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# Tri-relational view of human agency

Jeffrey Scott Pflug
*The University of Montana*

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# THE TRI-RELATIONAL VIEW OF HUMAN AGENCY

by

Jeffrey Scott Pflug

B.A., The University of Montana, 1994

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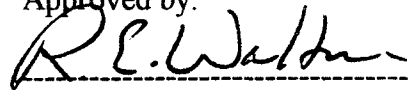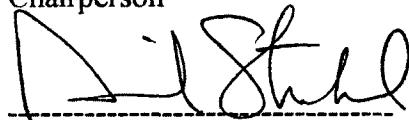
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The value placed on empirical truth in the modern age typically has been considered a threat to philosophical inquiry. Beginning with Galileo's and Newton's challenge of Aristotelian science, which reigned during the Middle Ages, there has been a steady increase of scepticism among intellectuals in their aspiration to answer the questions that are at the heart of philosophy: (1) What is the essence of human nature? (2) How are humans teleologically predisposed towards reality? (3) What is the Final Reality to which we all are accountable? In fact, the postmodern mindset of our culture can be defined as the hunger, resulting in the many symptoms of intellectual starvation, for an alternative to continuing the quest to answer such questions apart from science or writing off such a quest as impossible from its inception.

This thesis seeks to demonstrate that findings in neuroscience may answer the first question, and that the second question may be answered through an accurate articulation of the way we experience ourselves to be intersubjectively related to one another and the way we see other animals to be intersubjectively related. In sum, by seeking to trace the way we experience the world back to the macro-structures of the human brain, it is argued that we are essentially tri-relational agents. Then, using the tri-relational view of human nature, an account is provided to explain the manner in which humans come to be teleologically concerned with the value of truth.

The tri-relation view of human agency is also used to account for such things as mental causation, consciousness, self-control and our ability to identify particulars. But beyond this, its explanatory power is used to answer the third question. That is to say, it is argued that the tri-relational view of human agency may allow for the possibility of empirically confirming the manner in which the Christian tradition speaks of God as a Trinity. The thesis concludes on this note, seeking to define the good life for humankind.

# Acknowledgments

The writing of this thesis has been a journey of discovery, and it is a journey which I hope continues in further discovery. Like any journey, as we progress towards our destination we encounter many obstacles, detours, and delays, and when we finally get to our destination it does not always turn out to be like what we expected. Fortunately, I believe that the destination of my journey turned out to be better than I expected, and I have a few persons to thank for helping me complete my journey. I first want to thank my wife, whose companionship has taught me how much I need to learn about life, communication and love. I can honestly say that I this thesis would not be what it is without her.

My journey was also aided by a Chairperson, Richard Walton, who gave a large amount of time to reading many versions of this thesis. His comments and suggestions helped me to notice things which I would not have given my attention to. I am also grateful to him for the care he gave in helping me with my writing. If there are any grammatical errors in this edition, believe me when I say that they are mine and not his.

The other two committee members of this thesis, Albert Borgmann and Michael Hufford, also have had an influence on my journey. The classes I have taken under Albert have challenged me to reexamine many of my beliefs. I am grateful to him for his patience with me when I did not always patiently learn. I am thankful to Professor Hufford for his willingness to deal with topics outside of his field. His comments directed me in being more cautious to articulate the tentative nature of empirical evidence used to support the tri-relational view of human agency.

For my journey of discovery, and life itself, I foremost want to thank the One who is and was and is to come. This thesis only exists because of Him and I dedicate it to Him.

# Table of Contents

## Chapter One
## Introduction: Human Agency and the Philosophy of Mind

### A. What is a Human Agent?

This question, arguably *the* primary question of philosophy, has haunted and perplexed philosophers through the ages.[1] From our modern perspective, the general terminology used by the ancients to describe the human subject (e.g., "soul," "spirit," "mind" and "heart") seems vague and ambiguous. Although such terms may have given many of the ancients a clear enough comprehension of humanity's nature, for us such terminology seems to evoke non-material abstractions that are nebulous. Thus, contemporary philosophers who have inherited the problem of describing human subjectivity seek to reduce these abstract terms to the concrete, material world (e.g., they may contend that the mind is really the brain). Yet, this urge to reduce the human subject to more tangible, scientific terms has tended to depersonalize humanity. In embracing metaphysical reductionism many philosophers have found a way to explain how the mind must be related to the *functional*, neurochemical networks within the brain, but they have failed to account for the subjective character of our *conscious* (mental) states. Indeed, there seems to be no way to account for how there can really be anything like our phenomenal experience of subjectivity. As a result, the axiological significance of the ancient dictum "know thyself"[2] also seems to be lost from sight.

The quest to know oneself is primarily a metaphysical one, but an answer to this question must address how this quest also beckons us to become better integrated with ourselves, each other and reality at large. The axiological significance of the ancient

dictum asks us to become better *oriented to* and *integrated with* the environmental demands (both physical and social) placed upon us. Moreover, it assumes that each of us plays an active role in orienting ourselves to and integrating ourselves with higher values, as we also deliberately pursue the values that attract us at a deeper level, bringing them into realization as we conform our character to them. That is to say, it assumes that persons---as agents---have their own integrated personalities and a significant amount of control over their own *conscious states* and, therefore, over what values define their projective (i.e.,expressive) identity. As a result, to know oneself assumes that we can purposively pursue knowing how we are related to our environment, and also that we can choose to act in some particular way rather than another. Therefore, whatever metaphysical account we give for the question of human agency, this account must describe the manner in which we have the power of self-control.

I will present the tri-relational view of human subjectivity, primarily as a solution to the problem of human agency, demonstrating how this theory may help us understand why human beings naturally value truth, and then investigating how it may resolve a few problems in the philosophy of mind. My argument for the theory of the tri-relational subject will be transcendental (in the sense that it relies on our indispensable experience of human agency), but I will also present some empirical findings that may support the theory. Therefore, although the theory will be grounded on our phenomenal experience of having certain mental capacities and the characteristic of self-control, it also provides a model for neuroscience which can be tested empirically to a large degree, for the theory claims that human subjectivity relies ontologically, not only on its physical and social

environment, but also on the macro-functional structure of the human brain.

There is much phenomenological evidence for human agency and responsibility as related to moral concerns, yet many critical thinkers refuse to give credence to such evidence because they fail to understand how such a view could be tenably maintained from a scientific perspective. Accordingly, to argue for the conclusion that humans are animals with the capacity of self-control, and the only animals capable of valuing truth, along with the other natural desires for survival and communal concern, I will demonstrate how three subsisting relations of human subjectivity (i.e., the *attentive-interpretive disposition*, the *pretentive-reflexive disposition and* the *evaluative synthesis of the responsive-evocative continuum's personally present awareness*) enable us to exist with these teleological characteristics. Furthermore, I will investigate how the three relations of the tri-relational subject may have some support from the empirical findings of Paul D. MacLean's theory of the *triune brain* and the macro-functions of the left and right hemispheres of the neocortex.

However, it will also be argued that all supraorganic systems acquire and store information for the purpose of better satisfying their desires, but not all such systems temporally modify their behavior to the same degree. Therefore, before articulating the tri-relational view of human agency and arguing how humans come to value truth, I will present an account of emergentism which will help us better understand the nature of human agency as compared to that of reptiles and non-human mammals. After making distinctions among suborganic, organic and supraorganic systems,[3] I will argue that--- unlike unconscious or quasi-conscious (e.g.,reptiles) and conscious or quasi-self-conscious

(e.g., non-human mammals) supraorganic systems---the three subsisting relations of subjectively self-aware supraorganic systems (e.g., humans) are related to each other such that their decision-making processes are not only naturally driven to seek coherent engagement with their focally relevant, physical and social environments, but are also driven to seek for intellectual coherence *as* they interact with others in a linguistic community. In sum, it will be argued that there are three subsisting relations of the human *subject*, and these relations make it possible for toddlers to find themselves subjectively self-aware as they interact with other subjects linguistically. Such awareness enables children to develop the power of *self*-control, understood as intellectually responsive evaluation and selection of natural and projective satisfaction conditions that are made present to us in order to pursue our natural vision of truth and our own expressive, projective visions.

Self-control is a contentious issue in philosophy. How can we have control over our actions, given the explanatory principle of causal determinism? This principle states that every true description of the world's features will entail (or at least predict) an account of how they are causally related to other features of the world. Even if we grant the probabilistic perspective, this does nothing to resolve the problem of whether human agents are in control of their actions. Ultimately, we must still defeat the skepticism that human behavior may be completely determined when we regard it from the natural scientific perspective. As John Bishop says, "Skepticism about natural agency is, in fact, what underlies the whole skeptical tradition about how free action can occur---both under determinism and under indeterminism."[4]

As a compatiblist,[5] I hold that a true account of human agency will not conflict

with the explanatory principle of causal determinism; however, I would not resist being

labeled a libertarian, because it is possible for agents to control their own actions, and yet

have desires with more motivational force than others, or some projective visions that are

more attractive to them than others. Therefore, my account of emergentism will seek to

provide a scientifically viable (i.e., granting the epistemological thesis of causal

determinism) conception of the agency which explains how humans actually do have

control over their actions through the possibility of making better judgments. To

accomplish this, I will present a view of emergentism that arises from the importance of

two questions: (1) *What* features of the world are causally significant when discussing

human actions? (2) *How* is the agent causally related to these features?


**B. How has Human Agency been Conceptualized?**

One of the most important implications of the predominantly mechanistic view of

society in the modern era is how our understanding of the human subject has either been

considered to be a mysterious thing-in-itself or nothing-whatsoever. Thomas Hobbes, of

course, rejected Descartes' mind/body distinction, but he also did away with the mind's

self-defining capability, making him one of the founders of associationistic psychology,

which is similar to modern day behaviorism. One of the many examples of the ethical and

sociological consequence of the Hobbesian view of the subject can be found in the

emphasis on semiology in modern structural anthropology: "Semiology displaces all issues

towards the analysis of discourse and gives pride of place to the relationship of emitter to

code . . . The result is that the origin of meaning can no longer be located . . . in the author of discourse, the individual who believes he is expressing himself, but rather it lies in language itself . . . *Not man, but structures are decisive! Man is nothing!*"[6]

There is no denying that such a denial of human agency has grave implications for our belief in moral obligation. Kant hoped to prevent such determinism by providing an alternative to the Hobbesian view of the subject as found in Hume. In place of Hume's conception of the subject as "a mere bundle of perceptions," Kant posits the unitary "I think," the noumenal self, on the necessity of our phenomenological experience of having autonomy and a unitary identity. He introduces a middle path as an alternative to Descartes's mind-substance and Hume's scepticism of a unitary mind. As Kant said, ". . . only in so far as I can grasp the manifold of representations in one consciousness, do I call them one and all mine. For otherwise I should have as many-coloured and diverse a self as I have representations of which I am conscious to myself.[7]

Understood in this light, Kant's ethics rests on his anthropology, which serves as a safe-haven of freedom in a mechanistic world. Yet, although Kant provides us with an alternative to a mechanistic explanation of man, his view of the subject seems to retain the mysterious, solipsistic character of Descartes's ghost in the machine. Furthermore, from Kant's Transcendental perspective, we can neither argue that we are in fact free, nor can we argue that we are completely determined. Rather, it all depends on whether our understanding is practically or scientifically oriented; in the former, conscience gives us reason to believe we are completely free; in the later, empirical investigation of the brain's relation to the environment gives us reason to believe we are utterly determined.

Before articulating, and arguing for, the tri-relational view of subjectivity in

Chapter 3, Chapter 2 will be devoted to understanding how contemporary philosophers

(who have chosen the scientific orientation, rather than Kant's practical orientation) have

conceived of human agency and personhood. I will summarize and criticise Daniel

Dennett's narrative conception of the self, comparing it to Derek Parfit's anti-

substantialist (and reductionist) position, while articulating some consequences of Hugh

Mellor's denial of subjectivity.

These contemporary denials of subjectivity not only fail to provide us a way to

think about human agency, but they also are unable to resolve problems in the philosophy

of mind. Consequently, in Chapter 4 I will demonstrate how the tri-relational view of

human agency can help us understand the manner in which humans, as subjectively self-

aware, supraorganic systems, *have* minds in and through their three subsisting relations; in

fact, it may enable us to resolve some problematic issues in the philosophy of mind from a

more holistic perspective.


## C. Two Basic Problems in the Philosophy of Mind: Mental Causation and Meaning

Mental causation, the problem of how mental states or properties can interact with

physical events or properties, still causes many problems for contemporary philosophers.

For example, functionalism, the reigning paradigm in the philosophy of mind, identifies

mental states with their dispositional relations. These functional or causal roles are the

relations mental states bear to environmental effects upon bodies, other functional roles

(i.e., mental states) and bodily behavior. Yet in reducing mental states to their

dispositional relations, functionalists seem unable to account for how intentional states (i.e., perception, belief and emotion, which refer to the world) can have effects in virtue of the fact that they refer to the world. As a result, functionalists are unable to account for the causal efficacy of intentionality.

This becomes evident in Davidson's theory of action.[8] His "anomalous monism" avoids all talk about the intentionality of mental states, and instead opts to refer to psychological explanations as a species of causal explanation. Kathleen Lennon explains, "The causal generalizations required to support the singular causal link between reasons and actions . . . rest on the non-intentional characteristics of events. Intentional states therefore cause actions in virtue of their neurophysiological characteristics."[9] Thus understood, Davidson argues that an agent is *caused* to perform an action because of her desire and her instrumental belief that she can attain her desire. However, such a view seems to turn a subject's mental states into mere theoretical posits, because an account of intentionality is left out of the explanation. Normally understood, an agent does not perform an action because she has a certain belief and desire; rather, she acts *in order to* satisfy her desire (or what I will call a natural or projective vision). Thus, mental states seem to be more teleological than functional.

As I argue for what the tri-relational view of human agency has to offer to problems in the philosophy of mind (in Chapter 4), it will be maintained that we cannot account for how intentional states are causally efficacious unless we understand how human subjectivity is responsively and evocatively related to other things in the world through its inherent teleological dispositions. Such an account, I believe, is provided by

the tri-relational view of human agency, which explains how we have natural teleological dispositions towards our environment. Basically, it will be argued that mental states only refer to the world and have causal influence because they exist as the result of our natural, teleological engagement with the physical and social environments. Furthermore, the responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity, especially its personally present, evaluative synthesis, is causally related to these mental states, because all mental states only originate as a result of this continuum's unconscious, conscious or subjectively self-aware decision-making processes while being engaged with its environment.

Recently there seems to be much interest in the debate between externalism, the theory that meanings are dependent on our relation to our environment, and internalism, the theory that meanings are only in the mechanism we call the brain or mind.[11] Since its birth there has been a tendency in analytic philosophy to stress a separation between the content of mental states and the content of experience. Yet, many philosophers are beginning to challenge the idea that meanings are "realized in" internal mechanisms, such as the components of the brain. It is argued that mental states do not merely supervene on intrinsic mechanisms, but are partly determined by the relation between the subject and his environment.

For other philosophers (e.g., Hubert Dreyfus), externalism posits that which originates most of the problems in the philosophy of mind: an immense gap between an isolated subject and his environment, that is, the subject-object distinction. As such, some want to avoid all "mentalistic overtones,"[11] placing emphasis merely on our practical coping, or occupation, with the world. I take such a formulation to be an extreme form of

externalism. Richard M. McDonough criticises Dreyfus' interpretation of Heidegger on this very point, saying, "Specifically, one must ask, is one in-a-world by virtue of coping with things, or *must one already be-in-a-world to cope with things in it?* Dreyfus' formulation implies the former. But Heidegger clearly intends the latter."[12]

As opposed to internalism and extreme externalism, I will defend an externalist stance (which I prefer to call relationalism) that views *subjectively self-aware* agents as having the meanings of their mental states dependent upon their past-present reflexive identity, their future-present projective identity and a present meta-context of intersubjectivity. Although these are dependent upon our social environment, relationalism allows us to understand how an individual subject partly determines one's own narrative self, that is, the way that the responsive-evocative continuum's personally present, evaluative synthesis is meaningfully related to a social environment through an intellectual re-interpretation of a past-present reflexive identity in order to satisfy a future-present projective visions, while also realizing a present, natural vision of truth. In sum, the meaning of our minds is there because we are agents who are intellectually engaged in maintaining, or failing to maintain, the unity of our own autobiographical memories as we dwell in an intersubjective environment. In fact, the tri-relational view of human agency seeks to answer why there is an environment in the first place. This account will be presented at in Chapter 4, where I will conclude by demonstrating how relationalism may allow us to understand how pragmatism, coherence and (something like) correspondence theories of truth are inherently interrelated.

## Notes and References to Chapter One:

1. I believe philosophy should first seek to articulate, as Charles Taylor says, "self-clarity about our nature as knowing agents . . ." See his *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 14.

2. See Plato's *Phaedrus*, 230a.

3. See Ervin Laslo, *The Systems View of the World: The Natural Philosophy of the New Developments in the Sciences* (New York: George Braziller, 1972). I am in debt to Laslo for some of the ideas I present here, especially for his distinction of suborganic, organic and supraorganic systems. He uses these terms to refer to "levels rather than categories of reality, distinguished in reference to modes of organization rather than to essence or substance" (p. 30). However, he does not recognize supraorganic systems to be organisms that have different levels of decision-making processes.

4. John Bishop, *Natural Agency: An Essay On The Causal Theory of Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 176.

5. In siding myself with compatiblists, I must say that I am *not* the type of compatiblist who wants to revise our common understanding of morality by glossing over common, everyday ways of thinking about moral responsibility. I agree with John Bishop when he says, "What is necessary for an agent to be morally responsible for an outcome is just that the outcome should have been produced through an exercise of the agent's control, or in other words, through the agent's action" (*Natural Agency*, p. 23). Like him, I am a realist about human actions.

6. Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. L. Scott-Fox and J.M. Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 104-5.

7. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith (New York, N.Y., 1978), p. 154. While I do see phenomenological value in Kant's transcendental arguments, I see no value in his placing the answers to all ontological questions (e.g., God, freewill and the things-in-themselves) in a mysteriously unsearchable, noumenal realm.

8. See his *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

9. Kathleen Lennon, "Reasons and Causes", in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge: Blackwell Reference, 1995), p. 534.

10. See John Gibbons's "Externalism and Knowledge of Content", in *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 105, No. 3 (July 1996); and Martha Klein's "Externalism, Content and Causation", in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society: New Series*---Vol.XCVI, 1996, p. 159-176.

11. See his *Being-in-the-world* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991) p. 51.

12. Richard M. McDonough, "Heidegger, Externalism, and Mechanism" in *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, Vol. 26, No. 2, May 1995, p. 133.

## Chapter Two
## The Denial of Human Agency and its Consequences

### A. Dennett's Narrative view of the Self

Daniel Dennett does not want necessarily to deny the existence of different levels

of reality, but his methodology has severe ontological consequences. He makes the mild

claim that things will not always turn out to be as real as we thought them to be and is

thereby pleased to rid us of the annoyingly persistent idea of the self as an entity in the

brain. In its place, he maintains that the self is a "center of narrative gravity," a useful

abstraction of what we "feel" our brain doing, that is, building "up a defining story about

ourselves, organized around a sort of basic blip of self-representation. The blip isn't a self,

of course; it's a representation of a self."[1] This "self-representation," however, cannot

rationally control or contribute by positing its own interests and goals; neither can it play

an active causal role in organizing its own identity. Rather, "what makes a person the

person he or she is the coalition of memes [i.e., the cultural 'genes' of evolution] that

govern---that play the long term roles in determining which decisions are made along the

way."[2] Therefore, the self specifies a "real" level of existence---it has a *fictional* existence

as the open-ended biography of the living body.

Dennett recognizes three methodological stances that can aid a scientist in

predicting the behavior of different types of systems. First, one can have the *physical*

stance which grants an investigator knowledge of a system relative to that system's

physical state and laws. Second, the *design* stance offers an explanation of a system, but

only relative to a hypothesis that a person holds about the system's functional design; e.g.,

one may know how to drive a car but not have a clue as to what actually propels the car.

Lastly, in the *intentional* stance, the investigator tries "to figure out what the designers

had in mind."[3] In other words, the intentional stance provides an explanation of the

hypothesis that a system is behaving rationally relative to its purposes and beliefs.

However, it is important to keep in mind that these purposes and beliefs "(and some other

mental items drawn from folk psychology) are *like* [centers of gravity] in being *abstracta*

rather than part of the 'furniture of the physical world' and in being attributed in

statements that are *true* only if we exempt them from a certain standard of literality."[4]

Although Dennett is willing to grant a powerful ("abstract"?) effect to the memes

infesting our brains, determining the meaning of our lives, he can do so only with the

brain's impersonal meta-habits of talking to itself. The self can have no influence on these

"habits of self-stimulating," because they are caused by a pandemonium of dumb

specialists. For a moment, one specialist is left in charge who controls the brain with its

particular epistemic hunger. It is not individual persons who desire to know the truth of a

matter; rather, it is impersonal mechanisms and memes working themselves out to satisfy

other impersonal mechanisms and memes which lack the proper information. For this

reason, all his talk about persons as having some ("almost," or "for the most part") sway

of influence in overall performance of their brains is utter malarkey, for it is only the

memes themselves that influence the brain's mind.

Those, like Dennett, influenced by the connectionism of modern day cognitive

science cannot tell us who we are, for merely *having* systems, even millions of systems,

that maintain control by keeping our outputs within a restricted range does not account for how we *are* subjects. Our self-conscious mental states do not become conscious, as Dennett says, "by winning the competitions against other mental contents for domination in the control of behavior . . ."[5] In stripping the self of any causal power and replacing it with "abstracta," Dennett has lost a way of providing us a truly satisfactory explanation of how a subject can control its beliefs, desires, intentions, and policies in a detached way, as objects of evaluation. He tells us that his Gregorian creatures, with their internal environment, test their possible moves before they actually make them, but what are these creatures? Are they not just mindless networks of abstracta? Indeed, the self, as he understands it, is the result of thousands of "dumb" micro-processes interacting within the brain, forming the hard drive of different meta-habits which, in turn, create a complex impersonal, syntactic structure that stores memes as they are received. Hence, the content of a person's meaning and purpose in life can only come from an "interplay of memes," and this interplay thwarts, exploits and redirects "the machinery Mother Nature has given us."[6]

In sum, his denial that humans actually have self-control in defining their narrative selves results in a contradiction of how he speaks about human agents. Although he denies that there are an actual entities as human agents, he speaks of the selves as possessing "blessings" and "esteem" for certain memes (i.e., the cultural units of evolution). That is, his language assumes that we, as agents with self-control, can present ourselves to ourselves, yet he does not account for how agents are in possession of them*selves*.

I believe his account of the self is contradictory because he fails to make a distinction between the subject that exists as an individual subject (i.e., an "I") and the

narrative self (or autobiographical memory), over which a subject has a significant amount of control. If we are to understand human agency, we must, I will argue, make a distinction between the subject and the self, or narrative self. While all animals are subjects with sentience in some form or another, only humans are subjectively self-aware subjects who are capable of maintaining the narrative unity of them*selves*, that is, of their mental life.

We will see how this explains why Dennett affirms while also denies the existence of the self; more specifically, we will come to understand why it is that he wrestles against the very structure of human language. For example, we do not say that 'myself', as a narrative self, has control over 'I', as a subject; rather, we say that 'I' has control over 'myself'. Also, we will see that, although it is true that we do not start life with selves, we do start life as individual subjects. While Dennett is right to refer to selves as open-ended narratives, influenced and partly constructed by our social interactions, he is wrong to think that subjectivity is reducible to this. On the contrary, we will see that human subjectivity is a natural continuum of unconscious, conscious and subjectively self-aware decision making processes.

## B. The Connection between Dennett and Parfit

Like Dennett, Derek Parfit's view of the self is ultimately impersonal. That is to say, a person is not a real individual, but constructed like clubs and committees. Furthermore, he concludes from this that "our reasons for acting should become more impersonal. Greater impersonality may seem threatening. But it would often be better for

everyone."[7]

For Parfit, the identity of the subject reduces to a transitive relation of continually connected memories and character traits. The self is not a substance, entity or unitary system but a construction of causally related, non-branching psychological states.[8] Therefore, he thinks we should not be concerned about our future, because our future is less strongly related to our present relation of interconnected states. But what is this "present relation"?

He tells us that "a person is distinct from his brain and his body, and his experiences." Yet, he also says that "persons are not separately existing entities . . ."[9] As he explains, "Personal identity just involves certain kinds of connectedness and continuity, when these hold in a one-one form. These relations are what matter."[10] Basically, he argues that these "present relations" are the only facts we need to understand personal identity. He writes, "On the Non-Reductionist View, personal identity is what matters. And it does not just involve physical and psychological continuity. It is a separate further fact, which must, in every case, either hold completely, or not at all."[11] In sum, Parfit denies that there are natural facts of personal identity (or subjectivity) that can hold completely, yet he also wants to affirm the existence of a present relation of psychological continuity. As a result he cannot account for how humans are members of a natural kind, having their identity fixed by a certain organized structure that sets them apart from other forms of existence.

I will later argue that if we each are a present relation[12] that is a fact, we each must also have future-present projective visions from which we respond and are

motivationally driven, and towards which we can make decisions and maintain self-constancy as we interact with other persons. Also, these future-present visions rely on how we are related to a past-present, reflexive identity, because future-present visions only gain significance from a past-present reflexive identity as they are personally evaluated through a disposition of temporal abeyance according to how we are presently related to a natural, teleological vision of truth. In other words, we must have future-present projective visions if we each are to have our own personal identity. Together, the three subsisting relations which make up the tri-relational agent, enabling the subject to maintains one's own *personally individualized* identity over time. Therefore, if our present relation to other psychological states is a fact, our personal identity must be concerned about future-present visions.


## C. Hugh Mellor's views of Self, Time and Experience

For naturalistic reasons, Hugh Mellor also denies that there are any subjective facts or selves. But he goes further than Parfit by unambiguously denying that there is anything such as a *present* relation of identity; in fact, for him, "there are no tensed facts."[13] He relies on McTaggart's argument that time understood as a series of *nows* (past-present-future) involves a contradiction: every member is included in the other so that these very predicates contradict each other. If there were an actual *now*, Mellor explains, "then since all sentence tokens of the form 'The time is now Y' are true if and only if they occur at Y, every time would have to be both *now* (to make the true tokens true) and not *now* (to make the false ones false), which it can't be."[14]      For Mellor,

there is no *nows* that moves from the future through the present and into the past, that is, there are not facts involving pastness or futurality. Instead, he believes time to be a series, such as that by which we make discoveries in physics (earlier-simultaneous-later). All temporal statements are to be explained by this series rather than relying on the indexical 'now', which he takes to be a (notional) semantic function. For him, it is only true that I am *now* writing this sentence because it is simultaneous with this event (i.e., writing a sentence).

But what is *this* event? Does not *this event* assume that something has happened at a particular time, a particular *now*? Indeed it does, for it refers to some particular event that maintains identity over time; in fact, it meaning relies on a lived subject. Indexical language in general seems to be essential to human agency. Words like 'I', 'here', 'now' and 'this' are not merely descriptive terms. Their meanings are not determined by their reference to particular objects in the world, but to the manner in which a subject is actively engaged or situated in the world. That is to say, we can identify *this* event because it has constancy in being part of an agent's projective, metapersonal context that can be referred to before the event actually happened, as it was taking place and after it was completed.

In Chapter 4, I will return to the problem of *this* event, which assumes there is an agent who is *now* writing. Likewise, in the case of the sentence ('The time is now Y'), it must either be uttered or written by an agent at a certain *moment* which can be true only when it was written or spoken. I will argue that this *moment* of engaged agency is best understood as the inclusion of past-present pretentive-reflexive identities into future-present projective visions, as the responsive-evocative continuum's personally present,

evaluative synthesis decides to complete the action within a meta-context of intersubjectivity. Therefore, we will see that the subsisting relations of the tri-relational subject are simultaneously interrelated, enabling us to refer to tensed facts such as *now* or *this*. In fact, it will be shown that Mellor's preference for the time series of physics presupposes the reality of lived subject.

For Mellor, just as *nows* are mere semantic functions, so are *I*s and properties of *being me*. So, when Mellor speaks of second-order beliefs (i.e., the act of believing that I have a particular belief), he posits an inner sense (i.e., "insight") to stop the infinite regress of believing mental states. He says, "Just as eyesight is how we know about the things we see, so insight is how we know about our own present beliefs."[15]

Although such "insight" is at best controversial and shrouded in mystery, if we are to take him seriously he must also maintain that this impersonal "insight" is also responsible for recognising what certain forms of experience are like. By "insight" secondary experiences, i.e., images through which experience is known to be like something, are not only believed, but believed "correctly, i.e., in a way that makes me recognise them when I have them."[16]

As a result, Mellor seems to be an extreme internalist, for the content of experience is described in a way that does not necessarily require the existence of things in an environment spatially outside the thinker. Although highly unlikely, it is possible on Mellor's account, that we are just brains in vats. Accordingly, there seems to be nothing that could justify the degree of correctness his belief (i.e., of his secondary experience) has to primary experience. Indeed, he tells us that he "can only explain what it is to know what

some experiences are like by invoking other experiences (secondary experiences) of which we lack even that much knowledge."[17] Without the presupposition of "insight," Mellor is unable to understand how we can have knowledge of the world. Therefore, he is unable to bridge the gap between secondary experience and the primary experience of the world.

Following McDowell,[18] who wants relief from the resulting scepticism of Wilfrid Sellar's "Myth of the Given," which imposes itself between the subject and the world, I will explore what the theory of the tri-relational view of human agency offers in way of relief, describing how it supports relationalism, which both offers a way of understanding our primary experience and upholds the view that what is given in our prospective apprehension of experience can be confirmed within a community of intellectually honest agents who share similar practices of engaging reality. That is, I will show how our disinterested judgments of reality are intellectually responsive to the facts of the world because the content of our mental states is determined by our previous engagements with the physical world and within a social environment. Furthermore, I hope to articulate how we may know that our primary experience correspond to reality.

**Notes and References to Chapter Two:**

1. Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little Brown, 1991), pp. 428-29.

2. Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meaning of Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), p. 368.

3. Ibid., p. 229-30.

4. Dennett, *The Intentional Stance* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), p. 72.

5. Dennett, *Kinds of Minds: Towards an Understanding of Consciousness* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), p. 155.

6. Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, p. 367.

7. Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Clarendon Press of Oxford University, 1984), p. 443.

8. Quassim Cassam, "Parfit On Persons", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society: New Series*—Vol. XCIII. Part 1, 1993, pp. 22-23.

9. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, p. 275.

10. Ibid., p. 272.

11. Ibid., p. 272.

12. I will latter call this 'present relation" a temporal abeyance of a personally present, evaluative synthesis that allows us to maintain our identity through time as subjectively self-aware supraorganic systems..

13. Hugh Mellor, "I and Now", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society: New Series*—Vol. LXXXIX. Part 2, 1988/89, p. 81.

14. Ibid., p. 80. It must be pointed out that Mellor, along with McTaggart, is speaking of the formal structure of time relations, which does not necessarily have anything to do with what actually takes place in the world. His position could be criticized on this ground alone.

15. Ibid., p. 91

16. Hugh Mellor, "Nothing Like Experience", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society: New Series*—Vol. XCIII. Part 1, 1993, see p. 5 and 12.

17. Ibid., p. 13.

18. See his *Mind and World* (Cambridge: Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994).

## Chapter Three
## Emergentism and the Tri-relational View of Human Agency

### A. Basic Assumptions for the Tri-relational Subject

Reductionism in the philosophy of mind is motivated by the desire to overcome the dualism of a mental substance that is not extended in space (e.g., ideas) and a physical substance that is extended in space (e.g., the body). Otherwise, how could we ever account for the causal interaction between mental and physical states? But a denial of dualism need not imply that we can utterly reduce that which makes mental states mental to that which gives the body its characteristics. For example, in the way that chemical reactions in organic structures (e.g., amino and nucleic acids) rely on chemical reactions of non-organic structures (e.g., carbon, hydrogen and oxygen), and yet have causal relations that are not utterly determined by these non-organic structures, so too it may be that interactions between mental states and properties depend upon, and yet are not utterly determined by, characteristics of physical states and properties.

I will assume, then, that all natural things consist of the same substance (call it "matter," "energy," etc.). However, I will also assume that this substance is conditioned by a macro- structural organization, and can be partly conditioned by how it is related to other structural organizations. Such a position presupposes that all natural things are causally related with, and influenced by, many other things within a holistic system. Therefore, I maintain the basic thesis of naturalism to the extent that it requires that all things are related to many other things in law-like relationships. But I also insist that in the same way we cannot identify the actual content of substance unless we have a coherent,

holistic view of reality, I do not suppose that we can specifically identify the actual content of mental states apart from some holistic view of an organized system that makes these states possible in the first place. Therefore, in Chapter 4 I will seek to explain how the tri-relational view of human agency may help us understand consciousness to be the result of temporal relationships, although it relies on a substance qualified by spatial relationships.

It can be maintained that I hold to the basic thesis of supervenience, which I understand to mean that all mental states are in a dependency relation to spatially structured organizations (e.g., physical systems). However, the crucial question of supervenience has not to do with the proposition *that* a particular thing depends upon another, but the nature in which a particular thing depends upon another. I want to ask: What are the structural characteristics that certain types of mental dispositions are dependent upon, and in what way are these dispositions structurally related to each other. Although I will later specify how I think consciousness is best generally conceived as a temporal phenomenon, I will presently argue that the intentionality of mental states rely on the macro-functional structure of the brain as an organism is teleologically engaged with its environment. Before accomplishing this, however, I want to stress that any adequate view of supervenience must incorporate some view of how physical systems are causally related to each other.

Obviously, science must work under the instrumental premise of causal determinism to discover how the different levels of reality are functionally related, but it certainly is not necessary to assume that lower levels of reality (e.g., neurochemicals) must have ontological priority in utterly determining what happens at high levels of reality (e.g.,

mental states). For example, Valerie Hardcastle says, ". . . many agree that "species" and "gene" cannot be defined in terms of lower level properties or entities because the definitions are intimately tied to other properties at the higher level."[1] She explains how once, through observation, we define different levels of reality, we can understand how properties of a higher level may be causally related to other properties at this level more than those at a lower level. She says, "One and the same object---an eye, for example--- can be and in fact is described differently depending upon what sort of questions are being asked. We can talk about the eye in terms of its cognitive function, in terms of its anatomy, in terms of its physiology, in terms of its chemistry and so on."[2] Therefore, she concludes, "Insofar as we can define a higher level property, then that property might be causally efficacious."[3]

If some form of emergentism is not true, it would seem to imply that our definitions of causally efficacious properties at higher levels of reality would have no ontological basis. Thus, although it is methodologically appealing that all levels of reality be reducible to one base level, such an appeal must be of an instrumental nature, encouraging those with seeking minds that there is always more to discover. However, emergentism, I believe, should be considered to have more ontological appeal. Granting that there is significant continuity among levels of reality, it does not claim that lower levels of reality are ontologically sufficient to account for higher levels of reality. In sum, the parts that make-up a particular system are not enough to explain the whole. Rather, to understand the whole we must look beyond the manner in which this particular system is explicitly related to other systems, seeking to discover its intrinsic organization, or

processes of organization. For example, while some of the basic principles of biology can be accounted for by the laws of physics and chemistry, as biological levels become more developed, the laws of physics and chemistry---although still having an effect on the organization of micro- and macro-biological processes (e.g., molecular biology, natural and sexual selection)---fail to have *focal patterns of reciprocal influence* on how some biological entities are intrinsically related to each other (e.g., as in parental care and play). With emergentism it becomes possible to understand how communication between similar functional systems (e.g., members of the same species) create feedback relationships which establish higher level focal patterns of influence and, therefore, are able to rise above the influence of lower level laws.

I believe it necessary to stress a distinction between "focal patterns of reciprocal influence" and explicit causality.[4] Explicit causality happens in the interaction that takes place between systems, or aspects within a system, that *superimposes* themselves upon each other. Reciprocal influence is different from explicit causality in that it happens through the integration of two or more systems, or aspects within a system, that *reciprocally and intrinsically rely* on the influence of one another for an integrated and explicit causal process at a higher ontological level. Therefore, the view of emergentism I am proposing recognises at least three distinct, structurally organized physical systems: suborganic, organic and supraorganic. By suborganic systems I mean non-living systems, which tend to remain closed to reciprocal influence unless put under stress from explicit causal relations. Organic systems are living systems or processes that are involved reciprocally in continuously open relationships to some other organisms or organic

processes. And supraorganic systems, which arise within living organisms, are involved in decision-making processes, and some are even involved in determining the manner in which they experience their focal patterns of reciprocal influence. Understood in this way, while suborganic systems need to be prompted into reciprocal influence, organic systems are continually open to reciprocal influence with other organic systems. But supraorganic systems are not only open to reciprocal influence, they are involved in decision-making processed which enable them partly to experience (the extent to which depends upon the development of their decision-making processes) their focal patterns of reciprocal relations with other systems.

In Chapter 4 I will briefly discuss how the extent to which supraorganic systems experience their environment depends on the temporal levels of concentration to which decision-making processes make information focally present, but the main concern of this present Chapter will be to demonstrate how subjectively self-aware supraorganic systems (i.e., humans) have decision-making processes that enable them partly to define their own focal patterns of reciprocation. However, I will also argue that such systems only have this ability because they are more significantly determined by focal patterns of reciprocal influence of other subjectively self-aware supraorganic systems through their linguistic capacity. But before doing this, I will provide some examples for my distinction between suborganic, organic and supraorganic systems.

As the universe unfolds, it is evident that as systems move to higher levels of reality they also become more reciprocal in character. For example, the reciprocal relations of *suborganic* systems tend to be dependent upon external, explicit causal

relations. For example, atoms are maintained and held together by internal forces and therefore more or less tend to be closed systems, meaning that they, in an undisturbed state, "do not exchange energies with their environment, although they are affected by high energies and heat."[5] Indeed, atoms with complete outer shells (i.e., such as helium atoms) almost never interact with other atoms. However, atoms can become unstable, and therefore are open to reciprocal interaction with other atoms, under stressful conditions (e.g., due to an imbalance between the electrons in their outer shell and the protons in their nucleus or because they fall under electron bombardment) and thereby absorb energy from outside themselves.

I am not saying that subatomic particles (e.g., electrons and protons) are not involved in reciprocal relationships with other particles, but that ordinarily these particles are in balance *within* the atom. As a result, there must be some *external*, explicit force which separates an atom's positive and negative charges before there is the potential for something like a reciprocal flow of electricity. Also, although molecules are integrated collections of atoms that have bonded together through their electrons, they also tend to remain closed systems. Without some superimposing force (e.g. heat) many molecules will not chemically interact with other molecules.

Unlike suborganic systems, while *organic* systems exist they are continually maintained as open systems of reciprocal influence, constantly integrated with their environment as they replicate, exchange and store energies and information with other interrelated, organic systems. All organisms are interrelated to *and* interdependent upon other living systems, even individual cells are greatly influenced by the activity, and the

products of activity, of other cells in tissue, organ, organ-system and organism. Such reciprocal relationships are especially evident in the original formation of amino acid chains, forming protein chains, with the aid of nucleic acids (DNA and RNA): "We know that cells link amino acids together into proteins based on instructions carried by DNA (and RNA), and that cells can synthesize DNA and RNA with the aid of enzymes (which are proteins)."[6] It seems to be the case that DNA and RNA are as reciprocally and intrinsically depend upon proteins as these very proteins chains are reciprocally and intrinsically depended upon DNA and RNA.

However, as organic systems are reciprocally interrelated (in a constant process of intake and output to replenish themselves), they do manifest varying degrees in which they can superimpose themselves upon other systems through explicit causal relationships, outside of their focal patterns of reciprocal influence with other systems. For example, moving organisms can impose explicit effects on a number of different types of entities over a large span of territory, whereas organic cells only have a localized, explicit effects on other organic processes in their (largely) stationary setting. The physical identities of moving organisms are not disturbed because of decision-making processes which regulate and intensify their own internal environments, enabling organisms to resist the vicissitudes of features changing in their external environments. While many organic systems (e.g., cells) tend to be lost in a sea of tacit, non-expressive, reciprocal influence, supraorganic systems (i.e., organisms with some form of decision-making processes) can maintain their physical individuality, while being in explicit causal relations with a changing environment.

Although lower level supraorganisms maintain their individuality on the basis of

biological homeostasis through reciprocal, decision-making processes, these feedback mechanisms are unable to maintain a cognitive identity by being involved in the subjective self-aware formation of their own focal patterns of reciprocal influence. Such systems may be instinctively responsive to certain behavioral displays of other supraorganisms (as in reptiles) or sympathetically responsive to the feelings of other supraorganisms through behavioral stimulus generalizations (as in mammals). But their individuality continues to be primarily determined by their biological homeostasis, while their decision-making processes merely function to condition and maintain communicative focal patterns of reciprocal influence with other mammals. As thermostats regulate the temperature of homes after being programed with a sensitivity to a certain outcome (i.e., maintaining a comfortable temperature), so, too, are these organisms' decision-making processes regulate their behavior as they are "programmed" by their social interactions.

What seems to be phenomenologically evident is that as supraorganic systems become more developed, they are endowed with more concentrated, internal activity in their substrates of subjectivity. We witness sub-personal supraorganic systems in such creatures as reptiles. Reptiles, which seem to be closer to something like pure stimulus-response systems, have a largely unconscious or quasi-conscious responsive continuum of motivational attitudes towards their environment. But we also witness pre-personal supraorganic systems in non-human mammals, which have a largely conscious or quasi-self-conscious responsive-evocative continuum of motivational attitudes towards their environment. Lastly, we witness personal supraorganic system in ourselves, having a subjectively self-aware continuum of motivational attitudes and personality-character traits

not only towards the environment, but also towards ourselves as individuals with personal identities. That is to say, as adults we can condition ourselves knowingly with certain personal and character traits---with certain focal patterns that determines the way in which we think of ourselves and reciprocally relate with others.

By investigating the functional structural of the human brain, we can begin to see why these supraorganic systems have these qualities. While I will seek to better define the intentionality of consciousness in Chapter 4, it will now be argue that there are three forms of intentionality which make up the subjectively self-aware supraorganic system, and each is related to one of the parts of the macro-functional structures of the human brain, as an organism is teleologically engaged with and within its social environment.


## B. Emergentism and the Triune Brain

Paul D. MacLean's constructive-discovery (i.e., as of yet not proved) of the triune human brain has made it possible to narrow the neurochemical complexity of the human brain down to its fundamental components. Although the brain consists of billions of neurons, millions of neural networks, and hundreds (?) of structural-interacting systems of neural networks all communicating with one another, within this buzz of complexity, there are three basic components that clearly stand out as defining the overall macro-structure of the human brain: the R-complex, the limbic system, and the neocortex. These systems, each with its own forms of decision-making processes, build on each other, enabling the us to interact with our world in more expressive ways than reptiles and non-human mammals.

Each of these components reveals how the human nervous system developed through time. The R-complex (including, e.g., the basal ganglia, the thalamus, and the hypothalamus at the top portion of the spinal cord) is involved in unconscious processes such as in the regulation of metabolism, digestion and respiration, along with the tacit "regulation of daily master routines and subroutines."[7] The limbic system (including, e.g., the hippocampus, the septum, the amygdala, and the cingulate gyrus) adds a pre-explicit, experiential and emotional dimension to the R-complex's functions in the primitive mammalian brain. Also, with an enlarged cortex, the limbic systems grants some higher mammals the power of short-term, working memories along with greater memory retention and comparison than more primitive mammals. Finally, with the introduction of the neocortex (including the occipital, parietal, temporal, and frontal lobes and prefrontal cortices), which enhances, re-organizes and incorporates the old mammalian brain's capacity of pre-verbal memory, motor, sensory and emotional functions into high-level linguistic-cognitive functions, humans are gifted with many cognitive talents which other mammals lack. In sum, as MacLean says, "Radically different in chemistry and structure and in an evolutionary sense countless generations apart, the three neural assemblies constitute a hierarchy of three brains-in-one, a triune brain."[8]

What is not only ontologically, but also ethically and politically, significant about these three different components of the human nervous system does not directly have to do with their complex neurochemical functions, but rather with how these functional components partly determine how we are intersubjectively related to other subjects.[9] In other words, each of these three subsystems interiorises aspects of its social environment

in unique ways, producing a responsive-evocative continuum subjectivity build upon intersubjective interactions. Before seeing why the responsive continuum of motivational attitudes in reptiles and the responsive-evocative continuum motivational attitudes and feeling states in mammals are different from those in humans, I will demonstrate how the responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity of the tri-relational subject is related to the triune brain.

The tacit, or procedural, behavioral-responsive relation, including, e.g., needs, instincts, desires and behavioral habits and skills, emerges on account of the interiorisation of our engagements with an environment through the functional structures of the R-complex. I will label this as the *responsive relation* of the continuum of subjectivity. By adding an *evocative relation* to this continuum, I mean a experiential-integrative relation, including, e.g., feelings (emotions and concerns) and pre-explicit episodic memories, that emerges on account of the interiorisation of our engagement with an environment through the functional structures of the limbic system. Finally, the human mind, which includes extrapersonal and metapersonal forms of background awareness, an attentive-interpretive disposition and an pretentive-reflexive disposition, will be described as resting upon the responsive-evocative continuum of motivational states, personality-character traits and the temporal abeyance of a personally present, evaluative synthesis of a past-present identity, or subcontext, and a future-present projective vision, or context, according to an intersubjective meta-context of other points of views. In this present section I will focus on how the content of the mind emerges through the interiorisation of our engagements with an environment by the functional structures of the neocortex and the linguistic-

projective constructions found in society, and in the next section I will discuss the manner in which we come to be able to partly interiorise the content of the mind through our linguistic capacity.

The responsive-evocative continuum of the tri-relational subject can be thought of as consisting of three interiorised forms of intentionality. While functional structures of the R-complex enable us to have a *corporeal intentionality* towards the world, the functional structures of the limbic system enable us to have an *emotional intentionality* towards a communal environment. On top of this, the functional structures of the neocortex, in operation with the other functional structures of the R-complex and limbic system, grant us a *linguistic intentionality* towards other persons, which plays the key role in the development of different cultures.

This distribution is determined by the functions of each subsystem's structural-interacting systems of neural networks. For example, the R-complex is the most determined as corporeal intentionality because one of its structural-interacting systems (the hypothalamus) is the command center of the neuroendocrine system. The hypothalamus is a structural interacting system that functions to mediate the process which connects the brain with the entire body by regulating the endocrine system (i.e., the autonomic nervous system) and the limbic system[10] through a feedback loop whereby it "pumps" hormones into the bloodstream, through the pineal gland, to make the body more active (through the sympathetic nervous system) or restful (through the parasympathetic nervous system). The R-complex also includes the thalamus and the basal ganglia, which both serve to regulate and integrate sensations, movement and bodily behavior.[11]

As we continue I will discuss some of the components that make-up the other forms of intentionality, but for now I will assume that my reader has some understanding of how the tri-relational subject is thoroughly embodied.[12] After briefly examining how the functional structures of the R-complex and limbic system are communicatively engaged in reptiles and primitive mammals, I will then investigate how linguistic intentionality of human subjects is partly determined by the functional structure of the neocortex and the linguistic-projective construction found in culture.

If any one of the functional structures of the human brain manifests characteristics that are most amenable to something like the findings of social behaviorism, it is the responsive relation of the R-complex. MacLean has studied this component of the brain in various kinds of lizards and mammals, concluding that the R-complex plays a basic role in behavioral displays used in social communication. Such displays he calls "protosemantic communication" (e.g., the nonverbal signaling of dominance, submission and the defense of territory) and "interoperative behavior" (e.g., the rigid neural mechanics of routinizing which "not only regulate the order in which . . . actions occur, but also the time of their occurrence"[13]). These instinctive, nonverbal (or tacit) forms of behavior include imitating the action of other animals, responding positively or negatively to other animals' signaling, and reenacting behavior for the purpose of preserving survival and regeneration.

As linked to a social environment, the R-complex of reptiles and animals has them actively engaged in nonverbal communication, providing them with a behavioral memory of acquired signaling skills forming a background of predisposed engagement. However, it is important to note that not all creatures are behaviorally predisposed merely for the rigid

purpose of survival, because as the limbic system develops, other relational goals gain

significance. In other words, *different focal patterns of reciprocal influence begin to re-*

*orient lower ontological levels* (e.g., the R-complex). For example, reptiles can take part

in grooming, breeding and migratory behavior, but not behavior displaying parental care;

such behavior, as MacLean says, "is nonexistent in the case of most reptiles, and this may

have been true of the mammal-like reptiles."[14] He understands three major behavior

developments happening in the transition from reptiles to mammals: "1) nursing in

conjunction with maternal care, 2) audiovocal communication for maintaining maternal-

offspring contact, and 3) play."[15]

While reptiles have a corporeal intentionality that enables them to dwell in the

demands of their social environments by instinctively responding to the behavioral

dispositions of other reptiles, non-human mammals have an emotional intentionality that

enables them to dwell in the demands of their social environment by responding to the

feelingly sympathetic, behavioral dispositions in other mammals. Their primordial,

corporeal intentionality---the tacit needs, instincts, desires and behavioral habits and skills

of the R-complex---becomes conditioned (or qualified) by the feelings and pre-explicit,

episodic memories of its interactions with other mammals. Their bodies are now capable

of exhibiting emotional expression in the form of play and parental concern. From the

perspective of neuroscience, because the hypothalamus and basal ganglia of the R-

complex are neurochemically connected and interrelated to the limbic system, mammals

have a lower ontological level of being behaviorally responsive to an environment that

serves as a basis upon which they can be oriented to a higher ontological level of being

emotionally engaged with their environment. Whereas reptiles are only collectively and behaviorally intersubjective, mammals are *communally* and *feelingly* intersubjective through their behavior. The evocative relation of the limbic system's functional structures gives mammals a certain spiritedness about them which reptiles lack; in fact, it is a spiritedness that manifests itself in a high degree of variation among members of a single species.

While reptiles have an R-complex, they lack a sufficiently formed limbic system; therefore, they are responsively related with other reptiles for the general value of survival. Non-humans mammals, because they have a sufficiently formed limbic system and partly developed neocortex, have an augmented manner in which they are responsively related with other members of their species. They are feelingly responsive to other like themselves. In other words, while reptiles are more determined by their need for survival through a corporeal intentionality, non-human mammals are capable of desiring the pleasure of *communal* (not merely *collective*) survival through an emotional intentionality.

If reptiles are responsively related to one another for the purpose of survival, and if non-human mammals are responsively and feelingly related to one another in order to achieve communal survival, what about humans---what does the functional structure of their brain enable them to desire? It will later be argued that the cognitive structure of the neocortex and the linguistic character of human communication, enables humans to augment how they are feelingly related to other humans with intersubjective desire for truth. But for now I will investigate whether the neocortex of the human brain actually provides the functional structure for this capacity.

As compared to humans, even higher mammals are greatly limited in the motivations they can provoke within themselves, because their range of motivationally strengthened, anticipatory expression is, by and large, limited to the evocative relation of the limbic system's functional structures. All mammals have the ability to arouse or relax (through the amygdala and septum, respectively[16]) the incoming and outgoing information of declarative and procedural memories (through the hippocampus), because the emotionally sensitive neurons in the limbic systems of mammals are intrinsically connected to the prefrontal cortex, enabling them to have an anticipatory stance toward a social environment.[17] As feelings are evoked by the behavioral dispositions of the R-complex through the limbic system, the prefrontal cortex can be understood as allowing subjects to better orient and augment the R-complex's instinctual and learned behavior, needs and drives with their own *immediate* experiences of pre-verbal communication through the felt needs (i.e., concerns) and pre-explicit memories of their engagement within their social environment. Therefore, primitive mammalian expressions often seem completely oriented to an environment according to a survival instinct, largely dependent on a stimulus in the *immediate* environment. However, in familial and playful interactions they seem to let their feelings gracefully rise above the rigid survival oriented expressions of the R-complex to condition their behavioral dispositions, both emotionally and concernfully.

With the development of the neocortex in humans there is an enhancement of our ability to orient ourselves to immediate social and material environments. This is due to the augmentation of the power to control the cognitive operations provided by the functional structures of the prefrontal cortex: the powers of anticipation, expectation,

selection, focusing attention and monitoring effects in the environment.[18] When we

compare the power of our intellect and the versatility of our expressive behavior with that

of other mammals, it is no wonder that the frontal lobes exhibit one of the greatest

allometric developments in the evolution of the human nervous system, making up 33% of

the neocortex.[19]

Before providing some evidence that the neocortex, and especially the enlarged

frontal and prefrontal cortices, provide the functional structures for a linguistic

intentionality that enables us to condition the responsive-evocative continuum through the

attentive-interpretive, pretentive-reflexive dispositions and the evaluative synthesis of

personally present awareness. I need to mention briefly how humans are linguistically

embedded in society. Indeed, if non-human mammals integrate and express themselves

most beautifully in their play and family concern, then humans integrate and express

themselves most beautifully as personal and cultural groomers of meaning through their

linguistic capacity.

Given the linguistic nature of the meaning structures in culture, we not only dwell

in the demands of an immediate social environment, we also dwell in the accumulated

linguistic-projective constructs (e.g., something like Dawkin's "memes") which are part of

the history of human culture (e.g., the surviving linguistic-projective constructs of

deceased humans). Furthermore, because language is the medium whereby humans create

and recreate culture, these linguistic structures transmit knowledge from one generation to

the next. Accordingly, a culturally matured person with a healthy brain is thoroughly

conditioned by linguistic focal patterns of reciprocal influence, and such an individual can

condition himself with these linguistic constructs with his own focal pattern of personal interest.

As in reptiles and non-human mammals, the responsive relation of our responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity grounds our corporeal intentionality in the sympathetic behavioral dispositions of other humans within society; but now they do so in a more complex fashion. Humans corporeally and sympathetically respond to other people and meaning structures through their interiorised linguistic-projective generalizations.[20] While spiders spin webs to catch their food and bears scratch trees to mark their territory, adult humans have learned to operate within a complex system of linguistically determined social roles and norms so that they may go to work to earn a living, and hope to achieve personal goals.

But the linguistic-projective constructs of culture also envelop us with latently linguistic-behavioral demands. We cannot get up from our bed in the morning without finding ourselves predisposed towards responding to the anticipations and expectations of others. For example, behavioral anticipations and expectations are laced in the technology which surrounds us, whether in the form of an alarm clock, a toothbrush, or a backpack. How is it, then, that these linguistic-behavioral demands can be embodied in the tri-relational subject? Beyond this, if we are always and already directed by the linguistic-projections of others, how is it possible that we form our own linguistic patterns of reciprocal influence from our personal interests? Indeed, how can there be *personal* interests? Before answering these important questions I will seek to articulate how the neocortex is functionally related to the responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity.

Although the following claims will need direct confirmation, more direct than merely citing references, through the empirical research of neuroscientists, I will seek to provide some evidence that the neocortex provides the functional structures for two of the subsisting relations that allow our responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity to have a personal (rational) linguistic capacity. On the one hand, the functional structures of the prefrontal and ventromedial prefrontal cortex of the left hemisphere grants a subject interpretive control over a metapersonal, attentive stance. I will describe this attentive stance (or relation) more fully later, but for now it is sufficient to say that it is a disposition that allows us to be focally and metapersonally related to objects, events, persons. On the other hand, the functional structures of the prefrontal and the ventromedial prefrontal cortex of the right hemisphere allows a subject to have reflexive control over a extrapersonal, pretentive stance. This pretentive stance (or relation) will also be discussed more fully later, but for I will define it as a disposition that spontaneously responds to the attentive-interpretive focusing, while it arouses the responsive-evocative continuum with extrapersonal feelings and episodic memories that are relevant to the attentive-interpretive disposition's focally and metapersonally attuned apprehension.

Additionally, in relation to both the pretentive-reflexive and attentive-interpretive dispositions, the functional structures of the R-complex, the limbic system and the ventromedial prefrontal cortex combine to form a hierarchy of decision-making processes, culminating in the responsive-evocative continuum's subjective self-awareness. This continuum is more firmly conditioned through the functional structures of the R-complex at the center of the brain and less firmly conditioned (and thus more flexible and creative)

through the functional structures of the limbic system and ventromedial prefrontal cortex at the front of the brain. The responsive-evocative continuum of motivational attitudes, personality-character traits and the evaluative synthesis of personally present awareness will later be shown to have some control over the focus of the attentive-interpretive stance, according to a natural vision for truth, that which is common to all humans, and projective visions, that which allows each of us to be personally individuated. But I will begin my investigation by presenting some evidence for the attentive-interpretive disposition, which relies on the functional structures of the left hemisphere, and the pretentive-reflexive disposition, which relies on the functional structures of the right hemisphere.

Many of the functions of the right and left hemisphere are now well documented:[21] The right hemisphere, on the one hand, helps to enable persons to be receptively sensitive to gestalt phenomena and excel at visual-motor tasks---while it also empowers persons to be acutely sensitive to emotional information. The left hemisphere, on the other hand, grants persons the ability to structure linguistically and interpret experiential information, control speech production, and draw inferences from a differentiation and analysis of experience---while it does not invest persons with the ability to be receptively sensitive to emotional change. For these reasons, among others, we know the left hemisphere to be more dominant than the right hemisphere in our production of speech. However, some asymmetries are still very ambiguous. For example, the right hemisphere is capable of acquiring many linguistic capacities and, oddly, even though the right hemisphere is attuned to emotions, unlike the left hemisphere, it does *not* allow agents to initiate

voluntary facial expressions---although it does empower agents to manifest spontaneous laughter.[22] It is also a mystery as to why the left hemisphere is involved in the production of "false memories," whereas the right hemisphere is always involved in the production of "truthful" memories.[23]

Although this is not the place to provide as detailed an account as I would like, I believe the attribution of a metapersonal, attentive-interpretive disposition to the left hemisphere and an extrapersonal, pretentive-reflexive disposition to the right hemisphere may help clarify some of these ambiguities. I will consider evidence for the following statements: The parietal lobes of the neocortex function together to augment the tacit, behavioral-responsive dispositions of the responsive-evocative continuum by developing two different forms of spatial orientation. The corporeal intentionality of the responsive-evocative continuum is qualified by an *abstract-structural* orientation by the functional structure of the left parietal lobe and an *embedded-holistic* orientation by the functional structure of the right parietal lobe. These spatial orientations qualify corporeal intentionality with two different forms of stimulus generalizations that help to condition the background perceptual fields that rely on the functional structures of the superior temporal lobes. In sum, I will show how there is some evidence to think that the corporeal intentionality of the responsive-evocative continuum is tacitly stimulated by metapersonal aspects of our perceptual field, granted by the functional structure of the left parietal lobe's *abstract-structural* orientation. Together with this I will give some evidence for how the corporeal intentionality of the responsive-evocative continuum is also tacitly stimulated by extrapersonal aspects of our perceptual field, granted by the functional

structure of the right parietal lobe's *embedded-holist* orientation.

The functional structures of the temporal lobes of the neocortex function to condition each hemisphere with two different, yet complementary, forms of peripheral, background awareness---that is, two pre-reflexive forms of awareness that complementary condition our sense information as a perceptual field. The emotional intentionality of the responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity is channeled to the left superior temporal lobe, and this conditions the left frontal lobe with a peripherally *metapersonal, background awareness*, e.g., cognitive feelings of experiential-linguistic memories with which we cannot personally identify, accompanied by such cognitive concerns as curiosity, ambiguity, puzzlement, anxiety, respect and reverential awe. Also, the emotional intentionality of the responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity is channeled to the right superior temporal lobe, and this conditions the right frontal lobe with a peripherally *extrapersonal, background awareness*, e.g., cognitive feelings of what other people anticipate from us and experiential-linguistic memories with which we can personally identify, accompanied by a the full array of intersubjective and subjective emotions and concerns. These pre-reflective, background forms of awareness come forth from the responsive-evocative continuum, and in the process emotionally and memorially qualify the abstract-structural and embedded-holistic conditioned corporeal intentionality of the parietal lobes, which will later be shown to be focally conditioned by linguistic intentionality of the frontal and prefrontal cortices.

The somatosensory areas of the parietal lobes lie directly behind the motor strips of the frontal cortex. Considering that the motor strips are functionally involved in voluntary

bodily movement and contributors to spontaneous bodily movement, it makes sense to

think that these strips are intimately connected to the neuronal activity of the

somatosensory areas, which are "responsible for both the external senses of touch,

temperature, pain, and the internal senses of joint position, visceral state, and pain."[24]

Furthermore, there is evidence that subcortical components of the brain are active in

integrating sensorimotor co-ordination. For example, ". . . it has been shown that cells in

the basal ganglia which receive highly processed spatial information, probably from the

parietal lobes, are active when [an] animal is tracking a moving visual object."[25] Because

sensory information is neurologically integrated by the components of the R-complex, it

makes sense to think our sensory information is conditioned by corporeal intentionality.

Understood in this way, sensory information has relevance to the spatial, somatic

character of the parietal and frontal lobes. Furthermore, as corporeal intentionality

qualifies our sensory information by making it into perceptually relevant information, it

can then be further qualified by our emotional and linguistic intentionality.

It is well known that the left parietal cortex is endowed with calculative and

linguistic associative dispositions,[26] and is also involved in the integration of somatic and

visual information. Yet, from the perspective of the tri-relational subject what is more

significant about these dispositions is where they are located: the left somatosensory area

interacts with its neighboring temporal lobe and the motor strip of the frontal lobe to pass

information on to Broca's area in the left frontal cortex, which controls and coordinates

muscles to produce speech. Furthermore, the angular gyrus of the parietal lobe is found

within the left somatosensory area, which is the main area for associating visual images

with the left temporal lobe's auditory memories (in the auditory cortex) and linguistic comprehension (in Wernicke's area). Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that the left somatosensory area can be thought of as conditioning corporeal intentionality with an abstract-structural orientation.

We often find ourselves working from this orientation in our daily lives as we tacitly respond to common, algorithmic-linguistic constructs. For example, when driving we often find ourselves systematically obeying the rules of the road, even when our minds are not consciously focusing on these rules. I will later demonstrate how these forms of intentionality are also more personally qualified by the attentive-interpretive stance of the functional structure of the left frontal lobe, but for now it is important to show how the emotional intentionality of the responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity is also tacitly conditioned by the functional structures of the left temporal lobe.

It has been found that patients with an excited left temporal lobe "tend to be obsessional, humorless, very concerned with religious ideas, and to have little interest in sex . . ."[27] Stated differently, an excited left temporal lobe gives a manifest awareness of what is normally a background awareness that tacitly focuses on metapersonal concerns, e.g., curiosity, puzzlement respect and reverential awe. In addition, there is strong evidence that damage to the deeper parts of the temporal lobes, which are closer to the limbic system, "shows a sparing of immediate but not lasting memory function . . ."[28] In support of this, it has also been demonstrated that the outer cortex of the left temporal lobe is partly responsible for our capacity of short-term procedural and declarative memories.

The left temporal lobe is generally known to be crucial for speech perception, but from the perspective of the tri-relational subject it is also significant that the temporal lobes are connected to the hypothalamus (and thus the responsive relational of the continuum of subjectivity) through the limbic system.[29] Memorial and emotional information is evoked from the responsive-evocative continuum through the hippocampus and parahippocampus into the temporal lobe's short-term, working memories, granting it a peripherally metapersonal, background adjustment to the body's current environment. In other words, as the responsive-evocative continuum of emotional intentionality moves out toward the cortical surface of the brain through the temporal lobes, it can qualify the corporeal intentionality of the left parietal lobe, which has already been qualified by abstract-structural orientation. More specifically, the functional structures of the left temporal lobe condition the corporeal intentionality of the left parietal lobe as it filters the extrapersonally relevant force of emotional intentionality, leaving this intentionality with only a metapersonally relevant force in its qualification of corporeal intentionality.

While the left parietal lobe grants an *abstract-structural* orientation to the responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity, the functional structure of the left temporal lobe grants it a peripherally *metapersonal, background awareness*. I will now show that there is also some evidence which demonstrates that the corporeal intentionality of the responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity is tacitly conditioned with an *embedded-holistic* orientation through the functional structures of the right parietal lobe, while emotional intentionality is conditioned as a peripherally *extrapersonal, background awareness* through the functional structures of the right, superior temporal lobe.

However, because the metapersonal and extrapersonal forms of background awareness

simultaneously work together, we must keep in mind exactly how they are different. For

example, when driving over the speed limit a background, metapersonal concern of

respect for the authority of the law can cause us to be anxious when we see a police car.

Here, the responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity is conditioned by metapersonal

awareness as it is peripherally engaged by those common aspects of sensory information

and linguistic structures which a person *cannot* identify with himself (e.g., the authority of

the law that is represented in and by the police officer's car). At the same time, the

responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity is conditioned by a extrapersonal

awareness as it is peripherally engaged to sensory information and linguistic structures

which have been qualified through personally conditioned memories and feelings of past

encounters with the police car. Such engagement allows a person to change personally

the emotional or memorial significance of aspects related to the situation (e.g., a person's

attitude toward how he is required to obey the law).

Through the study of patients with anosognosia (i.e., the inability to respond

emotionally to the fact that one has a disease), it has come to be recognized that there is a

significant asymmetry between the left and right somatosensory areas in the parietal lobes

of the neocortex.[30] When there is damage to their left somatosensory areas and the

patients suffering from this damage are told that their condition is fatal, and that they will

probably not live a normal life, they will quite normally respond with emotion and concern.

However, if these same patients had damage in their right somatosensory areas, they

would respond with an emotionless, unconcerned attitude. It is as though the patients lose

contact with how the doctor's words are personally relevant to their own condition. They can understand the words, but they cannot grasp how these words are subjectively related to themselves. Antonio R. Damasio (a neurologist) says that this phenomenon is most likely caused by the damage to the right hemisphere, because "the representation of extrapersonal space, as well as the processes of emotion, involve a right hemisphere dominance."[31] Indeed, some consider the functional structures of the right temporal lobe to be the locus of emotions and the source of our existential confidence. In fact, it has been found to be active in those having near-death experiences.[32]

However, according to the tri-relational view of the subject, it makes more sense to explain anosognosia by saying that it is the damage to the right somatosensory area that destroys the right parietal lobe's *embedded-holistic* orientation which, in turn, makes it impossible for the right, superior temporal lobe to orient its *extrapersonal, background awareness* with an appropriately qualified corporeal intentionality. That is to say, we must specify how the metapersonally filtered and extrapersonally enhanced emotional intentionality of the right temporal lobe qualifies the corporeal intentionality of the right parietal lobe and how this corporeal intentionality grounds this extrapersonally qualified emotional intentionality in an embedded-holistic orientation.

As the corporeal and emotional intentionality move out from the responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity, being qualified by abstract-structural and embedded-holistic orientations and the metapersonal and the extrapersonal, background forms of awareness, the frontal and prefrontal cortices can be thought to bring this awareness back to the continuum of subjectivity---but, now, qualified as a linguistic intentionality. Indeed,

the functional structures of the limbic system and R-complex are known to be connected

to the prefrontal cortex: ". . . the prefrontal cortex is involved in a three-way dialogue with

other parts of the nervous system: (1) via projective fibers to subcortical structures

involved in arousal, orientation, and affect, (2) via associative fibers to other cortical areas

involved in sensory, as well as motor, language, imaginal, and cognitive functions, and (3)

via callosal fibers with prefrontal cortex in the other hemisphere."[33] Furthermore, we can

add to this that the functional structures of the left frontal and prefrontal cortices seem to

grant the responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity as more interpretive function;[34]

in fact, when there is damage to these areas, persons lose their ability to organize plans

and overcome pre-established response tendencies.[35] Moreover, the functional structures

of the right frontal and prefrontal cortices have no such function. Although these

structures are *indirectly involved* in the process of understanding and conceiving of

language, they seem to operate more to translate propositions "into a scenario of being

and acting."[36] Generally, the right frontal and prefrontal lobes seem to be active in

helping subjects to orient themselves by "resisting distractions and developing an

awareness of self and time."[37] One study found that the right hemisphere is more

involved in self-monitoring tasks requiring only moderate reasoning.[38]

What is emerging here is the idea that as awareness moves from our background

pre-reflexive and pre-interpretive dispositions, it begins to form an extrapersonal,

pretentive-reflexive disposition through the functional structures of the right frontal and

pre-frontal cortices and a metapersonal, attentive-interpretive disposition through the

functional structures of the left frontal and prefrontal cortices. Consequently, these

dispositions can be thought to qualify intellectually the evocation relation of the response-evocative continuum of corporeal-emotional intentionality with a linguistic intentionality. As a result, the responsive-evocative continuum can take on propositional attitudes (e.g., beliefs), acquire personality-character traits and participate in different roles that make-up one's reflexive identity, e.g., a person may be a husband, a father, a police officer and a little league baseball coach.

The interaction between the attentive-interpretive and pretentive-reflexive dispositions and personally present awareness relies on the neurochemical communication among the orbital cortices, frontal and prefrontal cortices, the ventromedial prefrontal cortices, and the limbic system. These are the primary functional structures of neural networks that play the major role---although not the primary role of a linguistic community---in allowing the responsive-evocative continuum's personally present, evaluative synthesis to partly determine its own focal patterns of reciprocal influence.

The cingulate gyrus is the outermost part of the limbic system, surrounding the corpus callosum (which is the largest fiber tracts of communication between the left and right hemispheres) and connecting with the parahippocampal gyrus in the temporal lobe.[39] The ventromedial prefrontal cortices run back from the neocortex to the anterior cingulate gyrus which is "known to be involved in the ability to think creatively and make decisions."[40] Thus understood, we can have a grasp of how the anterior cingulate gyrus serves as an evocative mediator for the attentive-interpretive and pretentive-reflexive dispositions. In fact, damage to the anterior cingulate gyrus, the prefrontal cortices and the ventromedial cortices "not only produces impairment in movement, emotion, and

attentiveness, but also causes a virtual suspension of the animation of action and of thought process such that reason is no longer viable."[41]

There is also evidence that the right side of the anterior cingulate gyrus is more active when a subject is in pain or emotionally involved,[42] supporting the idea that the functional structure of right prefrontal cortex grants subjects their extrapersonal, pretentive-reflexive disposition. Moreover, there is support for the belief that the functional structures of the left prefrontal cortex grants subjects their metapersonal, attentive-interpretive disposition, for it has been discovered that the left side of the anterior cingulate gyrus is active when subjects are *not* reflexively aware of their need to maintain information to solve problems.[43] In other words, the left hemisphere allows us to be involved in reasoning, but only that aspect of reasoning that is *not* reflexively self-aware. Together, these findings point to how the responsive-evocative continuum's personally present awareness is evoked by two different, yet complementary dispositions: one a metapersonally projective awareness or identity and the other an extrapersonally reflexive awareness or identity.

While evaluative synthesis of personally present awareness relies upon the responsive-evocative continuum's more creative and imaginative thoughts, these thoughts rely on the functional processes taking place in the anterior cingulate gyrus. There is evidence that its more firmly conditioned, sub-personal and pre-personal memories and feelings rely on the functional structure of the caudate nucleus of the R-complex. The caudate nucleus is considered to be the automatic transmission and filter station for the front part of the brain that plays a role in determining the manner in which thought is

usually engaged with the world in our mundane activities.[44] Moreover, it is the outermost part of the basal ganglia and it plays a key role in circulating dopamine, a type of "lubricant" that aids the communication of neurons and "seems to help us move seamlessly from one line of thought to another, or to convert our intentions to walk, sit down or reach for a cup of coffee into a smooth executive sequence of actions."[45] It is possible that the circulation of dopamine, among other neurochemicals such as serotonin, serves as an intermediary link between the nervous system and the supraorganic system as a whole. That is, these neurochemicals possibly constitute the material (non-intentional) substrate of the tri-relational subject's corporeal, emotional and linguistic intentionality, which is temporally conditioned through a hierarchy of decision-making processes and by the present-personal, past-present-extrapersonal and future-present-metapersonal dispositions of the neocortex.

We can now return to some of the ambiguities about why the right and left hemispheres have been found to be related to the phenomena which I mention earlier. For example, we can say that the right hemisphere is attuned to emotions, yet cannot be directly involved in initiating voluntary facial expressions, because it does *not* provide the functional structures which allow agents to interpret and re-interpret scenarios of extrapersonal engagement. Beyond this, we can also be clear about why it is that the right hemisphere is directly involved in the production of spontaneous laughter. By its functional structures, agents are spontaneously and extrapersonally engaged with their world through their extrapersonal, pretentive-reflexive disposition. Also, because the left hemisphere's functional structures grant subjects a metapersonally projective, attentive-

interpretive disposition, they can disengaged from their situation to create false memories from the pretentive-reflective evocations in the right hemisphere. However, the pretentive-reflexive disposition granted by the functional structures of the right hemisphere is *not* able to disengage from it immediate environment in this way; therefore, its extrapersonal (past-present) stance can only afford subjects the opportunity to tell the truth.

## C. The Origin of Human Agency and Our Natural Vision of Truth

Assuming that a (healthy) human brain provides the structural hardware for how we have conceived of the tri-relational subject, against the background of its pre-reflexive and pre-interpretive dispositions, I will now discuss how these three subsisting relations allow humans originally to *notice* them*selves*, and *then* become personally present to them*selves*, as fallibly related to reality through their linguistic communication with other subjects. Furthermore, it will be argued that it is in this manner of discovering ourselves that allows us to become aware of a natural, teleological value of truth. In the pursuit of truth subjects are granted the capacity of self-control because they can purposively abide by making better judgements to live in a manner that is more available to discovering truth and more responsive to intersubjective priorities. In other words, I will seek to articulate the manner in which humans become aware of their power to reason (understood as the power of *context inclusion or exclusion*), and as a consequence they can become aware of their power of self-control. Let us begin by differentiating "noticing" (or discovering) from the attentive-interpretive and pretentive-reflexive stances of the tri-relational self.

The metapersonal, attentive stance is a polymorphous phenomenon. We can see this in the way we use the verb "attending." Unlike other verbs, it does not depend on what we are doing. We can attend to anything but we cannot walk, play or have pleasure with anything. But it is also significant that our attentive stance allows our awareness to center on that "of which we are actively engaged or busy or occupied in any perceptual (looking, listening, etc.), or intellectual (thinking, dreaming) ways. Hence we speak of concentrating or focusing or centering our attention, of not going off at a tangent . . . we say our attention is given, paid, directed, fixed."[46] The attentive stance allows our awareness to move from ourselves towards some object, event or person on account of a particular reason or purpose. In this sense, the attentive stance is metapersonal because it always directs our awareness from a subject to something else. But if the attentive disposition takes our awareness away from ourselves, what is it that re-engages our awareness with ourselves?

The pretentive stance is also a polymorphous phenomenon. But it is quite different from the attentive stance because we are never actively involved in using the pretentive mode of our awareness. Rather, it is evocatively and spontaneously responsive to how the attentive-interpretive disposition focuses our awareness on the world, and it is also reflexively aroused as we focus the attentive-interpretive disposition of our awareness on questions, concerns and purposes. It characterizes the holistic, engaged predisposition that persons have to their present situation, or even to a particular object, event or person. Therefore, while it is through the attentive-interpretive stance that our awareness can be in focal contact with the world, it is through the pretentive-reflexive stance that our

awareness is made focally relevant to ourselves.[47]   Furthermore, the pretentive stance is

responsive to an indefinite number of cues that arise from the attentive stance. In this

sense, the metapersonal characteristic of the attentive-interpretive stance is brought back

to us as focally relevant mental states through the engaged, holistic, extrapersonal

characteristics of the pretentive-reflexive stance.

The pretentive stance is also considered to be extrapersonal because it is not

directly determined by us, although it is through past-present feelings and episodic

memories that we are enabled to be meaningfully engaged with an environment, giving us

a sense of expectancy while also inclining motivational attitudes so that we are persuaded

to choose certain actions over others. Therefore, it can either take the form of an

instigating or inhibitory force upon the subject, because its feelings and episodic memories

can either be attracting or threatening.  But in each case, it originates as a tacit response

from an agent's previous unconscious, conscious and subjectively self-aware engagement

with an environment. Instead of paying or fixing pretention, it is already paid and fixed for

us, making the world spontaneously relevant to us, according to the our focal concerns

which are in contact with the world through the attentive-interpretive stance.

Although it, too, is a polymorphous phenomenon, "noticing," unlike "attending," is

a mental action that cannot be intentionally utilized. That is to say, like the pretentive

stance, it is a responsive-evocative phenomenon. However, unlike the pretentive stance,

"noticing" does not occur concomitant with our intentional focusing of the attentive-

interpretive stance. Instead, we *as agents* notice what is significant in the attentive-

pretentive evocations, outside of what we were focally concerned with in the attentive-

interpretive stance, by what is already significant to us in the motivational attitudes and

personality-character traits of the responsive-evocative continuum, and the background

extrapersonal, pre-reflexive and metapersonal, pre-interpretive dispositions. While one can

be receptive to noticing particular phenomena, and even practice being more attentive and

sensitive to noticing what one usually fails to notice, one cannot choose to notice.

"Noticing," as Alan R. White says, "is something that happens to us, provided we are

properly prepared to receive it . . .When we notice something, we are struck by it, it

makes an impression or dawns on us."[48] Therefore, "noticing"---like all mental states---

has something to do with our acquisition of knowledge. More specifically, it makes

experience *present* to us without ourselves intending to bringing such experience into

focus through the attentive-interpretive stance of the mind. In this sense, whereas the

pretentive-reflexive stance is constantly relating a *past-present* evocations to a subject's

focused, metapersonal attention, an agent's "noticing" is prior to all such metapersonal

concerns and *future-present* visions.

An agent seems to notice according to priorities that supersede priorities in the

projective visions of how we would like to be oriented in the world, and although our

noticing does not manifest itself as a constant phenomenon, we consistently notice

ourselves being reminded of what is most significant to us. As White remarks, ". . . it does

not, unlike becoming conscious or aware, denote the beginning of a continuing state;

'become', 'remain' , 'cease to be' cannot qualify our noticing as they qualify our

consciousness and awareness."[49] However, when we notice something it is made *present*

to us through the consistent evocation of what is significant in the background,

extrapersonal and metapersonal dispositions. In a sense, it gives light (or access to further disclosure) to our attentive-interpretive stance towards the world so that we are enabled to make better judgments. In fact, "noticing" grants us access to experience the a priori, intersubjective value of truth.

I take the phenomenon of noticing to be a manifestation of the responsive-evocative continuum's motivational attitudes, personality-character traits and personally present, evaluative synthesis, as it is responsively receptive to the attentive-pretentive evocation that arises out of the mind's background, extrapersonal and metapersonal dispositions The intersubjective significance of the motivational attitudes and personality-character traits in the responsive-evocative continuum becomes evident when others assume we should have noticed something but failed, or when others are surprised that we did not notice something. For example, if I fail to respond to a person's cry for help, this person would think that I must be too insensitive to notice the needs of other persons. Or, if I notice that my wife needs help carrying heavy boxes, and take steps to help her, she may thank me for being conscientious. In sum, what we notice reveals our personality-character traits and intersubjective priorities to ourselves and to others.

However, we must not suppose that everything we notice has interpersonal relevance. For example, in seeking to confirm a theory about the nature of subatomic particles, a physicist may come to discover (a word with similar connotations as "notice") how certain particles are related to each other. Although it is imaginable that one day such a finding might have intersubjective significance, such insight does not necessarily entail that there is such significance. Rather, my point is that all truth is discovered, disclosed or

noticed, and that when we come to originally notice truth this is only possible because of the attentive-pretentive evocation that arises our of the pre-reflexive and pre-projective background dispositions as we interact with others in a linguistic community. Also, it must not be assume that something is true because it is something we have noticed. For example, someone might believe she notices an old friend across the room, but when she moves closer she may discover that this person is not really who she though it was.

At conclusion of Chapter 4, I more fully discuss the nature in which our processes of evaluation are related to the narrative self, but for now I will seek to articulate the nature in which the interpretive and reflexive power of the continuum of subjectivity comes to be subjectively self-aware in toddlers, that is, how the responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity comes to have a personally present, evaluative synthesis. This, I will argue, enables us to understand how it is that we originally come to have the power of self-control and how we become aware of ourselves as teleologically orientated towards the value of truth. I will begin by discussing why it is that reptiles and non-human mammals do not have such a standard.

As a general rule, the background and foreground attentive and pretentive stances of supraorganic systems are what determine the character by which their responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity notices the world within which they dwell. It makes sense to say that reptiles only unconsciously or quasi-consciously notice the world with which they are engaged, for they neither have limbic systems, nor the attentive-pretentive evocation of the neocortex. Mammals, however, not only notice their world but can also notice the evocation of the attentive-pretentive stances to varying degrees (depending on

the development of the neocortex). However, because other mammals lack sufficiently developed frontal and prefrontal cortices, unlike humans, they cannot be evaluatively engaged with their attentive-pretentive evocations, that is, with their thought.

Although some higher developed animals (chimpanzees, apes and dolphins) can reflexively hold information that is relevant to a task immediately at hand they do not have the hardware to orient reflexively themselves to other possible scenarios in the same way that human can. Such creature are unable, as one neuroscientist says, ". . . to rehearse the possible consequences of different responses to a stimulus, without any faculty of planning . . . The animal brain is not checked to allow time for the choice of one among several possible responses . . . "[50]

The second of the two following examples demonstrates, I believe, the manner in which our reasoning capacity supersedes that of non-human mammals. (E1) A toddler may attempt to get a cookie out of the cookie jar, an action he has perceived his older brother perform. He pulls a chair over to the counter, then climbs. When he goes to reach for the jar, he finds that he cannot reach the jar because his arms are too short. However, as the toddler is trying to complete his projective vision, he notices a taller chair in the living room. Therefore, he gives his attention to attaining to his desired goal with the higher chair. (E2) This same toddler is trying to get a cookie out of the same cookie jar, but now the jar is on top of a stove. When he climbs the chair to get a cookie, his older brother sees him and remembers that the stove has just recently been turned off. He proceeds to warn his younger brother not to reach for the jar, or else he will get burned. However, this toddler projectively takes a stance on what he has come to believe as true

about his engagement with the world (i.e., that stove burners are only hot when they are glowing), and because none of the stove burners are glowing, he continues to reach for the cookie jar, despite having knowledge of his brother's warning. Therefore, the toddler gets burned and notices himself to be ignorant in his evaluation of projective satisfaction conditions, which he thought would have enabled him to attain his projective vision. In other words, he would have normally avoided being burned rather than taking pleasure in eating the cookie.

In (E1) the toddler's responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity is predisposed towards coherent engagement with the world to fulfill his desires, and in the process he is graced with an insight to his dilemma. However, it must not be thought that such an account demonstrates how humans are different from non-human mammals. It is conceivable that a primate could have been graced in the same manner. For example, an ape may notice a long stick to strike down bananas that are out of reach. In this sense, many mammals are capable of coming to notice a solution to a previous problem in fulfilling their desires. Therefore, the ape can be thought to be reflexively orientated to its environment, trying to achieve its desire for food, and then *successively* notices a solution (the long stick) to this problem.

(E2) is adapted from an example given by Charles Peirce to explain how it is that humans come to have an awareness of themselves. He says, "A child hears it said that the stove is hot. But it is not, he says . . . but he touches and finds the testimony confirmed in a striking way. Thus, he becomes aware of ignorance, and it is necessary to suppose a self in which this ignorance can inhere. So testimony gives a first drawing to self-

consciousness."[51]  What this example attempts to demonstrate is that humans become

self-aware through their communally shared linguistic capacity. Once a child begins to

communicate with others through language, he will eventually come to recognise that he is

fallible in what he believes, and this fallibility will characterize his manner of existing.  As

Anthony O'Hear explains, "The Peircian view then is that self-consciousness . . . is initially

consciousness of myself as a believer, which in turn depends on my being confronted with

the exosomatically (linguistically) expressed belief of others, which stand in complex

relations of harmony and discord to my own experience and ideas."[52]  What I want to add

to this account is a description of how self-awareness depends on the intellectual powers

of the tri-relational subject. The key question is not that the child finds himself to be

ignorant, but the manner in which ignorance actually *inheres* in the child.

As illustrated (E1), the toddler has the ability to compare *successively* a earlier

reflexive orientation to a latter reflexive orientation by noticing an insight of how better to

achieve a projective vision. But in (E2), the toddler[53] needs another linguistic creature to

find himself (#1) *simultaneously* evaluating himself (#2) to be fallibly related to himself

(#3), while also noticing himself (#1) to be related to the world in a potentially fallible

manner. In other words, he finds himself (#1) as an evaluator of a *future-present*

projective vision of how he thought he would like to be identified (or oriented) in the

world (#2) to be fallibly related to a *past-present* reflexive identity (or engaged

orientation) of how he thought he could attain this vision (#3) , and in the process he

simultaneously notices himself (#1) to be a *personally present,* evaluative synthesis (or

judgment) between this *future-present* projective vision (#2) and *past-present* reflexive

identity (#3). Therefore, because the relation between his past-present reflexive identity and future-present projective vision has been noticed to be fallible, he knows himself (#1), as an evaluator, to be related to the world in a potentially fallible manner.

In being fallibly related to the world, the toddler finds himself evaluating future-present projective visions he can accomplish in the world, through projective satisfaction conditions, with the knowledge of what once was a present satisfaction condition to a projective vision that *seemed* to be judged correctly (i.e., that the non-glowing stove burner was not hot). Not only has he gained knowledge of how to become more coherently engaged with his world in certain projective visions (e.g., those requiring the knowledge that some non-glowing stove burners are hot), he also has come to know of himself as a potentially fallible evaluator of present satisfaction conditions, which are the means to fulfilling projective visions. Stated differently, after the toddler spontaneously notices his fallibility, his continuum of subjectivity interiorises the intersubjective significance that he needs to pay better attention to the linguistically communicated advice given by other persons. For in interiorising correct advice he can have better control over himself, and become engaged with the world in a more coherent manner.

With knowledge of one's fallibility, the character of human awareness undergoes a qualitative change. Before fallibility the tri-relational subject could *voluntarily attend and re-interpret* its focus upon the world and upon its past-present identity *through* the attentive-interpretive stance, and from time to time the subject's continuum of subjectivity could *notice* novelty that would give it opportunity to resolve problems with its immediate engagement with an environment *though* the motivational strengthening of its past-present

pretentive-reflexive identity and future-present projective vision. But after coming to notice its own fallibility, the tri-relational subject is now also <u>forced</u> to *attend and re-interpret carefully* its focus upon the world and upon its past-present, reflexive identity *through* the attentive-interpretive stance <u>by</u> the responsive-evocative continuum's personally present awareness of its *need* to *evaluate deliberately* its present manner of potentially being related to the world in a fallible manner. The subject must now make judgments according to whether his thought will coherently adjust him to his world and to the thought of another subject. It is in this sense that we originally become concerned with the value of truth (i.e., truth understood as engaged, intellectual coherence with one's world and with other subjects), and also with the expectation of how other subjects will accept, reject or ignore a manifestation of our present manner of existing.

Therefore, in originally becoming personally present to ourselves (in the three *temporal* senses of the word) as fallible, whenever we are put under pressure to evaluate how we are related to our world and to others, the responsive-evocative continuum's *personally present* synthesis of a *past-present*, reflexive identity and *future-present*, projective vision find its evaluation to be in temporal abeyance between the possibility of truth or non-truth, that is, between a motivationally strengthened judgment, or deliberate desire, that can be coherently engaged with the world or other subjects, or one that cannot. From here on, subjects can pause to consider the manner in which they are evaluatively related to truth. And perhaps this is one of the reasons that children are the most inquisitive creatures alive. They, unlike most adults, tend to have no pretense to cover up their fallibility; rather, they ask questions when their personally present,

evaluative stance towards the world cannot synthesize their attentive-pretentive evocations so that they are coherently engaged with, or intellectually related to, the world. However, it is obviously true that once children become personally present to themselves as evaluators, they also become aware that they can rebel against linguistically communicated advice that disagrees with their desires.

In becoming aware of oneself as an evaluator who is potentially related to world in a fallible manner, a subject is aware of her ability of *context inclusion (or exclusion)*, that is, to her ability to *compare simultaneously (past-present, reflexive) subcontexts within a (future-present, projective) context, and do so with knowledge of how this context is (presently) evaluated as its own point of view within a intersubjective meta-context of her awareness of other points of view.* Basically, she finds herself as an individual with the power of reason, knowing herself to be in the temporal abeyance of a personally present, evaluative synthesis of her past-present, reflexive orientation among other possible reflexive orientations (i.e., *extrapersonally reflexive subcontexts*) according to her future-present, projective vision of how she would like to be oriented to the world (i.e., *a metapersonally projective context*). But she only knows herself to be an individual among other individuals who also make deliberate judgments as to what they believe to be beautiful, good and true (i.e., *an intersubjective meta-context*). Therefore, she can take time to evaluatively affirm (i.e., deliberately include) or refrain from affirming (i.e., deliberately exclude) her projective vision within an intersubjective meta-context and a reoriented, reflexive identity within her projective vision, judging how it will be received by others and how it will allow her to fulfill her long term interests and priorities.

Context inclusion (or exclusion) best captures the phenomenon of human reason, I believe, because it explains the manner in which we can focus our attention on a context without losing our grasp on particular subcontexts, while we also can reflexively consider particular subcontexts without losing our grasp on the total context. As such we can understand our world from our concern with particular parts (or extrapersonal subcontexts) within a whole (or a metapersonal context), but we can only understand this whole because we originally find ourselves as a particular point of view among other points of view (an intersubjective meta-context). Therefore, the tri-relational view of human agency insists that human reason only arises out of our engagement with others in a linguistic community.

When we originally find ourselves to be fallible, we recognise our need for self-control in making good judgments according to the intersubjective nature of our awareness of a natural, teleological value for truth. The reason we naturally value truth is that it partly hides from us and partly draws us towards itself. In other words, our intellectual concern for truth is *transcendently* related to the responsive-evocative continuum of motivational attitudes, personality-character traits and the personally present, evaluative synthesis in the sense that truth is not something we can intentionally disclose through our focused attention, for we can only make ourselves (in the three temporal senses of the word) available to truth so that we can better open ourselves (or predispose ourselves) to noticing it as a gift made present by other persons or experience itself. Therefore, we are required to take care in controlling ourselves so that we can become more coherently engaged with, and intellectually related to, the world.

Our intellectual concern for truth is also *immanently* related to the responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity through a pre-cognitive value for communal concern, which all mammals with limbic systems share to some degree. This communal concern engages us in our interaction with other persons whom we know also to be practically and intellectually concerned with truth. Moreover, in the process of interacting with others we come to interiorise truths of how to augment the way we communally relate with one another. Such truths come to be the intersubjective priorities that are evoked from background attentive-pretentive evocations, and there is reason to think these feelings and thoughts include our conscience. As a result, we find ourselves within an intersubjective meta-context which places us under the obligation to practice self-control by seeking to interiorise the past-present subcontexts of our reflexive identity with more practical know-how, a practical know-how that can be made more or less intersubjectively sensitive through our evaluative inclusion (or exclusion) of the metapersonal, projective visions whereby we seek to become more coherently related to the intersubjective priorities that are evoked from background attentive-pretentive evocations.

The significance in this is that the object of our concern for intellectual coherence both stands within ourselves, so that we can *relate with it* enough to make better judgments, yet it also stands outside of ourselves, so that we must *deliberately seek to respond to its lead* in our day to day interaction with others and reality at large, or else we may lose touch with the light of truth. I will return to this point later, but for now I will discuss how this view of the human agency surpasses the denial of subjectivity and may even resolve problems in the philosophy of mind.

## Notes and References for Chapter Three:

1. "On the Matter of Minds and Mental Causation", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. LVII, No. 1, March 1998, p. 6.

2. Ibid., p. 5.

3. Ibid., p. 6.

4. I thank Richard Walton and Albert Borgmann for their criticism of my earlies distinction between "efficient causality" and "reciprocal influence." Albert Borgmann suggested that I replace "efficient causality" with "explicit causality." My use of "focal patterns of reciprocation" was also influenced by Professor Borgmann. In *Crossing the Postmodern Divide* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, p. 119), he speaks of "focal reality" as "a placeholder for the encounters each of us has with things that of themselves have engaged mind and body and centered our lives." I am here expanding the use of focal realism to a wider metaphysical perspective, explaining how organized functional structures (in general) are reciprocally related with other systems, and in the process focally center each other's manner of existing.

5. Ervin Laslo, *The Systems View of the World: The Natural Philosophy of the New Developments in the Sciences* (New York: George Braziller, 1972), p. 38.

6. Patricia Barnes-Svarney, ed. dir., *The New York Public Library Science Desk Reference* (USA, MacMillan, 1995), p. 90.

7. Paul D. MacLean. *The Triune Brain in Evolution: Roles in Paleocerebral Functions* (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1990), p. 16.

8. Ibid., pp.8-9.

9. I do not suppose that MacLean would agree with my formulation of the tri-relational self, nor do I suppose that he would even attempt such a formulation.

10. Peter W. Nathan, "Nervous System", *The Oxford Companion To The Mind*, ed., Richard L. Gregory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 524.

11. I also find it significant that the cerebellum plays a key role in body balance and muscle coordination. As I understand it, the cerebellum has three major layers that concomitantly developed with the triune brain, and that it acts as the main modulator of movement and balance between the brain and spinal cord.

12. I like Merleau-Ponty's use of the term "flesh" to describe our primordial (both bodily and worldly) embeddedness. As he says, "The world is not 'in' my body, and my body is ultimately not "in' the visible world: as flesh applied to flesh, the world neither surrounds it nor is surrounded by it" (*The visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p.138.). The flesh is a corporeal intentionality which "is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive. It breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system" (*Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. By Colin Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), p. 203).

13. MacLean, *The Triune Brain*, p. 143.

14. Ibid., p. 141.

15. Ibid., p. 16.

16. Ibid., pp. 350-354

17. See Paul D. MacLean's "Evolutionary Psychiatry and the Triune Brain", *Psychological Medicine,* vol.15 (1985), p.219-21 and also chapter 27 of *The Triune Brain* (1990).

18. See Charles D. Laughlin's, John McManus's and Eugene G. d'Aquili's *Brain, Symbol and Experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p.116.

19. Ibid., pp.112-114.

20. I believe embodied linguistic-projections better captures what Richard Dawkin means by "extended phenotype" (see his *The Extended Phenotype: The Gene as the Unit of Selection,* Oxford and San Francisco: Freeman, 1982) and what Antonio R. Damasio means by "somatic markers" (see his *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Avon Books, 1994), chps. 8 and 9). I believe that embodied linguistic projection has relevance to Wittgenstein's "forms of life" which I take to be grounded in the tacit agreement and consensus of human action. These linguistic projections are "embodied" because they are a qualified form of corporeal intentionality.

21. For excellent summaries on the scientific finding of the right and left hemispheres see Joseph B. Hellige, "Hemispheric Asymmetry", Annual Review of Psychology 41 (1990): pp. 55-80; and Colwyn Trevarthen's "Brain Science and the Human Spirit", *Zygon* vol.21, no.2 (June 1986), pp.179-185.

22. Michael Gazzaniga says that some facial expressions (e.g., smiling) must be more "evaluative," so that people can override spontaneous expression (e.g. laughter). See his "The Implication of Specialized Neuronal Circuits Versus Neuronal Number for Concepts Concerning the Nature of Human Conscious Experience", pp. 7-8. I believe the tri-relational conception of the subject provides a more thorough explanation.

23. Michael Gazzaniga, "The Split Brain Revisited," *Scientific American,* July (1998), p. 51-5.

24. Damasio, *Descartes' Error,* p. 65.

25. Ian P. Howard, "Spatial Co-ordination of the Senses", *The Oxford Companion To The Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 732.

26. For a discussion on how the parietal lobes are calculative-linguistic involved see Nathan, "Nervous System", *The Oxford Companion To The Mind,* p. 526; and Andreasen, *The Broken Brain,* pp.112, 113 and 122; and also Gary G. Tunnell, *Culture and Biology: Becoming Human* (Burgess Publishing Company, 1973), pp 30-34.

27. Andreasen, *The Broken Brain* (New York: Harper Row, Publishers, 1985) p.185.

28. S. Corkin, "Lasting consequences of bilateral medial temporal lobectomy: Clinical course and experimental finding in H.M." in *Frontiers in Cognitive Neuroscience,* ed. Stephen M. Kosslyn and Richard A. Anderson (Cambridge: The MIT Press/A Bradford Book, 1992), p. 525. The patient Corkin is concerned with in this article had a very deep temporal lobectomy. It is true that damage to the cordial regions of the temporal lobes can cause problems with tacit short-term memory. My main concern is to show that it is connected to the limbic system.

29. See Nathan, "Nervous System", in *The Oxford Companion To The Mind,* pp. 527-530.

30. My discussion here is taken from Damasio, *Descartes' Error,* pp. 62-67.

31. Ibid., p. 66.

32. See Michael A. Persinger, "Near Death Experiences: Determining the Neuroanatomical Pathways by Experiential Patterns and Simulation in Experimental Settings," in Luc Bessette. ed., *Le Processus de Guerison: Par-Dela la Souffrance ou la Mort/Healing: Beyond Suffering and Death* (Beauport, Quebec, Canada; Publications MNH, 1994), pp. 284-285. For this citation I am indebted to Patrick Glynn's "Intimations of Immorality" in *God: The Evidence---The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason in a Postsecular World* (Rockin, Prima Publishing, 1999), pp. 99-137.

33. See *Brain, Symbol and Experience,* p. 113.

34. 82. See B. Milner and M. Petrides, "Behavioral effects of frontal-lobe lesions in man", in *Frontiers in Cognitive Neuroscience,* ed. Stephen M. Kosslyn and Richard A. Anderson (Cambridge: The MIT Press/A Bradford Book, 1992), pp. 612-17.

35. M. S. Gazzaniga, *The Social Brain* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), pp. 72-73. Also see his article, "Right hemisphere language: A twenty year perspective", in *American Psychology,* vol. 38 (1983), pp. 525-537.

36. Colwyn Trevarthen, "Brain Science and the Human Spirit", *Zygon* vol.21, no.2 (June 1986), pp. 181-2.

37. Russell A. Barkley, "Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder", *Scientific American,* Sept. (1998), p.67.

38. See Tim Beardsley's article, "The Machinery of Thought", in *Scientific American,* August (1987), p. 78-83.

39. Andreasen, The *Broken Brain,* p. 97.

40. Ibid., p. 103.

41. Damasio, *Descartes' Error,* p. 72.

42. Pierre Rainville, Gary H. Duncan, Donald D. Price, Benoit Carrier, M. Cathrine Bushnell, "Pain Affect Encoded in Human Anterior Cingulate But Not Somatosensory Cortex", in *Science,* vol. 277, August (1997), pp. 968-71.

43. Gregory S. Berns, Jonathan D. Cohen, and Mark A. Mintun, "Brain Regions Responsive to Novelty in the Absence of Awareness", *Science,* vol. 276, May (1997), p. 1272-75.

44. Jeffery M. Schwartz (with Beverly Beyette), *Brain Lock.* (New York: ReganBooks, 1996), p. 46.

45. John McCrone, "When the Seconds Last Forever", in *New Scientist,* Nov. (1997), p. 55.

46. Alan R. White, "Attending and Noticing", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society---* Vol. LXIII, 1963, p. 108.

47. Particularly important to subjects of such evocation are the personally and socially conditioned memories (or episodic memories) which are pregnant with latent linguistic significance.

48. White, "Attending and Noticing", p. 118.

49. Ibid., p. 124.

50. See W. Grey Walter's *The Living Brain* (Penguin, 1961) p. 26.

51. "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties for Man", in *Charles S. Peirce: Selected Writings, ed. Philip Wiener* (New York: Dover Publications, 1958), p. 28.

52. Anthony O'Hear, *Beyond Evolution: Human Nature and the Limits of Evolutionary Explanation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 45.

53. The reason I choose the term "toddler" (which I understand to be around 2 years old) is because there is some evidence that around 18 or 24 months children begin to develop an autobiographical memory. Furthermore, as Mark L. Howe and Mary L. Courage explain, "There is a substantial literature that shows that toddlers begin to recount their memories of personally experienced (i.e., autobiographical) events as soon as they acquire the rudiments of productive language, even before they have reliable control over the use of past-tense markers (e.g., "I see big fish," following a trip to the aquarium)." See their "The Emergence and Early Development of Autobiographical Memory," in *Psychological Review*, 1997, Vol. No. 3, p. 507.

What is also significant about this age is that toddlers begin to identify others having their own power of self-control. For example, it has been found that by "2 years of age, most children could make a doll act as an independent agent (have the doll drink or walk for example)." See Carolyn Uhlinger Shantz's "Social Cognition," in *Handbook of Child Psychology: Vol. III, Cognitive Development*, eds. John H. Flavell and Ellen M. Markman (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1983), p. 538.

# Chapter Four
## Conclusion: Mental Causation, the Narrative Self and Relationalism

## A. Mental Causation and Temporal Unity

Among animals, only humans are aware and able to respond to the value of truth, for they are the only supraorganic systems which have a natural potential to acquire a teleological stance towards intellectual coherence, that is, toward a *responsively and evocatively consistent relationship one maintains in the personally present, evaluative synthesis of one's projective intentions (whether bodily or linguistically expressed) towards reality and one's reflexive inclusion, or exclusion, of engagements with reality (whether pragmatically or intersubjectively received)*. Although our responsive-evocative continuum has a sub-personal (somatic) disposition towards survival and a pre-personal (emotional) disposition towards non-individuated, communal concern, we also have personal (rational) dispositions towards an intellectual concern for coherent engagement with reality. However, a consequence of this is that we are capable of attempting the impossible, that is, we can interiorise (and have interiorised!!!) motivational dispositions which seek coherence within ourselves without concern for the intersubjective nature of our awareness of existence and truth. That is to say, as it is abundantly obvious in our contemporary society, we humans are capable of failing to use our intellect to become more conscientious, or careful, in what projective visions we seek to attain in our daily interaction with others.

Although we only become individuals through our interaction with others, we seem to have forgotten this truth. It is erroneously claimed that "a child's earliest self-

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awareness is noncomparitive, it is usually preconscious."[1] It is true that we have a

prelinguistic, somatic identity before we become subjectively self-aware, but, according to

the tri-relational view of human agency, it makes no sense to collapse our *awareness of*

*having the power of self-control* (through our deliberative, evaluative judgment) to our

somatic identity. Instead, what should be brought to light is how it is possible to live

according to interiorised intersubjective priorities that enable us to live more intimately in

and with truth. Before recommending how we can seek to make ourselves more available

to truth, I will first better explain how self-control and mental causation it is possible in the

first place. Intervening these two topics I will show how the tri-relational view of the

human agency surpasses Dennett's, Parfit's and Mellor's denial of subjectivity.

Although I cannot delve into the subject of consciousness very deeply, I would like

to articulate the what I believe mental states are like, as compared to that of physical

states. Heat can be defined simply as energy in motion (i.e., what physicists call kinetic

energy), but it may also take the form of a potentiality (i.e., what physicists call potential

energy). All material particles, even those that merely vibrate, possess heat in relation to

what these particles are moving against. Furthermore, heat can be transferred and

dispersed; in fact, heat existing in the form of radiation does not even require a medium---

it can be its own medium. For example, the earth is heated by the sun whose energy has an

effect upon the earth though a vacuum (i.e., space). Therefore, I believe it is makes good

ontological sense to draw an analogy between heat and consciousness. Let me explain.

In the way that the motion of heat becomes more intense as the kinetic energy of

suborganic systems are concentrated in a specific location (in space), I propose that the

information of consciousness becomes more intentional as the decision-making processes of supraorganic systems are concentrated in temporal unification. Such a comparison seems to have much promise, for our ordinary experience seems to tells us that as creatures become more subpersonal, having less awareness or control of decision-making processes, they also experience less sensation. For example, we tend to believe that insects experience less pain than fish or reptiles, and we also think that fish and reptiles experience less pain than mammals. Perhaps this also helps explain why humans seems to experience psychological anguish, even psychosomatic disorders, more than other mammals.

An analogy between heat and consciousness may also help us better to understand the three subsisting relations which make up the tri-relational subject. The attentive-interpretive stance towards the world and a person's questions and metapersonal concerns, which deconstructs or constructs future-present projective visions through the subcontexts of our past-present reflexive identity by the sub-personal, pre-personal and personal decision-making processes, can be compared to the kinetic energy of radiation which passes from its source through its own medium towards another object in the world. In this sense, our attentive-interpretive stance passes *through* its own mental state towards the world to give us a focal awareness of the world. It is in direct, focal contact with the world through our questions and metapersonal concerns. However, this focal contact can always become developed intellectually as persons learn to be sensitive to the interiorised background, metapersonal awareness and abstract-structural dispositions *from* which our attentive stance is related to the world.

However, the focal awareness of the attentive-pretentive disposition can only

become significant to us through the subsisting relation of our pretentive-reflexive disposition, which is spontaneously united with its focal counterpart. In other words, the pretentive-reflexive stance and the subcontexts of our past-present, reflexive identity gives their engaged disposition over to the attentive-interpretive stance and the contexts of our future-present, projective vision. The pretentive-reflexive stance is responsively related to the attentive-interpretive stance, which is capable of channeling its focus to the world and to a past-present, reflexive identity. Therefore, it seems reasonable that the pretentive-reflexive relation can be compared to the potential energy of heat. Like the potential energy in the pulled back string of an archer's bow, the pretentive-reflexive disposition of the right hemisphere is always ready to be released when it is focally provoked by the attentive-interpretive disposition of the left hemisphere.

When it comes to the responsive-evocative continuum's subjectively self-aware decision-making processes in the form of a personally present, evaluative synthesis, the comparison of consciousness to heat seems to break down, for heat energy (from the contemporary perspective of physics) does not move or withhold itself from moving for the purpose of completing a projective vision, while also being capable of abiding by a natural, teleological vision of truth. Or does this comparison really break down? I will later return to this question, but for now I will continue to discuss how the temporal unification of decision-making processes in the tri-relational subject may enable it to initiate and define its own attentive-pretentive evocations which result in the definition of its ow personally determined actions.

We can simply define the feedback mechanisms of supraorganic systems as

internal, decision-making processes that have varying degrees to which they can focally

concentrate the information they interiorise from their environment. Such systems not

only acquire information, they also store it with other information and use it to initiate and

control how they are related to their environment "on the basis of incoming and stored

information."[2]  From this perspective, we can consider some creatures to be pure

stimulus-response systems. For example, a tick does not "acquire information that is *for it*.

In order to be said to acquire information that was for it, the tick would have to be able to

use the information it acquired; and it can't do that."[3]

Robert Kirk wants to stress that there are certain systems which make information

"present" to themselves. Therefore, he argues that a system can only have perceptual

information that is conscious when this information is "present" to it own decision-making

processes. Furthermore, a system is only self-aware if it has a concept of a self that is

"present" to itself. However, as Peter Carruthers points out, ". . . what is wholly unclear

on Kirk's account, is why it should necessarily feel like anything to be an organism with

perceptual information present to its main decision-making processes."[4]  Carruthers seeks

to demonstrate how reflexive self-awareness may overcome Kirk's failure to account for

the intentional qualities of our experience. Basically, he argues, ". . . for there to be a feel

to experience, the subject must . . . be capable of thinking, reflexively, about its own acts

of thinking."[5]

In what I think is something of a synthesis of Kirk's and Carruthers's positions, I

believe it makes more sense to say that information is made more "present" to a system to

the degree that this system is capable of participating in making information focally

relevant to its own *present* temporal unification. Animals make information focally relevant and significant through the attentive and pretentive stances, and there are varying degrees by which they can make that information focally relevant and significant to themselves. Understood in this way, animals experience more intense sensation and perception to the degree that they presently participate in fulfilling the manner in which they are teleologically engaged with the world. In other words, as systems become more metapersonally concerned with their world, information becomes more focally present to their own experience.

If this is true, we can say that to the degree that a system's attentive-interpretive stance is capable of making information more focally relevant, the more the pretentive-reflexive states will refer, or engage, these focal states with past-present relevance, making its attentive-pretentive evocations more significant to itself. And such extrapersonal relevance only exists as a result of engaged unconscious, conscious and subjectively self-aware decision-making processes. As a result, the intentionality of mental states must be thought to be dependent upon the degree to which systems participate in realizing natural teleological dispositions.

This enables us to clarify how human agents can play a significant role in determining their thought (i.e., their attentive-pretentive evocations) and how these thoughts can be brought to initiate and express our behavior. For example, if a person arrived at work in the morning and is told that he has just been laid off, we can understand why his responses could vary according to his decision-making processes. Because he has a deep, unconscious somatic identity (through the functional structures of the R-complex

and his corporeal intentionality) his initial response could very possibly be controlled more by his teleological orientation towards survival. He may, understandably, roar in anger at his boss from an unconscious threat to his very survival, somatically concerned as to whether he will be able to earn enough money to live. However, because his identity is also consciously related to his teleological disposition towards communal concern for others with whom he is emotionally intimate (through the functional structures of the limbic system and his emotional intentionality), we can think of him becoming more concerned for his family, worrying about how he is going to feed not only himself but also them. Finally, after a short time of emotional angst, because of his natural, teleological disposition towards truth (through the functional structures of the neocortex and his linguistic intentionality), he would eventually come to evaluate his situation, seeking to make the best judgment as to how he can now make a living, or he may purposively seek out a friend to talk with about his current plight. In other words, he can take time to consider how he is oriented to his values and the world, evaluatively organizing his thought so that he can get control of himself in relation to his values and the demand placed upon him by other persons involved in his current plight.

It hard to see how Donald Davidson, who leaves intentionality unaccounted for in his explanation of action, could use the above phenomena to justify his theory. What is crucial at each level of this person's unconscious, conscious and subjectively self-aware decision-making processes is the fact that his mental states of feeling threatened, of feeling concerned, and of thinking through the problem assume that the intentionality of mental states play causal roles *according to inherent teleological dispositions—not mere*

*functional dispositions.* And more importantly, it is not merely the intentionality of these states that cause behavior. Although the propositional attitudes of the mind (e.g., projective visions and beliefs) enable action, they do not---contrary to Davidson---cause an agent to act. Rather, it is the agent who purposively evaluates his situation according to the values he holds to be dear, giving some of these values priority over others, and these evaluations will define how he is behaviorally oriented in, and engaged with, the world. Therefore, it is the agent who is accountable for the decisions he makes to correct his engagement with the world.

Moreover, as the agent more intensely deliberates over his options and chooses to realize his goal through one route over others, he will experience greater dissatisfaction with himself if he fails to complete his intended projective vision. But this is not to rule-out the possibility that he will experience greater satisfaction with himself to the degree that his goal is fulfilled. Such, I believe, is the nature of a subject's evaluative participation in making certain thought more focally concentrated than others in his evaluative, decision-making processes. In sum, the intentionality of mental states increase to the degree that a subject is involved in the temporal unification of his own thought.

## B. The Subject of Self-Control and the Narrative Self

As we have already seen in Chapter 2, Daniel Dennett's theory of agency seems to be founded on the same quagmire as Davidson's theory of action. Dennett asserts that we *must* resist "the temptation to explain *action* as arising from the imperatives of an internal

action-orderer who does too much of the specification work."[6]   In its place he want to

posit "thousands of word-making demons in temporary coalitions [that] could exhibit a

unity, the unity of an evolving best-fit interpretation, that makes them appear *as if* they

were the executive intentions of a Conceptualizer."[7]

According to the tri-relational theory of human agency, there is not an entity made

of a different substance within the human body who controls every action, but there are

two---not "thousands"--- interdependent "semi-intelligences" (the attentive-interpretive

and pretentive-reflexive relations) that forms a personally present, evaluative synthesis,

which is made present to the responsive-evocative continuum of motivational attitudes and

personality-character traits.  Together, these three subsisting relations have power over

the temporal abeyance of the personally present, evaluative synthesis's intellectual

concern, enabling a subject to pause and give further consideration to its thought

(although such pausing is held accountable to a natural teleological vision of truth).

Stated differently, the continuum of motivational attitudes, personality-character traits and

personally present awareness controls the temporal abeyance of an evaluative synthesis,

characterized by a fallible disposition towards coherent engagement, through the attentive-

interpretive and pretentive-reflexive stances. A subject, understood as a continuum of

subjectivity, controls its thought according to its future-present projective vision in a

metapersonal, attentive-interpretive disposition, which enframes a subject's past-present

reflexive identity through a extrapersonal, pretentive-reflexive disposition. It is in this way,

I propose, that the subjectively self-aware, tri-relational subject defines his actions as an

executive "conceptualizer" with the power of self-control.

One of the most fascinating things about the human mind is how it is in control of its own thought. While it is true that there are times that we do not have self-control over our mental states (e.g., as in dreaming while asleep), we normally possess the power to change our thoughts whenever we like, or at least we are able to pause for further consideration. In fact, if we perceive a human agent to be behaving irresponsibly we are accustomed to exclaim, "Will you control of yourself ?!?!". Not only do people become protectively "carried away" with themselves, but they also can become reflexively "wrapped-up" in themselves. If we perceive that someone is introspectively (or reflexively) lost in his own thought, and staring off into space, we may ask, "What are you thinking about?".

In the *Theaetetus*, Plato keenly described our capacity to control our thought. He compared it to a man who possess hundreds of wild birds in a cage: "In a sense we might say that he 'has' them all the time inasmuch as he possesses them [in a cage] . . . But in another sense he 'has' none of them, though he has got control of them, now that he has made them captive in an enclosure of his own; he can take and have hold of them whenever he likes by catching any bird he chooses, and let them go again, and it is open to him to do that as often as he pleases."[8]

Notice that there are three phenomena that stand out in this description: (1) there is the manner in which *we have our thoughts available to us* that is similar to the way the man possess the birds in the cage; (2) there is the manner in which *we can take hold of particular thoughts* that resembles the way the man can grab certain birds rather than others; (3) and there is a manner in which *we capable of freely letting thoughts go for*

*other thoughts* that closely imitates the way the man can let bird go "as often as he pleases."

According to the tri-relational view of human agency we can account for our "caged," or available, thought through the evocative nature of conscious thought, that is, the way in which our attentive-interpretive focus is given significance though the latent feelings and episodic memories in our pretentive-reflexive evocation. Although human consciousness may be evoked by the inward interpretive and reflexive modes more than non-human mammals, many mammals also have "caged" thought. However, when they *notice* attentive-pretentive evocations that are significant, arising from the background attentive-pretentive evocations of consciousness, for the most part they can only do so according to the way they are immediately engaged with their present environment, responding from their natural desires of survival and (non-individuated) communal concern. Whereas humans are capable of not only responding from these dispositions, but are also intellectually engaged with their own thought. In other words, they are capable of taking hold of their thought through their personally present, evaluative synthesis without being passionately or emotionally engaged by the significance in their attentive-pretentive evocations. Because they are aware of their own fallibility, they have trained themselves to pause before engaging themselves with their environment so that they can be become more coherently engaged with, our intellectually related to, their world.

To get a hold of our thoughts, our personally present, evaluative synthesis can create imaginative and evocative contexts from its subcontexts through the attentive-interpretive and pretentive-reflexive relations that enable us to be engaged with the

meanings of our thought rather than the way we are immediate related to an environment. As Merleau-Ponty said, "Human life 'understands' not only a certain definite environment, but an infinite number of possible environments, and it understands itself because it is thrown into a world."[9] For example, when my attentive-interpretive disposition is focused on my car keys my pretentive-reflexive relation evokes innumerable related images, memories and ideas (e.g., the image of my car, the memory of when I bought the key chain, and the concept of how I use them to start my car). This evocation enables subcontexts to form around the percept of my keys, through which I can understand how the keys are related to me at this moment, and how they are related to a host of images, memories and ideas and projective visions. Perhaps I have wanted to buy a new keychain for quite some time; if I have no priorities that are more significant to me I could very well choose to satisfy this projective vision. What this means is that my present evaluation not only rests on my past-present, reflexive identity, but that it also always has access to other future-present, projective visions. But it even has access to more than this.

As was pointed out in the quotation from Merleau-Ponty, we only have a self because we are "thrown into a world" wherein there are persons who have their own points of view, their own beliefs about the beautiful, the good and the true. In other words, we are always present to and within an intersubjective meta-context where we find ourselves in the temporal abeyance of an evaluative synthesis that is projected towards a future-present projective context through the evaluative selection of past-present reflexive subcontexts, while our judgments are continually confronted with the possibility of being related to truth or non-truth. It is in this sense that an agent is always free to let particular

thoughts go for other thoughts; that is, let thoughts go for what one believes to be more rational, or truth. For example, I may be on my way out the door to go get a new keychain, already having predetermined where I am going to get it, but on the way I may be reminded that I have a doctor's appointment. Although the temporal abeyance here would not be very difficult to resolve, due to the fact the I care about my health more than a keychain, the important thing is that I am free to participate in what I believe to be the greater priority. In sum, I am free to participate in what I feel is most important in my present circumstances. And if I have awareness of something that is equally important, I am the agent who will have to make the judgment to choose one over the other.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Dennett, like Parfit, wants to compare ourselves to corporations or clubs, claiming that selves are "but artifacts of the social processes that create us, and, like other such artifacts . . . The only "momentum" that accrues to the trajectory of a self, or a club, is the stability imparted to it by the web of beliefs that constitute it, and when those beliefs lapse, it lapses, either permanently or temporarily."[10] According to the tri-relational view of human agency, however, we must recognise how the "momentum" found in the "web of beliefs" that constitute persons are very different from those that constitute corporations or clubs. We can see this in the way we hold corporations responsible in a manner that is very different from the way we hold persons responsible. Indeed, the way that we hold a corporation responsible relies on the manner that we hold persons responsible.

For instance, if a corporation is caught using child labor in a third world country, we would not hold each person equally responsible. There would be persons who had no

knowledge of the corporation's use (e.g., outside investors), persons who had knowledge of the use but did not devise the means of using the labor (e.g., office personnel), and persons who actually originated the idea of using child labor as a means of achieving their projective visions (i.e., the executives). Although the executives may squabble over who was the chief instigator, the main "visionary", we would hold each executive to be *fully responsible* for their actions. As for the office personnel, each would be held less accountable but each of them would be held guilty of neglecting their duty to refrain from participating in the practice and reveal it to the proper authorities. But we would not hold outside investors to be accountable for any wrong doing, for such persons would have had no knowledge of the practice.

Only the executives would be considered to be persons having full "momentum" in forming their "web of beliefs" in relation to the unjust act of using child labor. In other words, persons who evaluatively included reflexive subcontexts, those facilitating the practice of child labor, within a projective context, or vision, of making more money would have intentionally neglected the way they were related to their intersubjective meta-context and their own interiorised intersubjective priorities.

Derek Parfit is wrong, therefore, to say that humans are mere present relations, having no necessary relation to the future. I believe Parfit might be correct that identity merely consists of a chain of interlocking memories, but only if he, like Dennett, confuses personal identity with the narrative self. The problem is not that personal identity involved memories that are connected to each other, but how thought is made into memories that have personal significance. I propose that memories are personalized through a person's

evaluative synthesis of thought that arises from the background and foreground, attentive-interpretive and pretentive-reflexive stances. That is to say, we have personal memories because we are, by and large, in control of ourselves.

*As the responsive-evocative continuum of motivational attitudes and personality-character traits that makes thought present in the temporal abeyance of an evaluative synthesis, human subjects are in control of how they evaluatively synthesizes the extrapersonal, past-present relation of their existence into the metapersonal, future-present relation of their existence.* Also, because human subjects always finds themselves in an intersubjective meta-context where they are aware that other persons have different points of view, they will be evaluatively concerned---the extent to which will depend upon their motivational attitudes and personality-character traits---about how their action *will* effect others; therefore, they will always be concerned about their future. As MacIntyre writes, "There is no present which is not informed by some image of some future and an image of the future which always presents itself in the from of a *telos*---or of a variety of ends or goals---towards which we are either moving or failing to move in the present."[11]

I will return to the topic of how we can maintain narrative unity in our narrative selves in the next section, but for now I want to stress how a subject's personally present, evaluative synthesis is not stagnant, but lived through a narrative self. That is, the personally present, evaluative awareness is related to the world and itself as the inclusion of the subcontexts of personal engagement with the world (in its past-present reflexive identity) within the context of a metapersonal concern (one of its future-present projective visions), according to how it is related to its meta-context of intersubjectivity. Because of

the intersubjective meta-context, subjects are continually projected into a future to take a stance on the world, but the exact manner in which subjects will express themselves cannot be pinned down to behavioristic laws.

The reason we must investigate the nature in which subjectivity is related to its thought as a lived narrative before investigating how the narrative self can be maintained as a narrative unity is because knowledge of the latter depends on the former. To a certain extent, this is even true of our disinterested evaluation. Even our attempt to have unity between our thoughts about causal processes in the world and the causal processes themselves depends on our being lived subjects with a history. In fact, for us even to see time as a succession is dependent upon our evaluating time as a simultaneous phenomenon, indeed, as a lived subject. As Merleau-Ponty said, "We must understand time as the subject and the subject as time . . . this primordial temporality is not a juxtaposition of external events, since it is the power which holds them together while keeping them apart."[12] By investigating this, we will also see why Hugh Mellor is wrong to make the time series of physics (earlier-simultaneous-later) more primary than the lived time (past-present-future) of the subject.

Before toddlers discover their manner of existing as fallible creatures who desire truth, they have a somatic and emotional awareness of how they are related to things in the world. As infants, they live and interact with the world, becoming responsive to the information of their sensory functions and aware of a pre-personal existence which is evoked within them by their emotions as they become engaged with the facial expressions of loving (or non-loving) parents. But somewhere around two years of age they begin to

acquire a sense of self. It has been found that when an infant is eighteen months old it can begin to understand the meaning of "now", but by the time children reach three years of age they begin to understand the meanings of 'not today', 'tomorrow', and 'yesterday'.[13] Such temporal attributions can be understood only after they have self-awareness of their fallibility, for this is the only way they begin *metapersonally to* find them*selves* linked to the subcontexts of their extrapersonal engagement within an intersubjective meta-context. As they continue to develop, there "is a progression from egocentric causality to spatialization of causality . . ."[14] In other words, they begin to attribute their own effective power of self-efficacy to objects in the world through an evaluative synthesis of their attentive-pretentive evocations.

When we make judgments about how successive events are causally related to each other we can only do so metapersonally by attending to how we are related extrapersonally to these events according to an intersubjective meta-context, and by evaluating how these events are correlated with other durational events. All of this presupposes that we are personally present to our own durational existence as subjects who evaluatively control our attentive-pretentive evocation in the temporal abeyance between truth and non-truth. Therefore, the concept of causality is the consequence of our originally finding ourselves as a durational unity with the power of self-control. In sum, our concept of causality depends on our concept of time as a succession of durationally distinct events, and this concept of succession depends on our being subjectively self-aware of our own durational existence. As a consequence, Mellor would do well to understand the time series of physics as dependent upon our lived time. In fact,

he would also do well to reconsider his position on the non-existence of "tensed facts," for without being a present, durational unity of a past-present reflexive identity and future-present visions we could not specify how human subjects able to refer to particulars.

According to the tri-relational view of human agency, we can understand how all particulars only attain their individuality and unity as they are re-identified by a subject's personally present, evaluative synthesis, which is durationally situated between the subcontexts of its past-present reflexive identity and the contexts of its future-present projective visions, that is aware of itself having a particular point of view among other points of view through an intersubjective meta-context. In the same way that I can specify that I am *here* because I am situated in an spatial environment, I can also specify that a particular event happened at a certain time because I am, in my very nature, situated temporally, that is, *this* event is interiorised as an extrapersonal subcontext within my past-present identity, and it can be re-collected when I attend to the metapersonal context within a former future-present vision that made this event focally present to myself. As the attentive-pretentive evocations that were present when *this* event happened are re-collected by a subject's personally present, evaluative synthesis, *this* event can be re-identified as it was originally experienced.

For Mellor, it is only true that I am *now* writing this sentence because it is simultaneous with this event (i.e., writing a sentence). However, according to the tri-relational view of human agency, I can only identify that I am now writing this sentence because I am an agent who is personally present to the evaluative process of completing a future-present projective vision through extrapersonal subcontexts of my past-present

reflexive identity, according to what I believe to be the truth of the matter about particulars within the meta-context of other points of view (particularly Mellor's). Such a view accounts for how human awareness of particulars rely on the nature of human subjectivity as a "tensed fact." As argued throughout this Chapter, the human subject is a "tensed fact" because the human subject is a lived fact that can participate in defining its own existence; more importantly, it is an intersubjectively lived fact, for as we shall now see our only hope to live in narrative unity with ourselves (in the three temporal senses of the word) is by living in unity with others.

## C. Relationalism and Narrative Unity

The externalist/internalist debate can be quite confusing. For example, in Chapter 2 I described Hugh Mellor as an internalist because of his presupposition of the mind's capacity of "insight," which he believes enables us to recognise "correctly" a particular, primary experience but only through a particular, secondary experience. In other words, he thinks that the meanings of our experiences are provided by the internal workings of our mind. I still hold to my characterization, for reasons that will become manifest, but it must be recognized that some would call him an externalist because he is uncritical about the manner in which his mind "represents" the world. He seems to be satisfied with the fact that he can only know the world through his "secondary experiences." Arthur Danto defines such a position as externalist to its core; he writes, "The externalist perceives us as in a world that rains stimuli on us. The internalist finds the very existence of what the externalist takes for granted the deepest problem there is, namely whether there is a world

external to ourselves to whose existence our beliefs can testify."[15] Understood in this

light, perhaps we need better to define the debate itself before moving onward, seeking for

a possible resolution.

For starters, I think we should dispense with the idea of there being some

mysterious division between the "internal" and the "external." It is not that these

metaphors are utterly inappropriate, but that we can better define the "internal" as

particular, information processing systems and the "external" as providing information for

these systems to process. In reframing the debate in these terms we can come to

understand what is really at issue: the question is not whether the information (or

meaning) is utterly "out in the world," as opposed to being utterly "within the mind";

rather, *the important question is concerned with meaning as it inheres in the engaged*

*relation a particular, supraorganic system maintains as it dwells within its environment.*

Thus, I will choose to use the term "relationalism" over that of "externalism" or

"internalism." Accordingly, I will seek to articulate the objective manner in which a

subjectively self-aware, supraorganic system is *meaningfully related* with its environment.

Throughout this paper I have defended the view that subjectively self-aware,

supraorganic systems are structured by three subsisting relations, and more importantly

that the tri-relational subject is teleologically predisposed to interact with its environment

in a specific way. Therefore, we can answer the concern of relationalism by saying that

the tri-relational subject is meaningfully related to an environment because it is

intersubjectively aware of a teleological disposition towards truth---and this is what

defines the manner in which the tri-relational subject is primarily engaged with the world.

As opposed to Mellor, who is comfortable in his separation from what he would consider primary experience (and even admits that he can never know what this would be), according to the tri-relational view of human agency the intersubjective nature of our awareness of the truth is primary experience. But what is truth? It is this to question that I *hope* to provide an answer.

While our primary experiences are both local and contextualized, all our experience is judged according to the intersubjective nature in which our knowledge is localized and contextualized by the natural subsisting relations of the tri-relational subject as it is engaged with its environment. Furthermore, subjects are only *meaningfully* related to an environment through the attentive-interpretive and pretentive-reflexive dispositions of the mind and the characteristics of the responsive-evocative continuum of subjectivity. But we can also say that a human subject is only *related* to an environment at all because, as a personally present, evaluative synthesis, it is projected towards a metapersonal, projective vision (i.e., the personally expressive context), while constantly being oriented and re-oriented through an extrapersonal, reflexive identity (i.e., personal subcontexts), in the process of confronting and being with other points of view (i.e., an intersubjective meta-context).

Therefore, we can say there are three senses---although I will postpone the third sense until later---in which we can speak of truth from the perspective of the tri-relational subject. First, we can speak of truth from a subject's extrapersonal (past-present), emotional and practical engagement with the world. Consequently, the pretentive-reflexive disposition can be understood as concerning its personally present, evaluative

synthesis with the manner in which it is feelingly and practically oriented and focally engaged with the world, e.g., the way in which it can better cope with others in the different sub-contexts of its life. But we can also speak of truth from a subject's metapersonal (future-present), projective visions of the way it desires to be ideally oriented in the world. Accordingly, the attentive-interpretive disposition can be understood as concerning its personally present, evaluative synthesis with the manner in which its projective visions, or contexts, coherently abide by what its continuum of subjectivity has noticed and believes to be true of its intersubjective meta-context, as priorities are evoked from background, attentive-pretentive evocations.

In this sense, the degree to which we will be coherently, or consistently, related to our practical and intersubjective priorities depends upon the degree that we have oriented ourselves in and toward the world. Therefore, as it was defined earlier---and while keeping in mind that we are postponing the third sense of truth---we can define truth as the *responsively and evocatively consistent relationship one maintains in the evaluative synthesis of one's projective intentions towards reality(whether bodily or linguistically expressed) and one's reflexive inclusion, or exclusion, of engagements with reality (whether pragmatically or intersubjectively received).* Therefore, truth is a coherently maintained balance of one's intellectual engagement in and towards reality. For example, if a person primarily understands himself to be engaged in the world as a farmer, he will not only aspire towards the projective ideal of being the best farmer, but he also will open himself reflexively to correct, or exclude, poor farming habits and enhance, or include, those habits which help him fulfill his ideal. According to this theory of truth, a truly

excellent farmer will never think that he can attain the ideal of farming; rather, farming is a practice which stands as an objective ideal in which he participates.

Obviously there is a major problem with this theory of truth, although it is in one sense a marvelous problem. In sum, this theory of truth is relativistic. Because we all do not aspire to the same ideal, we do not all have the same understanding of truth. Some of us aspire to be great teachers, while others seek to be the best lawyers. Some of us find fulfillment as we compete in particular sports, while others have joy in painting. Although truth defined by the our aspirations to participate in ideals of personal interest does not give us an adequate explanation of how we all share the same form of life, it does allow for the value of personal expression.

This is why it is a marvelous problem, for it allows for an enormous amount of differentiation. We do not have to conform to one form of expression. We are free to live by our own interests. However, it must be recognised that differentiation in and of itself causes huge problems in modern societies around the world: The fragmentation of interest groups from one another and alienation persons from each other. Although differentiation unifies us in the sense that it assures us that we have own rights and privileges, it creates disunity in the sense that it destroys any communal vision of the good life in which we all can participate.

But perhaps the vision of a universally shared form of life is a fantasy. Perhaps we should not even attempt to reach a definition of truth which seeks to encompass our intersubjective engagement with one another. As a matter of fact, why can't we just settle for a definition of truth that is limited to the empirical discoveries of science? This would

radically change our definition, for science attempts to view the world from an objective

stance that deals with things that are as certain as the causal relations between suborganic

and organic systems. It does not deal with things that are as uncertain as the values found

in different practices and the joys found different experiences. Science deals with facts, not

values and the qualities of personal experiences. I do not believe that truth in its full sense

can be defined through the findings of empirical data alone; however, if the tri-relation

view of human agency is true, it should be able to account for why this is not possible.

From the tri-relational view of the human agency and the earlier definition of truth,

science is a particular form of life, another way in which humans can be engaged in and

towards the world. In the practice of scientific investigation, scientists evaluate truth

according to their extrapersonal engagement with objects, seeking to interiorise the facts

of the experimental information in the subcontext of their extrapersonal, reflexive identity.

But these facts are evaluated and synthesized by scientists as they seek to verify, or justify,

their theoretical visions of how they believe such instances are generally related through

their metapersonal, projective contexts, that is, the theories of how they believe certain

phenomena to be causally related to other phenomena.

But there is also something else, is there not? For what a scientist believes will

largely be influenced by *a deeper commitment to a tradition of practices that make him*

*aware of empirical truth, the practices that enable empirical confirmation.* For example,

if a scientist believes that he has confirmed his theory by showing how it predicts the way

in which physical processes are actually related to one another, then he may very well have

discovered an empirical truth. Yet, this scientist must evaluate the manner in which his

experiment actually confirms his theory within the present, intersubjective meta-context of the tradition of empirical research. As the chemist and philosopher, Michael Polanyi, says, "Science is a system of beliefs to which we are committed. Such a system cannot be accounted for either from experience as seen within a different system, or by reason without any experience . . it is a system of beliefs to which we are committed and which cannot be represented in non-committal terms."[16]

As a result, our objective knowledge of the world is limited by the nature of what we are interacting with and the degree that we can articulate our tacit, extrapersonal dispositions within already shared beliefs. Therefore, objectivity in science is a matter of public achievement rather than pure fact, for objectivity depends on the faithfulness of an agent's commitment to dwelling integratively in practices which allow him to be engaging the world in way that reveals scientific truth, while he also linguistically participates with other scientists to clarify these engagements. But it also depends on what an agent is engaged with. As Polanyi says, " . . . indwelling is less deep when observing a star than when understanding men or works of art."[17] Therefore, it makes sense that scientists should not treat all objects as if they were the same type of things, mere objects in space. For example, any form of behaviorism that wants to assume that there are no subjective states, but only behavioral responses to an environment, is completely fallacious. In assuming this they end up treating humans as if they were something closer to reptiles. Basically, they want to leave out the "tensed fact" of lived subjects and measure them as if they were something closer to pure, stimulus-response systems

Scientists are agents who are committed to their own visions of reality and

committed to practices which enable them to confirm their visions. However, because such vision are typically disengaged from the way they understand themselves to be *meaningfully* related in and towards reality, they cannot tell us how to live. Furthermore, who is to decide which aspect of the physical world will tell us how we ought to live? Because it is the most certain form of empirical knowledge we have, perhaps we should turn to physics. This, however, would not get us very far. There are many physicists who believe they can answer the big metaphysical questions of philosophy. For example, Paul Davis and Stephen Hawking are passionately searching for a mathematical explanation to everything---a Grand Unified Theory. One seemingly insurmountable problem they will have to overcome is the incompatibility of Relativity theory and Quantum theory, for the first requires continuity and a precise causal relation and the second manifests no continuity and does not seem to follow one causal law. In the end they can only be left with the beauty of their theory, not its empirical truth. As physicist David Lindley says, "Experiments to test fundamental physics now is something of impossibility, and what is deemed progress now is something very different from what Newton imaged . . . The mathematical neatness comes first, and the practical explanatory power comes second."[18]

As agents participating with the same aspects, levels or systems of reality they can seek to articulate---and possibly agree on---the explicit nature in which phenomena tested in experiments are consistently related to one another. But scientists can only do this under the shared, deeper commitment to the tradition of empirical research. Although empirical truth in itself does not tell us how we are meaningfully related to our primary experience, there is great intellectual value to be gained through scientists' engagement

with phenomena in experiments which can be finely tuned so that a particular way of thinking of reality can be proven to be more reliable than other way of thinking of reality. Furthermore, such practices can reveal more and more about the natural of the physical world to the degree that these scientists diligently integrate and articulate the manner in which the findings of their experimental engagements with phenomena are related to other empirical findings. But it can not define truth, for if scientist were to do this they would have to persuade us this their practices are the best way to be engaged with reality. Furthermore, although it can give us, or seek to give us, a mathematical vision of reality, it is difficult to understand how such a vision would address the way we should interact with one another in our intrinsic, intersubjective relations.

Just as we have extrapersonal subcontexts, metapersonal contexts and an interpersonal meta-context of thought about our engagement with the physical world, we also have three contexts of thought about our engagement with social environments. In general, persons have a personal history of their own past-present, extrapersonal experiences (i.e., sub-contexts of our potential emotional and practical dispositions which define our pretentive-reflexive stance) and their own future-present, metapersonal ideals (i.e., contexts of focal aspirations and goals which define attentive-interpretive stance). But persons metapersonal ideals are conditioned by their deeper commitments to what they believe to be fundamentally and meaningfully true about reality and their place within it (i.e., an intersubjective meta-contexts of different opinions about what is beautiful, good and true). The intersubjective meta-context of personal existence takes the form of deep commitments and practices which place boundaries on our projective visions of how we

desire to be oriented with our world, as found in the beliefs and practices of religious traditions, philosophical systems, political ideologies and the value-paradigms of different social-economic classes.

Although it is only within the light of our meta-contextual commitments that we form our personal, projective visions of life, I want to argue that this light only discloses truth to us to the degree that we are sensitive to the tacit and intersubjective nature of our awareness of our natural, teleological vision of truth. Such a vision is tacit because it partly involves of the fundamental priorities we consistently notice being evoked from the background, attentive-pretentive evocation in our day to day interactions with others. That is to say, it is only through a deeper, tacit history that we have our own autobiographical history. "In fact," as Gadamer writes, "history does not belong to us, we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, the society and the state in which we live."[19]

Because all persons have tacitly internalized intersubjective priorities, it seems that if subjects are to maintain unity in their narrative history they must maintain a responsive-evocative consistency in the extrapersonal dispositions they interiorise into their reflexive identities through their projective interaction with others, while also maintaining intersubjective consistency in their projective visions, according to what they believe to be fundamentally true and meaningful about their world and their place within it. Through their reflexive identities subjects can interiorise personally experienced subcontexts of relating with others, while through their projective identity they seek a personally live out

contexts of how they desire to be related with others. However, the manner in which these two relations are united will depend upon persons' evaluative commitment to synthesize their thought according to what they believe to be true and meaningful about their intersubjective meta-context, which defines their vision of the good life and manner in which subjects believe they are obligated to relate with others.

For example, if persons are inconsistent in the way they treat people in their day to day lives, acting kindly to a select few and rudely to everyone else, while allowing such behavior to become a part of their reflexive identity, it is difficult to understand how their conscience would give them rest. In other words, it is difficult to understand how the background attentive-pretentive evocations of intersubjective priorities that were established when they act kindly to a select few would not be evoked when they act rudely to everyone else. They would be repressing their tacit, intersubjective priorities even more then they already have been, while interiorising dispositions of self-interest. Furthermore, their reflexive identity would be interiorised with conflicting modes of extrapersonal engagement. As such, they would not have narrative unity.

It is also necessary for there to be *consistency* between our future-present, meta-personal projective visions and the present, meta-context of what we take to be true of the world, other persons and ourselves. For instance, if a person sincerely believes, and even declares, that no corporation should have the right to dump toxic waste in the ground, and yet holds shares in a corporation that he knows does just this, it is hard to see how he could have narrative unity in his autobiographic history. Again, we would wonder about this person's conscience. A person would only declare such a belief if he were consistently

evoked from background, intersubjective priorities which he could not ignore, and such

evocations would help define the way his projective vision. Yet, in continuing to hold

shares to such a corporation he would be denying the very meta-context of

intersubjectively that was tacitly interiorised by our unconscious and pre-personal decision

making processes.

But what, specifically, is this meta-context that interiorises the tacit, intersubjective

priorities of human conscience? This returns us to my original *hope* of defining truth from

a perspective that includes the way we are meaningfully related to one another. Perhaps if

we can make this meta-context explicit, we can come to understand how reality includes a

communal vision of the good life in which we all can participate. But to even attempt this

we need to turn to the traditions of our meta-context, for according to the tri-relational

view of human agency it irrational to assume that we could *autonomously* discover such

an explicit explanation of our common meta-context.

According to the tri-relational view of human agency, if human subjects lose touch

with the traditions, the macro-points of view in our intersubjective meta-context, that help

them notice their tacit and natural teleological vision of truth, it will be more difficult to

maintain the unity of a narrative self. Such traditions allow for a comprehensive

orientation by which subjects can have more meaningfully defined identities which give

them direction when they experience intense states of being in temporal abeyance between

the possibility of truth or non-truth. By participating in a meaningful, meta-contextual

visions of life, subjects can be aided with a certain degree of passion to include certain

intersubjective experience within their daily life (and thus their narrative history), and do

so with a concern that is open to being instructed by teachings that shape their projective visions with a concern for the one, tacit meta-context. If persons fail to be connected to a tradition whereby their lives are challenge or affirmed to become more intersubjectively sensitive to other's needs and concerns, it is very possible that such persons may lose touch with their fallibility, believing their own projective visions are sufficient unto themselves. Of course, there also is the danger that persons will believe themselves to be so fallible that they cannot even attempt to make their tacit vision of truth more explicit.

But, then again, there is the danger that some people will treat their traditions as if they were so infallible so as to prevent them from opening up to see how other traditions may truly encourage persons to become more intersubjectively insensitive. Also, such an attitude of infallibility may prevent them from seeing how the manner in which their tradition's beliefs have been explicitly enhanced fails to make them sensitive to other persons' needs and concerns. Such persons, I suggest, are unable to understand how traditions are a means of meaningfully disclosing a natural vision of truth by making it more explicit. Traditions not only give us a framework within which we can find meaning, they also open us up to questioning our fundamental priorities in the light---or against the darkness---found in other traditions. But this brings us to the thorny question of which tradition best articulates our tacit, natural vision of truth.

According to the tri-relational view of human agency, we only experience the world because we are fallibly related to it through our awareness of different points of view, and thus our primary experience encourages us to have an attitude of openness to learn from other traditions, allowing us to question our identification with a particular

tradition, or allowing us to affirm our participation in a particular tradition. In other words, our stance towards traditions that are not own should be one of understanding or conversation, which Charles Taylor, following Gadamer, says aims at a "fusion of horizons, not escaping horizons. The ultimate result is always tied to someone's point of view."[20] Yet, such conversation must be based on an honest attempt to understand other traditions. As Taylor says, ". . . the aim of the comparative exercise is to enable us to understand others undistortively, and hence to be able to see the good in their life, even while we also see that their good conflicts with ours."[21] In the comparative evaluation of traditions, we do not let go of our own history---we can't for it already owns us---but we granted a tacit, natural vision of truth to evoke in us priorities which as of yet have not been made explicitly meaningful.

Therefore, we must steer clear of two putative forms of evaluation which make us give priority to an attitude of openness over that of intellectual coherence. The first form of putative evaluation allows for projective openness but does so at the cost of utterly sacrificing our commitment to a tradition without justification. This stance is displayed the in the beliefs of those who want to claim that all traditions are ultimately the same, and that the explicit contradictions among different traditions are inconsequential. As such, this putative form of evaluation allows us to be projectively open, but it is a form of projective openness which disengages us from our reflexive identities by eroding and diluting the truth claims of our traditions. As such a person could not have narrative unity, for an attitude of understanding, or openness, alone cannot define one's autobiographical narrative. Although, as Allan Bloom has said, "[o]penness---and the relativism that makes

it the only plausible stance in the various claims of truth and the various ways of life and kinds of human beings---is the greatest insight of our times,"[22] such openness has dire consequences. Bloom argues throughout *The Closing of the American Mind* that once we resign ourselves to 'tolerance' or 'openness' we risk the possibility of basing lives on falsities, illusions and even lies. In sum, openness based on the attitude of openness alone would be taking a stance on a metapersonal, projective disposition towards the world without maintaining a deeper, participatory commitment to a particular tradition which gives us an explicit perspective on the tacit, natural vision of truth. This being so, how would we ever expect to move more deeply into the light of truth?

However, we must also be weary of resigning our attitude of openness solely to our current extrapersonal, pragmatic disposition towards the world. That is to say, we must not think that we can find unity with each other by discovering a common, reflexive identity, or a way of practically coping with each other, without finding commonality in a explicitly shared aspects of a common, intersubjective meta-context. This position is the second form of putative evaluation, a stance that is as empty as the first. For example, it can be seen in Rorty's pragmatism: "For pragmatists, the desire for objectivity is not the desire to escape the limitations of one's community, but simply the desire for as much intersubjective agreement as possible, the desire to extend the reference of 'us' as far as we can."[23]

There are many problems with this approach, foremost of which is Rorty's inability to define 'us' and his means of attaining 'intersubjective agreement'. He can do neither because he sees a "gap between truth and justification not as something to be bridged by

isolating a natural and transcultural sort of rationality which can be used to criticise certain cultures and praise others, but simply as the gap between the actual good and the possible better."[24] Not only does he refuse to recognise the possibility that humans may have natural commonalities, but his "actual good" and "possible better" are too vague to offer any means of convincing others of actual pragmatic "truth." Why should a committed racist who believes that the world would possibly be a better place if certain races were exterminated be persuaded by Rorty's vision of the "actual good?" And for that matter, what is Rorty's 'actual good'?[25]

In opposition to these two forms of putative evaluation, the tri-relational view of human agency enables us to understand how a subject can have substantial evaluative access to making the tacit, natural vision of truth more explicit through his participation in the practices of a particular tradition. He can be given direction through a projective openness to other traditions, while not losing sight of the fact that his own projective visions are always formed in the light of the tradition he believes is most true and meaningful. In sum, in learning to live with others by seeking to develop consistency in our past-present, reflexive identities, and by being carefully attentive to how the coherence of our future-present, projective vision matches up with what we know to be intersubjectively true in different traditions---and through continued growth in what our personally present, evaluative synthesis considers to be intersubjectively relevant----we can always be aware that our *present understanding* of the traditions with which we each are identified may have the power to make our natural vision of truth more explicit.

As stated earlier, truth is not something we can intentionally disclose; rather, it is

noticed by us when it is revealed. It partly hides from our explicit characterizations, yet it is partly within us as well, and this one of the very reasons we desire truth. In having a natural desire to make our tacit, natural meta-context of truth, including the tacit priorities of intersubjective concerns, more explicit, we have a natural desire to move from our own fallibility to the attainment of greater communal unity with others. Therefore, whatever tradition we belong to we can speak from that tradition, seeking to articulate how our tradition may have answers to humanity's condition of fallibility. We do not speak with the intention of demonstrating the superiority of one tradition over another, but to help us better abide by our fundamental, intersubjective priorities that we all consistently notice being evoked from our background attentive-pretentive dispositions. And we can only find what these consistent priorities are when we converse with one another from within our own traditions, seeking to move ever closer towards a fuller participation in an explicitly articulated natural, teleological vision of truth.

In light of this---and speaking from what I believe to be a light found in the Christian tradition in general---truth is not so much something to attain and be controlled as much as it is to be taken up in a participatory process, a process of seeking which requires us to be open to its intersubjective claims upon our lives. Truth is not something that we can make certain once and for all, although it is something independent of ourselves. Rather, it is a way of life, something that is participatorily known. As John records Jesus' words in his gospel: ". . . those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."[26] The nature of truth is something that is fundamentally practiced. Persons do not know themselves to be

correctly adjusted to truth through an impersonal mechanism, or "insight," of the brain/mind. Persons know themselves to be correctly adjusted to the truth as they consistently commit themselves to obeying the fundamental, intersubjective priorities that arise from background, attentive-pretentive evocations. As we obey these priorities, we are not only made more sensitive to other person's concerns, but we are made more aware of an emerging, intersubjective, narrative unity of our past-present reflexive identity and our future-present projective vision. Furthermore, our personally present, evaluative synthesis becomes more intimately related to our common, intersubjective meta-context which can be made ever more explicit.

Having said this, perhaps we can now be enabled to understand a third sense of truth I earlier hoped to articulate. From the perspective of relationalism, where the primary experience of the tri-relational subject is understood to be the intersubjective nature of our awareness of truth, the correspondence theory of truth takes on a whole new meaning. Historically, correspondence theory has been unable to explain how our thoughts, or linguistic characterizations, are justifiably related to things in the world: How can we anchor our thoughts down to anything except with other thoughts? Although we can never get outside of ourselves to discover the actual corresponding truth of the matter which resides beyond of our own concepts, we have the omnipresent feeling that certain thoughts correspond to reality better than other ones, and also that some thoughts do not correspond at all. How can this "feeling" of correspondence be explained according to our primary experience?

When the tri-relational view of human agency is united with the tradition of

Christian doctrine on the Trinity and the doctrine that we are created in the image of God

(i.e., that we are created naturally to be *like* God) we can say that our "feelings" of

correspondence, including our tacit vision of truth as our primary relation to reality, can be

made explicit through God's self-revelation in the Christian tradition, especially through

the Biblical tradition which is upheld by Christians to be God's primary means of self-

revelation. In fact, it can even be maintained that the tri-relational view of human agency,

or something close to it, *may* provide a means of empirically verifying the manner in which

humans are created in the image of God, and therefore, revealing the manner in which God

is defined as three subsisting relations that are communally united as One. Beyond this,

this extraordinary form of verificationism *may* provide a means to augment our quest in

making humanity's common, intersubjective vision of truth more explicit. Let me explain.

It can be maintained that as we seek to live in a responsively and evocatively

consistent relationship that corresponds to the manner in which God's extrapersonal,

pretentive-reflexive stance (i.e., the Son of God) is participatorily engaged with God's

metapersonal, attentive-interpretive stance (i.e., the Father's Holy Spirit), according to the

responsive-evocative continuum's subjectivity (i.e., God the Father), who controls his

responses and evocation through a meta-context of truth which is determined by the

*focally temporal unification* of God's past-present, extrapersonal relation and God's

future-present, metapersonal relation as a personally present, narrative unity (i.e., the

Logos). In other words, when we are reflectively and projectively participating in

accordance with the intersubjective priorities that are evoked in our background, attentive-

pretentive evocations, by both being open to them and applying them to our lives, we are,

to a certain degree, participating in the Divine nature. However, when we act contrary to

the intersubjective priorities evoked in background, attentive-pretentive evocations, we are

excluded from participating in the Divine nature.

This understanding augments our quest to make our intersubjective, natural vision

of truth more explicit because it narrows our search to the manner in which God has

revealed his Divine nature to us through the incarnation of his Son, who not only is "the

image of the invisible God,"[27] but has came to us "to testify to the truth."[28] But before I

conclude with an examination the manner in which the Triune God is our meta-context of

truth, I first seek to dispel some misconceptions of God in Christian tradition, especially of

Augustine's which have dominated theological speculation from his time to this day.

All too often Augustine's Neoplatonic sympathies compromised the Biblical

portrait of God as a dynamic and impassioned, yet faithful, Person for a static, impassible

and unchanging, simple substance---for "if the trinity is one being, it is also one

substance."[29] I do not have a quandary with Augustine's belief that God is the Final

Reality, or eternal substance, but his inability to explain the manner in which there can be a

temporal creation in the first place. Of course, he never sought after a holistic account of

creation; rather, his concern was exigetical. He sought for a way to interpret the creation

account of *Genesis* in a coherent fashion apart from an examination of natural processes,

and Neoplatonism was the primary source of his coherence.

He tells us that the creation of all things originally took place as a simultaneous,

spiritual event within God's Word: ". . . . there is one Word of God, *through which all*

*things were made* (Jn 1:1-6), which is unchanging truth, in which all things are

primordially and unchangingly together, not only things that are in the whole of this creation, but things that have been and will be."[30]  Again, I do not have problem with his concern that truth be understood as unchanging in some sense, but what I question is his insistence that creation was brought into being as completely and utterly determined, including *"things that have been and will be."*

God's timelessness is a recurrent theme in Augustine's writings.  In fact, he strays away from the Biblical tradition which describes eternity as an endless duration, not as a timeless enigma.  In the Old Testament, eternity is not the opposite of temporality; on the contrary, it is an "everlasting" temporality of a certain kind, characterized by the duration of a certain way of life (God's life) and the quality of certain kinds of covenants (God's covenants).[31]  Such a view of eternity is also consistent with the New Testament.  As John says in his Gospel, "And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."[32]  Eternal life as depicted here can be experienced within this current life, within temporality.  In other words, as believers increasingly turn away from their own lifestyles, characterized by temporal unity that lacks narrative unity, they can freely participate in a relationship with God's everlasting temporality through the narrative unity of the Trinity.

Augustine felt obligated to protect his conception of God from any form of change, especially that of temporality; he writes, ". . . it is unthinkable that God should love someone temporally, as though with a new love that was not in him before, seeing that with him things past do not pass, and things future have already happened."[33]  God might have a strange and distant way of relating with his creatures through his eternal,

predestined plan of salvation history, but he himself remains ineffably veiled in his timeless

habitation. Augustine felt the frustration of the resulting incoherence of his conception of

God. Confessing his confusion to God, he says, " it is rare to see and very hard to sustain

the insight, Lord, of your eternity immutably making a mutable world, and in this sense

being anterior."[34] How can God be forever at rest and yet move to create a changing

world? This frustration was inherited from Plato's *Timaeus*, where eternity is depicted as

a static reality, and time is understood as "a moving image of eternity."[35]

Augustine's concepts of time, eternity, and God have had dire consequences

throughout the history of Western theology and philosophy. Augustine's understanding of

predestination and divine immutability have carried Classical theism beyond the Middle

Ages into our present age. These ideas, I believe, are among the most responsible for the

irrelevancy of the Christian worldview throughout the modern age. We think of such

doctrines as nonsensical, offensive, and awkwardly abstract. Nietzsche was among the

first to understand how the Classical idea of God was becoming less and less of a cultural

influence as history progressed. Without an adequate way of understanding God, he

thought all Christian values, too, would gradually loss their significance. Not that all such

values would have to be utterly discarded, but they would have to be reinterpreted into a

naturalistic framework.

Although Augustine, held captive by his Neoplatonic tendencies, distorted the

Biblical understanding of God as an active, purposive agent with desires and feelings, he

did lay the ground to correct this misunderstanding in *The Trinity*. After an exhaustive

examination of Scripture's account of the three "persons" and their relations to each other,

he began a complex phenomenological search into the nature of the human mind to discover the image of God. Thus, he made some insightful contributions to the theology of the Trinity: 1) he opened up the a new pathway to understand the trinity---through an image of the human mind; 2) he understood the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as one Being; 3) and he emphasized the double procession of the Holy Spirit.

Unfortunately, at the end of his examination, Augustine threw up his hands and retreated back to his Neoplatonism, stating that temporal creatures cannot "comprehend how God's foresight is the same as his memory and his understanding, and how he does not observe things by thinking of them one by one, but embraces everything that he knows in one eternal, unchanging, and inexpressible vision."[36] The supreme Trinity is unlike any other trinity, for it is outside time. In fact, he takes the economical trinity (God's dispensation in salvation history) to be utterly unlike God's immanent Trinity (the intrinsic, ontological foundation of God's nature). The relations of the economic trinity are temporal relations; therefore, he argued, they distort the nature of God's timelessness. As for the relations of the immanent Trinity, they remain forever outside of time, and thus they are empty verbiage. Because our understanding is bound within time, and because God's true relations are timeless, the supreme Trinity will remain a mystery---that is, until we are resurrected from the dead into God's timelessness, where he believes "there will be nothing for us to seek with the reasoning of the mind . . ."[37]

What Augustine, and most of the major theologians after him, except perhaps for the Cappadocians in the East, failed to take seriously in his quest to understand the immutability of God's nature in the Biblical portrayal of the Trinity is the temporal

significance of metaphors describing God's "begetting," "sending," and "proceeding."[38] From the perspective of the tri-relational view of human agency, presupposed to be that which is created in the image of God, we can say that God is the Final Reality who everlastingly attends metapersonally to otherness through the focal relation of His attentive-interpretive relation (i.e., the future-present, attentive-projective relation of the Holy Spirit), but God, being the only Reality there is, everlastingly begets a temporally focused, extrapersonal image of himself (the past-present, pretentive-reflexive relation of his Son). As Paul says, speaking of what I take to be God's metapersonal relation, ". . . the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God."[39] This would also explain why Paul speaks of Christ, who I believe everlastingly lives as God's perfect extrapersonal relation, as "the first*born* of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth . . . have been created through him and for him (my emphasis on "born")."[40]

This is the major point I want at present to discuss from the prespective of the Trinitarian view of God I am proposing, which I will call Tri-relational theism, or holism. This view enables us to understand how creation is related to God and God to creation. In other words, Tri-relational theism not only enables us to understand the everlasting, durational unity of God, it also allows us to articulate the mystery of theism's distinction between God's transcendence and immanence. We can say that creation is distinct from God's past-present, pretentive-reflexive relation in that it comes into being through a projective vision that is not essential to the everlasting unity of God's extrapersonal and metapersonal relations. While God's extrapersonal relation exists as a focal, durational relation that is everlastingly begotten in God's metapersonal relation, God's metapersonal

relation everlastingly proceeds, being brought into focus, by the Father who is
everlastingly made personally present to himself as the narrative unity (the Logos) of his
extrapersonally past-present relation everlastingly responding in the temporally future-
present focused love (the selfless seeking out) of his metapersonal relation. All three
subsisting relations are united as truth.[41]

Because God is a tri-relational subject---*the* original Tri-relational Subject---He is
able creatively to posit a projective vision of how He would like to be related to otherness,
but because He is the only reality He must bring otherness (e.g., suborganic, organic and
supraorganic systems) into being through His temporally focused attentive-interpretive
and pretentive-reflexive dispositions. It is for this reason that I earlier questioned whether
it was true that my comparison of heat with the three subsisting relations of human
consciousness utterly breaks down, just because our contemporary understanding of
physics does not include the possibility that energy may be teleologically, rather than
randomly, organized. In fact, if we are to carry the analogy to its conclusion, we must
also say that space must not be understood as an impersonal plenum, or a passive
container. Instead, we are led to the conclusion that universe only exists as a result the
temporal unification of God's attentive-pretentive evocations.

Furthermore, because God is everlastingly related to truth, he does not seek
perfection from creation or through the process of creating. Rather, through his projective
vision he seeks to bring the otherness He created into truth, into his narrative unity, and
the experience of His delight is intensified as a result of having others take part in his
narrative unity. Also, subjectively self-aware supraorganic systems are allowed freely to

participate in truth through their own personal expressions, as they to experience the joy of being made personally present to God in his narrative unity. But, obviously, something must have happen to destroy our inclusion in his narrative unity.

This gets into theological matters that go far beyond the concerns of this paper. Therefore, while I cannot here go into why God took the risk of creating subjectively self-aware supraorganic systems who could create their own projective visions outside of God's narrative unity, I do want to conclude by showing how this understanding of the Final Reality may make humanity's common, intersubjective vision of truth more explicit.

Tri-relational holism allows us to understand why we must patiently endure the struggle of evaluatively adjusting our projective vision to our natural vision of truth while it only resides in tacit, background evocations. We are to do so in the *hope* that we will increasingly adjust our metapersonal context to coherently abide by the everlasting narrative unity as our foremost, projective vision. As Paul says, ". . . through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness."[42] While the prescriptive requirement of entering into narrative unity with the God "is written on [our] hearts, to which [our] own conscience also bears witness," we seem to be helplessly trapped in our "conflicting thoughts" which "will accuse or perhaps excuse [us] on the day when . . .God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all. "[43] Such conflicting thoughts can now be understood to be the result of being personally present to the tacitly internalized truth of our intersubjective meta-context, while at the same time being aware of our metapersonal relation which we fail to make appropriately fallible in our projective visions and to our extrapersonal relation which fails to be appropriately satisfied self-

reflexively.

At present, there is a promise that our souls can be increasingly put into order as we seek to follow the example of God's economic trinity revealed through the life of Christ, stretching through his incarnation, death and resurrection. It is promised that "everyone who does right has been born of him."[44] As such we can live "as children of light [whose] fruit . . . is found in all that is good and right and true."[45] But such a life is not easy for it means that we will have to often endure by practicing what we believe to be right, even when we know we will suffer for it.[46] However, through such a life we can increasingly become participatorily integrated within God's narrative unity at a deeper level as we seek to imitate his extrapersonal relation, revealed to us in the person of Christ, who was perfectly engaged with God's metapersonal relation during his time on earth. But it must be recognised that we never possess our own righteousness. Rather, it is an everlasting gift from God in which we increasing dwell as we participate more fully in the life of Christ, for Christ made it clear that no one "is good but God alone."[47] We must never think we will ever reach a state where we can declare ourselves good, but we can have the eternal joy of knowing God more intimately as we become more attuned to how his metapersonal relation is working in our lives. This can be seen in Paul's prayer for the Colossians: ". . . be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God."[48]

If this new articulation of correspondence theory (from the perspective of relationalism) is true, we must never be thought to individually maintain our *own* narrative

unity. Rather, if our autobiographical narrative is to have any unity it must be understood to be dependent upon our participating in the intersubjective priorities we come to notice in our day to day lives---and primarily dependent upon our participating in God's narrative unity. If we only have narrative unity by participating in the truth, and if we only participate in the truth when the subsisting relations correspond to that of God's narrative unity, we are held accountable to become ever more sensitive to the intersubjective priorities of our conscience. For even God the Father has chosen metapersonally to draw persons who exist outside of his narrative unity into this unity through his extrapersonal relation, "through the eternal Spirit [who] offered himself without blemish to God, purify[ing] our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!"[49]

Of course, it is not objectively certain that this understanding *is the truth*---for no *tradition*, or understanding of a tradition, can be *the truth*---but the tri-relational view of human agency may help all people to appreciate the beauty of the light of the truth within the Christian tradition, especially its emphasis on the nature of love. Is really possible to believe that will come to understand the Christian tradition as the best revelation our tacit, natural vision of truth? Can this vision be considered to reveal the good life in which all humans can participate? This, of course, will depend on the degree to which persons are attracted to the beauty and the truth of its claims. While it is true that we may never be completely certain of its claims to truth, we can experience its beauty in a life lived from, through, and toward the Christian ideal of love. As Augustine articulated, "True love then is that we should live justly by cleaving to the truth . . . we observe it within ourselves, or rather above ourselves in truth itself . . . always enduring and never changing . . ."[50]

**Notes and References for Chapter Four:**

1. Amelie Rorty and David Wong, "Aspects of Identity and Agency", in *Identity, Character, and Morality*, eds., Owen Flanagan and Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 20.

2. Robert Kirk, "Consciousness and Concepts", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*: Supplementary Vol. LXVI, 1992, p 26.

3. Ibid., p. 25.

4. Peter Carruthers, "Consciousness and Concepts II", Ibid., p. 46.

5. Ibid., p. 51.

6. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, p. 251.

7. Ibid., p. 251.

8. *Theaetetus*, 197d-197e, in Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds. *The Collected Dialogues: including the Letters* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 904.

9. M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans, Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 327.

10. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, p. 423.

11. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), pp. 215-216.

12. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 422.

13. G. J. Whitrow, *The Natural Philosophy of Time* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 68.

14. Eleanor J. Gibson and Elizabeth S. Spelke, "The Development of Perception", in *Handbook of Child Psychology: Vol. III, Cognitive Development*, eds. John H. Flavell and Ellen M. Markman (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1983), p. 22.

15. Arthur C. Danto, *Connections to the World: The Basic Concepts of Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 153.

16. Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 171.

17. See his "Tacit Knowing: Its Bearing on Some Problems of Philosophy" in *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi*, ed. Marjorie Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 160.

18. David Lindley, The *End of Physics* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), p. 255.

19. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York, Seabury Press, 1975), p. 245.

20. Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*, p. 151.

21. Ibid., 163.

22. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), p. 26.

23. Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), p. 23.

24. Ibid., pp. 22-23.

25. Everything Rorty values (e.g., sympathizing with another's pain and the search for an inclusive "we") assumes that there is a deeper reason why everyone should recognise these

values. What is need is not a dogmatic proclamation that we should recognise these values, but an  account which articulates the reason we should live by these values.

26. John 3:21. All translations will be taken from the *New Revised Standard Version* in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
27. Colossians 1:15.
28. John 18:37.
29. Saint Auguistine, *The Trinity*, intro., trans, and notes by Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle (Brooklyn, New York: New City Press, 1996), VII.10, p. 228.
30. Ibid., IV.3, pp. 206-207.
31. See Gen. 9:16; 21:33; Deut. 33:27; Ps. 141:2; Jer. 31:3; Dan. 7:13-14.
32. John 3:17
33. *The Trinity*, V.17, p. 201.
34. Augustine, *The Confessions,* trans. by Henry Chadwick (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), XII.xxix (40), p. 269.
35. Plato's *Timaeus,* 37d
36. *The Trinity*, XV.13, p. 405.
37. Ibid., XV.45, p. 430.
38. Luke 10:16; 24:49: and John 15:26.
39. 1 Corinthians 2:10.
40. Colossians 1:15-16.
41. See John 14:6; 1 John 5:6; and John 17:17.
42. Galatians 5:5
43. Romans 2:15.
44. 1 John 2:29
45. Ephesians 5:8.
46. 1 Peter 2:21-24.
47. Mark 10:18
48. Colossians 1:9-10.
49. Hebrews 9:14.
50.*The Trinity*, VIII.10 and 13, pp.252 and 254.