

The Dreyfus-McDowell Debate and the Limits of Reason

Those who want to find a home, a native soil, safety, must make the sacrifice of belief. Those who stick to the mind, do not return.

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Caspar David Friedrich (1819)

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Abstract

In the Dreyfus-McDowell debate, John McDowell makes the claim that what makes us distinctively human is our all-pervasive conceptual rationality. Hubert Dreyfus, on the other hand, argues that we are, at our best, absorbed in the world and only 'part time' rational animals. Who is right? I appraise the debate, and proceed to then focus my analysis on two core issues: the Linguistic Community of McDowell, and the non-qualitative phenomenology of Dreyfus. I conclude that Dreyfus and McDowell cannot explain how we 'step back from' and 'step in to' the world, respectively. I propose a mediatory account between Dreyfus and McDowell's claim through Helmuth Plessner's concept of 'eccentric positionality'. In employing psychopathological research, providing Plessner's eccentric positionality as an instructive model, I suggest that we can see the disruption of eccentricity as a cornerstone of the 'ontological confusion' of personhood found in people with schizophrenia. Furthermore, I will propose that in this disruption of eccentricity, we are led to similar issues found in Dreyfus' non-qualitative phenomenology, and the issues faced with McDowell's linguistic community. This suggests a need for a reconciliation of both of their claims, which can be made through Plessner's eccentric positionality. Therefore, I will suggest that both Dreyfus and McDowell are describing reciprocal aspects of the nature of the human being, which are in fact complementary and necessary to one another. However, these two positions need to be consolidated through Plessner's eccentric positionality to account for the human being, for, to be the human, is to be eccentric.

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Chapter One. The Dreyfus-McDowell Debate.	7
1.1 Mind and World	8
1.2 A World Embraceable in Thought	12
1.3 The Myth of the Mental	14
1.4 Rule Following and the Expert	18
1.5 The Absorbed Coper	21
1.6 Attention and Perception	24
Conclusion	30
Chapter Two. The Linguistic Community and the Absent Ego.	32
2.1 McDowell's Initiation	34
2.2 The Pre-Linguistic Community	38
2.3 Dreyfus' Absent Ego	43
Conclusion	50
Chapter Three. Dreyfus-McDowell and Human Eccentricity.	52
3.1 Helmuth Plessner's Eccentric Positionality	53
3.2 Laughing, Crying and Language	55
3.3 Disrupting Dreyfus' Flow	58
3.4 The Disruption of Dreyfus-McDowell	60
3.5 Dreyfus, Disrupted	63
3.6 McDowell's Disrupted 'We'	65
Conclusion	68
Conclusion. The Eccentric Person.	70
Works Cited.	74
Acknowledgments.	87

The Dreyfus-McDowell Debate and the Limits of Reason

What could be more natural than to hold that the capacities that belong to what differentiates human beings from other animals, their rationality, are operative in activity that is essentially human?

- John McDowell

Rather than take for granted that critical rationality is the defining feature of human beings we should ask: What is rationality? Is it required? Should it be?

- Hubert Dreyfus

What are the limits of reason? John McDowell claims that what makes us distinctively human is our all-pervasive conceptual rationality. Hubert Dreyfus, on the other hand, argues that we are only part time rational animals. These two claims have provoked the Dreyfus-McDowell Debate, which is, as Joseph Schear notes, “the extent to which conceptual rationality is involved in our skilful embodied rapport with the world” (Schear 2013, 2). My intention for this paper is to present, critique and then to mediate, between the two philosopher’s claims. Both have compelling points. However, I argue that Dreyfus cannot explain how we ‘step back’ into reflection. I further argue that McDowell does not address the distinctively human pre-requisites for rationality enabling us to ‘step in’ to the world. I propose that we can bridge this gulf with Helmuth Plessner’s concept of ‘eccentric positionality’, in which we modulate between being the lived body and the body-as-object. In an analysis of schizophrenia research and in light of its disturbance of eccentric positionality, I reflect the sort of symptoms and behaviours that highlight Dreyfus-McDowell’s weaknesses in their claims. In analysing eccentricity’s disruption in people with schizophrenia, I propose that we see a split into either Dreyfus or McDowell’s claims. From this, I conclude that both Dreyfus and McDowell are explaining aspects of the human being that can, in fact, complement one another when reconciled together under Plessner’s concept of human eccentricity.

Chapter One will introduce and review the Dreyfus-McDowell debate. McDowell claims that we are essentially rational animals, for “what could be more natural than to hold that the capacities that belong to what differentiates human

beings from other animals, their rationality, are operative in activity that is essentially human, including activity at the ground-floor level?" (McDowell 2013a, 54). Hence, McDowell's argument is that our experiences as human beings are essentially saturated with conceptual rationality. It is only through an initiation into a linguistic community that we become 'minded', which allows us to "enjoy the full normativity which for McDowell is the essence of mentality" (Thomas 1997, 88 quoted in Zahavi 2013, 324). For McDowell, this "constitutes a background without which the special way in which experience takes hold of the world would not be intelligible" (McDowell 1996, 33). On the other hand, in his 2005 *American Philosophical Association Presidential* address, Hubert Dreyfus contests McDowell's claim. Dreyfus proposes that "rather than take for granted that critical rationality is the defining feature of human beings we should ask: What is rationality? Is it required? Should it be?" (Dreyfus 2013, 26). For Dreyfus, we are pre-conceptually and pre-linguistically absorbed into the world. These, to quote Dreyfus, "embodied skills, when we are fully absorbed in enacting them, have a kind of non-mental content that is non-conceptual, non-propositional, non-rational [...] and non-linguistic." (Dreyfus 2007b, 360). In this chapter, I will take particular consideration of the levy of detached rule-following that Dreyfus charges against McDowell, and the concessions that are made by Dreyfus subsequently after. Subsequently, I address, both for Dreyfus and McDowell, their arguments for the link between unreflective and reflective action. I raise issues regarding McDowell's proposal of sharing a 'conceptual form' to link unreflective action and reflection. I also address McDowell through considering arguments, such as those of Gareth Evans, against a conceptualist analysis of colour perception; rather, non-conceptualists argue that there fine-grainedness of non-conceptual content that eludes conceptualism.

Chapter Two will take focus on Dreyfus' absence of an ego in absorption and McDowell's linguistic community. First, I will address McDowell's transition from the 'proto-subjectivity' of pre-rational infants, to their transition into the 'fully fledged subjectivity' of mature, rational human beings, who are 'truly minded'. In employing the works on Michael Tomasello's 'we intentionality' of infants, as well as Merlin Donald's notion of 'mimesis', there appears to be a pre-linguistic strata of experience that suggests a form of collective or 'we' mindedness that eludes and precedes McDowell's conceptual rationality. Second, in an analysis of Dreyfus, I will address his absorbed coping claim. I argue that, given absorption at its best requires zero

self-monitoring, it seems difficult to ascertain how the ego comes back into play, or why it is necessary at all if we perform at our best in this absorption. Furthermore, Dreyfus proposes that humans have a 'mineness', which does not rely on experience, but rather the context of one's solicitations. However, I suggest that it appears to be questionable how we can speak of a non-qualitative phenomenology, or if we can even attribute a phenomenology to these concepts of absorption and mineness. Given the issue of Dreyfus' inability to explain how one steps out of the world into reflection; and, given the issue of McDowell's conceptual rationality not being exhaustive of human experience, I argue that we require a mediation between the two philosopher's claims.

In Chapter Three, I seek to reconcile Dreyfus and McDowell's claims through Helmuth Plessner's conception of 'eccentric positionality'. For Plessner, the human is a psychophysical unity. The human, as an eccentric being, is both a lived body (body as immediately experienced) and she is also the body-as-object (the body that can be objectified), and, thirdly, she has an eccentricity ('eccentric positionality') through which she is both. Helmuth Plessner, as the *Plessner Society* notes, formulated a concept of philosophy "according to which the ground of philosophical reassurance lies not in knowledge guaranteed by pure reason, nor in the primacy of action" (Plessner Society). For Plessner, rather than turning exclusively to rationality or a non-qualitative absorption, he sought for an empirically and phenomenologically viable solution that situates human beings in the world, whilst also acknowledging their differentiation from other beings. Whilst taking language and rationality as of importance, Plessner saw the wider span of life and expressiveness of life as of equal importance, a recognition of the human being's distinctive 'in-betweenness'¹. In the final part of Chapter Three, I will provide empirical evidence of clinical studies into the psychopathology of schizophrenia in relation to Plessner's claim. This, I believe, can shed further on light on the troublesome aspects of Dreyfus and McDowell's claims, and, ultimately, displays how the two claims can be reconciled,

¹ The term 'in-betweenness', which I have employed as another term to explain Plessner's 'eccentricity' or 'modulation', is with reference to Joel Krueger's (2018) analysis of twentieth century Japanese philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō, and his notion of '*aidagra*', whose concepts bear a great resemblance, particularly with the *leib/körper* modulation, to Plessner's own works.

when it is acknowledged they are in fact necessary for one another, via Plessner's eccentric human.

Chapter One The Dreyfus-McDowell Debate

It still remains a scandal to philosophy and to human reason in general that the existence of things outside us [...] must be accepted merely on faith, and that if anyone thinks good to doubt their existence, we are unable to counter his doubts by any satisfactory proof

- Immanuel Kant

A centipede was happy – quite!
Until a toad in fun
Said, "Pray, which leg moves after which?"
This raised her doubts to such a pitch,
She fell exhausted in the ditch
Not knowing how to run.

- Katherine Craster

In this first chapter, I introduce the debate between Hubert Dreyfus and John McDowell, addressing some of the key issues concerning their claims. First, I will, situate John McDowell's claim for conceptual rationality, which will be situated on the background of his critiques of foundationalism and his addressment of Wilfrid Sellars' Myth of the Given and Immanuel Kant's *Critique*. McDowell attempts to provide a remedy to resolve the 'anxieties' that reside in Western philosophy, the link between mind and world, in his aptly named book *Mind and World*. McDowell makes the claim for the 'all pervasiveness' of conceptual rationality in human lives insofar as our lives are distinctively human to help bridge this anxiety. In contrast, in his 2005 American Philosophical Association Presidential Address, "Overcoming the Myth of the Mental: How Philosophers Can Profit from the Phenomenology of Everyday Expertise" Hubert Dreyfus (2005) attacks McDowell's conceptual rationality claim. Dreyfus proposes that McDowell overreaches in his claim for the pervasiveness of conceptual rationality in human beings to account for our richly normatively structured world. He suggests, and queries, that "rather than take for granted that critical rationality is the defining feature of human beings we should ask: What is

rationality? Is it required? Should it be?" (Dreyfus 2013, 26). For Dreyfus, rather than humans being pervasively conceptually rational, they also have a pre-conceptual, pre-rational non-self-monitoring absorption in the world, which we share with infants and non-human animals alike. As Dreyfus writes, our "embodied skills, when we are fully absorbed in enacting them, have a kind of non-mental content that is non-conceptual, non-propositional, non-rational [...] and non-linguistic" (Dreyfus 2007b, 360). In summary, Dreyfus argued that McDowell overreaches in his ability to bridge the gap between mind and world, by placing a normatively structured world solely in the realm of the mental. The clash of two philosophical titans thus began.

This chapter will proceed to address some key issues on both sides of the debate. I will address Dreyfus' 'skilful coping', his phenomenology of skill acquisition and 'average everyday' coping in the world, where Dreyfus posits a transition from the beginner copier to the expert copier (think of someone riding a bike and becoming more proficient, until one 'just does it' without thinking, for example). This, he argues, runs contrary to McDowell's 'rule following' beginner, the kind of propositional and conceptual ideas that revolve around McDowell's conceptual rationality. Yet, is it really the case that when we are within the realm of our peak performances that we do not have any recourse to some form performance-enhancing reflection? I will then proceed to address Dreyfus and McDowell's discussion of unreflective action and reflection. Dreyfus posits that unreflective action, the sort of absorbed coping that he claims for, eludes McDowell's conceptualism. McDowell, however, argues that there is a shared conceptual form between unreflective and reflective action. I will appraise this discussion, additionally considering particular non-conceptualist accounts of perception, such as that of Gareth Evans' colour perception argument.

1.1 Mind and World

How do we situate the mind in the world and our capacities for rationality and reason? That which we can refer to as 'mind' is what Sellars (1997) terms as belonging to the normatively structured 'logical space of reasons'. This is, as McDowell wrote, "[a] normative context [that] is necessary for the idea of being in touch with the world at all, whether knowledgeable or not" (McDowell 1996, xiv). The normative significance of the space of reasons is distinct from the 'logical space of nature'. This distinction is made because the logical space of nature 'impinges' on

our sensory experience, meaning that this space is unable to point to something that is correct in light of something else; judgement belongs in the space of reasons. Therefore, because a mental state is to be directed towards the world, as a belief, for instance, this mental state needs to be within a normative context. Hence, to have a belief or judgement is to have a normatively structured link between mind (the space of reasons) and the world (the space of nature) - something that is answerable to the world as it is. But how does one link to the other? For this does not explain how our experiences provide us with the rational test for our beliefs. How, then, do our beliefs and experience connect with how the world is as it is? We come, as John McDowell surmises, to an issue that is characteristic of the “anxieties of modern philosophy that centre [...] on the relation between mind and world” (McDowell 1996, x). This is, in McDowell’s *Mind and World* (1996), something which he seeks to reconcile. Before turning to McDowell’s ‘remedy’, as he words it in his medically-infused ‘diagnostic spirit’, let us first address some of the issues of mind and world that McDowell seeks to remedy, beginning with Immanuel Kant.

As Kant remarked, “thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind” (Kant 1781/1929, 93, A51, B75), meaning that this interlinking of intuition, thought and concept are what makes an overall experience possible. The intuition is the faculty of receptivity, what one might say is the faculty of receiving the sensory way that the world is ‘such and such’; concepts² are exercised by the ‘faculty of spontaneity’ via active judgement. Kant proposed an answer to remedy the anxieties of the relation of mind and world. Kant’s ‘critical enquiry concerning the limits of my possible knowledge’ (Kant 1781/1929, a758/B786), proposed a delimitation of our knowledge to only that which can be known; this is not to the object in of itself, but to the mode of how we experience the object. Kant follows the tradition of his predecessors before him in that the spontaneity of thinking is required to relate to a particular given content as objective. The synthesis, combination and structure that comprises thought can only function qua thought if there is something present in the first place: something ‘given’. However, Kant also departs from tradition, for the given does not exceed our particular mode of representation, for

² I employ the general definition of ‘concept’ as the articulation of “possessing a concept”. One possesses a concept *C* iff she believes that *C*. However, alternatives to this definition, such as Frege’s notion of concepts, weigh in heavily in the conceptuality debate as a whole (see Byrne 2004, 231).

“the given must conform to our mode of representation and is never external to it” (Kant 1781/1929, preface). So here we see that, in empirical judgements, the aspects of concepts and intuition work interdependently, for thoughts require some intuitive content, and intuitions must be structured by concepts. However, for McDowell, Kant still commits to a dualism between, on the one hand, a world of appearances that conforms to our knowledge and, on the other, the world as it is itself, the noumenal world, in which the object in and of itself is unknown to us, that is ‘supersensible’, yet causes our representations. For McDowell, Kant either fails because our representations refer to a ‘Given’ that is supersensible to us, and hence unknowable to us, and we thereby fall into what Sellars termed the Myth of the Given (1997). Or, secondly, Kant fails because he renounces external constraints on our thinking. As Crispin Wright notes, “McDowell’s agenda [...] is shaped through and through by the challenge of overcoming the Kantian legacy of minds’ alienation from an unknowable noumenal reality” (Wright 1991, 235).

Further risks of alienation between mind and world are elucidated in McDowell’s critique of Foundationalism and Coherentism, of which the former I will address in particular. McDowell reverses the traditional philosophical order of, first, seeking out the nature of perception to subsequently show how we can have rational beliefs regarding the world, for he takes rational beliefs regarding the world to show that, essentially, the nature of perception is conceptually structured. McDowell, in the Sellarsian spirit locates perception within the “logical space of reasons” as the normative space in which our claims can be justified. However, the Foundationalist claim, which is an epistemological claim, posits a hierarchical structure to knowledge, in which there is a fundamental entity that is epistemically basic from which higher levels of knowledge rests upon, inferentially, and thus constituted by this foundational tier in a world that “is dominated by a certain modern conception of natural law” which generates the conception of what valid knowing is, that Charles Taylor terms the “Inner/Outside (I/O) position (Taylor 2002, 106). This knowledge cannot be reasoned via prior evidence; for it is regarding facts which are irreducible, unconceptualised sense-data. Higher knowledge is presupposed via knowledge presented to the mind at the fundamental level. Yet, as stated, this foundational epistemic entity is not presupposed by anything in or of itself (Echelbarger 1974, 231). For McDowell, situating the rational human as beings in a natural world proves problematic, in its current conception, in which contemporary physical science

provides a description of what Wright notes to be the “metaphysics of what the natural world essentially is, a ‘Realm of Law” (Wright 2002,141).

This, therefore, results in our beliefs being founded on unconceptualised sense data, leading to no rational connection between mind and world. Perception requires sensibility, a response to the environment, enabled by physiological sensory systems (McDowell 2008, 2). Yet, as McDowell adds, our sensibility does not belong to reason; we share this sensibility with non-rational animals and, following Sellars, “the rational faculty that distinguishes us from non-rational animals must also be operative in our being perceptually Given things to know” (McDowell 2009, 2). This problem here, then, is, as alluded to earlier, what Sellars termed the ‘Myth of the Given’ (Sellars 1997). The Myth of the Given is a myth because sensibility, which we share with animals, in of itself, without the inclusion of conceptual capacities that belong to the human being’s distinct rationality, cannot make things available for cognition. For, as McDowell writes, “[...] the sense of a Myth would be an availability for cognition to subjects whose getting what is supposedly Given to them does not draw on capacities required for the sort of cognition in question [...] being given something for knowledge without needing to have capacities that would be necessary for one to be able to get to know it” (McDowell 2008, 1-2).

The Myth figures into our perceptual knowledge because it is inadequate to speak of sensibility in of itself being able to make things available to our cognition, absent of rational faculties. Generally, Sellars’ dictum regarding the Myth of the Given rests, though not exclusively, on C. I. Lewis’ (1929) distinction between sensory data, “which are presented or given to the mind” and the “construction or interpretation which the mind brings to this data” (Lewis 1929, 52). The immediate, basic data the mind receives is then interpreted under a conceptual scheme, within the ‘space of reasons’ (the space of norms and meaning), thereby forming higher levels of knowledge. The causal input from the external world enacts our sensory capacities to modify and correct our beliefs. Hence, the truth of the external world is testable, and proves that our representations, our conceptual scheme of the world, refers to and proves the existence of actual objects that cause our representations. As McDowell notes, this Givenness of knowledge to a reflecting subject can be ‘innocuous’. Yet, on further analysis, it becomes ‘pernicious’. This is because “Givenness in the sense of the Myth would be an availability for cognition to subjects whose getting what is supposedly Given to them does not draw on capacities

required for the sort of cognition in question". He continues, "if that is what Givenness would be, [...] it must be mythical" (McDowell 2008, 1). For something to be Given, one is given something that we can crudely term as 'knowledge'. However, one lacks the conceptual capacities that are necessary for one to receive it, and "that is incoherent" (McDowell 2008, 2), for the bestowal of knowledge takes place in the "logical space of reasons", which is the space of "justifying and being able to justify what one says" (Sellars 1997, §36). Hence, as Tim Crane notes, "one's experience cannot serve as the justification for one's empirical beliefs" (2013, 229). Furthermore, as those in the phenomenological tradition have noted, we do not *have* sensations, rather, we can only sense that we are sensing, for one can never sense the cause of our sensations. Therefore, for Sellars, the fundamental issue for those who take the Given as...well, a given, is that:

[...] instead of coming to have a concept of something because we have noticed that sort of thing, to have the ability to notice a sort of thing is already to have the concept of that sort of thing and cannot account for it" (Sellars 1997, 176).

The second claim, which I lightly touch upon, that McDowell rallies against, is what Donald Davidson termed as the 'Coherentist position' (Davidson 1983; Rorty 1998). This is where our beliefs are only justified by other beliefs and are true if they are coherent with these other beliefs. Yet, as Davidson noted, "[...] we can't get outside our skins to find out what is causing the internal happening of which we are aware" (Davidson 1986, 307). Furthermore, as McDowell argues, this renders our beliefs not *about* anything, for there is a constant point of deferral to another belief, and then a deferral to another belief, and so on. The Coherentist lacks any explanation of how true beliefs cohere, without a 'solidity', so to speak, for our judgements and beliefs regarding the world. Additionally, we are left questioning what coherence *actually even is*. One cannot make an argument that experience can justify a subject's beliefs or judgement, because nothing can be a justification for a belief beyond another belief. We are left, as McDowell writes, 'frictionless spinning in a void'.

1.2 A World Embraceable in Thought

To reconcile this gulf between mind and world, McDowell proposed a 'minimal empiricism', which "drops Kant's transcendental framework" (McDowell 1996, 43-44). For McDowell, the Given needs to conform to our mode of representation, yes, but "the world is not external to the space of concepts" (McDowell 1996, 146). As McDowell noted, for Sellars there is nothing inherently wrong with a 'Given', that things are given to us for our knowledge. Rather, the Given only becomes mythical if we "fail to impose the necessary requirements on getting what is given [...] avoiding the Myth requires capacities that belong to reason to be operative in experiencing itself, not just in judgements in which we respond to experience". The Given needs to conform to our mode of representation, for "the constraints come from outside thinking, but not from outside what is thinkable" (McDowell 2008, 3). McDowell makes the claim that humans are *essentially* rational animals. He proposes that "conceptual rationality is everywhere in our lives in so far as our lives are distinctively human", for "conceptual capacities are already operative in the deliverances of sensibility themselves" (McDowell 2007, 338). Hence, the immediate 'output' of our observation is already conceptual, the inner/outer distinction between mind and world collapses to an extent, and humans become 'open to the world'. Our immediate experience of the world is already conceptual in nature for, to employ Sellarsian language, it is "the idea of knowledge as a position in the space of reasons" or having "a normative status" (Sellars 1997, 187). Hence, as McDowell writes, "a belief or judgement [is] to the effect that things are 'thus and so'" (McDowell 1996, x). The normative space of thought and perceptual experience cannot be given from the outside in; rather, "the norms of thought are instead indigenous to thought itself or self-legislated, as we might say. Thought is therefore autonomous with respect to precisely the same world that must rationally constrain it in experience" (Forman 2008, 564).

As we can see, then, a knowledgeable perceptual judgement, McDowell (2008) argues, has its rational intelligibility, in the light of the subject's experience, because she judges that "that things are thus and so" (McDowell 2008, 2). This idea allows for the passivity and receptivity of our thought's being constrained by the world, hence evading Kant's issue of the noumenal world, and additionally it evades Sellars' Myth, because a human being's sensibility is inherently conceptual. We are never led to a non-conceptual 'Given' as the basis for the justification of our

perceptual beliefs, as we otherwise see in Foundationalism and Coherentism, and the noumenal world of Kant. As McDowell writes:

If these relations [between perceptual contents and the beliefs perceptions give us reason to form] are to be genuinely recognizable as reason-constituting, we cannot confine spontaneity within a boundary across which the relations are supposed to hold. The relations themselves must be able to come under the self-scrutiny of active thinking. (McDowell 1994 quoted in Speaks 2005, 14).

We can tease out this idea of McDowell's by laying it out in an outline, as articulated by Jeff Speaks (2005, 14).

1. Perceptions provide agents with reasons for forming certain beliefs.
 2. If perceptions provide agents with reasons for forming beliefs, the contents of those perceptions must be conceptual.
- C. The contents of perceptions must be conceptual (1,2)

Hence, if perception p justifies subject A to believe in p , A must have the ability to discriminate the relation between p and x . Hence, A will be able to think and draw the relation between p and x . Therefore, we support (2), because an aspect of A 's thought process is her ability to think about the perceptual content and the content of the belief's formation. If the content of her perception x is a part of her thought p , the perceptual content of A 's thought, then perceptual content cannot be said to be absolutely non-conceptual and thus cannot be a different sort of entity than that which are in the contents of thought - thoughts that are external. As McDowell writes, "there is no ontological gap between the sort of thing one can mean, or generally the sort of thing one can think, and the sort of thing that can be the case [...] there is no gap between thought, as such, and the world. (McDowell 1996, 27). We have here, then, McDowell's conceptual rationality claim for the human being, where human experience is saturated by rationality.

1.3 The Myth of the Mental

In response to McDowell's *Mind and World*, in his 2005 APA Presidential Address, Hubert Dreyfus queries that "[c]an we accept McDowell's Sellarsian claim that perception is conceptual 'all the way out,' thereby denying the more basic perceptual capacities we seem to share with pre-linguistic infants and higher animals?" (Dreyfus 2006, 43). Dreyfus offers a critique of McDowell's conceptual rationality, and additionally provides his non-conceptual account of human experience, by claiming that we are, at the 'ground floor', engaged in our skilful and embodied coping. This is non-conceptual, pre-linguistic and pre-rational (Dreyfus 2006), drawn off the works of Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Martin Heidegger³; thus, Dreyfus proposes a limitation to McDowell's conceptual-rationality. As Dreyfus acknowledges, McDowell echoes the existential phenomenologists, in that we "find ourselves already engaged with the world" and the "acting subject is [...] herself embodied [...]" (Dreyfus, 2009, 1). However, unlike Dreyfus, McDowell argues that even our embodied engagement in the world is permeated by conceptual rationality. Hence, for McDowell, perception and embodied action must be conceptual pervasively. Yet, for Dreyfus, the meaningfulness of our embodied, skilful coping comes first. McDowell's sort of rationality is the 'upper floor', presupposed by our pre-conceptual, pre-linguistic 'ground floor'. Even when taking part in highly conceptual activities, say performing theoretical experiments, it is the bottom floor, the fundamental, which makes conceptual activity possible in the first place. To recall, McDowell, in the Kantian spirit, argues that:

[E]xperiences are actualisations of our sentient nature in which conceptual capacities are inextricably implicated. The parallel is this, intentional bodily capacities are actualisations of our nature in which conceptual capacities are inextricably implicated (McDowell 2016, 15)

Yet, Dreyfus charges McDowell with overreaching in his attempt to reconcile Sellars' issue of the Myth of the Given; McDowell is, instead, committing what Dreyfus levies against him as the 'Myth of the Pervasiveness of the Mental' (2005). This is the myth

³ I agree with Wrathall (2014) that Dreyfus, with too much modesty, attributes his insights too much to Sartre, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty's works without taking his own due credit.

in which “all intelligibility is pervaded by rational capacities” where “the mind is everywhere the pure given is not” (2013, 1). To be specific, Dreyfus terms this a myth because “in order for the mind to relate to the world at all, every way we relate to the world must be pervaded by self-critical enquiry” (Dreyfus 2013, 16). Therefore, instead, Dreyfus proposed that we can take a weaker reading of rationality in the sense that rationality is just *one* aspect of the what human experience is, insofar as our lives are distinctively human, to borrow McDowell’s phrasing.

Delving deeper into the debate, as we have seen, McDowell argues that the normative relation of mind and world to be held without committing Sellars’ Myth of the Given, conceptuality must pervade all of perception and action. Yet, Dreyfus argues that McDowell’s claim cannot be reconciled with phenomenological insights into our, what Heidegger termed ‘primordial’ (or foundational) way of being in the world, how we are absorbed in our everyday activities and our expert coping as dancers and chess masters, for example. This absorption is the most direct, unmediated way in which we experience the world, which has a privileged status over other forms of access to the world, such as rationality and language. It is only when our absorption is disrupted that we become detached into rationality, losing the richness of the grasp of the background familiarity with our world, as we are attracted (solicited) and repelled by the affordances (Gibson 1975; 1979) around us. Even when committing ourselves to rational or reflective practices, these conceptual faculties are premised on a rich normative background world, for our bodies maintain a normative grip on this world which is absent of facts, language and conceptual data. This, Dreyfus argues, is also how we can account for our world being meaningful. Drawing from Heidegger’s concept of *Dasein*, which can be translated to a ‘being-there’ or ‘existence’, *Dasein* is “that entity which in its Being has this very Being as an issue” (Heidegger 1927, 4: 32). Dreyfus’ claim rests on that fact that we are encapsulated by the World and are in the World, what Heidegger termed “Being-in-the-world” (Heidegger 1927, 12:84). *Dasein* is inseparable from it and embedded within it, accustomed to its environment and its relationship to the entities around it. *Dasein* need not only represent and conceptualise, for it is, for most its time, entangled with ‘things’, absorbed in the ‘average everyday’ of its existence. For Dreyfus, we experience and engage with other entities in our day to day living by coping with them through an ‘equipmentality’. Dreyfus also employs phenomenological insight from Merleau-Ponty, who, for instance, writes of the ‘body-

schema', which is a "pre-reflective familiar state with the world depends on the body-scheme, the body projecting its motorintentions into the world it inhabits (*Umwelt*) (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 112). The body schema is not represented in the traditional epistemological view. Rather this body schema exists towards its tasks; the body schema illuminates that one's body is in the world (*est au monde*), what Taylor Carman terms the "bodily point of view" (2008, 90). Therefore, as Dreyfus argues, following the existentialist and phenomenological tradition, the world is "pervaded not by critical conceptuality but by lines of force" (Dreyfus 2013, 17) in which affordances, attracting and repelling us as forces, solicit our attention pre-reflectively. Rationality, or what we can call a 'detachment' from this coping, is the top floor. To conclude, Dreyfus states that "[...] the alternative picture which merges once we deconstruct the mediational one, through a consistent metacritical turn, is one of an embodied agent, embedded in a society, and at grips with the world" (Dreyfus 1972, 280).

Dreyfus contests that we do not fall back into the Myth of the Given through his phenomenology of embodied coping, because, in being solicited by an affordance, one is provided with a pre-conceptual 'layout of reality'. Hence, through this, the embodied copier's coping has intentional content, but "it just isn't *conceptual* content" (Dreyfus 2005, 11). For Dreyfus, the dichotomy of the 'bare Given' and the 'thinkable', is therefore a false one, because our ground floor coping "opens up the world by opening us to a *meaningful* Given – a Given that is *non-conceptual* but not *bare*" (Dreyfus 2005, 12 – my emphasis). Rather than defining the normative structure of our world solely in the space of reasons, then, we can, as Erik Rietveld suggests, take Dreyfus' conception of a normatively structured world, as a "responsiveness to normative significance" (Rietveld 2010, 184). Through this responsiveness to normative significance, as hitherto stated, "the phenomena show that embodied skills, when we are fully absorbed in enacting them, have a kind of non-mental content that is non-conceptual, non-propositional, non-rational [...] and non-linguistic" (Dreyfus 2007, 35). So, for Dreyfus, as we have seen, rather than humans being essentially rational animals, a 'conceptuality thesis', we also have a 'ground floor' embodied, skilful coping, the non-conceptual aspect of perceptual experience that we share with infants and non-human animals alike, which provides us with a human being that eludes McDowell's space of reasons. Therefore, under this non-conceptual coping thesis, we can view Dreyfus' critique of McDowell as that

of McDowell missing out the 'ground floor' of the human being's pre-linguistic, pre-conceptual being, which allows us to maintain our optimal grip on the world. Rather, McDowell is 'top floors all the way down' missing the responsiveness to pre-reflective normative significance from which conceptuality is made possible. This is not to say that there is no conceptual rationality, an ability to 'step back' and reflect, in our lives, for we evidently make judgements on our perceptual experiences. As Zahavi notes, "[w]hat Dreyfus objects to, isn't the concept per se, but rather the idea that the mind, thus defined, has as central and pervasive a role to play in our engagement with the world as McDowell thinks" (Zahavi 2013, 320). Furthermore, as George Olsen notes, "Dreyfus is not merely noting the difference between sub-personal information processing and personal level awareness" (Olsen 2013, 21); on the contrary, Dreyfus argues that humans have a practical understanding of their world which is a different kind to the understanding exhibited in conceptuality and linguistic articulation of the world around them, "characterized primarily in terms of conditions of improvement versus conditions of truth" (Olsen 2013. 21), a know-how rather than a knowing 'that'. McDowell's claim of conceptual-rational capacities brings about a detached self, one above the world, not in it, oriented to an independent reality (McDowell 2013a, 42) Hence, "in assuming that all intelligibility, even perception and skilful coping, must be, at least implicitly, conceptual [...] Sellars and McDowell join Kant in endorsing what we might call the Myth of the Mental" (Dreyfus 2006, 46). Dreyfus concludes with the bold statement that "thus, like a Vulture, the Myth of the Mental feeds off the carcass of the Myth of the Given" (Dreyfus 2005, 7).

1.4 Rule-Following and the Expert.

To develop his claim for absorbed coping, Dreyfus, following from his works on 'skilful coping', makes the distinction between the kind of expert coping (Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1980) that we do when we are at our best, absorbed in our activities, versus the 'beginner', who has the kind of detached rule following that Dreyfus equates to McDowell's conceptual rationality. As we have seen, Dreyfus claims that, rather than being beings pervaded by conceptual rationality, it is our absorbed, embodied coping in the world, our skilful bodily (embodied) action in the world, which is the fundamental grounding of normative significance, for "this alternative conception of man and his ability to behave intelligently is really an analysis of the

way man's skilful activity [...] generates the human world" (Dreyfus 1992, 281). Dreyfus posited, amongst multiple intermediary steps, the distinction between the 'beginner' and the 'expert' or 'master' embodied copers of skill acquisition. The beginner begins from the perspective of a 'know that' form of intelligence, following rules that are "context-free *features* that the beginner can recognize without previous experience in the domain" (Dreyfus 2005, 1). Dreyfus likens these rules to that of a computer following a program, or the example of a learner driver learning to recognize "interpretation-free features such as speed (indicated by the speedometer)", being given rules to shift the gear to *x* when the speedometer tachometer needle points to *y*. This is a slow way of doing things, for the reliance on contextually independent rules means that the beginner cannot respond to meaningful additional aspects of the situation at hand. To be fully absorbed is to be the master or expert. In this process, the beginner "make[s] judgments using strict rules and features, but with talent and a great deal of involved experience, the beginner develops into an expert who sees intuitively what to do without applying rules and making judgments at all" (2004, 253). Furthermore, as Dreyfus argues, in our 'average everyday' lives, we, too, are expert copers in the realm of the intramundane, for "[s]omething similar happens to us [...] when any activity from taking a walk, to being absorbed in a conversation, to giving a lecture is going really well. That is, whenever we are successfully finding our way around the world" (Dreyfus 2014, 281). This involved absorbed coping is not just operative in the realms of the expert, in the sense of the baseball player, the dancer, the formula one driver, and so on. Rather, skilful coping "is instead simultaneously the highest and most basic form of engagement with the world" (Wrathall 2014, 4), for we are all master or expert skilful copers in our 'average everyday' lives, for the "everyday is the enveloping wholeness of Being" (Heidegger 1927; Steiner 1991, 15). So, with Dreyfus' account of skill acquisition, this expert coping is done "without calculating and comparing alternatives [...] what must be done, simply is done" (Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1980, 253), leading to a phenomenological non-conceptualism that runs contrary to McDowell's conceptual rationality. Have we found the limits to rationality? No, McDowell responds.

McDowell, on the contrary, argues that there is no issue with "acknowledging the pervasiveness of mind in a distinctly human life [that] is consistent with appreciating those phenomenological insights" (McDowell 2007a, 346). He argues

that this “constitutes a background without which the special way in which experience takes hold of the world would not be intelligible” (McDowell 1996, 33), for Dreyfus assumes that McDowell regards action as a form of detached rule following akin to the beginner coper. However, as Tony Cheng (2015) notes, McDowell, in his paper, “Wittgenstein on Following a Rule” (McDowell 1989), makes a concerted effort to relinquish this idea of the same kind of detached rule following that Dreyfus levies against him. Most notably, McDowell addresses Kripke’s analysis of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s skeptical paradox, in which Wittgenstein writes: “this was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule” (Wittgenstein 1953, 201a). As McDowell writes:

[Kripke’s] line of interpretation gets off on the wrong foot, when it credits Wittgenstein with acceptance of a “skeptical paradox” [...] the reasoning that would lead to this “skeptical paradox” starts with something Wittgenstein aims to show up as a mistake, the assumption, in this case, that the understanding on which I act when I obey an order must be an interpretation. (McDowell 1984, 236 quoted by Cheng 2015, 6)

Saul Kripke illustrates the issue employing the dilemma of numerical addition. What is the rule of addition? Its application has numerous ways of application and interpretation, as well standard uses of, which can be employed with a finite set of applications, such as $5+13 = 18$. As Kripke⁴ conceives of understanding as a species of interpretation, such as when I employ the use of a ‘plus’ function, I can interpret my past usages of this ‘plus’ function to conform to other deviant functions. To understand what I mean by ‘plus’, I must first have an interpretation of what ‘plus’ means. This, results in a paradox, because it either leads to scepticism or relativity (relying on how we have previously performed such functions). However, and most pertinently to Dreyfus’ criticism is that, in response to this skeptical paradox, McDowell replies that this is only a paradox if we conceive of rule-following as a detached conception. For McDowell, “we need to do interpretation when our

⁴ See Kripke, Saul A. (2004). *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition* (Reprinted Edition). Oxford: Blackwell.

understanding is functioning” (Cheng 2015, 7). Hence, there is no detachment for “we find ourselves *always already engaging* with the world” (McDowell 1996, 34). For McDowell, to understand rule-following, and avoid the paradox, this rule-following should be viewed as a result of our inculcation into a practice of, in this instance, addition. Thanks to our inculcation into our culture, we become sensitive to reasons, which then influence our “habits of thought and action” (McDowell 1996, 85). Hence, through this inculcation, we obey a certain rule without detaching from our engagement with the world. And, furthermore, to requote Dreyfus, his argument that McDowell’s conceptual rationality is akin to the “context-free *features* that the beginner can recognize without previous experience in the domain” (Dreyfus 2005, 1) is mistaken, for McDowell’s conceptual rationality is not independent of a given context, a ‘detached rule-follower’. To uphold Dreyfus’ critique of McDowell, then, we require a different sort of self-reflection than one which is premised on a detachment.

1.5 The Absorbed Coper

In “The Return of the Myth of the Mental” (2007, 353) Dreyfus concedes this point by McDowell. However, in jettisoning his emphasis on detached, context independent rule-following, Dreyfus then progresses to provide a further dichotomy of ‘conceptual intentionality’ with ‘involved motor intentionality’ (Dreyfus 2007a, 363). Essentially, Dreyfus argues that subjectivity, not detachment, is at issue; as he writes, “I should have argued that subjectivity (not detachment) is the lingering ghost of the mental [...]” (Dreyfus 2007b, p. 373), for “[i]n fully absorbed coping, there is no immersed ego, not even an implicit one” (Dreyfus 2007b, p. 374). Dreyfus further quotes Merleau-Ponty, that “to move one’s body is to aim at things through it; it is to allow oneself to respond to their call, which is made upon it independently of any representation” (Merleau Ponty 1962, 161). Barbara Montero, both a philosopher and previous professional ballet dancer, describes the example of Dreyfus’ absorption, that we are at our best, such as in ballet, when we are seamlessly moving about our performance, absent of a self-monitoring ego which would just get in the way of our motor-intentional action. Montero quotes the choreographer, George Balanchine, who would say to his dancers, “Don’t think, dear; just do.” (Montero 2013, 303), which she terms as the ‘Just-do-it Principle’, also termed Dreyfus’ *Principle of Automaticity*:

When all is going well, expert performance significantly involves neither self-reflective thinking, nor planning, nor predicting, nor deliberation, nor mental effort. (Montero 2013, 304)

Dreyfus employs the examples of the baseball player Chuck Knoblauch and lightning chess to lend credence to this absorbed coping, the absence of an ego (Dreyfus 2007, 354). Chuck Knoblauch, of the *New York Yankees*, was awarded the *Golden Glove Award* for his ‘expert performance’ on second base. However, one day he faltered and began to start “spraying around his throws to first base. He had to be moved to left field and his career tailed off” (Papineau 2017). Poor Chuck one day simply ‘forgot’ how to ‘just do it’, forgetting how to perform baseball in the flow. As Dreyfus wrote,

As second baseman for the New York Yankees, Knoblauch was so successful he was voted best infielder of the year, but one day, rather than simply fielding a hit and throwing the ball to first base, it seems he stepped back and took up a “free, distanced orientation” towards the ball and how he was throwing it – to the mechanics of it, as he put it. *After that, he couldn’t recover his former absorption...Interestingly, even after he seemed unable to resist stepping back and being mindful*, Knoblauch could still play brilliant baseball in difficult situations – catching a hard-hit ground ball and throwing it to first faster than thought. What he couldn’t do was field an easy routine grounder directly to second base, because *that gave him time to think before throwing to first*. (Dreyfus 2007a, 354 – my emphasis)

Chuck’s ego came into play, and his absorbed coping is disrupted, the absorption in which his body knew how to do things at its best, absentia subjectivity. He needed to empty his mind, so to speak, and go with the flow. Instead, Chuck reverted to clumsy self-monitoring, swapping a practical understanding for a conceptual understanding, a paralysis by analysis, decoupled from a richer world of affordances that would solicit him otherwise in absorption. Hence, Chuck reverted back to mindedness – the ego. For Dreyfus, McDowell’s conceptual rationality, the ‘responsiveness to reasons’, is flawed, for “the involvement of rationality in human action [...] is not a result of

adding an 'I think' to representations of one's actions", for this would cohere to a subjective stance towards one's perceptual experience. On the 'intra-mundane' level, Dreyfus quotes Heidegger in that:

What is first of all 'given' is the 'for writing,' the 'for going in and out,' [...] 'for sitting'. That is, writing, going-in-and-out, sitting, and the like are what wherein we *a priori* move. What we know when 'we know our way round' (Heidegger 1927 quoted in Dreyfus 2013, 17)

In Dreyfus' other example, of lightning chess, he shows an absorbed activity that we *could* view as more conceptual in nature than to Chuck Knoublach's motor-intentional activity. As was the case for Dreyfus' previous example, there is, in the example of the grand-master 'expert' chess player, no deliberation or the presence of an ego. Rather, "after much experience, the chess master is directly drawn by the forces on the board to make a masterful move" (2013,35). Dreyfus & Dreyfus pitted Julio Kalpan, an internationally renowned chess master, against a weaker player in a game of lightning chess (Dreyfus 1986, 33). During this game, Kaplan was presented with mathematical additional sums, and requested to vocally answer as rapidly as he could. However, as they reported, "[e]ven with his analytic mind completely jammed by adding numbers, Kaplan more than held his own against the master in a series of games" (Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1986, 33). This, for Dreyfus & Dreyfus, indicates "that attending to one's moves it not important or essential to chess expert" (Montero 2016, 214), for, lacking the time to perceive issues and seek methods to resolve them, Kaplan still, in Dreyfus' terminology, produced 'fluid' and coordinated play. As Dreyfus wrote:

When the Grandmaster is playing lightning chess, as far as he can tell, he is simply responding to the patterns on the board. At this speed he must depend entirely on perception and not at all on analysis and comparison of alternatives. (Dreyfus 2005, 53)

As we have seen, the idea of 'attention' focuses heavily on Dreyfus phenomenology of absorbed coping, in which self-reflective monitoring is only competent at best or, for Chuck, dire at its worst. The expert or master is unreflective. Yet, I cannot agree

with Dreyfus' characterization of McDowell's claim, as I shall discuss in the next section.

1.6 Attention and Perception

Contrary to Dreyfus, McDowell argues that “distance is *not* actualized in unreflective perceptual experience or in unreflective intentional agency, but conceptual capacities are operative in both” (McDowell 2013a, 53). It is true that the subject is not in the position whether to judge that things are that way in many circumstances in which reflection is not being enacted. However, as McDowell further notes, “if a rational subject does not yet have means to make explicit some way her experience reveals things to be, it is always possible to equip herself with such means” (McDowell 2013a, 43). Hence, making this content explicit does not mean that the content is newly conceptual (what one could assume is transformed into from the sort of non-conceptuality Dreyfus advocates), for having things received into experience in a certain way is already a form of conceptual capacities in operation. Rationality, in what McDowell terms as “rationality in the strong sense”, permeates action, even in unreflective action such as that of the expert or master. McDowell, in “The Myth of the Mind as Detached” (2013), employs the example of a rational human and a ‘mere animal’, a dog, catching a frisbee thrown directly to them. To quote at length:

[C]onsider catching a flying object. When a rational agent catches a frisbee, she is realizing a concept of a thing to do. [. . . O]f, say, catching this. (Think of a case in which, as one walks across a park, a frisbee flies towards one, and one catches it in the spur of the moment.) When a dog catches a frisbee, he is not realizing any practical concept; in the relevant sense, he has none. The point of saying that the rational agent, unlike the dog, is realizing a concept in doing what she does is that her doing, under a specification that captures the content of the practical concept that she is realizing, comes within the scope of her practical rationality – even if only in that, if asked why she caught the frisbee, she would answer “No particular reason; I just felt like it”. (McDowell 2013a, 48-49)

In this example, the dog is not realizing any practical concept, any practical rationality. However, as strong rationality is pervasive and thus operative even in the human being's unreflective action, the rational human realizes her practical concept; she is doing the right thing to do, through her practical experience, a practical wisdom. As Benedict Smith notes, "McDowell [...] suggests that mindedness can be expressed through practice, not merely translated into action, but realized in action" (Smith 2010, 159). However, McDowell proposes that Dreyfus creates a new Myth, the 'Myth of the Mind as Detached', which distorts the notion of acting for reasons, misconstruing McDowell's own position. For the rational human, when she catches the Frisbee, she is "exercising a capacity that belongs to her rationality; she is realizing a concept of a thing to do" (McDowell 2013a, 48). Even if the frisbee player does not realise the concept of a frisbee, she has another concept of, say, 'catching *this*'. In acknowledging the question 'why?' the frisbee catcher judges appropriately that this question was directed to her with regards to her catching the Frisbee. This is also to say, then, that she acts intentionally, "she is realizing a concept of a thing to do" (McDowell 2013a, 49) by providing a null answer. The human Frisbee catcher, then, reflects on her reasons for reacting retroactively. This runs contrary to Dreyfus' assertion that when one steps back, one is stepping back to reflect conceptually, removed from a pre-conceptual coping. The operation of conceptual capacities, therefore, do not *need* to be active. Rather, and for the most part in our day to day coping and our master or expert performance, these conceptual capacities are passive. To read the pervasiveness of conceptuality as always operative is, then, a misconstrual of McDowell's argument. For McDowell, the absorbed copier does not have content explicitly in her thought, unless her 'flow' is disrupted, but this does not mean conceptual rationality is absent. McDowell argues that:

[L]anguage enables us to have experience that [...] has content that is conceptual in the sense that I have introduced [...] No aspect is unnameable, but that does not require us to pretend to make sense of an ideal position in which we have a name for every aspect, let alone to be in such a position. (2007a, 348)

As McDowell argues, just as an 'I think' in the Kantian sense, encompasses all thoughts, that, given the nature of the first-person nature of our experiences, an 'I do' must always accompany our experiences. To quote McDowell:

Self-awareness in action is practical, not theoretical. It is a matter of an 'I do' rather than an 'I think'; hence, if we conceive of actions in terms of an 'I do' it is a "way of registering the essentially first person character of the realization of practical rational capacities that acting is (McDowell quoted by Dreyfus 2013, 28)

As McDowell has stated, in order to not fall into the Myth of the Given, the relevant perceptual content of an experience must already be in the right conceptual form in order to be received. He writes, "[m]y claim was that the 'I do' characterizes the form of actions as such" (McDowell 2013a, 46), whether it is reflectively engaged or not; it is always the possibility of this 'I do' that "characterizes the form of the representations of self-conscious subjects [...] even representations that do not involve explicit thinking" (McDowell 2013a, 46). If we drop Dreyfus' commitment that conceptual rationality, the self-knowledge of reflection must be taken as a disruption in egoless absorbed coping, and hence a self *in the moment* of action, we can see the chess master, for instance, as "making his moves in [a] self-consciously rational response to the forces on the board" (McDowell 2013a, 49), for the chess master can articulate her moves retroactively, for any unreflective action as conceptual in the first place. Her movements responding to the forces on the board provides a non-null answer to the question of 'Why did you move that piece?' (McDowell 1996, 57). Thus, as McDowell notes, "making the content [explicit] even if the subject first has to acquire means to do that [...] does not make the content newly conceptual in any sense that it is relevant to my claim. It was conceptual already" (2013, 43). As he writes, regarding the operation of conceptuality in un-reflective experience "what is important is this: if an experience is world disclosing [...], *all* its content is present in a *form* in which [...] it is suitable to constitute contents of conceptual capacities" (McDowell 2007a).

But what is it to have a conceptual 'form' or 'shape'? In *Mind and World*, we can read into this shape as being of the sort of propositional content that McDowell defines as 'things are thus and so', which, as the content of experience, provides a

certain determinative structure to the conceptual content.⁵ However, as a thorough all pervasive conceptualist, McDowell still argues that human experience cannot have non-conceptual content. Whilst acknowledging the distinction between experiences that are conceptually exercised and not exercised, McDowell still views these unexercised faculties as conceptually operative. However, is it possible to bring forth all the richness of our perceptual experiences, the fine grainedness of experience into conceptual capacities? McDowell argues that, making content explicit, through retroactively applying the correct articulation via language of it, does not mean that the content was non-conceptual to begin with.

Yet, as both Dreyfus, in direct response to McDowell, as well as Gareth Evans in *The Varieties of Reference* (1982) have noted, the content of a subject's experience, our perceptual discrimination, is far richer, and hence more finely grained, than that which conceptual discrimination can provide us with. As Evans queries, "do we really understand the proposal [...] that we have as many colour concepts as there are shades of colour that we can sensibly discriminate?" (Evans 1982, 229). These general concepts, applied to colours (i.e. *purple*⁵² or *purple*⁶⁸) in this instance, are insufficient to provide an adequately rich account of our perceptual experience of these colours, for the ability to discriminate the determinate shades exhausts one's conceptual capacities. For Evans, there is a non-conceptual content that is too finely grained, which is then *transformed* into conceptual experiential content, whereas McDowell argues that experiential content is intrinsically conceptual from the get-go.

⁵ However, in the face of criticism by Charles Travis (2013), McDowell dropped the requirement for experiences being credited with judgement-propositional content in the exercise of conceptual capacities, of such 'that things are thus and so' as being the content of experience. Instead, McDowell tweaked this towards the Kantian 'intuitional' content of conceptual content experience, as "a form in which it is already suitable to be the content associated with a discursive capacity' (McDowell 2009: 264). As he wrote:

I used to assume that to conceive experiences as actualizations of conceptual capacities, we would need to credit experiences with propositional content, the sort of content judgments have. And I used to assume that the content of an experience would need to include everything the experience enables its subject to know non-inferentially. But both these assumptions now strike me as wrong (McDowell 2008, 3).

Let us consider the perceptual state within the context of the background in which you are currently in. Say, the words on this page, the surround of your desk and books, the vast array of colours ranging across our visible light spectrum. How many words would adequately encapsulate this cacophony of conceptual activity? Consider the multitudinous array of experiences pervading one's perceptual experiences currently, such as an almost innumerable amount of colours of whites, browns, deeper shades of blue and so on. Can these be exhausted by conceptual articulation? Our perceptual experience is presented far more finely grained than concepts can articulate. As Andrew Inkpin notes, "McDowell's argument relies on representation via the finite and discretely articulated system of a language – as it presumably must in order to preserve an intrinsic connection with reasons and rationality." (Inkpin 2015, 69). Yet, if language preserves the connection between reasons and rationality, and colour perception exhausts the conceptual articulation of colours, and hence is too fine grained, then there is an element of human experience that cannot be conceptually articulated. This inexpressibility of the rich perceptual experience of our lives is thus, as stated too *fine grained*. The conclusion of this argument, therefore, is for a claim of the non-conceptualism of perceptual experience, as "the content of perceptual states is different in kind from that of cognitive states like belief" (Evans 1982, 485), which we can apply to more generalized, more coarsely grained, concepts.

McDowell, and other conceptualists (Brewer 1999), counter-argue against this non-conceptual critique. They argue that one can account for these fine-grained concepts by appealing to the concept as being a 'demonstrative concept', such as '*this* shade' or the "shade that is experienced" (Kelly 2008, 398), instead of the more general concepts, susceptible to Evans' critique. For the rational subject, even if she lacks the means to make explicit some aspect of experience that she perceives, has the capacity to equip herself with these means: she "has *that* shade of colour" (McDowell 2013a, 43). These demonstrative concepts, contrary to general concepts, are articulated through a demonstrative expression that "pick out the way the object or property now being experienced is given" (Kelly 2001, 401) in perceptual experience. As Sean Kelly notes, these demonstrative concepts are elements of thought, for they "figure in expressions that we can entertain in propositional attitude context, they are propositions that stand in inferential relations to one another" (Kelly 2001, 401; Kelly 2005), and are 'context-dependent', in the sense that the semantic

value changes, depending on the context in which it is applied. McDowell acknowledges the threat here, that ‘that thing has that shade’ is a “only a fraudulent appearance of expressing a way objects can be, so that one could significantly say that the object in question is that way” (McDowell 2013a, 43-44). He responds further to this in *Mind and World* (1996), in that we can recognize demonstrative concepts as conceptual activity if the same conceptual capacity that the “very same capacity to embrace a colour in mind can in principle persist beyond the duration of the experience itself” (McDowell 1996, 57). Hence, after this indication, when holding ‘this’ shade of colour in mind over *x* amount of time, we are employing our conceptual capacities in a meaningful way, for *that* shade, after the original unreflective/inexpressible perceptual recognition of that colour through the demonstrative concept, can be expressed in the concept of a shade. As McDowell writes:

[...] what ensures that it is a concept [...] is that the associated capacity can persist into the future, if only for a short time, and that, having persisted, it can be used also in thoughts about what is by then the past, if only the recent past [...] the very same capacity to embrace a colour in mind can in principle persist beyond the duration of the experience itself (McDowell 1996, 57)

However, as Inpkin has noted, if the “determinable and demonstrative concepts in combination with recognitional capacities suffices to ensure that fineness of grain does not succeed in distinguishing something as nonconceptual [...] McDowell gives no argument of how the shape of the form of content occurs; there is no explanation of if the shape was already conceptual in form” (Inpkin 2015, 69). As McDowell has stated, employing demonstrative concepts opens up the potential for articulating experiences, even when lacking the adequate words which are not available, for we “do not need to have words for all the content that is conceptually available to us” (McDowell 2007a, 348). Yet, if, as we have seen earlier, McDowell acknowledges the distinction between unreflective action and reflection, yet conflates the two as both as conceptually operative (and thus sharing what we can call a ‘conceptual ‘shape’), there needs to be a link between pre-reflection and reflection, even if they share the same form and shape, and hence a shared meaning that can be (as McDowell would argue) *potentially* articulable. Yet, without a shared conceptual form

between unreflective and reflective conceptual form, the potential for articulation of the unreflective form would not exist in the first place. To reiterate, McDowell writes, “what is important is this: if an experience is world-disclosing [...], all its content is present in a form in which [...] it is suitable to constitute contents of conceptual capacities” (McDowell 2007b, 319). Hence, when the experience has a world disclosure, the content has a distinctive form. Yet, this ‘distinctive form’ requires a determinate characteristic to demarcate it from, to employ a colour example, *purple*₂₃ from *purple*₁₀₉₈. To antecedently apply a conceptual form onto an experience does not justify that the concept was intrinsically conceptual in the first place; to assert ‘it was conceptual already’ is not enough. As Inkin notes, this is the same kind of argument that Wittgenstein critiques in his *Philosophical Investigations*, in which we could say in an extension of that critique, that McDowell commits the fallacy of the “predicating of the thing what lies in the mode of representation” (Inkin 2015, 70; Wittgenstein 1953, §104). Unlike our conceptual capacities operative in reflection, this responsiveness to reasons is not experienced in unreflective action. As Rietveld notes, the consequence of the application of McDowell’s framework through which “[...] the subtleties of unreflective human behaviour in context are concerned is sometimes like repairing a torn spider’s web with one’s fingers” (Rietveld 2010, 186-187).

Conclusion to Chapter One

Having introduced the Dreyfus-McDowell debate, there have been two key elements from both philosophers that I have explored. Dreyfus initially argued that McDowell’s conceptual rationality was akin to the form of theoretical rule-following of the beginner. However, after points raised regarding McDowell’s own conception of rule following – one that was not detached – Dreyfus dropped this argument, instead opting for our absorption being mindless, and lacking an ego – the absence of subjectivity. But, again, this runs into issues of his critique of McDowell’s conception of the operation of conceptual capacities. Whilst Dreyfus claims that there is no conceptual rationality in unreflective absorption, McDowell responds that one’s self-awareness in action (such as catching a Frisbee) is practical, not theoretical. It is a master of an ‘I do’ rather than an ‘I think’” (McDowell quoted by Dreyfus 2013, 28). However, McDowell appears to be unable to explain the link of conceptual form

between that of unreflective and reflective action: how are we involved in the world, given the conceptual 'gap' between unreflective action and self-reflection? Additionally, McDowell's argument for demonstrative concepts to counter Dreyfus and Evans' critiques regarding the fine-grainedness of colour perception, applying the retroactive '*that shade of colour*', fails to prove that the content was conceptual to begin with. To antecedently apply conceptual content to fine grained colours is not a strong enough argument to counter the non-conceptualists claim. The argument for a (finite amount) of articulable colour concepts being exhausted by the potentially limitless number of shades of colour that one can perceptually discriminate seems to hold firm against McDowell's counter-critique. McDowell puts forth the claim that the conceptual form is shared in unreflective and reflective action in order to prevent conceptual rationality being situation independent, yet, as we have seen, McDowell provides no compelling reason for the 'form' in unreflective action being conceptual, rather than non-conceptual, in the first place.

In the second chapter I will hone in onto two points of Dreyfus and McDowell's. First, regarding Dreyfus, I analyse his absorbed coping argument, questioning the phenomenological underpinnings of the absence of an ego and subjectivity in absorption. Second, I follow on from my critique of McDowell's unreflective to reflective action argument by addressing how this link can be maintained through an 'ethical upbringing', to what McDowell terms the initiation into a linguistic culture, the attainment of a natural language, to be truly 'minded'. I contest this, for, given contemporary research into what is termed as a 'we' intentionality, there is a specifically human capacity for a pre-linguistic, pre-conceptual group-ish mindedness, even in infant human beings, that McDowell would deem proto-subjective, that elude the sort of conceptual, linguistic parameters for the human being that McDowell speaks of.

Chapter Two

The Linguistic Community and the Absent Ego

Man is a rational animal — so at least I have been told. Throughout a long life, I have looked diligently for evidence in favour of this statement, but so far, I have not had the good fortune to come across it.

- Bertrand Russell

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When a decent upbringing initiates us into the relevant way of thinking, our eyes are open to the very existence of this tract of the Space of Reasons

- John McDowell

As we have seen in the previous chapter regarding the operation of (a shared form of) conceptual capacities in unreflective and reflective experience, there is still something that needs further exploration. Let us requote McDowell, in that “[f]or the initiated person who has acquired a language, this language opens up the potential for articulating experiences” (McDowell 2007a, 348 – my emphasis). What exactly does it mean to be initiated? McDowell proposes that this initiation is that of the initiation of an infant (a pre-conceptual/proto-subjective infant)⁶ human, acquiring their second nature (*Bildung*) via an ‘ordinary upbringing’ into a ‘linguistic community’. This infant, then, acquires a natural language. It is only when one is initiated that we are truly minded, because an “ordinary upbringing can shape the actions and thoughts of human beings in a way that brings these demands [of the operation of conceptual capacities] in view (McDowell 1996, 82). Both infants that are not yet initiated into this linguistic community, and non-human animals alike, lack McDowell’s strict sense of ‘mindedness’. The human infant, however, has a ‘potential’. As we can read in Davidson’s notion of language and rationality in his chapter “The Rational Animal”:

Neither an infant one week old nor a snail is a rational creature. If the infant survives long enough, he will probably become rational, while this is not true

⁶ Let us say for simplicity’s sake, around the eighteen-month mark.

of the snail. If we like, we may say of the infant from the start that he is a rational creature because he will probably become rational if he survives, or because he belongs to a species with this capacity. Whichever way we talk, there remains the difference, with respect to rationality, between the infant and the snail on one hand, and the normal adult person on the other

(Davidson 1982, 317)

As we have seen in the opening chapter, McDowell employs his conceptual rationality claim to reintegrate the link between mind and world. This additionally accounts for our richly normative world, which, as Thomas noted, “is to enjoy the full normativity which for McDowell is the essence of mentality” (Thomas 1997, 285 quoted in Zahavi 2013, 324). However, are there aspects of the human being, such as colour perception hitherto discussed, that is too fine-grained for conceptual articulation (nor, it appears, can it be described in demonstrative concepts either) that appears to elude McDowell’s claim for the all pervasiveness of conceptual rationality? I believe so.

In the first part of Chapter Two, I argue that, given evidence of a pre-linguistic, pre-conceptual ‘we’-intentionality and mimetic capacities in both infants and adults alike, we can see that the human being, and distinctly the human being, is enriched with a normatively structured world prior to the acquisition of a natural language which additionally resides in the mature human. In human infants, expression, or bringing a ‘world in view’, is not articulated via the medium of a natural language, true. However, the world can be brought into view through the understanding and enforcement of normative requirements. Hence, whilst these infants may not be minded in McDowell’s strict sense, pre-conceptual infants show a mindedness of the ‘we’. This appears to suggest that there is something distinctively human that may also provide the conditions for rationality, without being exhausted by rationality itself.

I will then address Dreyfus’ phenomenological absorption claim, specifically in relation to his ‘mindlessness’ - his absence of an ego in absorbed coping. I query how, if the absence of an ego is when we perform at our best, as the baseball player, as the driver, as the lecturer, and so on, then how do we ‘step out’ of this absorption and into reflection? Dreyfus, evidently, does not denounce our ability for self-reflection, as evidenced by his articulation of the phrasing of the human being as a

'part-time rational animal'. Proceeding along the argument of Dreyfus' absent ego, I address Dreyfus' argument for how we distinguish the human being from non-human animals. Dreyfus argues that human beings have, in distinction to non-human animals, which otherwise we are akin to in our absorption, a 'mineness'. However, this mineness experience is not qualitative; the mineness is of our affordances in our given context, rather than a self-acquaintance with the self. Let us recall that Dreyfus allows for no monitoring or mindedness during absorption. We are, therefore left with a non-qualitative phenomenology. However, I explore and query: what exactly is a non-qualitative phenomenology?

I will conclude Chapter Two by acknowledging that both Dreyfus and McDowell have strong points; however, there is an ontological gulf between the two philosopher's claims. Dreyfus and McDowell's claims, I argue, require a mediation to reconcile this gulf between conceptuality and existential phenomenology. I believe that this can be remedied through the lens of Helmuth Plessner's Philosophical Anthropology.

2.1 McDowell's Initiation

McDowell, as we have seen in the previous chapter, endeavours to reconcile mind and world, because, how we avoid the "sensitivity to real demands of reason looks spooky, unless we can reconstruct it from materials that are naturalistic in the relevant sense". To do this, we require an "*ordinary upbringing [that] can shape the actions and thoughts of human beings in a way that brings these demands in view*" (McDowell, 1996, 82 – my emphasis). McDowell attempts to resolve this issue via a generalised Aristotelian naturalism, with a particular focus on Aristotle's ethics, which is a "form of thought which is intrinsically human but which is nevertheless responsive to [...] demands (Wright 1996, 247). McDowell rests this on the concept of the *Bildung*, that of a second nature (though, outside of McDowell, there are other definitions). The 'ethical' is a domain of rational requirements which are there in any case, whether or not we are responsive to them, for "to feel the force of ethical demands is, then, constitutive of the ethical character one acquires through the proper ethical training, an ethical character that is therefore a second nature" (Forman 2012, 470). McDowell employs this notion for the initiation and attainment of conceptual capacities through this ethical upbringing:

When a decent upbringing initiates us into the relevant way of thinking, *our eyes are open to the very existence of this tract of the Space of Reasons*. Thereafter our appreciation of its detailed layout is indefinitely subject to refinement, in reflective scrutiny of our ethical thinking. (McDowell 1994, 82 – my emphasis).

As we can see here, then, this initiation does not just add a rational layer on top of proto-subjective experience; rather, it is a comprehensive transformation of experience. This initiation is a radical transformation of subjectivity, because under ethical considerations, an “ordinary upbringing can shape the actions and thoughts of human beings in a way that brings these demands into view”, for the “rational demands of ethics are autonomous - they don’t need validation or interpretation from outside specifically ethical thinking” (McDowell 1994 83). As stated, this is a generalised account of Aristotle's ethical upbringing and that of the practically wise person, the *phronimos* (the agent of *phronesis*). As Aristotle wrote:

...although the young may be experts in geometry and mathematics and similar branches of knowledge [*sophoi*], we do not consider that a young man can have Prudence [*phronimos*]. The reason is that Prudence includes a knowledge of particular facts, and this is derived from experience, which a young man does not possess; for experience is the fruit of years (Aristotle 1976, 1142a)

For McDowell, the ethical upbringing, or we can say initiation, of the *phronimos* equips her with embodied conceptual rationality, which is “not something that dictates to one’s nature from the outside” (McDowell 2001,192). Both McDowell and Dreyfus agree on the *phronimos* being an example *par excellence* of human action, in which in a given situation, “the unreflective action of this ethical expert somehow takes not only all relevant virtues into account (friendship, justice, etc.), but on top of that also the right time, the right way of acting, etc., and all this in relation to ourselves” (Rietveld 2010, 190). This practical wisdom cannot be expressed independently of the context in which *phronimos* is called to act (McDowell 2007,

340)⁷. However, for McDowell, in this reception of the *phronimos* of acting sensitively to a particular affordance that solicits her, she determines what is relevant to the particular situation based on the *phronimos*' conception of how to live herself; the way of upbringing that moves her to act to the affordance *x*, rather than *y*, immediately (this can also be seen to harken back to McDowell's frisbee example in the second chapter). Concepts that we have learnt to actively apply to such things as beliefs and judgement are drawn passively, then, into operation in lived experience. Hence one's upbringing, through one's socio-cultural enculturation and learning to be 'prudent', enables "one's sensitives to kinds of similarities between situations" (McDowell 1998, 64). As McDowell writes:

We [should] stop assuming that the virtuous person's judgement is the result of balancing reasons for and against. The view of a situation that he arrives at by exercising his sensitivity is one in which some aspect of the situation is seen as constituting a reason for acting in some way [...] (McDowell, 1998, 56)

For McDowell, "if we generalise the way Aristotle conceives the moulding of ethical character, we arrive at the notion of having one's eyes opened to reasons at large by acquiring a second nature" (McDowell 1994, 84). Hence, one does not produce a distance between mind and world; rather, the autonomy of the space of reasons is contingent on one's ethical upbringing, which is a thoroughly naturalised *second nature* (*Bildung*). As Wright summarises the comparisons of Aristotle and McDowell's approaches, they are that "*first*, ethical judgement is constrained by the contingencies of our life; *second*, that this only needs to be an ordinary, and hence not a mysterious process (without becoming 'spooky'), an ethical education to initiate people (infants) into the rational demands of ethics. And *thirdly*, "that correct ethical judgement is 'essentially within reach' of our ethical thinking" (Wright 2002, 248),

This second nature, an initiation into the space of reasons, then, is something humans acquire rather than innately have within the realm of natural causal-law, for

⁷ McDowell agrees with Heidegger's interpretation of the *phronimos*, quoting Heidegger, in that "it is precisely the achievement of *phronesis* to disclose the [individual] as acting now in the full situation within which he acts" (McDowell 2007, 340 quoting Heidegger 1962, 101).

this initiation is something that is a natural process, given an initiation into a linguistic community, in the maturation of human beings. In acquiring our second nature, we are initiated into a linguistic community through a “natural language [...a] language into which human beings are first initiated, [which] serves as a repository of tradition, a store of historically accumulated wisdom about what is a reason for what” (McDowell 1996, 126). The levy of ‘Rampant Platonism’, the acquisition of conceptual capacities, could be seen as a stepping back from the world, but McDowell avoids this critique for he stresses that this *Bildung* is natural through and through. This allows us to draw a distinction between the purely perceptual receptivity of infants and non-human animals, and the conceptually rational human within the space of reasons in a naturalistic concept. Therefore, we can say that the space of reasons is natural, but is not reducible down to causal-nomological law. These rational demands are autonomous, which means they do not need validation or interpretation outside of that which is ethical thinking. For McDowell, then, the ethical upbringing of the practically wise person through the sensibility of the *phronimos* draws the particular concepts into operation:

when faced with a particular situation requiring moral consideration, the impact of the particulars on the sensibility of the *phronimos* draws the relevant concepts into operation (Azadpur 2011, 31).

McDowell considers infants distinct to other animals in the sense that they have the ‘potential’ to be in the space of reasons; however, McDowell also emphasises that the human being remains an animal, for it is not released from its environment. However, as Sabina Lovibond notes, “humans alone develop beyond the stage of ‘enslavement to immediate biological imperatives’ (Lovibond 2009, 114). For humans, actuality (*ἐνέργεια*) is prior to potentiality (*δύναμις*) in “formula and in substance; and in time it is prior in one sense, and in another not” (Aristotle, 1976, 1049b 11–12). On one hand, everything that exists is caused and rendered intelligible by something that precedes it. On the other hand, as Aaron Jaffe notes, a “latent potential must itself be temporally prior to what comes to be actual. In the temporal register, and applied to humans, this potential would be the form that exists in the child before she has acquired conceptual rationality” (Jaffe 2016, 56). Our ethical upbringing, therefore, brings us into the space of reasons, hence enabling us

to have a particularly human normatively-structured view. As has been alluded to, we acquire these abilities to actively apply judgements or beliefs passively into operation in our experiences through our maturation, our initiation in which we acquire a second nature. This, therefore, allows McDowell to equate mindedness with initiated human beings, without causing a disjuncture between the space of reasons and space of the natural world, and falling into the Myth of the Given, or rampant Platonism. As McDowell writes:

[if] an individual human being is to realize her potential of taking her place in that succession, *which is the same thing as acquiring a mind*, the capacity to think and act intentionally, at all, the first thing that needs to happen is for her to be initiated into a tradition as it stands” (McDowell 1996, 126 - my italics).

Does this constitute mindedness, however? Or is there a limit to this conception of conceptual rationality and its joining with mindedness? I believe so. If to be a human being with a fully-fledged subjectivity, enabling a richly normatively structured world, is to be ‘minded’ through the initiation into a linguistic community (and thus a natural language), then we should find that infants, as McDowell argues, lack a richly normatively structure to the world, the *“ability to think and act intentionally, at all”* (McDowell 1996, 126). In accordance with McDowell, these infants are indistinguishable from the proto-subjectivity of non-human animals, barring potentiality. Is this so? Perhaps not. Whilst infants may lack an apperceptive ‘I’ as defined by McDowell, via the initiation into a linguistic community, they still have a *distinctively* human, and only human, capacity for a ‘we intentionality’ and a mimetic capacity, a social-cognitive and specifically human trait, that appears in infants at a younger age than that in which language acquisition, and hence earlier than when McDowell’s sense of ‘mindedness’, develops.

2.2 The Pre-Linguistic Community

The developmental psychologist, Michael Tomasello, has shown that the human being, even at the pre-linguistic age of below eighteen months, is distinct from other animals, in that we can imitate others, share attention with others, and understand that other humans have their own intentionality. Humans are a part of an

intersubjective, cooperative communication community. As he writes, “human cooperative communication is more complex than ape intentional communication, [...its] underlying social-cognitive infrastructure comprises not only skills for understanding individual intentionality but also skills and motivations for shared intentionality” (Tomasello 2010, 321). On this view, non-human animals we can say live in a bio-social environment, whilst humans live in a socio-cultural environment; a distinction between non-human animals of spontaneously joining in to an activity, and the genuine imitation of behaviour found in humans. For example, a non-human primate does not reflect or reason upon a pointing gesture, nor asks why someone else is pointing, for it is an imperative, a ‘go and get that for me’. However, whilst the notion of pointing to provide information in response to a want or desire is absent in non-human primates, it is very much apparent in human pre-linguistic infants (Moss 2013). Tomasello, in one study on infants, assessed, on the first test round, an experiment between an infant and adult’s expectations, comparing normative requirements (Tomasello 2008, 92-93, 321). In the first round, the infant passively observes an adult place magazines in a cabinet. On the second round, the adult expresses trouble opening a door because of carrying the handful of magazines. Intriguingly, in the third round, the infant anticipated what would happen, attempting to open the door for the adult in advance, showing where the magazines should be placed. As we can see, in this third round, the infant leads the way in this exercise, showing where the adult should put the magazines away before opening the door. This is an enforcement of normative rules. As Tomasello noted,

The child and adult develop mutual expectations about one another’s behaviour [...] the child ends up structuring the activity and even communicating to the adult something like “They go there”, meaning that in this activity, certain tasks are performed according to normative requirements. (Tomasello 2008, 93)

To stress, the infant is still in the ‘babble’ stage, and unable to employ the type of linguistic capacity that McDowell argues is the same as ‘mindedness’ via the attainment of a natural language. Yet, these very same infants are capable of a collaborative activity with an adult, for they “conclude that this is how it is done, this is how ‘we’ do it” (Tomasello 2008, 93). Contrary to McDowell’s argument that the

'minded' initiated are those "who are in charge of their thinking, standing ready to reassess what is a reason for what, and to change their responsive propensities accordingly" (McDowell 1996, 50), the pre-initiated infants have a normatively structured world, the sociocultural world, which "antedates any substantial skills with a conventional language" (Tomasello 2008, 323), thereby antedating an initiation in to McDowell's linguistic community. This suggests that this is a distinctly human pre-requisite for language in the first place. These pre-initiated infants can enforce normative requirements and direct behaviour, suggesting the 'reason for what' eludes a strictly rational claim. Hence, infants, differentiated from non-human animals, by what Tomasello terms their 'we-intentionality', appear to have a form of mindedness of a 'we', a normatively rich world of intersubjectivity. Linguistic based mindedness in McDowell's human being is an insufficient account. On the contrary, as shown, pre-linguistic infants, and their 'we-intentionality', exhibit a form of mindedness that eludes both non-human animals and that of language or rationality. As Shaun Gallagher writes, commenting on the intersubjective dimension of infants, resonating with my hitherto argument for Tomasello's 'we':

Just these kinds of activities, which seem basic, not only for understanding and imitating others, but for learning how to act and how to feel about that action, and *thus for the embodied and social acquisition of practical reason, do not disappear in later development, but remain active* and are enhanced across the variety of human intersubjective social experiences (Gallagher 2007, 209 – my emphasis).

McDowell's linguistic community displays a weakness, because a natural language is preceded by a distinctly human shared pre-linguistic world. This shared background of non-linguistic practices, the normatively structured 'we-intentionality' of pre-linguistic infants, enables the shared practices through which aspects of the world can be displayed. Language, then, in of itself, renders us "more and more remote from the immediate context (Olsen 2013, 67)", if we situate our analysis of infants under McDowell's strict lens of mindedness. As Olsen comments, on the contrary for Dreyfus, "linguistic expression [...] never itself helps to structurally articulate the 'referential whole' or our background familiarity and understanding of things" (Olsen 2013, 67). Based on his reading of into Heidegger's notion of *Das*

Man or 'The One', (as in, 'what one ought to do') Dreyfus' analyses 1970's Japanese and American cultures. Dreyfus notes the different cultures and their attributes that manifest in the children brought up in that culture, providing a normative structure, a distinct culture that manifests pre-linguistically via motor-intentional practices and imitation. As the "infants develop, American mothers encourage passionate gesturing and vocalising, while Japanese mothers are much more soothing and mollifying" (Dreyfus 2017, 47). This provides a culturally specific normative structure for the infant, in which American infants develop to be more aggressive; whilst Japanese infants develop to be more passive with a "sensitivity to harmony" (Dreyfus 2005, 4). This enculturation continues throughout life, with culture providing a background to our daily practices and ways of being, for "what constitutes the American baby as an American baby is its cultural style, and what constitutes the Japanese baby as a Japanese baby is its quite different cultural style" (Dreyfus 2005, 4). We have another form of second nature, according to Dreyfus, a cultural second nature, which does not entail conceptual rationality via an initiation into a linguistic community, yet is still distinctly human, for "such a pervasive and always operative ontological "second nature" opens a space of meaning that governs all forms of cultural coping" (Dreyfus 2013, 25).

To add a further argument against McDowell's linguistic community 'mindedness', we can see in the work of Merlin Donald (1993; 2001) the intersubjectivity of cognitive communities of human beings, a 'we'-community, which has its cognition shaped "by the demands of a communicative universe that was much larger than one contained inside a single brain and was instead provided by a community of brains", in which the "human cognitive was increasingly tethered to culture" (Donald 2001, 253-259). This all seems concordant with McDowell's idea of the linguistic *Bildung*, for we could argue that this communicative universe provides the appropriate upbringing of the proto-subjective infant into the linguistic community to be fully minded. However, Donald introduces the concept of 'mimesis'. This "mimetic capacity produces a layer of cultural interaction that is based entirely on a collective web of conventional, expressive nonverbal actions." (Donald 2001, 265). Mimetic skill is an important pre-requisite for language (both in the present and evolutionarily), Donald argues, in the symbolically structured sense, as the social organization of shared custom, shared attention and expression continued to become increasingly complex, in which mimetically intended expression would have

had an adaptive advantage which “created conditions that would have favoured a communication device of greater speed and power” (Donald 1993, 742). Therefore, Donald proposes, the pre-conditions of mimetic skill provided the fundamental level principles of highly complex symbolical speech to be possible, the “higher apparatus of speech depends on the basically mimetic ability of individuals to create rehearsable and retrievable vocal acts [...] *language per se is layered on top of a mimetically skilled phonological system*” (Donald 1993, 742 – my emphasis). For example, Donald employs studies of infants babbling in sign language environments. These infants who are deaf, growing up in a signing environment, mimed the motor principles behind signing, rather than the signs themselves; their “manual babbling” (Donald 1993, 743) reflecting the response, on the mimetic level, of repetitive motor actions. This manual or oral babbling, absent of reference in the linguistic sense, are representational in that the babbling patterns in response to their environment become not only just the elementary units of language, but the larger “mimetic envelope of expression” (Donald 1993, 743). What Donald posits can be compared with that of kind of motor-intentional action that we can see in Dreyfus’ sociocultural dimension of *Das Man*; practices of ‘waiting one’s turn’ when speaking, intonation of expression in response to another’s, and so on. Because this babbling, then, is free of linguistic symbolic reference, this appears to suggest, as Donald notes, that this mimetic adaptation evolved first, with linguistic symbolic reference, built upon the broader mimetic envelope, developing as a specialized subcategory of this mimetic skill. Donald termed this development as the ‘mimetic phase’, which, as have seen, is “[...] a layer of cultural interaction that is based entirely on a collective web of conventional, expressive nonverbal actions. Mimetic culture is the murky realm of eye contact, facial expressions, poses, attitude, body language, self-decoration, gesticulation, and tones of voice” (Donald 2001, 265). It is, to Donald, what “underlies all modern cultures and forms the most basic medium of human communication” (Donald 2001, 271). The ‘cognitive core’ of this mimesis is that of kinematic imagination, which is the basis of “*conscious* review and rehearsal, which are central to mimetic action” (Donald 2001, 271 – my emphasis), which involves a sequence of operations. First, the action is generated; second, one observes the consequences; third, one remembers them; fourth, one proceeds to review the initial action through one’s imagination and, finally, one then generates this action again, altered by the review. Hence, action that is generated is under constant review, in

which each renewal of the cycle of the action is intended to avoid the negative impacts of the previous actions – refining them. This, again, suggests there is a distinctively human capacity that eludes and precludes McDowell’s rationality. Because McDowell limits mindedness, and hence the human being, to her initiation into a linguistic community, I propose that he fails to address the pre-linguistic mimetic skills that predominate the mindedness of the ‘we’ in both infant and adult.

In the afterword to *Mind and World* McDowell acknowledges the need for a transitional account that puts non-human animals on a spectrum with the human adult in that “we are animals too, not beings with a foothold outside the animal kingdom [...] [i]f someone wants to work out a conception of orientation towards that [which would make] the language of world-directedness available for talking about the mentality of brutes, that is, so far, perfectly all right” (McDowell 1996, 183). Lovibond notes that to situate ‘spontaneity’ in a naturalistic setting, to acknowledge that human beings had evolved and hence have features taken up by a Hegelian process is that which “converts successive quantitative changes into a qualitative one, into a form of life marked by this unique new attribute of a *second* nature [...] a store of *historically* accumulated [and hence culturally informed wisdom] about what is a reason for what” (Lovibond 2009, 120). Now, as I have displayed earlier and, let us restate, in relation to infant we-intentionality in which certain tasks are performed according to normative requirements; one could argue that we see no issue with McDowell and we-intentionality, closeness and mimesis, for they all share normative requirements such as the normative enforcement by infants and so on. However, the emphasis must be made that these *specifically human traits* are provided on a pre-linguistic, pre-conceptual background and are, hence, not via an initiation into a linguistic community. I would suggest, then, that McDowell does not go far enough by restricting mindedness to the attainment of a natural language. In the absence of a pre-conceptual, pre-linguistic account of the human being, we are left with an incomplete account of the human being, left with an Absent We.

2.3 Dreyfus’ Absent Ego

Let us return to Dreyfus’ absorbed coping claim, in which, as stated, we only apply an ‘I think’, self-conscious reflection, back onto the subject when pulled out of our absorbed coping. However, if in absorption there is no self-monitoring and no

ego, then how do we have a sense of individuation and ownership of ourselves? Dreyfus responds that we can see our individuation via the context of one's own particular way of being-in-the-world, say as a student or a musician, a 'mineness'. In his reading of Heidegger and mineness, Dreyfus writes:

My mineness cannot be like my private feelings such as my headache, the kinaesthetic feeling of moving my body, or some private sense of who I am. For Heidegger, *Dasein's* mineness is the public stand it takes on itself--on what it is to be this *Dasein*-by way of its comportment (Dreyfus 1991, 20).

Therefore, Dreyfus' mineness has no 'private feeling' or 'private sense of who I am', as it is in the state of absorption, egoless. Yet, as Dan Zahavi points out, "Dreyfus insists that this [mineness] has nothing to do with the presence of some form of (even marginal) self-awareness. In fact, Dreyfus opts for what might be called a non-experiential reading of 'mineness'" (2013). As we have seen, Dreyfus sees any form of self-monitoring as incongruous to absorbed coping, as being incompatible with obtaining a maximum 'grip' on the world and, as is evident in the works of Dreyfus, Heidegger's phenomenology plays a critical role in this conception of absorption. So, if the embodied coping of the agent and world collapses, in which, at the ground level we are directly merged into a field of 'attractive and repulsive forces', there is hence no phenomenology of embodied coping in which there is intentional content that mediates between mind and world (Dreyfus 2013, 28). As Dreyfus notes, quoting Merleau-Ponty:

The orator does not think before speaking, nor even whilst speaking; his speech is his thought. The end of the speech or text will be the *lifting of a spell*. It is at this stage that thoughts on the speech or text will be able to arise (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 209).

In these kinds of scenarios of the absorbed copier it is only this embodied background coping that supports the foreground/top floor conceptuality of McDowell. As Dreyfus notes, in McDowell's 'pervasiveness of conceptual rationality' claim, he moves "from the reasonable claim that attentive experience with its attendant ego

is *sometimes exercised*” to mindedness in the strongest sense in that “that this capacity is *always operative*” (Dreyfus 2007b, 376).

However, as we have seen previously with Dreyfus’ account of skill acquisition (and later motor-intentional absorption and mindlessness), this expert (and absorbed) coping is done “without calculating and comparing alternatives [...] what must be done, simply is done” (Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1986, 253). In attributing an ‘I do’ to our experiences, Dreyfus argues that McDowell distances the subject from the world, akin to a Cartesian split. Dreyfus assumes that McDowell’s conceptual rationality is equatable to the rule following of the beginner skilful copier or self-monitoring ego. Dreyfus argues that, in our master or everyday embodied coping we are solicited, as William Gibson proposed, by “affordances” (Gibson 1977, 66; 1979), which offers the performative possibility of some given activity. These solicitations we need not be aware of, for the object that offers affordances, as Heidegger terms it, ‘withdraws’. We are directly drawn by the solicitation, without having to go through a conceptual-detour to it, in order to achieve our ‘optimal grip’ on the situation, for as Dreyfus remarks, “it would be a pun to think that realising practical capacities in my coping requires that I realise what I am doing” (Dreyfus 2013, 29). This is a “zone of openness and of presence [...] that is intra-mundane instead of intra-mental” (Olafson 2015, 96). Crucially, there is no self-monitoring when absorbed, just the solicitation, for “in fully absorbed coping, mind and world cannot be separated [...] we are directly merged into a field of attractive and repulsive forces” (Dreyfus 2013, 27-28). The presence of an ‘I do’ is not concordant with the phenomenology of our embodied coping⁸ for no ego is present. For Dreyfus, however, though there is no operative pervasive capacity of experience of the ‘I do’ in embodied coping, because “[w]hen *Dasein* is totally merged with the world there is no place for *content*, neither *experiential* nor propositional” (Dreyfus 2013, 29). This is what we could say to be the context of the solicitations that afford us and our way of being, as *Dasein* is characterized by a being whose Being is an issue for it. For Dreyfus, then, each person’s life “is pervaded by a certain style of stand on its own being, ‘*mineness*” (Dreyfus 2013, 30 – my emphasis), rather than ‘I do’ in McDowell’s sense. Heidegger, on Dreyfus’ reading, does not see *Dasein* as having a passive ego in embodied coping,

⁸ Dreyfus makes it clear this is not in relation to deliberative action (2013, 29),

For example, when I respond to my chair by sitting in it, it is not just my chair that solicits sitting. Rather, it is my chair at the table where my computer is with my books scattered around it. My coping skills are also taking account of the time (a time for work), the ambient lighting (sufficient for work), and the whole room (nothing wrong that would disturb work). *My world is thus pervaded by the style of hard work*. Only what enters my world, either by helping me work or by getting in the way of my work, counts for me. (Dreyfus 2013, 30 – Dreyfus' emphasis).

But what is it that distinguishes humans from other animals if we are to account for the richly, normatively structured lives of the human being? As hitherto noted, Dreyfus responds that “[...] even though there need be no ‘I’ in my experience of coping, my activities as opposed to that of nonhuman animals is pervaded by ‘mineness’ (2013, 30). An instant response to Dreyfus' phenomenology of mineness, would be the question of how can we speak of a phenomenology in which the ego, the experience of experiencing, is not operative and hence not qualitative? As Zahavi notes, “Dreyfus insists that this [mineness] has nothing to do with the presence of some form of (even marginal) self-awareness” (Zahavi 2013, f64). Hence, Dreyfus leans heavily on Heidegger's reading of mineness to show that, even in the absence of an ego, one has a sense of mineness of self through the particular and individual context of *Dasein*.

What is a phenomenology defined by the absence of an ego? As Zahavi also queries, “how can one speak meaningfully of a *phenomenology* of mindless coping [...] if the coping is completely unconscious?” (Zahavi 2013, 321-322). Perhaps it depends on the sort of phenomenology that we have in mind. For example, Daniel Dennett's heterophenomenology, which is the third person scientific method applied to consciousness, in which “nothing other than the scientific method [is] applied to the phenomena of consciousness” (Dennett 1993, 50). It works as “the bridge between the subjectivity of human consciousness and the natural sciences.” (Dennett 2007, 249). The subject's utterances, which are “the raw, uninterpreted data” (Dennett 2003, 21), are conveyed to the heterophenomenologist, and the subject's utterances are translated to *beliefs*. In treating intentional states as beliefs, which have a truth value, and hence can be either true *or* false, these intentional

experiences are treated in the third person and can be compiled into a 'catalogue' of beliefs. Dennett makes the point that rather than philosophical zombies existing in a possible world, we are all zombies already in *this* world. To Dennett, we are absent of the 'what it is like' experience of consciousness. As Dreyfus & Kelly note, Dennett's "motive as a behaviourist is clear since, once he converts all subjective experience into beliefs, he can then argue that beliefs are not mental content but are interpreted as such by the intentional stance" (2007, 48). Intentional experience is treated as a useful fictional abstraction, resulting in a third person ontology of consciousness and intentional irrealism, which, handsomely covers the ground – *all the ground* – of human consciousness, doing justice to *all the data...*" (Dennett 2003, 19 – my italics). To continue:

You are not authoritative about what is happening to you, but only about what seems to be happening to you, and we are giving you total, dictatorial authority over the account of how it seems to you, about what it is like to be you
(Dennett 1991, 84 — my italics)

Perhaps Dreyfus and Kelly are employing a form of Dennett's heterophenomenology in absorbed coping as Zahavi suggests (2013, 322)? Yet, Dreyfus & Kelly addressed Dennett's heterophenomenology in their co-authored paper, "Heterophenomenology, Heavy Handed Sleight of Hand" (Dreyfus and Kelly 2007). For Dreyfus & Kelly, Dennett both under and over-generates intentionality. As we have seen hitherto in Dreyfus' absorbed coping, instead of a mindedness, in which we step back to reflect, our primordial way of being is absorbed coping, in which there is not the experience of belief, "just the solicitation" (Dreyfus & Kelly 2007, 54). Attributing beliefs, therefore, as the heterophenomenologist does, only results in the under-generation of intentionality, neglecting and over-looking the motor-intentional primordial way of being of the skilful coper (Dreyfus & Kelly 2007, 48). For Dreyfus, there are other modes of experience beyond belief: that of an absorbed coping. As Dreyfus writes, our Being-in-the-World and our openness to it allows for the "capacity to step back and criticize any particular proposition about what is the case and any reason for one's actions" (Dreyfus 2013, 22). Dreyfus (2006, 43-49; Dreyfus & Wrathall 2014, 117) appeals to a quote by Merleau-Ponty that "in perception we do not think the object and we do not think ourselves thinking it, we are given over to the object and

we merge into this body which is better informed than we are about the world, and about motives we have and means at our disposal” (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 277) in what Merleau-Ponty refers to as being a *part* of the world (1962; 1968). Yet, how do we, so to speak, ‘step back’ into reflection, if this merging into the body ‘is better informed than we are about the world’? Dreyfus writes:

Of course, the coping going on is mine in the sense that the coping can be interrupted at any moment by a transformation that results in an experience of *stepping back* from the flow of current coping. I then retrospectively attach an “I think” to the coping and take responsibility for my actions. 20 (Dreyfus 2007a, p. 356).

Yet, as Maarten Coolen queries, “what kind of experience would force humans to give up their being absorbed in responding to solicitations that stem from affordances they come across in their world?” (Coolen 2014, 190). If no ego is present, and hence no experience is present in our absorbed coping, then how do we ‘step out’ and detach into reflection? If there is nothing there in the first place, given the complete absence of self-monitoring and an ego in absorption, it almost seems like phenomenological alchemy to postulate an ego, an ‘I think’, that appears once one steps back to take responsibility for one’s actions a ‘something from nothing’. This, McDowell levies against Dreyfus as ‘The Myth of the Disembodied Intellect’ (2012) for, as he remarks, “[o]nce I have separated me—the thinking thing I am—from this body, it is too late to try to fix things by talking about the former merging into the latter” (McDowell 2012, 350). In distancing himself from McDowell’s conceptual rationality, Dreyfus falls back into the pitfalls of Cartesianism by separating the mind from body. It gets worse, however, for as Jonardon Ganeri raises, this distinction between the egoless absorption and conceptual intentionality results into a return of the Myth of the Given, “creating an unbridgeable gulf between the mindlessness of motor intentionality and the fully propositional articulation of conceptual and linguistic structure” (Ganeri 2017, 88).

The question returns, then: can Dreyfus speak meaningfully of experience, particularly *qualitative* experience - a qualitative phenomenology - when the affordances offered solicited a *Dasein* is absent of qualitative experiential awareness? For Dreyfus, there is “just the solicitation” (Dreyfus & Kelly 2007, 54) in

experience, in which affordances “draw activity out of us only in the circumstances in which we are not paying attention to the activity they solicit” (Dreyfus & Kelly 2007, 52). If mindedness is the ‘enemy’ of absorbed coping (Dreyfus 2007, 353), then how do we speak qualitatively about a phenomenology if we are not paying attention to the activity that solicits us. However, as Zahavi notes, a mindedness that permeates even in absorption is not necessarily antithetical to Dreyfus’ phenomenology. For instance, under Heidegger’s conception of mineness, one is “always somehow acquainted with myself” (Heidegger 1962, 251) experiencing one’s experiences as *my* experiences. When experiencing something, one’s self is still present, there is an apperceptive element to one’s experiences, even when absorbed, an ‘I do’ is experienced qualitatively. Hence, a directness towards an affordance, for instance, is “not to be understood as an intentional experience that only gains a reference to the self afterwards” (Zahavi 2013, 327) as would be the case in Dreyfus’ disruption into self-reflection. Rather, the self discloses itself in its directedness, as “[...] every experiencing is characterised by the fact that “I am always ‘somehow acquainted with myself’” (Heidegger 1962, 251). So, for Heidegger, the sense of mineness is an experience of being acquainted with oneself - a qualitative experience, even when ‘absorbed’ in the flow. There is always a self-acquaintance with oneself, even minimally, thereby implying a minimal sense of self which still experiences qualitatively, rather than automatically. Dreyfus refers to a quote by Sartre, illustrating the absence of an ‘I’ or ego when ‘plunged into the world of objects’:

When I run after a streetcar, when I look at the time, when I am absorbed in contemplating a portrait, there is no *I*. . . . I am then plunged into the world of objects . . . it is they which present themselves . . . with attractive and repellent qualities -- but *me*, I have disappeared (Sartre 1957)

Dreyfus, attempts to explain the ‘stepping back’ from this situation of Sartre’s absent ‘I’, in what he even concedes is a “very sketchy” explanation of the transition from absorbed coping to reflection via a gradual disruption in our absorbed activities, “a gradual changeover from absorbed coping [...] that requires a reflective ego in order to take stock of and adjust the situation so as to allow re-immersion into mindless coping” (Olsen 2013, 137). But, if mindless coping is an egoless non-qualitative experience in which the mineness is only the particular context of a specific *Dasein*,

in how we obtain our optimal grip on the world, it seems superfluous to have a reflective ego added on top if this is how we perform when we are at our best. This suggests, then, that Dreyfus' absent ego is inadequate to account for the richness of the human being. Additionally, Zahavi (2013, 327) contradicts Dreyfus' argument premised on Sartre's work. Zahavi quotes the work of Sartre's later works, in which he writes that through "this self-consciousness we ought to consider not as a new consciousness, but at the only mode of existence which is possible for a consciousness of something [...] consciousness is self-consciousness. It is this same notion of self which must be studied, for it defines the very being of consciousness" (Sartre 1956, 76). Under this reading, then, we can see that only a being with this sense of qualitative mineness is able "to form concepts about herself, consider her own aims, ideals, and aspirations as her own, construct stories about herself, and plan and execute actions for which she will take responsibility" (Gallagher & Zahavi 2005 quoted in Fuchs 2014, 273). This thereby allows for a qualitative phenomenology, and additionally enabling 'something' to step back, rather than the absence of an ego altogether. This, therefore, suggests a need for an account of the human being in which she is concordant with Dreyfus' 'flow', whilst also being able to step back in to reflection.

Conclusion to Chapter Two

It appears that we are left at an impasse between Dreyfus' 'part-time rational' absorbed copier, and McDowell's conceptual rationality. As Dreyfus himself conceded:

It seems that the conceptualists can't give an account of how we are involved in the world, while the phenomenologists can't give an account for what makes it possible for us to step back and observe it (Dreyfus 2007b, 364)

Dreyfus, as we have seen, cannot explain how human beings, in distinction to non-human animals, can step out of our absorbed coping into reflection. Humans "have the capability of distance themselves from the world they inhabit [...] adopting an attitude in which they can distinguish objective features in their background" (Coolen 2014, 112), and this is something that is neglected from Dreyfus' absorption claim.

As Coolen notes, we are “in need of a philosophical account of how human embodiment differs radically from the animal way of being embodied (Coolen 2014, 123), for Dreyfus, in his own words, “owes an account of how our involved, situated experience comes to be transformed so that we experience context-free self-sufficient substances with detachable properties – McDowell’s world of facts, features and data. Merleau-Ponty promised what he called the genesis of objective truth, but he never produced one. (Dreyfus 2007b, 364). On the other side of the debate, McDowell in his claim for the initiation of infants into a linguistic *Bildung*, does not address the pre-linguistic ‘we’ of infants and adults alike and the mimetic pre-conditions for rationality and language. Conceptual rationality does not exhaust subjectivity or mindedness. Given this account that situates mindedness before language, McDowell cannot explain what enables us to ‘step in’. Furthermore, given the issues between the sharing of conceptual form link between unreflective action and reflection, we are faced, again, with an issue of how to explain how we ‘step in’ to the world. Therefore, echoing Zahavi, we need “an alternative and better understanding of what experience and subjectivity amount to” (Zahavi 2013, 334). It seems that what is required is we need to further refine the human being in light of Dreyfus and McDowell’s separate claims, for, to echo Coolen, “we have to find an answer to these questions without falling prey to the fallacy of taking humans as animals whose essential feature is a mental capacity to reflect” (2014, 123).

In the next chapter I will provide a synchronic, phenomenological account of the human being, through the philosophical anthropologist, Helmuth Plessner’s, notion of ‘eccentric positionality’. To be a ‘person’, Plessner argues, is to have an eccentric positionality, where one is modulating between being the lived body and the body-as-object. Under this ‘eccentric’ analysis, I will re-address some of the hitherto issues that were encountered with Dreyfus and McDowell. Additionally, employing psychopathological analysis of the experiences of people with schizophrenia, I intend to illustrate Plessner’s eccentric positionality through an analysis of its fragility that can be reflected by Dreyfus and McDowell’s claims, showing that a reconciliation can be made between the two philosophers that better captures the richness of the human being.

Chapter Three

Dreyfus-McDowell and Human Eccentricity

Ever since the awakening of my philosophical thinking, the question “what is the human being and what is his place in being?” has occupied me more fundamentally than any other question I have dealt with.

- Max Scheler

-

I looked just like every other child, but inside I was different. It is as if I am another creature that somehow ended up inside a human body

- Anon. Person with Schizophrenia

Let us begin this final chapter by returning to Dreyfus' concession:

It seems that the conceptualists can't give an account of how we are involved in the world, while the phenomenologists can't give an account for what makes it possible for us to step back and observe it (Dreyfus 2007a, 364)

Now, given this impasse, the 'ontological gulf' between the conceptual rationality of McDowell, and the existential phenomenology of Dreyfus, it would seem appropriate to try and find a way to mediate between these two claims. Both have a point. However, we still need to explain why, as an animal amongst other animals, we have the unique privilege of stepping in and stepping out of the world. Hubert Dreyfus cannot explain how, in absorption, one 'steps back' into reflection. John McDowell is required to explain elements that elude his conceptual rationality, such as, first, the pre-linguistic 'we'-intentionality of infants; second, Donald's mimetic capacity that underlies human experience; and, lastly, elements of experience, such as the fine-grainedness of colour perception that elude both general concepts and demonstrative concepts. Where do we look for this reconciliation? As Lenny Moss notes, "[w]hat this dialogue between a 'conceptualist' and a phenomenologist has exposed but [has] not been able to resolve is exactly the fundamental question of philosophical anthropology. How as an animal amongst other animals, and yet

distinguished from other animals, are we built differently?" (Moss n.d: 1). Dreyfus and McDowell have not resolved the question of what is the human being. In this third chapter, I will introduce the philosophical anthropology of Helmuth Plessner. For Plessner, rather than a human being being the rational animal or the absorbed copier, she instead is a combination of both: she has an 'eccentric positionality'. In this eccentric positionality, the human being is continuously modulating between the *lived body (Leib)* and the *body-as-object (Körper)*. Her eccentric positionality is the perspective from which she is both. Plessner argues that due to our eccentricity, differentiating ourselves from non-human animals, "[t]he nature of human beings is from the very beginning an artificial one" (Plessner GSV, 310). Our artificiality is mediated via culture, the *Mitwelt* of the 'I' and 'we'. I propose that, through an analysis of Dreyfus' issue of a non-qualitative phenomenology, and the equating of it with over-emphasising the lived body, and, additionally, given an analysis of McDowell's non-exhaustive account of rationality, we can see that both philosophers fail to mediate the balance of the human being required in Plessner's eccentric positionality. In the latter half of this chapter, having proposed a synchronic account of the human being via Plessner, I aim to show that the vulnerabilities of personhood, and hence the fragility of eccentric positionality, can be seen through a psychopathological analysis of people with schizophrenia. This fragility of eccentricity additionally illuminates the issues of the non-qualitative phenomenology of Dreyfus and the absent 'we' of McDowell which are reflected in the psychopathology of people with this disorder.

3.1 Helmuth Plessner's Eccentric Positionality.

Helmuth Plessner (1928; 1941 1963; 1967; 1970) critiqued his contemporary existential phenomenologists⁹, by arguing that, in their fierce opposition to Cartesianism (sans Husserl), they miss the fact that we are both beings that are a body and also have a body: an inner and outer. For the phenomenologist, however, "the cleft between 'inner' and 'outer' does not appear at all" (Plessner 1928,

⁹ One would assume that this would be primarily in relation to Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* due to its proximity of publication with Plessner's own works, for there is little evidence of direct engagement with Merleau-Ponty's works, despite, on the converse, Merleau-Ponty alluding to Plessner's work (see Coolen 2014). One would also presume that this would not be in relation to Edmund Husserl, given his own form of Cartesianism.

30-31). Plessner's unique perspective is that all living beings are characterised by forming boundaries (*Grenze*) and by the crossing of these boundaries (*Grenzverkehr*). Living beings have a specific relationship to their boundary, what is termed a 'positionality'. A living beings' positionality has a link to both sides of its boundary, the inner and the outer which is termed as a 'double aspectivity' (*Doppelaspektivität*) (Plessner 1975, 138f). Let us now draw out this idea by showing the positionality of plants and non-human animals before turning to Plessner's conception of human beings. A plant has an 'open positionality', in the sense that it has no relationship to its positionality. This means that neither the inside, nor the outside of the boundary, has a centre, for "the plant is characterised by a boundary which has no one or nothing on either side, neither subject nor object" (de Mul 2014, 16; Plessner GS V, 282f). Non-human animals, however, have a centre ('closed positionality') and hence have a relationship to their own positionality. Non-human animal organisms have a centric organisation, which means that its "boundary is mediated by a centre, which at a physical level can be localised in the nervous system, and at the psychic level is characterised by awareness of the environment" (de Mul 2014, 16). The non-human animal, then, is distinct from the plant in that it is 'in' its body.

Differentiating herself from both plants and non-human animals, the human being not only has a boundary mediated by a centre, localised in both the physical and phenomenological, but she also has an awareness and relationship with her centre, what is termed as a 'second mediation'. Human beings have an awareness of their centre of experience, which Plessner terms as 'eccentric', for "[e]ccentrically positioned, he stands there where he stands, and at the same time he does not stand there where he stands" (Plessner 1975, 342 quoted in Coolen 2014, 120). Therefore, "Man not only lives (*Lebt*) and experiences his life (*erlebt*) but he also experiences his experience of life" (Plessner GS V, 364). As Moss notes, "[t]he aim of Plessner's anthropology was to find a mind/body neutral language that could, in terms simultaneously empirically and phenomenological [be] meaningful, locate human beings amongst the continuum of lived organisms and yet also pick out the differentiate of their organismic being" (Moss 2007, 147). However, as Plessner wrote, as an eccentric being "man is not in an equilibrium, he is without a place, he stands outside time in nothingness, he is characterized by a constitutive homelessness (*ist konstitutiv heimatlos*) in its eccentricity. He always still has to

become 'something' and create an equilibrium for himself" (Plessner GS V, 385). We can see this in the distinction between a *World (Welt)* and the environment-surround (*Umwelt*) of Max Scheler et al (Scheler 2003, 39-45; Uexküll 1987), which are "biological foundations that lie at the very epicentre of the study of both communication and signification in the human [and non-human] animal" (Sebeok 1976, 194). Different organisms can have different *Umwelten* (the world that is experienced by an organism), whilst sharing the same environment. However, for the human being, the *Welt* is "its unity, its coherence, its interdependence and as such its intrinsic normativity" (Moss n.d, 5). It is in the alienation from one's *Umwelt* that humans distinctively become open to the World, resulting in a potential space of subjective openness. This is how human beings are 'artificial by nature'. The human being has a relationship to a *Welt*, rather than an *Umwelt*, by its specific positionality of relating to its centre. This is to experience one's experiences and thus become open to the world. For Plessner, the human being has three 'worlds', what Jos de Mul terms the "tripartite determinate of human existence" (de Mul 2014, 16). These three worlds are the 'inner world' (*Innenwelt*), the shared 'socio-cultural world' (*Mitwelt*), and the 'outer world' (*Aussenwelt*). The inner world is comprised of both 'soul' (*Seele*), the source of our psychic life, and 'lived experience' (*Erlebnis*), which one could view as the theatre where the psychic life takes place. The world of the *Mitwelt*, has an 'I' (*Ich*), the participant in culture and the 'We' (*Wir*), which is one who is in and is collectively shaping culture. As Majorie Grene notes in her foreword to Plessner's *Laughing and Crying* (1970), "it is our eccentric position that gives to our existence the ambiguity, of necessity and freedom, contingency and significance, which it characteristically displays" (Grene 1970, xii).

3.2 Laughing, Crying and Language

Following on from this discussion of the *Mitwelt*, the shared, cultural world, let us return to McDowell's argument for the acquisition of conceptual-rational capacities through the initiation of human infants into a linguistic community. As McDowell has claimed, conceptual rationality is pervasive in our lives insofar as our lives are *distinctly human*. He has argued that an infant, one who is proto-subjective, is initiated into a linguistic community, and it is only when she is initiated into this linguistic community, by acquiring a natural language, and consequently ennobled

with a fully-fledged subjectivity, that she can be said to be truly minded. Yet, as we have seen in the second chapter, regarding mimesis and infant ‘we intentionality’, it appears, to echo Donald, that “[t]he quality of thoughts can be improved with language. But thoughts do not start there or end there, nor are they judged there” (Donald 2001, 265, 277). Mimesis provides the conditions for McDowell’s linguistic community and conceptual-rationality, without being linguistic and conceptual in of itself. Mindedness, it appears, precedes language and, thereby, by extension, McDowell’s conceptual rationality. As Moss¹⁰ notes the human being’s “socio-cultural existence is first of all a kind of collectivity of mind. [...] Prior to the individuation of identities and self-consciousness” (Moss 2007, 142). On a reading of Merleau-Ponty, we can see an account of this intersubjective significance to the expressivity of the body found in pre-linguistic, and hence ‘uninitiated’, infant human beings:

A fifteen month-old infant opens his mouth when I playfully take one of his fingers in my mouth and pretend to bite it [...] “Biting” has an immediate intersubjective significance for him. He perceives his intentions in his body, perceives my body with his own, and thereby perceives my intentions in his body (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 368).

Hence, the human being, the adult that McDowell claims is ‘minded with a pervasively conceptual rationality, cannot be exhaustively characterized within the confines of his linguistic community. It appears there is a limit to reason in the human being. As Joachim Fischer notes, “Philosophical Anthropology, by contrast (to a linguistic turn) takes the process of life as its starting point, from whose break in continuity language springs as just one medium among others to bridge the divide (Fischer 2009, 169). Language, then, is an offshoot, rather than the constitutive stem of the human being. As hitherto noted, humans live simultaneously in three worlds:

¹⁰ Moss (2013; 2015) provides a diachronic account of the human being, the ‘Hybrid Hominin’, in which mindedness was initially absent in the individual, but rather there was a ‘Groupish’ psychology of mindedness (Freud 1959): the Hominin Group. This is what Moss terms as a first detachment from the surround. The Hominin Group set the conditions and normative requirements for a second detachment, the partial individuation of the Hominin from the Hominin Group. This resulted in a human being both a part of the Group and also the partially individuated ‘I’, what Moss terms the ‘Hybrid Hominin’.

the inner world (*Innenwelt*), an outer world (*Aussenwelt*) and a shared, cultural world (*Mitwelt*). The mutual world, the *Mitwelt*, is, as Phillip Honenberger notes, a world “correlated to the world wherein person live with (*Mit*) [...] split between awareness of oneself as an individual and unique and awareness of oneself as sharing in a common and interchangeable status or experience [...]” (Honenberger 2015, 15). Hence, there is an ‘I’ (*Ich*) distinguished from other individuals; yet, one also is like other individuals, a ‘We’ (*Wir*). As Scheler further notes, the *essential* character of human consciousness is such that the community is in some sense implicit in every individual, and that man is not only part of society, but that society and the social bond are an essential part of himself. (Scheler 2009, 229-230)

To return to McDowell, he has argued that “[c]reatures without conceptual capacities lack self-consciousness and – this is part of the same package – experience of objective reality” and thus infants “do not have the spontaneity of the understanding” (Lovibond 2008, 113), for, to recall, proto-subjective infants only have a ‘potential’. Lacking the ‘rational response to the deliverances of experience’, for proto-subjective infants, we do not have the idea of rational response which requires subjects “who are in charge of their thinking, standing ready to reassess what is a reason for what, and to change their responsive propensities accordingly” (McDowell 1996, 114). This response to reasons, as we have seen, is brought about through the initiation into a natural language, a linguistic community. Yet, I have proposed that there are pre-conditions to conceptual-rationality that are not themselves rational in the linguistic and conceptual sense. Furthermore, we are shown by Plessner particular instances of a human being’s experience that is irrevocably inexpressible in language. For instance, in Plessner’s conception of laughing and crying, we cannot reduce the moments of this crying and laughter down to propositional, linguistic articulation. To laugh, is to laugh ‘about something’; yet the awareness of this ‘something’, is something that is the reason for our laughter; “[i]t is not my body but I who laugh [...] and for a reason, ‘about something’” (Plessner LW 227/LC 25). One could argue, in the same vein as that of McDowell, that our rational capacities, enabled by our enculturation and initiation into our linguistic community, allows us to retroactively apply the ‘I do’ to past actions – the past action and cause of laughter, for instance. However, to unpack this point, let us requote from the first chapter of this paper regarding the sharing of conceptual form in the exercise of conceptual

capacities in both unreflective and reflective action, in which McDowell's argument is that:

what is important is this: if an experience is world disclosing [...], *all* its content is present in a *form* in which [...] it is suitable to constitute contents of conceptual capacities (McDowell 2013b, 319).

Yet, laughing and crying cannot be propositionally articulated and to retroactively reflect upon an unreflective action, such as laughter, does not mean this reflection is exhaustive of the act, nor is it linguistically articulable. As Matthias Schloßberger notes, what is proposed (by those such as McDowell) to be graspable in thought and language is ungraspable, for "[e]ven though they can relate to it as an object, they are not in complete control of it, as phenomena such as laughing and crying illustrate" (Schloßberger (2014, 307).

3.3 Disrupting Dreyfus' Flow

Let us return to Dreyfus and his issue of the absence of a qualitative phenomenological mineness when in absorption. Dreyfus stated that "[w]hen *Dasein* is totally merged with the world, there is no place for content, neither experiential nor propositional – there is nothing in any sense inner" (2013, 29; Dreyfus 2006, 117). Dreyfus endorsed and referred to Merleau-Ponty to articulate his absorbed coping claim, that "in perception we do not think the object and we do not think ourselves thinking it, we are given over to the object and we merge into this body which is better informed than we are about the world, and about motives we have and means at our disposal" (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 227). Yet, as I queried, how do we step back from this absorption if the body is 'better informed than we are about the world'? What allows us to access and to thematise what the body knows, enabling us to step back into reflection. For the eccentricity of the human being, as Plessner's third anthropological law states (Plessner 1975), the human being is "[e]ccentrically positioned, he stands there where he stands, and at the same time he does not stand there where he stands" (Plessner 1975, 342 quoted in Coolen 2014, 120). To simplify this, Plessner's quote can be viewed, from the perspective of the body, as the constant tension between *having a body* and *being a body*, never being just one,

nor the other, thus being able to always take a stance from the objectural perspective of the body-as-object or the lived body.

As Dreyfus wrote, in our absorption we still have the “capacity to step back and criticize any particular proposition about what is the case and any reason for one’s actions” and “[...] a primordial non-conceptual mode of coping on the basis of which the conceptual world makes sense” (Dreyfus 2013, 21-22). Yet, from Plessner’s formulation of the human being as eccentric, we can begin to reconcile Dreyfus’ resignatory response to how, in distinction to other creatures, human beings are able to step back from their environment. As shown, under Plessner, we have an ‘in-betweenness’ via our eccentric positionality. For example, I feel a pain, the lived experience of pain through the perspective of the lived body, my lived body is attuned directly to its environment, through its mode of appearance, an “environmental intentionality”, which as Krüger notes (2014), is a term that Merleau-Ponty later adopts. On an analysis of Plessner, however, we can see that he argues that the characteristic human mode of being in the world connected with eccentric positionality forbids us from leading a life in which we experience our own body exclusively in the sort of absorbed coping that Dreyfus propounds. For, as well as being the lived body, I also take up the objectural stance, that it is, say, ‘a wrist that is broken’, to my body. As another example, we could see this objectural stance as taking a mediating route through scientific representation of the objectural perspective of diagnosing my body as having a distal radius fracture. As this is a psychophysical unity, the eccentric position means that one always strives to find a centre, but is in perpetual oscillation between the two positions of the lived body and the body-as-object. This psychophysical unity can be taken to its extreme, as illustrated by Frederik Jacobus Johannes Buytendijk, in that, during one’s experience of pain, one is “being stricken in his utmost intimate unity, his psycho-physical naturalness, through which the ego comes in conflict with its own body, whereas it nevertheless remains bound to the body in all its painfulness (Buytendijk 1943, 170).

Furthermore, as hitherto quoted by Coolen on his analysis of Plessner, “our specific eccentric openness to the world forbids our body to merge fully with its role of mediated coping. Therefore, we can always be thrown out of the flow of our absorbed coping, thus being forced to step back and reflect”. (Coolen 2014, 124). In distancing ourselves from the existential phenomenology of Dreyfus, we can view that, for reiteration, the “characteristic human mode of being in the world connected

with eccentric positionality forbids us from leading a life in which we experience our own body ‘only in its mediality, in its mediating role’” (Coolen 2014, 124). Hence, given Plessner’s distinction of boundary formation of non-human animals and humans, under the definition of Dreyfus’ absorption via this analysis of Plessner, this appears to suggest that full absorption can only be seen in non-human animals. Non-human animals lack the experience of experience of the second mediation. Therefore, Dreyfus’ absent ego is discordant with an account of the double aspectivity of our human lives of both being a lived body and a body-as-object. As Bernard Prusak elegantly summarises, “only somebody who has himself can lose himself.” (Prusak 2006, 51).

To assess the sort of performative absorption Dreyfus speaks of with regards to chess players, baseball players, and so on, we can return to, and view, in Montero’s discussion of absorption that, contrary to that of Dreyfus’ egoless absorption, in the person’s performance “[t]he *awareness* of tension and relaxation within his own body, the sense of balance that distinguishes the proud stability of the vertical from the risky adventures of thrusting and falling – these are the tools of the dancer” (Montero 2013, 303 – my emphasis). Here we can see, on the background of our reading of Plessner’s eccentricity that, rather than performing at our best when the ego is absent, the awareness of this tension, the relaxation of the muscles as the dancer flows from one posture to the next, suggests that there is a constant mediation, the tension between being a lived body and objectifying one’s experiences and actions as the body-as-object. As Sanekke de Haan notes, “there is precisely no split between a monitoring mind and a functioning body” (de Haan & Fuchs 2010, 332). In the following section, I will develop this critique of Dreyfus’ absence of the ego and McDowell’s absence of the pre-linguistic ‘we’ via an analysis of the disruption of eccentric positionality in people with schizophrenia.

3.4 The Disruption of Dreyfus-McDowell

Plessner proposed that laughing and crying disclose to us “the secret composition of human nature,” which “constitutes the basis of laughing and crying” (LW 236, 235/LC 33, 32), revealing our eccentric positionality. However, I query, where does laughing and crying end, and pathology, a psychopathology, begin? As Krüger notes, in our laughing and crying:

We are losing our distance and self-control [...] In crying, we break down into the lived body. In laughing, we break out of the lived body. In the first case, we lose a sense of proportion in general. In the second case, we reap too many mutually inconsistent meanings of possible responses (Krüger 2009, 202).

Could an analysis of Plessner's 'person', losing their ability to mediate, such as in laughter and crying, show similar traits to that within the realm of mental disorders, in which there are ambiguous and inconsistent meanings, losses of distance and self-control and, even ontological confusions of personhood? I believe so. To recall, for Plessner, what he defines as a 'person' is the "subject of its experiences, of its perceptions and its actions, of its initiative. It knows and it wills" (Greene 1970, xii). If Plessner's definition of a 'person' correlates with these constitutive elements of the human being, then a disruption of these elements should result in a disruption of personhood itself, a prolonged bout of laughter or tears. It is, specifically, with the experiences of people with schizophrenia that I wish to pursue this approach, and to apply this to the Dreyfus-McDowell debate; for what constitutes the human being are central questions that, as has been shown, have not been satisfactorily answered by either men. That which makes schizophrenia unique, in contrast to other mental disorders that, for example, manifest psychosis, such as type I bipolar, is that schizophrenia is a *self-disorder* (or *ipseity* disturbance). As shown by Parnas & Handest (2003), studies conducted with people with schizophrenia indicate "collectively that self-disorders are specific to the schizophrenia spectrum conditions" (Sass and Parnas 2003, 437). As Krueger notes, schizophrenia "is likely due not just to a neurophysiological abnormality but additionally to the experiential distance many people with schizophrenia feel from their body as a *lived through* subject of experience and action". Through this more experimentally and lived approach to the disorder, one concludes that schizophrenia is not "exclusively neural"; rather, it is subjectively experiential, situated and agential" (Krueger 2018, n.p). As discussed in my critique of Dreyfus in the second chapter regarding absorption, in which he argues that "[i]n fully absorbed coping, there is no immersed ego, not even an implicit one" (Dreyfus 2007b, p. 374)" I argued that, in fact, even when stripping back, for instance, the 'autobiographical' self (Dennett

1971; 1991; Damasio 2012) or the extended self (Clark and Chalmers 1998), there is, at the core level, a *minimal self*, a qualitative mineness. Additionally, this also precedes the linguistic community and conceptual rationality of McDowell. The person with schizophrenia, “suffers from what may be called a disembodiment of the self. She does not ‘inhabit’ her body any more” (Fuchs 2005, 101). There is an absence of “every perception, movement or thought [which] is the experience of at least a minimal self” (de Haan & Fuchs 2010, 328). Under a reading of Plessner’s eccentricity, we can view schizophrenia as a disruption of eccentricity. Contrary to Krüger’s summary of eccentricity being mediated, in which “there is precisely no split between a monitoring mind and a functioning body” (de Haan & Fuchs 2010, 332), we find a phenomenon quite to the contrary. There is a split of the psychophysical unity of Plessner’s person, resulting in a flight to either the body-as-object or the lived body. Dreyfus, McDowell and Plessner are all driving at what qualifies as the core constitutive elements of the human being, whether that be from a conceptual-rational, phenomenological absorption or eccentric approach. In an analysis of schizophrenia, so stated as a disturbance of the minimal self, then, we can begin to approach these questions of the human from the ground up. This disturbance, an ‘ontological confusion’ at the core of the disorder is conveyed by one person with schizophrenia who noted that “I looked just like every other child, but inside I was different. *It is as if I am another creature that somehow ended up inside a human body*” (Henriksen and Nordgaard 2014, 426 – my emphasis). A further distortion of laughter and crying appears to be uncannily akin to the experiences of people with schizophrenia, who lose the sense that they are the ongoing subject of their experience, lose a grip on perceptions and actions, and have an ambiguity of the relation between mind and world. Plessner’s ‘person’, it seems, becomes disrupted. In showing eccentricity as constitutive of the human being via an analysis of its breakdown, we additionally lend further credence to the argument that a reciprocal relation of Dreyfus and McDowell, mediated by Plessner’s eccentric positionality, enables us to characterise the constitutive elements of the human being.

Schizophrenia is a psychiatric illness characterised by abnormal behaviours, described as a ‘loss of vital contact with reality’ (Minkowski 1927); a disparity and disintegration of and within experience and thought. Karl Jaspers summarised the essential characteristics of schizophrenia as “incoherence, dissociation, fragmenting of consciousness, [...] weakness of apperception, insufficiency of psychic activity and

disturbance of association” (Jaspers 1968, 581). A common method of characterizing the symptoms of people with schizophrenia has been to parse it into the ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ symptoms. The positive symptoms are “experiences of something being ‘made’” (Jaspers 1968, 582 - quoted in Fuchs 2005, 270), which we can say as being the ‘addition’ of something onto experience. Conversely, the ‘negative’ symptoms are ‘something being taken away’ from experience. Hence, the positive symptoms are comprised of hallucinations and being subject to delusional behaviour and thought, essentially the addition of experiences that otherwise would be absent for someone in a non-psychotic state (discounting hallucinogenic drug use, fevers and so on). The negative symptoms, then, are comprised of anhedonia, alogia (paucity of speech), apathy, as well as autistic symptoms¹¹ - a “lack of common sense” (Blankenburg 2001). This lack of common sense is the absence of “self-evident embeddedness in the world, in other words [...] a fundamental connectedness” (de Haan & Fuchs 2010, 331).

Furthermore, there is a further compensatory response of hyper-reflexivity, a flight, exclusively, to the body-as-object, in which “dispositional and habitual aspects of the self that are normally present in the background of awareness – e.g. the way *one* thinks, listens, speaks, interacts with others and the environment, are thrust to the foreground of awareness and made into objects of intense scrutiny (Krueger 2018, 21). This results, as Mads Gram Henriksen, Alessandro Salice (2015), Sanekke de Haan and Thomas Fuchs (2010) note, as the person with schizophrenia suffering from a lack of integration with others: a ‘Disrupted We’ (Salice and Henriksen 2015). Hence, here one can draw comparisons with Dreyfus’ disturbance of mineness, and McDowell’s oversight of the ‘we’ pre-conceptual, mimetic ‘sociocultural milieu’. Returning to the previously quoted passage regarding laughter and crying by Krüger, in a disruption of eccentricity in schizophrenia there is the loss of a “sense of proportion in general”, and a reaping of “too many mutually inconsistent meanings of possible responses. (Krüger 2009, 202).

3.5 Dreyfus, Disrupted.

¹¹ In the pre-1960s sense of autism associated with schizophrenia, not modern-day infantile-autism.

As Fuchs notes in relation to Plessner, the lived body is “mediated by proprioceptive and kinaesthetic awareness [implying] *a basic auto-affection which could also be called the background feeling of being alive* [(Fuchs, 2015b, 272 – my emphasis). For the lived body, when experiencing something, contrary to Dreyfus’ claim for mindless absorption, a ‘mineness’ is still present, for there is still an apperceptive element to one’s experiences. To have a self requires a self to be there in the first place. The lived body is experienced qualitatively. Hence, a directedness towards an affordance, for instance, is “not to be understood as an intentional experience that only gains a reference to the self afterwards” (Zahavi 2013, 327), i.e. via detachment into self-reflection. Rather, the self discloses itself in its directedness, as “every worldly experiencing involves a certain component of self-acquaintances [...] every experiencing is characterised by the fact that “I am always somehow acquainted with myself”” (Zahavi 2013, 329; Heidegger 1997, 251).

Yet, as noted, Dreyfus’ absorbed coping requires zero self-monitoring whatsoever, for any self-monitoring would be disruptive: a non-qualitative phenomenology. Dreyfus’ ‘mineness’, I propose, which lacks qualitative experience, can be seen as more akin to a person with schizophrenia’s hyper-automaticity, an almost mechanical process which lacks any self-monitoring at all, due to the disembodiment of the self associated with the disease. For instance, as a person with schizophrenia, L.N, reports, “I can do things without even noticing. I get up, I brush my teeth, I get back, and I cannot even remember what I have done in between [...a] *complete automatism*” (Salice and Henriksen 2015 – my emphasis). These experiences, or lack thereof, are strikingly similar to the non-qualitative phenomenology of Dreyfus’ claim. For Plessner, one’s self-feeling or auto-affection is “present in every perception; aware-ness of the world always includes a tacit awareness of oneself in relation to the world [...] self-referentiality that is rooted in the auto-affectivity of the body is indeed imparted to all our perceptions, actions, and thoughts” (Fuchs (2005, 96). Yet, given an analysis of people with schizophrenia’s hyper-automaticity, there appears to be the same absence of a qualitative phenomenology in Dreyfus as there is reflected in people with schizophrenia. In leaning too much towards a distortion of the lived body (i.e. disrupting the mineness of the lived body), personhood becomes disrupted. As Julian Jaynes notes in the experiences of disruption of affectivity, the disruption of mineness, of people with schizophrenia, leads to a situation where “[t]ime crumbles. We behave without

knowing it. Our mental space begins to vanish [...] And in that nowhere, we are somehow automatons, unknowing what we do [...] (Jaynes 1976, 404).

Given the inability to mediate between an inner and outer, this process can also result in a dissolution of the space, the boundary between the distinction of one's own inner experiences as a lived body, and one's relation to the other. This results in, as Fuchs notes, a situation in which "the agency of one's movement seems to come from the outside, and an inversion of intentionality results" (Fuchs 2003). Due to the loss of being the origin of their thoughts and actions - one's diminished self-affectivity - the background meaning given by the foundations of this self-affectation disintegrates. As Jaspers notes, the person with schizophrenia does not know why "he has this thought nor did he not know why he has this thought nor did he intend to have it. He does not feel master of his own thoughts and in addition he feels in the power of some incomprehensible external force. (Jaspers, 1963: 122–123). Therefore, this results in, to echo the words of a person with schizophrenia, one's "consciousness is not as whole as it should be"; 'I am simply unconscious'; 'My I-feeling is diminished'; "My I is disappearing for me"; (quoted in Parnas and Handest 2003). The person with schizophrenia, in episodes of diminished self-affectation, resulting in hyper-automaticity, no longer experiences the experiences of her life. To draw comparisons back to Krüger's analysis of laughing and crying, it appears that this diminished self-affectation results in "losing our distance [...] we lose a sense of proportion in general" (Krüger 2009, 201). This dissolution of boundaries reflects that of a disturbance of the relation to the *Mitwelt*, in which one is sharing a world with others, as well as a unique individual person, the 'We' and 'I' respectively. This results in this distinction of 'We' and 'I' to blur, resulting in what Jaynes reports of people with schizophrenia hearing "voices of impelling importance that criticise us and tell us what to do. *At the same time, we seem to lose the boundaries of ourselves.* (Jaynes 1976, 404 – my emphasis).

3.6 McDowell's Disrupted 'We'

The destabilisation of the lived body often results in a compensatory response in which, I propose, people with schizophrenia 'fly' to the opposite end of their eccentric position, to the body-as-object. This results in the hyper-objectification of their actions and perceptual experiences, as they attempt to gain a stronger grip

upon their actions and perceptual experiences, termed as a hyper-reflexivity. This hyper-reflexivity enacts further self-estrangement, for, to requote, the “dispositional and habitual aspects of the self that are normally present in the background of awareness – e.g. the way one thinks, listens, speaks, interacts with others and the environment, are thrust to the foreground of awareness and made into objects of intense scrutiny (Krueger 2018, 21). As Salice and Henriksen note in relation to their analysis of disruption of ‘we-intentionality’:

[s]ome of the most frequently reported self-disorders include feelings of being radically different from others and of not feeling self-present and present in the world, loss of common sense, hyper-reflectivity, transitive phenomena, and quasi-solipsistic experiences [... *the feeling of being radically different from others*]” (Salice and Henriksen 2015, 162 – my emphasis)

As Plessner noted, as “an eccentric being man is not in an equilibrium, he is without a place, he stands outside time in nothingness, he is characterized by a constitutive homelessness (*ist konstitutiv heimatlos*)”. The human being has, therefore, a “fundamental need for compensation given by human eccentricity” (Boccignone 2014, 183), for “he always still has to become ‘something’ and create an equilibrium for himself” (Plessner GS V, 385). Through this natural artificiality, and fundamental need for compensation, we strive to find equilibrium in our eccentricity and the artificial dimension of culture, a kind of second nature, “where man finds its homeland (*Heimat*) and its absolute rootedness (*Verwurzelung*), both are which are not provided by its ‘first’ nature” (Plessner GS IV, 391 – quoted in Boccignone, 2014, 184). The third world of the *Mitwelt* is where a person lives-with (*Mit*), and has an awareness of oneself as an individual and unique person, as well as one who is sharing this world with others, the ‘I’ and the ‘We’, “sharing in a common and interchangeable status or experience [...]” (Honenberger 2015, 15). On the affective level between the ‘I’ and ‘We’, we can draw inspiration from Giovanna Colombetti’s concept of a ‘*feeling close*’. This feeling close draws the distinction between that of basic empathy, which one can define as an experience of the Other, to a sense of connectedness with them which relies on the affective (I experience the source of feeling) rather than a judgement (she is feeling). This can be expressed by Edith Stein’s analysis in which “[a] special edition of the paper reports that the fortress has

fallen. As we hear this, all of us are seized by an excitement, a joy, a jubilation. We all have ‘the same feeling’” (Stein 1989, 17 quoted in Colombetti 2013, 181). this produces a greater sense of unity with the other in addition to basic empathy, a grander unity reflecting the *Mitwelt*¹². Yet, as the term feeling *close* suggests, the distinction between self and other is not lost, for the comprehension of the others’ feeling is identified as being the same as my own; from the “‘I’ and ‘you’ arises the ‘we’ as a subject of a higher level” (Stein 1989, 17) – there is still a boundary. As Fuchs notes, to have an eccentric positionality is to regard that “the distinction of perceiver and perceived implies a continuous oscillation between one’s own embodied centre and the simulation of the other’s stance and perspective” (Fuchs 2005, 104). However, due to the person with schizophrenia’s resultant hyper-reflexivity the person with schizophrenia loses their ‘common sense’ of tacit societal rules, the boundaries of the *Mitwelt*’s ‘I’ and ‘We’, resulting in quasi-solipsistic experiences. As Joel Krueger notes, “as a result, the spontaneity, fluidity, and naturalness of everyday interactions is lost, and the individual struggles to smoothly connect with others and the surrounding environment” (Krueger 2018, 21). This results in the person with schizophrenia having a “loss of common sense [that] is not a lack of any sort of ‘knowledge’, but rather of a basic attunement with the world and of a pre-reflective grasp of the meaning of everyday social interactions” (Salice and Henriksen 2015, 163). Furthermore, as suggested previously by Donald, ‘mimesis’ “underlies all modern cultures and forms the most basic medium of human communication” (Donald 2001, 271), which are “expressive nonverbal actions. Mimetic culture is the murky realm of eye contact, facial expressions, poses, attitude, body language [...]” (Donald 2001, 265). Yet, this same failure of the ‘murky realm’ of eye contact, facial expressions and so on is reflected in people with schizophrenia’s inability to ‘read’ and affectively link with others. This is most notable if we refer to a quote by a person with schizophrenia in Blankenburg’s (1971, 308) report:

What is it that I am missing? It is something so small, but strange, it is something so important [...] I find that I no longer have footing in the world. *I have lost a hold in regard to the simplest, everyday things [...]* every person

¹² See also: Hrdy, S. (2009) *Mothers and Others: The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).

knows how to behave, *to take a direction, or to think something specific... All these involve rules that the person follows* (Blankenburg 1971, 308 quoted by Parnas 2014, 28 – my emphasis)

To refer again to Krüger's analysis of laughing and crying, this diminishment of the 'we', the flight to the body-as-object, resembles, too, that of laughter, in which "we reap too many mutually inconsistent meanings of possible responses" (Krüger 2009, 202), resulting in a paralysis by analysis, or what the playwright and artist Antonin Artaud, who had a history of schizophrenia, as 'violent overflow of thoughts'. McDowell's language community for the articulation of experiences, conceptually, is certainly a rich and normatively structured way of opening up the world. However, we also require the pre-linguistic, pre-conceptual aspect of our lives. A disturbance of this through hyper-reflexivity results in a loss of the 'common sense' that grounds us as socially and affectively linked with others. This disturbance results in a situation where the person with schizophrenia, states that "I am not able to recognise what these rules are. I am missing the basics... I don't know what to call this... It is not knowledge... Every child knows these things! (Blankenburg 1971, 308 quoted by Parnas 2014, 28)

Conclusion to Chapter Three

In this chapter I have argued, through my mediation of Dreyfus and McDowell's ontological gulf, via Plessner's eccentricity, that due to a person's eccentric positionality, she is able to take a position as the lived body and also the position as the body-as-object. However, through an analysis the disruption of eccentricity in people with schizophrenia, I showed that this disruption results in a 'flight', to an over-emphasis of either the lived body or the body-as-object. The person manifests, reflecting Dreyfus' claim, hyper-automaticity, a non-qualitative phenomenology of mindlessness, as well as diminished self-affectivity. Furthermore, this fragility of self-affectivity, the lack of autonomy, results in a heteronomy which leads to what Schloßberger notes as leading to the phenomena that "one's own "nature" is determined by others [...] characterized by a violent moment of heteronomy (Schloßberger 2014, 305). Montero characterised Dreyfus' principle, *the principle of automaticity*, as that which, "when all is going well [...] performance

significantly involves neither self-reflective thinking, nor planning, nor predicting, nor deliberation, not mental effort (Montero 2013, 304). However, it appears that this principle of automaticity reflects that of a person with schizophrenia's experiences of hyper-automaticity, rather than the effortless flow of Montero's ballet dancer, suggesting that one's 'effortless flow' requires the constant mediation between being the lived body and having a body, as the body-as-object. On McDowell's side, lacking the pre-linguistic 'we-intentionality' and mimetic capacities of the human being, we are left with a person who cannot understand the tacit rules of life. The person with schizophrenia is locked into hyper-reflexivity, objectifying all of her experiences, in which what was once tacitly taken in experience explodes into a violent overflow of thoughts, leading to a quasi-solipsism, a loss of touch with the world.

Hence, to conclude this chapter, it appears that Dreyfus and McDowell are locked into one side or another of Plessner's eccentric being, rather than mediating between the two. Their claims result in the person being either exclusively open to the world and mindlessly absorbed or treating everything in hyper-reflection, in a violent overflow of thoughts. Dreyfus over-emphasises the lived body, reflected in the person with schizophrenia's inner world being diminished in self-affectivity or feeling invaded by other. Conversely, in over-emphasising the body-as-object they are exclusively the body-as-object, treating others and the world with hyper-reflexivity, causing them to become distanced from the socio-cultural world of the 'we'. Hence, this analysis suggests that to take McDowell or Dreyfus' claim by themselves results in the same kind of 'ontological fuzziness' described by people with schizophrenia, suggesting a reciprocal relation between these two claims, mediated via Plessner's eccentric positionality, constitutes, and is essential, to our personhood.

Conclusion

The Eccentric Person

Contrary to being McDowell's essentially rational animal, or Dreyfus' egoless absorbed copier, there is, instead, a third way that can reconcile the two's claims. This reconciliation is through Helmuth Plessner's eccentric positionality, in which a person modulates being both, and never exclusively, a lived body and a body-as-object.

Chapter One began with McDowell's claim for conceptual rationality, as well as the historic background for his inspiration and counter-arguments for this claim. McDowell claimed that to be the human being is to be an essentially rational animal. Dreyfus, by contrast, contended that there is a pre-rational, pre-conceptual 'ground floor' to human experience that eludes McDowell's conceptualist claim. In seeking to avoid Sellars' Myth of the Given, Dreyfus argues, McDowell overreaches, resulting in a new Myth: The Myth of the Mental. This is the Myth that rationality pervades all human experience, rather than being just one aspect on the background of the human being's way of being.

I introduced Dreyfus' critique by drawing on his distinction between the 'rule following' 'beginner', which he equates with McDowell's conceptually-rational person, and his 'expert' skilful copier (such as a professional athlete) who does not follow rules, but rather *'just does it'*, skilfully performing as the expert or master without rule following. However, when we are detached and rule-following, Dreyfus contends, we do not perform at our best. One issue I raised in response to Dreyfus's critique of McDowell is that, given his analysis of Wittgenstein and Kripke's 'rule-following paradox', McDowell, in fact, explicitly states there is no need to 'detach' from the world if one is to follow a certain rule. For McDowell, we are always already engaging with the world. This non-detached rule-following is brought about through the background of our upbringing into culture. Subsequently, Dreyfus turned his attention to questions of the mindlessness of our absorbed coping. For Dreyfus, contrary to McDowell, in absorption there is no *ego* present, for one is mindless in unreflective action. To reflect or 'step back', Dreyfus argues, is to be stripped of the richness of affordances that solicit us. However, I suggested that this is not in fact McDowell's position. McDowell argues that conceptual rationality is operative in *both* unreflective and reflective action; hence, for McDowell, rather than an 'I think' being

required for the ego to be present, there is an 'I do'. Making an absorbed situation explicit does not cause a 'step back' into rationality, for the unreflective action was conceptual in the first place. Making content explicit in conscious reflection, therefore, does not contradict the fact that it was conceptual already even in unreflective action. However, this raises a query, and an issue: how does one move from unreflective action to reflection? McDowell argued that unreflective action is conceptual already. However, I suggested that to assert blankly that unreflective action and reflective action share a conceptual form (that things are 'thus and so' or 'in view' depending on McDowell's earlier and later works respectively) is not sufficient to prove this point. Furthermore, given the fine-grainedness of colour perception, it appears that, such fine-grained shades *purple*³⁴, *red*²⁴, etc., elude conceptual articulation, despite McDowell's counter-suggestion for demonstrative concepts.

Chapter Two first addressed issues regarding McDowell's 'mindedness', which is understood and enabled by way of an initiation into a linguistic community. To become equipped with the faculties of conceptual rationality, a 'proto-subjective', and thus mindless, in McDowell's sense, infant is initiated into a linguistic community, and thereby becomes truly minded. I argued, however, that McDowell's definition of mindedness is too strict. McDowell overlooks the specifically human forms of 'we'-mindedness and intentionality present in infants. Infants, but not non-human animals, display an ability to enforce norms, and belong to a normatively structured world that is specifically human. Additionally, Merlin Donald's concept of mimesis offers McDowell another distinctly human form of expression that eludes conceptual-rationality. Dreyfus, I proposed, is unable to explain how the phenomenologist 'steps back' from absorption. I placed emphasis on Dreyfus' explanation of a human being's distinctive mineness. This mineness is what he argued differentiates humans from non-humans in absorption, the particular context of one's affordances. I queried, however, how can we have a phenomenology of mineness, if one's experiences in absorbed coping are non-qualitative - mindless? Dreyfus' mineness is just the context of affordances, not the experience of such. As represented in Coolen's critique, if we are truly egoless in the flow of absorption, "what kind of experience would force humans to give up their being absorbed in responding to solicitations that stem from affordances they come across in their world?" (Coolen, 2014, 190). In conclusion, I echoed Dreyfus succinct summary, and

quandary, regarding the debate, in that it “seems that the conceptualists can’t give an account of how we are involved in the world, while the phenomenologists can’t give an account for what makes it possible for us to step back and observe it” (Dreyfus 2007b, 364).

In Chapter Three, I sought for a reconciliation of Dreyfus and McDowell’s claims, to be able to countenance both the sort of objectual conceptually rational stance we take towards our bodies and others of McDowell, and the sort of absorption in the world that Dreyfus speaks of, through Plessner’s notion of ‘eccentric positionality’. With human eccentricity, one mediates between being a body and having a body. Hence, Plessner’s eccentric positionality provides an ‘in-between’ account of the human being: a ‘double aspectivity’ of, on one side, the lived body (*Leib*), that immediate lived experience of one’s experiences; and, on the other, the body-as-object (*Körper*), the objectual and public stance that we take towards our bodies.

Further into the chapter, I provided an analysis of the pathology of schizophrenia, in which I concluded that due to a disturbance of the person with schizophrenia’s eccentricity, the person veers either to one side or the other of the Dreyfus-McDowell debate. The person flies to Dreyfus’ end of mindless hyper-automaticity, or to the McDowell end of hyper-reflexivity and a diminished ‘we’. A loss of balance between these two poles of human phenomenological embodiment, results in a disrupted conception of personhood. As I quoted, “what many patients struggle to articulate is a feeling of being somehow ontologically different, ‘not really human’”, and that “I looked just like every other child, but inside I was different. It is as if I am another creature that somehow ended up inside a human body” (Henriksen & Nordgaard, 2014, 436 - quoted in Parnas & and Henriksen 2016, 77). Having analysed clinical findings from schizophrenia research, I proposed that we have provided empirical support for Plessner’s characterisation of eccentricity by viewing the resulting ontological fuzziness of personhood when it becomes disrupted. The conclusion of this chapter is to suggest that a successful conception of personhood involves and requires an oscillation between both “sides” of one’s eccentricity, for “Man not only lives (*lebt*) and experiences his life (*erlebt*), but he also experiences his experience of life” (Plessner 1975, 364). When eccentricity is disrupted, the person with schizophrenia’s hyperreflexivity or hyperautomaticity, appears to result in a person whose sense of personhood becomes fragile. It appears, then, that Dreyfus

and McDowell are describing reciprocal aspects of that nature of being human which are actually necessary and complementary to each other in the constitution of the human form of life. In bridging their claims via Plessner's human eccentricity, we acquire a stable account of personhood. To be a person, is to be eccentric.

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It is no exaggeration to say that, insofar as English speaking philosophers have any access at all to thinkers like Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Michel Foucault, it is through the interpretation that Dreyfus originally offered of them.

Sean D. Kelly

No one in our day has done more than Hubert L. Dreyfus to make Anglophone philosophy less parochial. For some forty years, he has helped the rest of us to understand what our European colleagues are up to, introduced us to them, and encouraged the study of their works

Richard Rorty