

# A Phenomenological Critique of Existential Feeling: Affect as Temporality

## Abstract:

Matthew Ratcliffe's model of existential feelings can be seen as a critical engagement with perspectives common to analytic, theory of mind and psychological orientations that view psychological functions such as cognition and affectivity within normative objective propositional frameworks. Ratcliffe takes a step back from and re-situates objective reifications within an interactive subject-object matrix inclusive of the body and the interpersonal world. In doing so, he turns a mono-normative thinking into a poly-normative one, in which determinations of meaning and significance are relative to the changing structural coherence of felt bodily and inter-socially shaped schemes of interaction. And yet, from the phenomenological vantages of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Gendlin and Heidegger, Ratcliffe's approach retains the metaphysical presupposition of subject-object dualism as interacting bodies, with a separate causative glue necessary to provide for the means of their relation. Ratcliffe re-purposed Damasio's concept of background feeling and dressed it up in the garb of phenomenology, but it remains a reciprocal causal model of psychological function.

What Heidegger's Being-in-the-World, Merleau-Ponty's figure-background structure of corporeal inter-subjectivity, Gendlin's implicit intricacy and Husserl's reduced transcendental ego have in common is a radicalized notion of temporality that overcomes the split between subject and object informing Ratcliffe's understanding of being 'immersed in' and connected to a world, and thus abandons the need to posit bodily feeling as a 'glue' organizing and maintaining the meaningful structure of consciousness of a world. Temporality, not the empirically causal body, provides the basis of affect, cognition and the organizational glue for structures of meaning.

## Introduction

Matthew Ratcliffe's model of existential feelings can be seen as a critical engagement with perspectives common to analytic, theory of mind and psychological orientations that view psychological functions such as cognition and affectivity within normative objective

reifications within an interactive subject-object matrix inclusive of the body and the interpersonal world. In doing so, he turns a mono-normative thinking into a poly-normative one, in which determinations of meaning and significance are oriented by the changing structural coherence of world-directed felt bodily and inter-socially shaped schemes of interaction.

The aim of this paper is to show that while Ratcliffe's existential feeling significantly transforms Damasio's concept of background feeling, in dressing it up in the garb of phenomenological philosophical conceptions, he neglects to follow Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Gendlin and Heidegger

in establishing a radicalized concept of temporality as the ground of affectivity. Whereas the above phenomenologists fuse affect and intention within the moment of time itself as tripartite structure of temporal becoming, Ratcliffe founds affect and intention as distinguishable structural aspects of a reciprocally causal model. As a result, Ratcliffe substitutes polarizing, semi-arbitrary conditionings for a more intimate, intricate and unitary process of affective-connative meaning creation.

### **Existential Feeling as Global Situatedness:**

In the early 2000's Ratcliffe introduced the outlines of what was to become his model of existential feelings, incorporating elements of Damasio's background feeling.

“According to Damasio, background feelings are ever-present, although ordinarily tacit. They serve to structure the everyday ways in which we encounter the world, the basic ways in which we find ourselves in the world:Ratcliffe 2002, p.298)

Damasio wrote:“. . . I am postulating another variety of feeling which I suspect preceded the others in evolution. I call it background feeling because it originates in “background” body states rather than in emotional states. It is not the Verdi of grand emotion, nor the Stravinsky of intellectualized emotion but rather a minimalist in tone and beat, the feeling of life itself, the sense of being.” (1995, p. 150)

Ratcliffe fleshed out his approach with elements drawn from the phenomenologies of Merleau-Ponty, Husserl and Heidegger:

“Both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty add that localized experiences of possibility presuppose a more-enveloping orientation, a sense of belonging to the world. When I see or think about something, when I am afraid of something, and when I am in a bad mood about a wider situation, I already find myself in the world, in a way that differs in kind from intentional experiences in one or another modality (e.g. imagining, perceiving, or remembering something). This ‘world’ is presupposed by intentional states of whatever kind with whatever content. We can think of it in terms of a possibility space, a receptivity to *types* of possibility.”“Things are experienced as *significant* to us, as *mattering* to us, in various different ways, something that involves a sense of the possibilities they offer.” (Ratcliffe, 2020)

“...what Heidegger in *Being and Time* calls ‘Being-in-the-world’ is exactly what we gain reflective access to by performing the phenomenological reduction...This conveys much the same broad conception of ‘world’ that we find in Husserl and Merleau-Ponty:...something that we are already practically, unreflectively immersed in when we experience something, think about it or act upon it.”

These globally structured patterns of existential feeling amount to “ ‘ways of finding oneself in the world’ . As such, they are what we might call ‘pre-intentional’, meaning that they determine the kinds of intentional states we are capable of adopting, amounting to a ‘shape’ that all experience takes on.” (Ratcliffe 2015)

### **The Affective ‘glue’ organizing existential feeling:**

If for Ratcliffe, a global structure of feeling orients the significance for us of the objects and persons we interact with in the world, how is this structure organized and sustained? What is the 'glue' that holds it together?

Ratcliffe's causal reinforcement-based model of affect assigns it the role of biasing appraisal via selectively guiding attention toward a heightening or lowering of perceived significance of various world events. The role of affective attunement is to produce "changes in the types of significant possibility to which one is receptive". (Ratcliffe 2016) "...existential feelings determine the kinds of noetic and noematic feelings that one is open to. "...the existential feeling sets the parameters for the kinds of more localized experience one is capable of having."(2016). "Emotions "tune us to the world, making it relevant to us by opening up certain possibilities for explicit deliberation and closing off others. "(Ratcliffe 2002)

Bodily dispositions can actively direct one toward salient objects in one's world, but are "equally implicated in feeling unable to act upon something. Passivity in the face of threat may involve inclinations to withdraw, to retreat, along with the absence of any other salient possibilities." (Ratcliffe 2015). For instance, in depression one cannot find the motivation to act to change one's situation ( a confident 'I can' becomes 'I can't'). Solipsistic self-perpetuating narratives, reinforced and organized by feelings of avoidance and reduced salience, tell one why they shouldn't or can't connect with others.

" In any experience, only certain possibilities are offered up and only some of these appear especially salient. According to both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, the possibilities that show up are constituted by bodily dispositions. These dispositions shape all experience and show up as potentialities that belong to objects. The different ways in which the body responds to things amount to different systems of concrete possibilities. "(Ratcliffe 2010)

In order to situate Ratcliffe's orientation relative to the phenomenologists whose ideas he incorporates, it is helpful to see how he makes use of Damasio's neuroscience-inspired theorizing on the relations of affect and intention.

"...emotions play a role in constraining and structuring the realm of explicit deliberation, restricting deliberation to a small number of options and structuring patterns of reasoning, so that we remain focused and relevant in our activities, able to act towards goals without becoming distracted by trivia. Thus emotions and feelings serve to constrain and focus our attention, so that we only consider from a pre-structured set of options. Damasio's (1995, 1996) more specific hypothesis is that emotions are cognitively mediated body states. He christens this theory the "somatic marker hypothesis". The idea is that somatic (body) signals are associated with perceptual stimuli, either as a result of innate or learned neural connections, and thus "mark" those stimuli. Different perceptions can be associated with various kinds of body states, which may serve as alarm signals or, alternatively, as enticing invitations. According to Damasio, a complex of such signals focuses and structures our cognitive interactions with the world. Once we incorporate complex learned associations between perceptions and body states, a vast web of somatic markers can develop. These signals serve to eliminate certain possibilities, which feel bad, from a choice set and focus deliberation upon other feel good signals. Thus cognition is constrained, enabled and structured by a background of emotion-perception correlations, that

manifest themselves as a changing background of implicit representations of body states.”(Ratcliffe 2002)

Slaby provides this useful elaboration of how bodily feeling can be world-oriented:

” feeling bad emotionally (as opposed to feeling bad due to physical illness or injury) is not a disembodied, intellectual appreciation of things going badly – although it surely is some kind of appreciation of things going badly. It is also and essentially a bodily experience. If you are angry and feel offended by your colleague, you have a self-disclosing bodily feeling. It is not easy to describe it exactly, but I think you have the physical impression of being “pushed down”, of being literally “oppressed” by an external force. In this way, emotional pain is essentially bodily. Its bodily nature is not a separable “aspect” that is merely added on to an otherwise purely intellectual appreciation of what’s going on; rather, it is the very core of the painful emotional experience. “(Slaby 2008)

Let me encapsulate Ratcliffe’s perspective on the role of affect in determining the ways that the world can make sense to us. Ratcliffe says emotion and embodiment are ““incorporated as essential components in cognition”, but emotion and cognition are clearly not identical; “...emotions and moods are not explicitly cognitive but neither are they independent of cognition”(Ratcliffe 2002, p.299). They originate as bodily sensations structuring cognition from outside of it. Emotion and cognition can 'conflict' and emotion can “override cognitive judgement”(p.299). Ratcliffe cites Ramachandran’s clinical observations of individuals with anosognosia, who apparently distort environmental information which contradicts an internally generated narrative. Ramachandran and Ratcliffe attribute this behavior to damage to connections between emotion and cognitive centers. Ratcliffe concludes from this that, in typically functioning persons, emotion signals from the body are presumed to pack a contentful punch large enough to break through a psychological narrative's resistances where weaker percepts from the environment cannot.

It seems, then, that for Ratcliffe , intention is a capacity for manipulating objects of thought, but emotion, as conditioning valuative valence, provides the criteria for such processing. He is apparently not able to find the resources strictly within what he thinks of as intentional thought to de-center thinking processes, because he treats cognition as tending to form temporarily self-perpetuating narratives which can distort or keep out contradictory input from the world. So he relies on the body, in the form of emotion cues, to come to the rescue and bring the stalled cognitive apparatus back in touch with a dynamically changing world. The mechanism of emotion is assumed to intervene in order to infuse a stagnant narrative with a new direction and meaning.

(FOOTNOTE: For Ratcliffe emotions selectively organize cognition not just by prompting the interruption of a current narrative, but also by facilitating the assimilation of new events into an ongoing context. Ratcliffe(2002) cites Ramachandran’s account of individuals with Capgras syndrome as evidence that affect can serve to inform the cognitive system that a previously experienced object is similar or identical to a current one.)

Ratcliffe(2002) asserts: “Without emotional responses, one is not uprooted from a coherent

interpretation of events...”(p.306). Although these emotion cues are claimed to be inseparably linked with conceptual processes, this linkage amounts to more of a concatenation between pre-existing states than a more radical indissociability. This may be due to the belief that feeling originates developmentally within the individual independently from cognition, as action readiness circuits that, Panksepp(1998) claims, are “completely biological and affective but..., through innumerable sensory-perceptual interactions with our environments, [become] inextricably mixed with learning and world events”(p.303)

For all their differences, Ratcliffe shares with other contemporary accounts of affect and emotion what I call the ‘adaptationist’ presumption that meaning is shaped in a semi-arbitrary way by inputs which come to influence it from a pre-existing outside. I don’t think Ratcliffe’s model of affectivity has abandoned the naturalist pre-suppositions animating Damasio’s (2000) claim: “...as a result of powerful learning mechanisms such as conditioning, emotions of all shades eventually help connect homeostatic regulation and survival values to numerous events and objects in our autobiographical experience”(p.54). According to this thinking, physiological processes of feeling adapt and co-ordinate with a partially independent cogitative environment, authorizing adaptationism as a causal explanation of origins.

Viewed as an adaptation, emotion is linked to a milieu outside of itself (cognition) and with which the logic of the bond is indirect, partially arbitrary in the sense that it is capable of being made irrational, as is supposedly the case with nonadaptive mutations. There is a partial independence assumed between the participant aspects of reciprocally adaptive interactions. The cobbling can be uncobbled unilaterally. Emotion can aid reason, but can also be dysfunctional.

### **Husserl’s Transcendental Affect**

Ratcliffe insists that affectivity and intentionality are inseparable, And yet, it is significant that he still finds it coherent to imagine what a situation might be like in which affect was absent from our experience of the world.

“...affect binds us to things, making them relevant and ‘lighting up’ aspects of the world in such a way as to call forth actions and thoughts. Without the world-structuring orientation that they provide, we are disoriented, cut off from the world, which no longer solicits thoughts and actions and is consequently devoid of value. In effect, [William] James is saying that our very sense of reality is constituted by world-orienting feelings that bind us to things .” (Ratcliffe 2005)

“ The absence of emotion comprises a state of cognitive and behavioural paralysis rather than fully functional cognition, stripped of ‘mere’ affect. A phenomenology without affect is a phenomenology that guts the world of all its significance. The experienced world is ordinarily enriched by the feelings that we sew into it, that imbue it with value and light it up as an arena of cognitive and behavioural possibilities. So cognition without affect is not, according to James, in any sense complete. It is an extreme phenomenological privation that strips the world of all meaning, a state of depression or ‘melancholia’. In such a state, James describes how ‘the world now looks remote, strange, sinister, uncanny. Its color is gone, its breath is cold, there is no

speculation in the eyes it glares with” (James 1902: p. 151), (Ratcliffe 2005).

Slaby concurs: “Nothing but “neutral states of intellectual perception” would remain, as William James famously put it, when we “try to abstract from consciousness [of an emotion] all the feelings of its characteristic bodily symptoms” (James 1884, 193).” “Not all human experience is clearly marked as hedonic, and so not all human experience is affective. “(Slaby 2008)

In sum, the experienced world without affect is an ‘extreme privation’, a world of paralysis, meaninglessness, disorientation. Even if Ratcliffe conjures the idea of affectless cognition only as a purely hypothetical thought experiment or limit case, the fact that he can associate any qualities at all with such a world indicates that he is operating from a concept of affect that does not treat it as a philosophical a priori. But what would such a philosophically grounding approach to affect look like? Imagine that instead of hypothesizing awareness without affect, we were to place time out of bounds. It is immediately clear that any attempt to describe the qualitative features of one’s experience of such a world (meaningless, paralyzed, disoriented, etc) would be pointless, since without time there could be no awareness and no world. If we were to re-construe affect in such a way that it became as irreducible to experience as time, then it would no longer be a matter of deriving feeling, mood, emotion and other forms of affectivity from adaptive patterns of contingent interactive bodily and interpersonal schemes, but of locating their origin in the basis of being itself. This is what Husserl attempted with his model of temporal constitution.

Husserl’s grounding of affectivity in temporality is a transcendental grounding, not a naturalistic one. Underlying and founding all strata of bodily and interpersonal dynamics is the assimilative basis of temporal constitution as retention, primal impression and protention. This is Husserl’s primordial pre-condition for any world, any being.

The subjective and objective sides of the structure of temporal synthesis are not separate entities but only poles of a single act of intentional sense. In this synthesis, both the subject and the object pole contribute their own quality of feeling to what ‘an object is for the subject’ in its valuative, affective sense. The energetic dynamism of feeling isn’t something added to a content of perception from outside of it, in causal relation with it as agent of reinforcement. Meaning content implies its own affective force, the affective signature is intrinsic to the objective and subjective sides. This is what constitutes the ‘life’ in what Husserl calls the living present. The affective qualities contributed by the objective pole (noema) are its vivacity. Husserl describes the affective allure contributed by the objective pole as “that varying vivacity of a lived experience, of a datum of consciousness.”(Passive and Active Synthesis, p.214)

And an affective signature is intrinsic to the subject, in the form of desires, tendencies, strivings, anticipations, aimed at the objective pole. As Husserl says, there are rays emanating from subjective side to the objective side and vice-versa. Both affects originating on the subjective side and those originating on the objective side are implied in all intentional meaning. The always present affective qualities of the object (beautiful, pleasurable, unpleasant) are not made thematic in objectivating acts (perceiving a spatial object), but they are in valuative acts. And

one's affective, hedonic attitude toward the object of an intention (disappointed, depressed, elated, bored, frightened) may not be thematized in theoretical interest, but will appear in our practical attitude toward the world.

Husserl's starting point in the retention-impression-protention triad of time consciousness is already a self-othering, thus an exposure to the foreign from within the resources of subjectivity, prior to any configurational-corporeal constitution. Natural bodily structures are not the basis of affect for Husserl. If one wants to still talk about a body, what remains of the body for Husserl once one has dug beneath all the sedimented layers of constituted meaning, would be the 'body' of the retention-impression-protention triad of time consciousness. This is already a self-othering, thus an exposure to the foreign from within the resources of subjectivity, prior to any configurational-corporeal constitution, prior to any empirically defined physiological or psychological structures, prior to human beings, but presupposed by them. Affect is not an evolutionary device, it is synonymous with entity, being, existence, object, subject. Being as the moment of experience is simultaneously the feeling of being affected and the feeling of anticipatory striving. These precede the notion of a body as biological organism, and instead is a pre-condition for being of any sort. Feeling, understood most primordially, is simply movement (not in empirical but subjective space), transition, becoming, time.

Footnote: Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's (2011) grounding of affectivity in activity recalls Husserl, but her rendering of it in terms of spatio-temporal movement and kinesthesia remains at the level of empirical space and time and fails to ground feeling relative to more primordial notions of internal temporality and spatiality common to Husserl, Gendlin, Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger.

Husserl introduces a primordial motivational principle in which noetic anticipatory assimilation dominates the foreignness of the noematic object pole. This means that the capacity of experiences to delight or disturb us, particularly when it comes to profoundly self-affecting valuative concerns, is much more a function of the relation of the event to our strivings and anticipations than it is to whatever qualities of feeling (enticement, allure, vivacity) are contributed by the object pole in itself.

If we were simply to conclude that an anticipatory tendency, a general striving toward 'possibilities' of fulfillment, characterizes at all levels Husserl's project, then we could justifiably claim that he has this in common with Ratcliffe, whose approach also is oriented around anticipatory temporality and possibilities. But it is not simply that Husserl claims protention as a general going beyond itself of one's experience of an object, rather that this going beyond itself has the character of a peculiar implicative consistency.

We strive to assimilate experiences. We see the centrality of similarity manifest itself at all levels of constitution, in the subjective achievement of synthetic unities, analogical apperceptive pairing, associative relationality, correlations, harmonious fulfillments, subjective 'mineness', variations, flowing multiplicities, congruities, nexuses, coherences, etc. Even in difference, negation, senselessness, irrationality, alienation there is no experience in consciousness that is not in an overarching way variation on a thematics (which are already associative syntheses of variations on variations) for Husserl, a similarity-in-difference.

Protention and retention are included in what Husserl calls a “universal drive intentionality (Treibintentionalität).” Experience is being affected and changed by what one anticipatorily aims at through striving. As Bernet says “this ordinary process, as a life-process, is not simply an automatic process; it has a goal and the tendency to draw near to this goal.” (Bernet 2010, p.16).

Striving as desire “is striving after, or driving away from, shunning, that is, it has its positivity and negativity.” “Its fulfillment is a relaxation that results from realizing [the striving, etc.], in the change into the corresponding joy of fulfillment.” On the other hand, because “expectations can really only be fulfilled through perceptions, they are also essentially susceptible to disappointment in all circumstances.” “...something new can be a slap in the face to all expectation.” (Husserl 1989)

How does this anticipatory receptivity on the part of the subjective, or Ego pole of experience compare with Ratcliffe’s claim that bodily felt dispositions constrain and orient our receptivity to the world?

Ratcliffe explains:

“I have argued – drawing on the work of Husserl (1989), amongst others – that experience of worldly possibilities is inextricable from a sense of bodily dispositions... loss of enticing possibilities from the world is bound up with a lethargic body that is not stirred into action by its surroundings. Again and again, first-person reports by psychiatric patients convey pervasive experiential changes, where an alteration in how the body feels is at the same time a shift in how the world appears and in how one relates to it. “

The dependence of our perceptions on bodily dispositions that Ratcliffe credits Husserl for revealing to us is a correlation that appears when we are approaching the world within the natural attitude. It represents that stratum of constitution within which the world opens up for us in terms of physical objects, subjective sensations, and casual relations between the psychical and the physical. Included within this naturalistic stratum of thinking are psychophysical relations intertwining my feeling sensate body with my felt physical body. Ratcliffe’s account of bodily felt dispositions as a complex of learned associations between perceptions and body states belongs to this natural causal stratum. However, Husserl asserts that making sense of intersubjective experiences such as affect, feeling, valuation, emotion and mood requires a shift from the natural attitude to what he calls the personal or spiritual attitude. Within this higher stratum, natural causation is replaced by intentional motivation.

“...when we speak of the *spiritual or personal Ego*, that is to be understood as the subject of intentionality, and we see that *motivation is the lawfulness of the life of the spirit*.” “The “because- so” of motivation has a totally different sense than causality in the sense of nature.” (Ideas II, p. 231)

My bodily felt dispositions lose their character as causal conditionings when I relate to the world as a valuing, intending social participant, and instead are fused with and subordinated to the motivated valuative intentionalities driven by the dynamics of my social interactions. Only when I shift back to the natural attitude do mood dispositions appear for me again in terms of causal bodily feelings and sensations (lethargic, constricted, closed off, energized, aroused, etc). But



noticing 'how my body feels' only contributes to the elucidation of intentional moods when transferred from the naturalistic to the personalistic sphere as a metaphor. For example, my personalistic sense of my depression infuses and animates my feeling of bodily lethargy with the corresponding affective intentional meaning of feeling 'down in the dumps'. Without this interpretive animation coming from the higher intentional stratum, fusing with and lending metaphorical significance to the bodily data, my corporeal sensations of lethargy would bear no direct relevance to my being in the world as depressed. No pattern of organization of causally intertwined perception and corporeal feeling would ever be able turn bodily sensations like generic lethargy into intentionally significant moods, values or emotions.

"To be sure, I find the stratum of sensation to be localized in the Body, including therefore physical pleasure and physical pain; but that only shows that this stratum does not belong to the realm of what properly pertains to the Ego." (Husserl, Ideas II p.223)

"...in my theoretical, emotional, and practical behavior-in my theoretical experience and thinking, in my position-taking as to pleasure, enjoyment, hoping, wishing, desiring, wanting-I *feel myself conditioned by the matter in question*, though this obviously does not mean psychophysically conditioned... For this realizing apprehension, the psychophysical relations do not play, obviously, any actual essential role. I apprehend myself as dependent in my behavior, in my acts, on the things themselves, on their beautiful color, on their special form, on their pleasant or dangerous properties. I do not *therein* apprehend myself as dependent on my Body or on my history." (Ideas II p.148)

Husserl allows that an intention can address and modify a more or less global background of pragmatic valuative concerns, or else be confined to only one detail of experience. A perceptual object can appear in its normal shape and color, but feel unreal or unenticing when we are depressed. The affective and valuative aspects most narrowly associated with a perception do not reflect one's depressed state because they are not directly implicated in the global changes in one's comportment toward the world, whereas higher strata of valuative feelings related to one's interpersonal engagements and expectations are directly affected. The key point is that the integrated structure of experience is such for Husserl that both higher and lower strata of valuative intentional constitution are engaged in such globally self-implicating experiences as depression and grief. Mood and emotion do not shape or condition as causal reinforcements, but instead express the relative anticipatory integrity of motivated position takings, drawing on a habitual history of valuative position-takings.

The constitution of intentional sense pertaining to one aspect of one's life does not occur in isolation from all other aspects of one's mental processes. For Husserl, the anticipatory nature of intentionality provides mental processes with a hierarchicizing organizational tendency. As Husserl puts it, a part demands a whole. And larger wholes demand even larger wholes within which to associate themselves in intentional syntheses. Relatively trivial perceptual meanings are motivated and framed in relation to more subordinate concerns and these are motivationally oriented in relation to one's most important self-involving goals. Experiences such as severe depression have their encompassing effects by virtue of the interlocking organization of meaning implications. Depression is a sweeping disappointment and loss at the highest, most integrative level of anticipative self-regard in relation to the interpersonal world.

The fact that Husserl's starting point is transcendental does not mean that a naturalized account of affect like that of Ratcliffe could not complement Husserl's a priori one. I don't mean to enter into a debate concerning whether insights of phenomenological philosophies of authors such as Husserl and Heidegger can be naturalized. There is no one notion of the natural. The history of empiricism is a genealogy of changing philosophies of the empirical and the natural. Eugene Gendlin's process model is an example of a naturalistic approach which accords in many ways with Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger. My interest in this paper is to persuade that Ratcliffe's particular naturalized interpretation of Merleau-Ponty, Husserl and Heidegger lacks a core concept defining the latter's approaches, the fusion of affectivity, conation and temporality. The organization principle underlying Ratcliffe's natural model implies a different philosophical ground than that of Husserl's, one more aligned with pragmatism and hermeneutics (and the phenomenologies of Sartre, Scheler and Stein) than Husserl, Merleau-Ponty Heidegger or Gendlin.

Husserl offers a model of recursivity uniting self-referential continuity and absolute alterity, the subjective and the objective, the affective and the conative, in the same intentional moment. Husserl's general notion of affect, applying to such terms as emotion, feeling and desire as well, determines that every experienced event of any kind (bodily-sensory, perceptual, conceptual, practical-valuative) is an affect, and every affect is a change in affect. If every event of meaning is an advent of qualitative novelty, then cognition is affective not simply in the sense that a background affective tonality, mood or attunement frames the activity as a whole, as "a kind of cradle within which cognition rests" (Ratcliffe, 2002, p. 296), but in that each moment of engagement is an inseparable inter-bleeding between a prior context of attunement or thematics, and a change in that attunement.

### **Heidegger on Attunement and Understanding;**

In Heidegger's *Befindlichkeit*, which has been variously and imperfectly translated as attunement, mood, self-finding and state of mind, we find the most thoroughgoing phenomenological articulation of the inseparable relation of affect, intention and temporality. Temporality is the well-spring out of which Dasein as Being in the world emerges. Temporality, the way the world discloses itself to Dasein, is structured as the equi-primordial gestures of care, understanding, attunement and discourse.

Since his earliest writings on background dispositions of feeling, Ratcliffe has used Heidegger's *Befindlichkeit* as a source of inspiration. But Heidegger follows Husserl in grounding the orienting capacity of affective attunement in a radical notion of temporality rather than in a schematic causal interaction between body states and meaning intentions.

Ratcliffe writes;

"...a mood is not an *intentional state* but a condition of possibility for *intentionality* ." "According to Heidegger, moods are not intentional states that encompass a wide range of objects. Rather, they are modes of *Befindlichkeit*, ways of finding oneself in the world. This, he says, is presupposed by the intelligibility of intentionally directed experiences, thoughts and activities: „: “The mood has already disclosed, in every case, Being-in-the-world as a whole, and makes it possible first of all to

direct oneself towards something” (Heidegger, 1962, p.176/ 137). A central characteristic of *Befindlichkeit*, in its various modes, is that it determines the ways in which things can matter to us and, therefore, the kinds of intentional state we can adopt.” (Ratcliffe 2012)

There is a crucial difference between Ratcliffe’s understanding of intention as directedness toward an object and what Heidegger means when he talks about directing oneself toward something. For Heidegger, ‘directedness toward’ does not mean connecting with a pre-existing object in a propositional stance but constituting an ‘object’ from the synthesis of past, present and future as a projective forehaving.

This projective disclosing does not mean, as Ratcliffe seems to think, an anticipation of possible happenings in the future. Ratcliffe says Heideggerian Care is “the way that we are anchored in the past (facticity), situated in the present (fallenness) and forever looking to the future (projection)” (Ratcliffe 2002)). But the past, present and future don’t operate for Heidegger as distinct modes. They interpenetrate each other so completely that all three are inseparably implicated in facticity, fallenness and projection. As Gendlin(1997b) explains, “the past functions to “interpret” the present,...the past is changed by so functioning. This needs to be put even more strongly: The past functions not as itself, but as already changed by what it functions in”(p.37 ). What the past functions in comes toward Dasein from the future. Dasein “occurs out of its future”. “Da-sein, as existing, always already comes toward itself, that is, is futural in its being in general.” “Only because Da-sein in general IS as I AM-having-been, can it come futurally toward itself in such a way that it comes-back.” Thus, “Having been arises from the future”.(Being and Time, p.299)

Contra Ratcliffe, Heidegger differentiates his use of the word ‘possibility’ from a conventional (and Husserl’s), understanding of it :

“The being-possible, which Da-sein always is existentially, is ... distinguished from empty, logical possibility and from the contingency of something objectively present, where this or that can “happen” to it. As a modal category of objective presence, possibility means what is not yet real and not always necessary. It characterizes what is only possible. Ontologically, it is less than reality and necessity. “(Being and Time p.135)

“Every understanding has its mood. Every attunement understands. “ “...what is encountered in the world is always already in a relevance which is disclosed in the understanding of world.” “As this understanding, it “knows” what is going on, that is, what its potentiality of being is. Da-sein is not something objectively present which then has as an addition the ability to do something, but is rather primarily being-possible. Da-sein is always what it can be and how it is its possibility . ”(p.134)

The attuned understanding projecting itself upon possibilities is not a future possibility as a hypothetical present that has not happened yet. A possibility is a relevant field of meaning happening now as implicit, veiled, undifferentiated meaning . It is the present in the mode of undifferentiated, implicit, but actually existing possibilities that the past has projected itself into NOW. Explicit relations with equipment and other Da-seins emerge out of the implicit,

veiled, undifferentiated field of relevance which Heidegger calls a possibility.

“...what is encountered in the world is always already in a relevance which is disclosed in the understanding of world, a relevance which is made explicit by interpretation.” “When something is understood but still veiled, it becomes unveiled by an act of appropriation...”

“the world which has already been understood is interpreted. What is at hand comes explicitly before sight that understands. “(Heidegger 2010)

Footnote: Slaby refers to his model of affect as ‘radical situatedness’ and yet shares Ratcliffe’s traditional, inauthentic understanding of affective temporality as causal dispositional state *taking place in* time, which is to say that, contrary to Heideggerian temporality, for Slaby time is divided into separate phases: the present as what is happening now, the future as what is not yet now, and the past as what is no longer now.

Slaby says factual situatedness “is situatedness in a place and a time, synchronic and diachronic”. “Affectivity ultimately is time, namely the factual past in the form of sedimented remainders that infuse, burden, and potentially suffocate ongoing comportment.”

“ The existential task of affective disclosure is circumscribed by this essential tension: A tension between what is already apprehended, articulated, and made sense of, and what is furthermore “out there,” beyond us, yet weighing on us and determining our situation in unforeseeable ways.” (Slaby 2017).

This is an important point, because Heideggerian projection conveys the idea that the structure of temporality marks each present experience, each ‘NOW’, as a global shift of existential feeling. “Attunement is grounded in thrownness”,... and, as thrown, Da-sein is thrown into the mode of being of projecting.” This means that each moment is a change in one’s way of being in the world. Even as moods maintain a loose ongoing thematic consistency over time, nevertheless each interpretive moment of attuned understanding unravels and subtly but globally ‘reframes the frame’.

Affectivity is not an existential state (there are no actual states, frames, representations, schemas, dispositions of existence for Heidegger, neither attuned nor intentional), not a background orientation of mood that frames particular intentions and emotions as a whole, as “a kind of cradle within which cognition rests”(Ratcliffe,2002,p.296) but simultaneously a change in affectivity, sense and understanding which for Heidegger is nothing other than the experienced equi-primordially of the ecstasies of past present and future as the becoming of the NOW.

Attunement is disclosive, not as a pre-deliberative, pre-reflective evaluative backdrop to intentional deliberation, a pre-given disposition as an already existing frame which shapes not yet actual possibilities. It is self-changing projective being-assailed by the world, always in a new way, every new moment, whose ongoing anticipatory continuity as ‘this particular mood’ is at the same time a moment-to-moment self-reinvention born of thrownness. Being-affected always totals, addresses and modifies all of one’s prior experience. For both Heidegger and Gendlin(whose work will be addressed later in this paper), the totality of one’s past pragmatic-valuative-affective comportment toward the world functions and changes as a single unity, with

all of its 'parts' always implying each other. One's comportment in fact only exists through its being changed moment to moment as attunement-intention.

When Heidegger says that, in attunement, Dasein "is disclosed to itself before all cognition and willing and beyond their scope of disclosure" this is not a validation of Ratcliffe's claim that propositional intentionality is an activity oriented *within* and framed by mood. The distinction Ratcliffe makes between existential and intentional structures of experience does not exist for Heidegger. While attunement, as an ontological concept, is a more primordial notion than will or cognition, it is not as if the latter simply act as variable moves within a more or less stable orienting background situatedness. On the contrary, such ontic concepts as cognition, willing, intending are inauthentic modes of 'letting things be encountered', and letting things be encountered IS being affected or moved by them freshly moment to moment. In other words, each intention as it appears subtly reinvents the attunement that it occurs into.

Against Heidegger's explicit determination of attunement as equi-primordial with discourse and understanding, meaning that none of these modes has priority over the others in a valuative, genetic or ontological sense, Ratcliffe wants to prioritize attunement.

"..it is mood that has primacy over understanding, as mood is responsible for determining the kinds of possibility that are presupposed by understanding. What Heidegger calls "discourse" (*Rede*) similarly depends upon mood." (Ratcliffe 2012)

We can see why it may be important for Ratcliffe to give mood a formative role that is not accorded to understanding or discourse, based on what has been presented so far concerning his distinction between existential feeling and intentionality. Briefly stated, Ratcliffe reads Heidegger's account of attunement as akin to the role of existential feeling, a, global interactive scheme composed of reciprocally causal innate and learned associations between perceptions and body states. Understanding, as propositional intentionality, is a particular relational structure within that orienting disposition. "...cognition is constrained, enabled and structured by a background of emotion-perception correlations, that manifest themselves as a changing background of implicit representations of body states."(Ratcliffe 2002). Heidegger, in contrast, explicitly warns against interpreting Understanding as the thematic propositional grasping of intentional meaning, insisting that such a misreading "degrades it to the level of a given, intended content."(Being and Time, p.145)

Intentionally directed experiences don't simply occur within the larger framework of a specific attunement. As factual experiences of interpretation, they are themselves changes in our global attunement. The mode of interpretation, which is where one can locate activities of perception, intention and interpersonal interaction in general, is not a modality conforming to a specific theme of significance of a prior attunement. As a development of understanding, it is a particular way of changing ones attunement as a whole. Thus, if attuned understanding determines the kinds of intentional meanings we are capable of adopting, then intentional meanings as they arise in circumspective relevance out of previous ones reshape the kinds of attuned understanding we are capable of having.

On the one hand, variation in modes of attunement is as continuous as time itself. On the other

hand, a thematic continuity holds for Dasein throughout its moment to moment global shifts in sense and feeling such that relatively stable ongoing modes of comportment toward the world are discernable.

Ratcliffe believes he can prioritize attunement over understanding because, as we have seen, his schematic feeling model begins from a split between the subjective (body feeling state) and objective (perceptual and propositional intentional meaning) poles of experience. As a result of this split, the affective and perceptual-connotative components are treated as if they are separate aspects in states of variable relationality. When bodily feeling states function to enhance our engagement with the world, according to Ratcliffe, we experience ourselves more intimately situated in the world. On the other hand, affective relevance (“the sense of being situated in a world” (Existential Feeling 2017) can be profoundly diminished, leaving propositional intentionality intact but devoid of adaptive orientation. One is still aware of a world moment to moment, one still has perceptions and memories, and yet this world is denuded of felt relevance and we are inclined to avoid social interaction. For instance, Ratcliffe claims that anxiety is intrinsically ‘alienating’ or ‘externalising’. It can alienate us from its objects (Ratcliffe and Wilkinson 2016). Ratcliffe considers the most extreme cases of erosion of situatedness, of the ability and capacity to experience types of possibility and to contemplate certain relevant options, to be a form of decision-making impairment and incompetence (Ratcliffe, forthcoming).

Fernandez, along with Ratcliffe, believes that psycho-pathologies like depression involve “a general degradation in our ability to be affectively situated in and attuned to our world” and perhaps even the complete loss of affective situatedness.

“... the degree to which one is attuned to and situated in a world through moods can itself undergo change. ... Some cases of people diagnosed with depression are best understood not as an erosion of a particular mood, or as the emergence of a new mood, but instead as an erosion of the category of moods as a whole; that is to say, as an erosion of the structure of situatedness.”

“Alfred Kraus also characterizes melancholic depression as a loss of moods and feelings: "At its core, the melancholic mood alteration is-paradoxically formulated-rather a lack of mood" (Kraus 2003, 208, Fernandez 2014).”

Ratcliffe’s understanding of situatedness differs from Heidegger’s in a number of crucial ways. First, unlike Heidegger’s account, Ratcliffe’s *Befindlichkeit* is not an irreducible *apriori* of affective experience, but instead is the contingent product of a complex configuration of bodily and perceptual elements. Affective attunement for him is the achievement of a concatenating process. When we delve beneath Ratcliffe’s global schemes to locate the invariant and essential condition of possibility of his feeling-perceptual concatenations, we arrive at a reciprocally causal model of co-determinative interactive bits. But having arrived at this neo-Kantian ‘*apriori*’, we are not yet in the vicinity of Heidegger’s *Befindlichkeit*. *Befindlichkeit* is not the product of an orienting device, adaptation or conditioning scheme, and not the ground of any reciprocally causal schematic structure, except as that structure be understood as a derived abstraction concealing its own basis in temporality.

In order to understand primordial situatedness, we have to bracket Ratcliffe’s causal naturalist

model in its entirety, and think prior to the split between feeling and thinking that it presupposes. What is essential and invariant in the Heideggerian structure of situatedness as temporality is that each moment is the disclosure of the now as affectingly foreign-familiar. For Heidegger not only is there no self and no world prior to relationship, but the self is nothing BUT this between. Being situated in a world is not a contingent accomplishment of a scheme of reinforcements, but a presupposition of Being. Dasein is always fundamentally affectively situated in that it is thrown into its NOW as surprised familiarity. This means that attunement is not a relationship between self and world that can be broken or diminished, as Ratcliffe asserts, regardless of what mood one is in. The most intractably severe depression is still, moment to moment, an awareness of being thrown into continual affective transformation and transition, as long as it is an awareness of anything at all. And as self-transforming, the affective basis of ongoing experience is always at the same time a projecting fore-having that anticipates into what surprises or disappoints or depresses it. The world of the depressive that appears unreal, insignificant, irrelevant, un-engaging, is meaningful precisely in its unreality and deficiency as disorienting, confusing, strange, uncanny, un-engageable, numbing. Experience of ongoing deprivation, lack and loss is not the degeneration of the structure of situatedness as projective-thrownness, but situatedness as always a new but at the same time anticipated sense of loss and absence.

Heidegger offers:

“Dasein in itself is essentially Being-with” “Being-with existentially determines Da-sein even when an other is not factually present and perceived. The being-alone of Da-sein, too, is being-with in the world. The other can be lacking only in and for a being-with. Being-alone is a deficient mode of being-with, its possibility is a proof for the latter.” When one feels alone in a crowd, “Their Mitda-sein is encountered in the mode of indifference and being alien. Lacking and "being away" are modes of Mitda-sein...[Being-with-others]”. (Being and Time, p.113)

I want to make clear that the essential issue between Heidegger and Ratcliffe I am attempting to articulate does not rest on whether we deem the nightmarish existential experience of severe depression, as well as other alterations of affective significance, in qualitative vs quantitative terms. After all, Heidegger uses a variety of adjectives (distorted, flattened, blind to itself, led astray, confused, closed off, obscuring, forgetful, deficient) to describe inauthentic modes of Dasein, and their associated moods, which can just as well be interpreted in terms of a lessening of the fluidity of existential movement as they can via a positive qualitative shift in modality of comportment.

The key point here is that however we prefer to characterize the organizational characteristics of mood marking the devastation of depression and other pathologies of world significance, we must understand such variation as taking place within the structure of a primordial situatedness whose essential features are invariant throughout such vicissitudes of mood. Specifically, what remains essential regardless of the severity of states of trauma. melancholia or depersonalization, is the underlying temporal-affective-conative 'glue' of *Befindlichkeit*. To be radically, irreducibly, primordially situated in a world is to be guaranteed, at every moment, a world that feelingly, creatively impinges on me anew as foreign. And it is simultaneously, to feel a belonging (familiarity) to what impinges on me in its foreignness due to the anticipative, projective futural aspect of temporality. In this way, affectivity as temporality constitutes the

essence of the fundamental, irreducibly situated felt significance and relevance a world always already has for me, a meaningfulness within whose bounds pathological conditions such as depression appear as modifications, but whose basis they can never undermine. (Heidegger would say that their possibility as deficiencies or privations is proof for the essentiality of *Befindlichkeit*.)

Such experiences are predicaments *within* affective situatedness rather than crises *of* situatedness. The supposed crisis of situatedness which leads to what Ratcliffe calls an impairment and even incompetence in capacity to experience significant meaningfulness (Ratcliffe, forthcoming) only appears as a possibility when one begins from a split between affect and intention. When one instead begins from the fusion of self and world that radical temporality instantiates, there can be only existential predicaments, not disorders of situatedness. Since I am always already relevantly involved in a world via thrownness, depression has to do with the kind of relevance I experience, not my capacity or competence to experience it. And contra Ratcliffe, anxiety doesn't 'cause' alienation, it is the attempt to mitigate the loss of coherence that alienating, threatening events portend. Heidegger says anxiety is a form of fear, and "fear is a fear of something threatening-of something that is detrimental to the factual potentiality-of-being of *Da-sein*" "What is encountered has the relevant nature of harmfulness." (Being and Time p.313). Thus it is the situation, not the emotion, that is alienating, and anxious attunement is the anticipation of, and incipient comportment away from, an impending event that holds within itself the specter of the alien, the unassimilable and thus the unanticipatable.

In order for Ratcliffe to be convinced that attunement and understanding are truly equi-primordial, he would have to find a way to relate the affective and cognitive aspects of experience more intricately than he has been able to. For Heidegger, mood and understanding are equi-primordial because the objective and subjective poles of experience are inseparable in each moment of experience. That is to say, Heidegger's notion of temporality makes movement, becoming, transition, the in-between, prior to any beings, bodies, states, entities, schemes that supposedly exist for a moment as in-themselves entities and then undergo change. The in-between IS affect and feeling itself, as well as sense, as the being affected by what one projectively discloses ahead of oneself (reminiscent of Husserl's inseparable objective-subjective contributions to feeling). For Heidegger, affect, emotion and feeling are not bodily structures reporting, interpreting or reacting to change, they are change itself as the structure of temporality. Heidegger captures this in-between with his notion of authentic anxiety, the essence of being changed by what is disclosed, abstracted from all contingent features of world context. Authentic anxiety, not as selective scheme of bodily reinforcement, but as temporality in its essence, underlies all and is implied by all particular moods, since every moment of time is both of familiarity (forehaving) and surprise (thrownness), relation and foreignness.

"Uncanniness is the fundamental kind of being-in-the-world, although it is covered over in everydayness. Tranquillized, familiar being-in-the-world is a mode of the uncanniness of *Dasein*, not the other way around. Not-being-at-home must be conceived existentially and ontologically as the more primordial phenomenon." "The publicness of the they suppresses everything unfamiliar" "Even as covered over, the familiar is a mode of the unfamiliar." (Heidegger 2010)

The inseparable co-dependence of the foreign and the familiar (the essence of affectivity as well



as sense) is implicit in the radical temporal understanding common to the phenomenologies of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger and Gendlin.

With his concept of primordial anxiety, Heidegger's intention is not to give preference to alienation and disconnection over relational integrity. He is re-situating the identity-difference, same-other, subject-object, affect-conative binary (which appears for Ratcliffe in the guise of reciprocal objective causality) in a more primordial way. The fact that the foreign-familiar binary of primordial anxiety underlies all particular attunements of situatedness doesn't deprive Heidegger's model of the relative ongoing meaningful stability over time that is rendered in Ratcliffe's perspective. Rather, it grounds Ratcliffe's structures within a more intricate dynamic. Even the most confident, effectively anticipatory and harmonious schematic comportment toward the world pre-supposes Heideggerian 'anxiety', the projective-surprised being-affected by the world in general, in each moment of its instantiation.

The paradox of Heidegger's radically temporal thinking is that it enacts a carrying-forward which re-invents its direction, sense and past every moment, beyond conscious control, without rending the intimate fabric of its anticipative continuity. Heideggerian attunement exposes a relentless global self and world-transformational mobility within every moment of, but invisible to, Ratcliffe's supposed schematic existential states, and at the same time imparts to our ongoing world situatedness an irreducible integrity and intimacy which no pathology can undermine.

### **Gendlin's Model of Temporality and Implicit Intricacy:**

My attempt at a direct comparison between Ratcliffe's naturalized, embodied approach and Heidegger's ontological project has been somewhat hampered by the fact that Heidegger made little reference in his work to the status and role of the body in relation to situatedness and affectivity. It may be helpful, then, to turn to Eugene Gendlin's process model. Like Ratcliffe's existential feeling, Gendlin's approach offers a naturalized account of embodied affect. But Gendlin rejects Ratcliffe's causal conditioning model, and its reliance on conventional notions of time, in favor of a reading of Heideggerian temporality consonant with the one I have been advancing in this paper. In various writings, he distinguishes his Heideggerian account of affective situatedness from phenomenologically-influenced causal interactionist readings such as those of Gallagher, Varela, Fuchs and Sheets-Johnstone (See Gendlin 2008, 2012).

Gendlin's approach has elements that seem to fall within the causal adaptationist orbit characterizing Ratcliffe's approach. Like Ratcliffe, Gendlin sees emotion as an evolutionary adaptation that specifically organizes behavior by selectively altering attention. But Gendlin differentiates emotion from bodily feeling, what he calls felt sensing.

Here we have an articulation of bodily feeling as an organized totality whose motivational principle is not that of an interactional casuality between feeling and knowing states, but an implicitly feeling-knowing sense.

Gendlin's account superficially resembles Ratcliffe's embodied cognitive approach in its rejection of symbolic representationalism and decoupleability, but there are crucial differences. In Ratcliffe's model, interaction spreads in a reciprocally causal fashion from point to point, whereas for Gendlin, each point somehow implies each other point; each part of a meaning organization somehow "knows about", belongs to and depends intrinsically on each other part. And this happens before a part can simply be said to exist in itself (even if just for an instant). What kind of odd understanding concerning the interface between identity and relation could justify Gendlin's insistence that the inter-affectation between parts of a psychological organization precedes the existence of individual entities?

As Gendlin (1997b) argues,

"The continuity of time cannot first be made by things next to each other, because such a continuity is passive; each bit IS alone, and must depend on some other continuity to relate it to what is next to it..." (p.71). For instance, fresh intentional experience does not simply sit alongside a prior context; it explicates the immediate past [Gendlin characterizes this past as an implicatory whole].

"In the old model something (say a particle or a body) exists, defined as filling space and time. Then it also goes through some process. Or it does not. It is defined as "it" regardless of the process "it" goes through. "It" is separate from a system of changes and relationships that are "possible" for "it." (p.50)... In the old model one assumes that there must first be "it" as one unit, separate from how its effects in turn affect it... In the process we are looking at there is no separate "it," no linear cause-effect sequence with "it" coming before its effects determine what happens. So there is something odd here, about the time sequence. How can "it" be already affected by affecting something, if it did not do the affecting before it is in turn affected?... With the old assumption of fixed units that retain their identity, one assumes a division between it, and its effects on others. (This "it" might be a part, a process, or a difference made.) In the old model it is only later, that the difference made to other units can in turn affect "it." (p.40)

Speaking to Ratcliffe's causal interaffecting organizational model of existential feeling, Gendlin explains:

If one assumes separate events, processes, or systems, one must then add their co-ordinations as one finds them, as if unexpectedly... "Inter-affecting" and "coordination" are words that bring the old assumption of a simple multiplicity, things that exist as themselves and are only then also related. So we need a phrase that does not make sense in that old way. Let us call the pattern we have been formulating "original inter-affecting". This makes sense only if one grasps that "they" inter-affect each other before they are a they (p.22).

Gendlin's organizational principle of radical interaffecting, made possible by his Heideggerian approach to temporality, exposes the concept of states, dispositions, and causal interactions between felt and intentional factors founding Ratcliffe's model as an abstraction derived from a more primary, intricate and intimate process in which feelings and intentions, like Heidegger's attunement and understanding, are equi-primordial rather than one being causally oriented by the other.

On the one hand, cognition, often conceived as propositional intentionality, is not simply directedness toward or an aiming at an object, or being about something. It is a transformation and enrichment of a prior meaning context, a creative alteration of sense.

(Ratcliffe claims bodily feeling and intentional state are two sides of the same coin, but nevertheless he still separates them. For instance: "some instances of diagnosed depression will most likely conform to cognitive approaches, that they will involve systems of intentional states rather than existential feelings.")

"Supposedly cognizing the "external" things does not change them. Cognizing is only about them. This "only about" assumes that our cognition does not change the behavior context, the situation including what our scientific work is about. But I will argue that it does change the behavior space...It has not been clear how cognition is a bodily process. "Only about" has meant that cognition happens in representations." (Gendlin 2008)

On the other hand, bodily feeling is already a cognate sensing."Currently it still clashes with our habits of language to say "we think with the body." Gendlin doesn't need to employ a notion of feeling as selective hedonic reinforcement of intentional organization, since it is temporality that organizes implicit bodily meaning. Feeling, as meaningful "sensed complexity", "implicit understanding sensed in living", makes reference to implicit bodily organizational process and by doing so contributes to the process as a further change within it. "To feel something as an inner object is a change..., not just a representation; feeling something makes a change in it."(Emotions in Therapy)

"We feel the change made by the actual environment occurring into the body's implied behavior context. The feedback occurs into the implying which carries the sequence forward into further implying and occurring, as our little model says. Behavior forms only as perceptions and feelings of this kind."(2008)

"Implying is not an occurring that will happen. It is not an occurring-not-yet. It does not occupy a different time-position than the occurring. Rather, one implying encompasses all three linear time positions, and does not occupy an additional linear time position of its own. (See *A Process Model*, IVB. This is a more intricate model of time. It includes a kind of "future" and a kind of "past" that are not linear positions. This time model can be reduced back to the linear model by considering just occurring-occurring-occurring as if it were cut off from implying. "

Gendlin's understanding of the body as sense creating via radical temporal organization locates his proximity not only to Heidegger and Husserl, but to Merleau-Ponty.

As Roald, Levin, and Køppe 2018 explain in their Merleau-Pontian challenge to bodily theories of emotion:

"The body is inherently involved in the production of meaning, and subjectivity is constituted intersubjectively or dialectically; thus there is always an element of alterity and familiarity in experience. [The body] forms and informs consciousness and produces not just the

constraint conditions for consciousness, that is, sets limits for what it can be, but takes part in creating its form.” *Affective Incarnations: Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s Challenge to Bodily Theories of Emotion* (Roald, T., Levin, K., & K ppe, S. (2018))

Merleau-Ponty defines an emotion as “ a variation in our relations with others and the world which is expressed in our bodily attitude” (1964b, p. 53).”

Ratcliffe interprets this to mean that emotion is a change in one’s habitual mode of existential feeling. “This points to a distinction between an emotional disturbance and a more mundane experience of something as significant relative to some project or set of projects. “(Ratcliffe 2019) However, for Merleau-Ponty, there is no pre-intentional disposition orienting experience, because being disposed or oriented ( as figure-ground structure of a gestalt field) only exists in intention, as variation. Perception, as the ground of experience, only has being as self-transforming action. Thus, for Merleau-Ponty, as for Husserl, Gendlin and Heidegger, temporality is the driving force of affectivity and intentionality.

“ In all uses of the word *sens*, we find the same fundamental notion of a being orientated or polarized in the direction of what he is not, and thus we are always brought back to a conception of the subject as *ek-stase*, and to a relationship of active transcendence between the subject and the world.” (Phenomenology of Perception, p.499).

“Action is, by definition, the violent transition from what I have to what I aim to have, from what I am to what I intend to be.”, “When I say that I know and like someone, I aim, beyond his qualities, at an inexhaustible ground which may one day shatter the image that I have formed of him. This is the price for there being things and ‘other people’ for us, not as the result of some illusion, but as the result of a violent act which is perception itself. “ (Phenomenology of Perception, p.444)).

Merleau-Ponty equates intention with attention:

“Attention is “a change of the structure of consciousness, the establishment of a new dimension of experience, the setting forth of an *a priori*... To pay attention is not merely further to elucidate pre-existing data, it is to bring about a new articulation of them by taking them as figures. “(p.35)

“The miracle of consciousness consists in its bringing to light, through attention, phenomena which re-establish the unity of the object in a new dimension at the very moment when they destroy it. Thus attention is neither an association of images, nor the return to itself of thought already in control of its objects, but the active constitution of a new object which makes explicit and articulate what was until then presented as no more than an indeterminate horizon.”(p.35)

## **Conclusion:**

I have argued in this paper that affective and intentional situatedness, understood by Ratcliffe as globally patterned inter-causal *states* (existential feeling), functions as a structure of entrenchment and self-conservation, inhering in itself and resisting its own transformation. A global change in bodily feeling is thus required to infuse supposedly stagnant affective-intentional narratives with a new direction and meaning, disrupt entrenched patterns, dissolve the

conditioning glue holding them together, reveal their contingency and open up new possibilities. Ratcliffe sees the role of Husserl's transcendental reduction and Heidegger's primordial anxiety as such disrupters. I have claimed, instead, that rather than a contingent island of static structure in a sea of indeterminacy, an affective - intentional attunement is the essence of temporal becoming as self-transformative dynamic, hiding *within* the supposedly static moment of Ratcliffe's existential feeling state. The role of the epoche and authentic anxiety is to reveal this intimate, intricate foreign-familiar binary of movement concealed within naive naturalized models of psychological functioning. If the purpose of the epoche and primordial anxiety is, as Ratcliffe says, to bring us face to face with indeterminacy, then it is not an indeterminacy outside of, before, after, or surrounding stable structures of situatedness, but rather an indeterminacy *at the core of* those structures themselves. But *Befindlichkeit* at the same time evinces a radical self-belonging and irreducible world-connectedness obscured by and undiscoverable when thought in terms of Ratcliffe's schematisms.

In failing to ground affective experience in radical temporality, Ratcliffe's conception of mood as causally configured state renders his approach an outsider's view. By the time Ratcliffe has noticed what he calls a shift in mood, an intricate process of change of felt meaning has already taken place, both within thematically harmonious and confused temporally unfolding episodes of affective experience.

Not recognizing this fundamental co-dependence between transitivity and identity leads to reification of each pole of experience. If dispositions to act and acts themselves, being and becoming, feeling and intention, can be treated as separate moments, then their relations are rendered secondary and arbitrary, requiring causations and glues to piece them together.

Ratcliffe writes: "This default 'style' (minimal self) of anticipation is not specific to any particular life-structure, any particular configuration of cares, concerns, commitments, projects, and pastimes. It is, if you like, the glue needed to hold any such structure together, any kind of world."(Trauma, Language and Trust, forthcoming)

The glue that holds together Ratcliffe's minimal self, interaffecting causation, is a secondary concept of organization, a naturalized abstraction derived from the primary temporal structuration of affectivity-connation.

What DeJaegher, critiquing Gallagher's primary intersubjectivity account, writes in that narrower context, could apply to Ratcliffe's general orientation,; "first we carve nature up at artificial joints – we split mind and body apart – and then we need to fasten the two together again, a task for which the notion of embodiment is, according to Sheets-Johnstone's assessment, used as a kind of glue. But glueing the two back together does not bring back the original "integrity and nature of the whole" (De Jaegher 2009, Sheets-Johnstone, in press). Unlike first generation cognitivims, Ratcliffe begins from interaction, but an interaction that is grounded in separated moments of subject and object, feeling and intention, being and becoming, time and stasis.

The radically temporal account of affect introduced by Husserl and transformed in different ways by Merleau-Ponty, Gendlin and Heidegger, implies a rejection of two long-standing assumptions

supporting the depiction of affect and cognition as distinct states. Contrary to these assumptions:

1) Intentional experience does not need to be pushed or pulled into action, or change of direction, by extrinsic reinforcement contingencies. Every moment of experience is already intrinsically affective (qualitatively self-displacing), assuring that even the most apparently non-emotive, 'rational', reflective type of awareness, such as supposedly characterizes affectively neutral empirical accounts, qualitatively, intuitively, hedonically transforms the meaning of what it references. Feelings belong to, operate within, carry forward, and transform what are called conceptual meanings . This qualitatively transformative effect in moment to moment experience is often subtle enough to go unnoticed, explaining the apparent analytical stability and inter-subjective objectivity attributed to empirical phenomena, the allegedly self-perpetuating coherence of linguistic narratives, and even the illusion of a stable ongoing pre-reflective self-awareness, minimal self or reflexive 'feeling of being'.

2) 'Raw' affect is intrinsically intentional. So-called bodily sensations of feeling not only manifest the characteristics of metaphoricity and narrative consistency traditionally associated with conceptual thought, but in fact are not categorically distinguishable from what has been called conceptual meaning in any stable way.

Prior to any notion of cognition and affect as distinguishable constructs, within and beyond such terms as cognitive states and bodily affective signs, lies a universe of self-exceeding senses, modulations, aspects, variations, ways of working. Not variations or modulations of STATES but modulations of modulations.

If feeling, understood this new way, IS the very core of so-called conceptual and perceptual thought, merging narrative-thematic consistency and global self-transformation, the subjective and the objective, the felt and the understood, in the same gesture, then the presumed partial independence of rationality and affect vanishes, and the distinction re-emerges as aspects inherent in each event. The inter-affecting of context and novelty which defines an event simultaneously produces a fresh, particular modulation of change (empirical aspect) and a unique momentum (hedonic component) of self-transformation. From this vantage, the valuative, hedonic (the perceived goodness or badness of things), aesthetic aspect of experience, underlying 'non-emotional' appraisals as well as our sadnesses, fears and joys, simply IS our vicissitudes of momentum of sense-making through situations, rather than arising from causal feedback loops. Affective valences are contractions and expansions, coherences and incoherences, accelerations and regressions, consonances and dissonances, expressing how intimately and harmoniously we are able to anticipate and relate to, and thus how densely, richly, intensely we are able to move through, new experience. If we can believe that a unique qualitative moment of momentum, ranging from the confused paralysis of unintelligibility to the exhilaration of dense transformative movement, is intrinsic to ALL events, then perhaps there is no need to attribute the origin of aesthetic pleasures and pains to the functioning of a limited class of entities like bodily affects, even if it is understandable why this kind of assumption has survived for so long in psychology .

From the standpoint of verbal expressivity, what has traditionally been called emotion often

appears to be a minimalist art, because it is the situational momentum of experiencing slowing or accelerating so rapidly that feelings seem to distill meaning down to a bare inarticulate essence. When the momentum of our reflective thought shifts in such dramatic ways (acceleratively enriched in joyful comprehension, impoverished in grief, ambivalent in fear, alternately disappointed and confident in anger), such so-called emotional events may appear to be a species apart from conceptual reason, a blind intuitive force (surge, glow, twinge, sensation, arousal, energy) invading, conditioning and orienting perceptual and conceptual thought from without as a background field. It is said that such 'raw' or primitive feeling is bodily-physiological, pre-reflective and non-conceptual, contentless hedonic valuation, innate, passive, something we are overcome by. At other times, situational change may be intermediate, just modulated and gradual enough that content seems to perpetuate itself in self-cohering narratives. Such situations have been called rational, voluntary, factual, reflective, stable, conceptual, propositional, rational, logical, theoretical, non-aesthetic. However, as I have said, these dichotomies: hedonic versus reflective, voluntary versus involuntary, conceptual versus pre-reflective bodily-affective, are not effectively understood as reciprocally causal innate and learned associations between perceptions and body states; they are relative variations in the momentum of a contextually unfolding process which is always, at the same time, within the same event, intentional and affective.

Am I suggesting that emotion be thought as a 'cognitive' appraisal, cut off from bodily sensation, movement and expression? On the contrary, it is precisely the treatment of cognition, bodily sensation and expression as separately pre-existing processes (even when treated as mutually structuring each other via 'intentional-affective' syntheses) which I am questioning. The point isn't that bodily responses to experience via such avenues as the endocrine, autonomic nervous system and the motor pathways are irrelevant or peripheral to the intentional experience of emotion, feeling and mood, but that, whether we talking about the experience of so-called conceptual appraisal or bodily sensation, the phenomenological scene of affect (or any other aspect of bio-psycho-social functioning) does not depend on an arbitrary concatenation or mutual conditioning between discrete components. Prinz(2004), Colombetti and Thompson(2006), Damasio(1999) and others deny such a thing as a totally disembodied emotion, arguing that the feeling of emotion is affected in degrees concordantly with the severity of damage to avenues of connection with the body. I support their larger claim that experiential processes, including what are called cognitive and affective, function as radically, contextually inter-relational. However, I want to turn their views around a bit. Feeling does not depend on the fact that the brain, as a spatial locale and repository of temporary states of content, always has some access to the body, as a separate locale with semi-independent contents.

I have said that feeling functions from within so-called reflective thought, and that bodily affect is intentional. But if both the former and latter are true, it is not because body sensation structures cognition(or vice-versa). Rather, it is because these stratifying abstractions are but inadequately formulated moments of a process of sense-making uniting the hedonic and the intentional prior to any distinction between, or intertwining of, mind and body. Before I could speak of the occurrence of emotion as mental appraisals structured and conditioned by a background field of physiological energetics and behavioral expressions, I would have to re-figure all of these modes, what would be referred to as the "motoric", the "sensate", the "cognitive", as unstable metaphorical figures emerging contextually out of each other over the course of an indissociably

intensive-affective global movement of experience which would imply the unraveling of the basis of categorical distinctions currently orienting the understanding of these terms.

When I am frightened, whether I focus on my attitude toward the world, my rapid heartbeat, my facial expression or bodily preparation for action, each of these aspects emerge out of each other as a fully reflective, metaphoric carrying forward and further transforming of the deepening implications of this tentative, confused situation. All these aspects already belong to, and in fact have their meaning ENTIRELY defined as variations-continuations of the thematic unfolding of my sense of the emerging threat, subtly remaking my entire past while always maintaining a sense, no matter how surprising, unpredictable or disturbing a new present appears, of implicatory belonging to this prior history.

Intermingled with my wandering in and out of significant shifts in experiential momentum, from doubts, terrors, and confusions to later confidences and contentments, will be more subtly self-transforming moments whose continual intuitive shifts of meaning, purpose and affective momentum are hidden so effectively that it may fool me into believing that this more plodding progress of comprehension represents the appearance of a different species from that of pronounced feeling, the realm of affectively neutral (or constant) cognitive states. However, such entities as narrative schemes and conceptual forms may in fact have no actual status other than as empty abstractions invoked by individuals who nevertheless, in their actual use of these terms, immediately and unknowingly transform the hedonically felt senses operating within (and defining) such abstractions in subtle but global ways. Feeling, the event, the inter-bleeding of subject and object, transformation without form: all of these terms reference the same irreducible 'unit' of experience, concealed by but overrunning what bodies, dispositions and other states are supposed to do. A 'single' state (whether so-called conceptual or bodily-affective) is already a panoply of intimately changing variations and momenta of felt meanings, in(as) the instant it is accessed, infusing the allegedly conceptual with feeling (and the sensate with intentionality) from within its very core, embodied before any consultation with a separate bodily 'outside'.

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