomenological analysis.

A technical reason for this is the difficulty involved in "grasping" experience in retention for the purpose of analysis and description. Unlike, say, perception, intersubjective experience is not continual whilst we are conscious of it unfolding. For this reason, perhaps, descriptions of intersubjectivity would be well fitted to representations in "fantasy" (for example, Lohmar's filmic examples are a type of imaginative variation). Intersubjective modes of consciousness are more difficult to get a grasp on; it is considerably difficult to be in an intersubjective situation and to awaken the latent phenomenological interest or make the "switch" or change of direction which phenomenological reflection, description and analyses entails. Regardless of this difficulty, phenomenological investigations into the experiential aspect of intersubjective processes will need to begin here. Assessing Gallagher's claim that we find no

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<sup>135</sup> Gallagher, S. (2012) Cognitive Science. *The Routledge Companion to Phenomenology*. Routledge: Oxon. Pg. 582.

experiential evidence for simulation would need to be based on a phenomenological investigation of the type I have outlined in this thesis, at the least in its broad outline. As no such investigation has occurred, Gallagher's claim has been made pre-emptively.

Gallagher states, as part of the simple phenomenological argument, that, on the phenomenological level, we are typically involved with interacting with others, and not attempting to predict their behaviour as simulation theorists would have it.<sup>136</sup> However, this description is at a fairly shallow level. At this level there seems no reason why we can't suggest we both interact with others and simultaneously run simulatory routines which help us "mind-read" and predict others behaviour. For example, whilst in conversation with others I try to predict what they are thinking about what I am saying, perhaps by very fast, indistinct and partial (but nonetheless personal level) analogical routines. At the shallow level of analysis this proposition seems just as tenable as Gallagher's to me.

As Herschback notes, a reason the debate between theory-theory and simulation theory stalled was over the extent of personal level processing and the personal/ subpersonal divide.<sup>137</sup> What is essential to the current debate is that the phenomenology needs to move from this simple or shallow level of description and engage with the technicalities of the method of Husserlian description. Or else, it may stall on the question of the extent and nature of personal level intersubjective phenomena, like other intersubjectivity debates before have done on this point.

Lastly, something that has also become clear is that Husserlian phenomenology begins with the description of individual examples of actual lived experience. Thus, regarding simulation, phenomenological description of simulation needs to begin with descriptions of intersubjective situations that we have actually experienced. There is surprisingly little

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Herschback, M. (2008). Folk psychological and phenomenological accounts of social perception. *Philosophical exploration: An International Journal for the Philosophy of Mind and Action*. Vol. 11, No. 3.

attempt to describe lived experience going on in any discussion of intersubjectivity within the cognitive sciences, despite the resurgence of interest in phenomenology.<sup>138</sup>

I think, from a phenomenological perspective, Gallese's methodical approach to simulation is problematic. Gallese is, first and foremost, a neuroscientist. Although Gallese is primarily interested in the physical processes of the brain, he interprets or examines his empirical findings in the light of simulation theory. It is the engagement between empirical science and simulation theory which leads Gallese to appropriation or employment of phenomenological authors like Merleau-Ponty.

The evidence which supports simulation theory is primarily and almost exclusively experimental evidence and neurological evidence – particularly research into the mirror neuron system. The notion of needing or providing phenomenological description of simulation has occurred only as an afterthought; the question of phenomenological evidence has been raised only because the distinction between personal and subpersonal processing, and the extent and relevance of personal level simulation, has become critical to the debate between simulation theory and interaction theory. It is at this point the debate turns to "The Phenomenology" for answers; it is only at this point that concrete description becomes called for.

For Husserl what qualifies as evidence, and the process of developing a theory from that evidence, is not the same as Gallese's. Husserl refers to inner evidence or self-evidence. Husserl states that we find self-evidence (*Evidenz*) wherever an intentional ray finds verification in a corresponding, fully accommodated intuitional percept (*LI*, Pg. 331). "For Husserl, evidence is the pre-eminent mode of intentionality in which the object we are conscious of is experienced as being itself there."<sup>139</sup> An account of Husserlian evidence would closely follow my discussion of intuition provided in the last chapter of this thesis (in Husserlian commentary the two themes are often discussed together).

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<sup>138</sup> The rare exceptions I have found are the article by Lohmar already discussed and Depraz, N. (2102). Empathy and second person methodology. *Continental Philosophy Review*. Vol. 45. Pp. 447-459.

<sup>139</sup> Walton, R Evidence. *The Routledge Companion to Phenomenology*. Routledge: Oxon. Pg. 136.



Evidential acts are understood by Husserl to be acts in which the object in question is given with intuitive fullness. Husserl distinguishes between evidence, as objective confirmation of an epistemic claim, and *evidenz* as fulfilment of co-presented intention. *Evidenz* is provided by the fulfilling intuition of a positing intention. Furthermore, when the fulfilling intuition perfectly or completely fulfils its intention it is said to offer “adequate” evidence. Acts of reflection on conscious experience, because they are given immediately and not in ‘profiles’, can in principle be given adequately.<sup>140</sup>

“But, the main point here is that each kind of evidence is... an immediate apprehension of the things themselves.”<sup>141</sup> Husserl’s primary methodological directive, or his “principle of all principles”, is to never accept as true anything that is not derived from evidence as he characterises it.

I claim that, if simulation theorists like Gallese are going to seriously engage with phenomenology, then a reclassification of exactly what sort of evidence supports simulation theory is necessary, one that orientates itself towards a phenomenological conception of evidence. This reorientation would have serious consequences for the conception of method, and ergo for the development of theory, for simulationists. The Husserlian method of description aims at indirect representation via linguistic communication of more or less adequate evidence. If we “find” phenomenological evidence, then an experienced phenomenological practitioner should be able to reproduce a rich, faithful description of the experience. Given the broadly phenomenological context of the debate between interaction theory and simulation theory, some more descriptions of actual lived intersubjective experiences would be the best place to begin the “meticulous philosophical work” that Gallese foreshadows. This provides a direction for future phenomenologically based research into simulation.

Husserl’s phenomenology is, at least in its initial and descriptive phases, opposed to theorizing. Theoretical presuppositions are excluded from phenomenological description.

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<sup>140</sup> Russell, M. (2006) *Husserl, A Guide For the Perplexed*. Continuum: Hampshire. Pg. 103.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

However, phenomenology is by no means theory neutral. An aim of Husserl's description and analyses is to discover the universal *laws* which govern conscious experience. But the point is precisely this: that the description and analysis precedes and leads to the construction of theory. Husserlian theory is grounded in or founded upon description and analyses, beginning with the description of concrete, actual lived experience, and the intuitional evidence provided therein.

As many contemporary theorists point out, phenomenology cannot tell us anything about the subpersonal domain. However, this divide is conceived of in very different terms in Husserlian phenomenology. The personal domain is effectively the phenomenological domain – the entire domain of conscious experience which is to be intuited, analysed and described in ever increasing levels of detail and complexity.

For Husserl what is typically subpersonal is constituted by the various processes of passive synthesis. The processes of passive synthesis are, however, available to phenomenological reflection and description. For modern cognitive science, as the quote from Dennett in the introductory essay to this thesis shows, subpersonal processes have been considered by some, very recently in the history of consciousness studies, the only processes which could constitute a psychological theory. Furthermore, they are defined as being completely directly inaccessible to conscious experience and analysis.

Even the recent phenomenologically orientated authors like Gallese and Gallagher label many of the processes which comprise their theory "subpersonal" in this directly inaccessible sense. However, a phenomenological description "unfolds" or unpacks its object. It discloses and makes explicit the structures or

"components, constituents, moments or whatever denotations one might prefer, which are involved in... conscious activity..., but which, prior to their being disengaged and disclosed, are effective only in an implicit fashion, silently, to

... speak with Merleau-Ponty, or in an anonymous way, to use a Husserlian expression."<sup>142</sup>

Prior to the intuiting, analysing and description of conscious experience we are more or less in a state of unawareness regarding the constituents, depths and extent of the personal, phenomenological domain. The entire purpose of Husserl's method is to reveal the personal domain in ever new levels of clarity through reflection. Also, it seems to me like this prior state of unawareness is the one that the debate between simulation theory/interaction theory is stalled in. Unless either side spends more time working towards producing concrete phenomenological descriptions of our conscious experience of intersubjective phenomena, the very nature and extent of personal intersubjective phenomena, and the provision of phenomenological evidence for a theory of intersubjectivity, will remain forever illusive within this literature.

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<sup>142</sup> Gurwitsch, A. (1974). On Thematization. *Research in Phenomenology*. Vol. 4. Pg. 3.

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