

THESIS

THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL SELF:
OWNER AND AGENT, THROUGH THICK AND THIN

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ABSTRACT

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The central work of this thesis is to compare and contrast two phenomenological notions of self: the minimal self, a Husserlian notion articulated by Dan Zahavi, and SESMET, as developed by Galen Strawson. The minimal self conception takes the self to be a kind of diachronically unified owner of experience and agent of action, but takes unification and ownership to entail more than may be justified. Strawson neglects to construe diachronicity appropriately, misconstruing the phenomenological nature of the stream and rejecting agency *in toto*, but covertly reintroduces agency in a metaphysical guise. Neither conception is an appropriate notion of self, but I propose a “hybrid” account that incorporates appropriately nuanced views of persistence and agency. I conclude by suggesting potential problems for this view, while highlighting its applications.

In Chapter 1 I explicate and critique Strawson’s SESMET, detailing its insights into the investigation of self and developing concerns with the account. In Chapter 2 I analyze Edmund Husserl’s account of internal time-consciousness, which serves as the foundation of Zahavi’s minimal self. In Chapter 3 I link this Husserlian framework to the basic sense of self (the feeling of *being* a self), proceeding by philosophical and psychopathological considerations, clearly define the minimal self, compare it to SESMET, and argue that these notions are *prima facie* equally legitimate. In Chapter 4 I contrast these notions, focusing on issues raised throughout and

the resolutions available for each “self”. I reject both notions, but use their respective strengths and weaknesses to propose a promising hybrid view. I then suggest possible faults of this view.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family,
every member of which has supported my curiosity,
endured my questioning, informed my morality,
and helped to make my life a good one.

I also dedicate this work to 'my' *self*,
my dearest acquaintance.

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Introduction: Phenomenological Selves

What is the self? This question has been variously formulated and contemplated across times and cultures. In addition to being of philosophical interest itself, this question can lend crucial insight to various social, physical, and mental phenomena.¹ In order to give an account of the self, it is necessary to formulate what kind of entity we take it to be, how we might be aware of it, its foundations and implications, and what characteristics might legitimately be attributed to it. There is no unequivocal account to be given, and some thinkers go as far as to argue that the self, properly construed, does not even exist.

I believe the self must be, fundamentally, a phenomenological entity: an adequate account of selfhood, as well as personal identity, must account for subjectivity, experience, and the structures thereof. I do not here argue this position, though present considerations may confer it *prima facie* support. I instead opt to consider two plausible phenomenological notions of self, and weigh them against one another; my findings are of philosophical and scientific significance, and constitute a contribution to the study of self regardless of other considerations.

First, however, I must address a crucial question: just what *is* a phenomenological self? In short, a phenomenological self is a notion of self derived from a Phenomenological investigation of the features and structures of conscious experience. This of course requires further explanation.

Modern Phenomenology is often considered to have begun with Edmund Husserl, a philosopher and mathematician who investigated the properties and structures of experience as such; he barred metaphysical questions concerning things *as conceived of as* third-person things

¹ I here neither endorse any kind of monism nor dualism concerning the physical and mental. These metaphysical considerations are interesting, but not here relevant.

existing independent of experience, and was instead interested in phenomena - things *as experienced*; these include experiences of ordinary objects, thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and the features and structures of conscious life generally. What sets phenomenology apart from seemingly related disciplines - such as cognitive science, neuroscience, and psychology - is the centrality of conscious experience considered *as such*.

Take, for example, the eating of a portobello mushroom: there is a visual experience, a brownish curvy blobbish thing that seems to be in arms-reach; an olfactory experience causes your mouth to water at the smell of the grilled fungi; there is a taste, a certain “savoriness” that might meet certain expectations, desires, and appetites; as you chew, there are tactile (and proprioceptive) feelings of one’s jaw moving, the mushroom in one’s mouth, the fork scraping one’s teeth... the latter is also associated with a high-pitched sound, and the annoyance or dismay which accompanies it; in time, you come to feel satiated, and you think to yourself “What an excellent lunch.”

Cognitive science might explore the relations of the various perceptions, actions, objects, knowledge, and cognitions associated with and pertaining to the events described above. Neuroscience might aim to understand the specific brain processes that bring about or are correlated with your eating of lunch. Psychology might provide a causal explanation of why you see the mushroom as appetizing, and what your parents have to do with it. Phenomenology, in contrast, studies these experiences not as informational transfer and action generation or as sub-conscious neuronal activity but rather as conscious experience itself; a phenomenological account of the above experiences will aim to explain the “what-it-is-like-ness” of the experiences (qualitativeness), their directedness or “about-ness” (intentionality), their possible relationships to a subject or subjects (subjectivity) and each other (unity), their unfolding in time

(temporality), their dis-similarities and commonalities... generally, Phenomenology is an investigation of the conscious features and structures that constitute your experiences *as* experiences and even make them possible in the first place.

Accordingly, a phenomenological notion of self will have only phenomenological content, and typically figures the self to be – at least minimally – the “subject” of experience.² What kind of thing this subject is and how we might come to experience or know it are widely debated topics. I here explicate and analyze crucial features of (what I take to be) two plausible, contemporary accounts of the phenomenological self – “SESMET,” developed by Galen Strawson, and “the minimal self,” articulated by Dan Zahavi.

In Chapter 1 I define, explicate, and critique SESMET, focusing on Strawson’s methodology and negative evaluations of the persistence and agency of the self. I find SESMET to be inadequate for a number of methodological, economical, and conceptual reasons. The minimal self can avoid many – though not all – of these shortcomings.

The minimal self is constituted by a certain feature of a Husserlian account of internal time-consciousness – “reflexive self-awareness.” I explicate the relevant Husserlian framework in Chapter 2. Husserl asks, “how must conscious experience be structured for experience of temporal objects to be possible?” and answers “consciousness must be fundamentally temporal, intentional, and reflexively self-aware.” I explicate structures and aspects of this account, their relationships to one another, and their implications for our awareness of objects.

Reflexive self-awareness grounds basic subjective senses of “ownership” and “agency” that pre-reflectively structure conscious experience. In Chapter 3 I present Zahavi’s argument for the sense of ownership and argue for a basic sense of agency by appealing to Shaun Gallagher’s

² Phenomenological content is content first derived from and ultimately commensurate with Phenomenological investigation. Beyond this derivation and conformity, such content may be further shaped by logical, metaphysical, or various other considerations.

application of Husserlian time-consciousness to schizophrenic alienation pathology. I then argue, in accordance with Zahavi and Gallagher, that reflexive self-awareness is awareness of the *subject* of experience, and specifically awareness of the subject as a certain kind of owner and agent. Reflexive self-awareness provides the basic sense of self – the feeling of *being* a self – in terms of subjective ownership and agency, and thus constitutes the minimal self. Comparing this self with SESMET, I find them to be equally legitimate *candidate* selves.

In Chapter 4, however, I challenge the status of these notions as *actual* selves, and make clear what each view has to offer. SESMET and the minimal self utilize commensurate conceptual resources to develop their unique strengths and weaknesses. Strawson might be correct about metaphysical persistence and “full-blown agency,” but Zahavi and Gallagher seem correct about ownership and “proto-agency.” Taking a cue from Gallagher’s considerations of schizophrenia, I briefly consider pathological “blindsight” and depersonalization phenomena, arguing that the distinctive strengths of the minimal self confer it scientific applicability and fecundity. I believe there are strong philosophical and empirical reasons for endorsing the minimal self over SESMET, but conclude that they are both unsatisfactory; SESMET is phenomenologically “thin” while the minimal self is metaphysically “thick.” I conclude by proposing what I take to be a well motivated and promising hybrid view. The thorough development and consideration of this hybrid is subject to future work, but I conclude by noting some possible problems as well as potential applications.

I must include a disclaimer regarding the scientific content of this thesis: I am no scientist. While I believe that I provide an adequate philosophical analysis of the scientific issues here presented, I must admit my limited grasp of the neurological machinations of the brain, as well as the scientific literature generally. However, this thesis is primarily a work of philosophy,

and I believe that certain fine grain inaccuracies concerning the scientific claims herein do not compromise my view: the very fact that the minimal self is scientifically *applicable* supports my view and illuminates important insights into the investigation of the self. That being said, I hope that some of my scientific claims *are* accurate, as this would represent significant potential for further research at the intersection of phenomenology, science, and perhaps metaphysics.

Chapter 1: SESMET

1: Methodology

Galen Strawson argues for a realist notion of self - a self that has some sort of ontological status - taking cognitive phenomenology as a starting point. Strawson writes:

Many analytic philosophers think that phenomenology is restricted to the study of non-cognitive mental goings-on: to merely sensory experiences (including mental images of certain sorts) and feelings (including mood feelings and emotional feelings) in so far as these things can be and are considered just in respect of their entirely non-cognitive felt character. (Strawson 2009)³

Some philosophers have explicitly endorsed the above restriction of phenomenology to the sensory, however I believe that this is a minority view: though, as Strawson suggests, many philosophers have certainly opted to focus on sensory aspects of experience, they needn't claim that the character of experience is *exclusively* sensory.

In light of this pre-occupation with the sensory, however, Strawson is right to point out that "Phenomenology... is the general study of the character of experience, or experiential 'what-it's likeness', and the character of experience is as much cognitive as it is sensory."⁴ I will not present Strawson's argument for this claim, but rather note that it is a commonly held position amongst phenomenologists, with what I take to be good support abound in the literature.

Within cognitive-phenomenology, Strawson believes that an investigation of the self should begin with what he calls "SELF-experience": "experience informed or shaped by - involving the deployment of - a certain complex experience-determining mental element: the idea or sense or feeling of the self."⁵ The sense of self is often utilized in phenomenological

³ Galen Strawson, *Selves: An Essay in Revisionary Metaphysics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 37-38.

⁴ Ibid.

investigations of the self, and designates the experience informed by or of *being* a self. I think it would be fair to here think of SELF-experience as informed by the *sense* of self, rather than the *idea* or *feeling* of self, as these terms might mislead; for Strawson, SELF-experience is cognitive, or non-sensory, and pre-reflective: the sense of self needn't be a specific concept or idea salient to or entertained by an experiencer.⁶

Strawson argues that in order to engage in a metaphysical investigation of the self (its existence and nature; “Is there such a thing? What is it like if it exists?”⁷), we must first explore the phenomenology of the self - SELF-experience - in order to determine the thing which we are to investigate. Strawson writes:

The central task of phenomenology, when it comes to the problem of the self, is to analyse the complex, cognitive experience-determining element SELF that is active in SELF-experience and that gives it its distinctive character. Once one has determined the content of this experience-structuring element, one can go on to ask the ontological question ‘Is there anything in reality to which it applies?’ [...] one can and should identify the content of SELF by a partly - largely - phenomenological method.⁸

Accordingly, Strawson endorses what he calls the “equivalence thesis”:

E-T: ...selves exist if and only if there is something that has the properties denoted by those thought-elements that feature in every genuine form of SELF-experience.⁹

The properties of any purported self must correspond to and be based on the thought-elements of genuine SELF-experience. Consequently – importantly – if the contents of some conceptual entity, X, do not correspond to or are not based on the thought-elements of genuine SELF-

⁵ Ibid., 2; Strawson uses small caps to signify “experience-determining mental elements” or “experience-structuring mental elements”. These elements can be concepts, but refer to a wider class than concepts.

⁶ You may have experience informed by the *idea* or *feeling* of self, perhaps, but at the ground level SELF-experience is cognitive and pre-reflective.

⁷ Ibid., 1.

⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁹ Ibid., 55.

experience, then metaphysical claims pertaining to the existence of X are irrelevant to the existence of the self: X is no self. I find these claims plausible, and for present purposes endorse E-T.

Having defined his core methodology - building metaphysics of the self on a phenomenological investigation of SELF-experience, or the ordinary sense of being a self - Strawson poses what he calls “the local phenomenological question”: “What sort of thing is figured in ordinary human SELF-experience?”¹⁰ He answers:

(1) a subject of experience that is a (2) single, (3) persisting, (4) mental (5) thing (in some solid sense of ‘thing’ that needs discussion) that is (6) an agent that has a certain (7) personality and is (8) not the same thing as a human being considered as a whole.¹¹

In an attempt to move away from specifically *human* SELF-experience and towards a more general notion of SELF-experience, he poses “the general phenomenological question”: “What is the minimal form of genuine SELF-experience?”¹²

There are at least two excellent motivations for this shift to minimal SELF-experience, and away from reference to some conscious creature. First: Strawson does not rule out the possibility of non-human selves; such a shift should result in a more inclusive theory of self that should apply equally well to human and non-human selves. Second: Strawson himself argues that SELF-experience can vary even *between human beings* - he claims for example that he himself does not, even in a *prima-facie* or illusory way, experience himself as persisting. In order to develop even a modest theory of *human* selves, he will need to account for these discrepancies; he attempts to do so by isolating the necessary aspects of SELF-experience - those aspects which do

¹⁰ Ibid., 33.

¹¹ Ibid., 3.

¹² Ibid., 33.

not vary from consciousness to consciousness, human or otherwise - and building a theory of self accordingly.

To answer the general phenomenological question, Strawson pares away what he finds to be unnecessary, arguing that the self as figured in minimal, genuine SELF-experience is a

SESMET: SUBJECT-of-EXPERIENCE-as-SINGLE-MENTAL-THING.¹³

According to Strawson, persistence, agency, personality, and distinction from the human being considered as a whole are not necessary aspects of minimal SELF-experience.

Furthermore, he wants to argue that the self as SESMET really is figured by minimal SELF-experience. He attempts to justify these claims by running “whittling” and “building” arguments, respectively. First, he whittles aspects of human SELF-experience that are unnecessary through a variety of arguments and considerations. Next, he argues that SELF-experience requires self-consciousness, and as such requires anything required by self-consciousness; he then attempts to show that self-consciousness requires all features of SESMET.¹⁴

Since the whittling and building arguments will each consist of a variety of arguments for the necessity or non-necessity of various aspects of SELF-experience, they could be thought of as *macro*-arguments, and the arguments they consist of as *micro*-arguments. I will not here be concerned with these macro-arguments directly, but will rather focus on particular micro-arguments, and specifically those of the whittling argument pertaining to the non-necessity of persistence and agency.

¹³ Ibid., 206; the use of small caps is Strawson’s; see footnote 5 above. It is also important to note that Strawson must argue that SESMETs are actually selves, and he purports to do so; I will not worry about this argument here.

¹⁴ Ibid., 62.

First, however, there remains one final preliminary: I will define, for future use and reference, the notions of *fundamental phenomenological self* (or **F_P**) and *developed phenomenological self* (or **D_P**). A notion of a **F_P** is a phenomenological notion of self derived only from *necessary* features of phenomenal consciousness generally. If minimal, genuine SELF-experience gets at and only at necessary features of consciousness, then the self figured by it - the answer to the general phenomenological question - will be an **F_P**. To be sure, for Strawson, SESMET is a **F_P**, figured by the minimal form of SELF-experience, and so derived only from necessary features of consciousness generally.

A **D_P**, in contrast, is a phenomenological notion of self that is, at least in part, derived from unnecessary features of phenomenal consciousness generally; notions of **D_P**s might include necessary features of consciousness, but also more *developed* features of consciousness, features above or on-top-of the bare minimum, necessary, *foundational* ones. Strawson's answer to the local phenomenological question - his pre-whittled eight-part "self" - is an example of a **D_P**.

Note that **D_P**s, by definition, are still *phenomenological* selves: they have phenomenological content, concerning both necessary and unnecessary features of consciousness. However, not all developed selves need be developed phenomenological selves (a merely developed, *non-phenomenological* self could be called a **D**). I believe that it is Strawson's position, with which I agree, that developed selves are selves only insofar as they also constitute a fundamental self; their unnecessary features are superfluous to their self-hood. Strawson's answer to the local phenomenological question - his **D_P** - is a self, but only insofar as it figures SESMET - his **F_P** - in addition to other unnecessary features of conscious experience.

Strawson's move to the general phenomenological question as the primary question of the self reflects this position.¹⁵

2: Persistence (Transience)

Strawson takes SESMET to be a kind of "thin" subject. According to the "thin" conception of subjects,

TCoS: a subject of experience exists if and only if experience exists of which it is the subject, since a subject of experience exists if experience exists.¹⁶

The truth of this claim depends on the claims that experience is necessarily experience-"for", and that experience-for is always experience-for *some subject*. This latter claim is not uncontroversial, but I will not here treat either as problematic, opting rather to take them for granted; in any case, Strawson takes it to be true that if there is experience, then there necessarily exists a subject *for* which it is experience, and also that the "subject" figured by SESMET is a thin subject in this way.

Through the lens of this TCoS, Strawson argues that persistence is a non-necessary aspect of SELF-experience, and therefore is superfluous to his theory of self. In order to come to this conclusion, Strawson considers whether distinct experiences might be experienced as those of some persisting subject (as "persistence experience of subjects," or "subject-persistence-

¹⁵ For clarification on developed *non-phenomenological* selves (or **Ds**), consider the following example. I am a logic instructor, and I consider this to be an aspect of who I am. In a sense, this *is* an aspect of who I am. However, this is not a necessary aspect of who I am: I could have easily failed to be a logic instructor, or I could immediately discontinue being a logic instructor, yet still be *me*. Furthermore, me being a logic instructor is not a *phenomenological* feature of who I am: my job is a matter of various relationships between myself and others, for sure, but without reference to my consciousness at all; as my students may often think, it is possible that I am actually an unfeeling robot merely programmed to take questions and homework as input and provide lessons and corny jokes as output. My conception of myself as a logic instructor is therefore developed, in that it accounts for unnecessary aspects of what I am, but non-phenomenological, in that it accounts for non-phenomenological aspects of what I am. We can conclude that not all developed selves (**Ds**) are developed phenomenological selves (**Dps**), though all **Dps** are **Ds**. An important question remains: can we say of **Ds**, a general class that includes **Dps**, that they are really *selves*? I would answer "no", but cannot argue that here.

¹⁶ Ibid., 324.

experience”), and what this experience amounts to metaphysically. He argues that we do not have persistence experience of ourselves as subjects, though concedes that, in normal cases, it *seems* that we do; he then provides an explanation of the latter.

Strawson defines the kinds of experiences and beliefs (beliefs being a certain kind of experience) that might support the persistence of the self:

Connectedness Experience: experience of temporally separated episodes of consciousness feeling as if they belonged together, as parts of the same self.

The Connectedness Belief: theoretical belief in the belonging-togetherness of episodes of consciousness.

Continuity Experience: experience of felt continuity of consciousness from moment to moment or through the waking day

The Continuity Belief: theoretical belief in the continuity of the process of consciousness¹⁷

Connectedness is a matter of singularity: for two experiences to be connected is for them to be experienced as belonging to the same single subject; to *believe* that two experiences are connected is to believe them to belong to the same single subject. Continuity is a matter of persistence: for two experiences to be continuous is for them to be experienced as those of a persisting subject who survives from one experience to the next; to *believe* that two experiences are continuous is to believe them to belong to a persisting subject who survives from one experience to the next. The persistence *of the subject* is a function of continuity as well as connectedness, as it entails that the surviving subject is the same *single* subject from moment to moment.

Though Strawson rejects the persistence of SESMET, he uses the term “persistence” in a particular, technical way. When it comes to persistence, Strawson considers both *synchronicity* and *diachronicity*, or synchronic and diachronic *unity*. Synchronic unity typically refers to unity - a matter of connection, or singularity - at a given time. It is widely agreed that consciousness is

¹⁷ Ibid., 224.

synchronically united; all of our mental goings-on at a given time seem to be connected to one another, or belong to the same subject: It seems to be the same “me” that is seeing a laptop screen, tapping on the keyboard of the very same laptop, and thinking about what to type next.

Strawson, however, considers synchronic unity in a more temporally extended way; for him, synchronic unity is a matter of singleness and persistence of the subject over some very small interval known as “the living present”.¹⁸ The living present - sometimes called the living now of experience - is not an instantaneous objective unit of time, but rather the unit of subjective time in which distinct experiential stimuli are first experienced together as objects and events (rather than mere stimuli); this is the unit of time in which we experience “now” and in which our basic feelings, thoughts, etc. can first operate. Strawson holds that this unit of subjective time spans, at maximum, about a third of a second (in objective time).¹⁹

Diachronic unity, on the other hand, spans living presents - it is a matter of the singularity and persistence of a subject of experience over distinct “nows”. When Strawson rejects the persistence of SESMET, he is only rejecting persistence of this diachronic form. Though synchronic unity is not a matter of unity at an instantaneous time slice but rather of the survival of some single subject over a small interval, he opts not to call such survival “persistence.” It will be worthwhile to briefly explicate his positions on synchronic and diachronic unity.

In the synchronic case, Strawson grants that experience seems to be united. Recalling the TCoS, it is necessarily true that during the moment of experience at least one subject exists. Furthermore, the experiences occurring during a given living present are experienced as (1)

¹⁸ This is not an unfamiliar take on synchronic unity, especially in phenomenology, but is nevertheless specific and technical and thus requires mention and some unpacking.

¹⁹ Ibid., 252; Strawson uses “around a third of a second” as a rough estimate

belonging to one and the same subject, and (2) belonging together and often as following one another.²⁰

In the diachronic case, however, Strawson claims that we do not necessarily have experience of connectedness or continuity, although we may subscribe to either or both corresponding beliefs; these points are largely a matter of metaphysical commitment, as Strawson illustrates by claiming that he (as well as others like him) do not have these kinds of experiences - a characteristic seemingly correlated with a metaphysical impermanentist lean - and that he subscribes to neither belief. He claims that when we consider ourselves specifically as singular mental subjects of experience (SESMET), we do not have any sense that the experiences of distinct living presents in any way (1) belong to one and the same subject, or (2) flow from one to another. Regarding the latter, he appeals to a pervasive version of “the bridge problem.”

It seems that experience is, at least occasionally, “gappy.” Dreamless sleep and “long distance truck driver” cases seem to illustrate such gaps. In the former case, some would argue that experience ceases when falling into deep, dreamless sleep, and picks up again upon waking. In the latter case, when driving or otherwise traveling some substantial distance, many of us are familiar with the phenomenon of “going on autopilot”: your mind blanks out, and all of a sudden you realize that you are at your destination. In both cases your brain is still functioning, and in the latter you must be aware of your surroundings *in some sense* in order to successfully navigate your route as well as traffic, but in neither case do you seem to be experientially conscious

²⁰ The experiences belonging to a given living present might very well be experiences *of* various things as distinct in objective time - perhaps existing within very small, successive temporal chunks - but are nevertheless experienced *as* together. Consider the rapid succession of two musical notes: I may experience them “together”, in so far as the first note does not yet feel, phenomenologically, gone or past by the time I hear the second. Yet, despite both being phenomenologically present, I can still perceive one note as temporally following the other. Consider, also, a succession of two notes so rapid that, though distinct in objective time, I experience as a chord - as two notes sounding simultaneously.

during the relevant period of time. The bridge problem is the question of whether and how subjects survive these discontinuities in experience.

Strawson claims that gaps in experience are far more pervasive than such examples suggest: our consciousness is fragmented from experiential moment to experiential moment, even if these gaps often go unnoticed. Strawson answers the bridge problem - on both the general and pervasive formulations - in the negative: the self does not survive gaps in experience. Specifically, though we may *believe* that experiences across living presents are connected or continuous, the experiences themselves are neither. As such, SELF-experience (and experience generally) does not persist across gaps, and since, on the TCoS, a subject of experience exists only when experience does, subjects do not persist across gaps either.

Another way to phrase the argument is as follows: since experience across living presents is neither connected nor continuous, we have neither connectedness nor continuity experience, and so no experience of persisting experience or a persisting subject. So persistence is not a necessary feature of SESMET. If selves do not persist from moment to moment, then, each human animal as a whole might actually correspond to some huge set of selves, each existing for a brief time before going out of existence and making way for the next. Strawson endorses this as the “transience view of the self.”

The question becomes: why do so many people, in the absence of corresponding experience, subscribe to the connectedness and continuity beliefs? Strawson claims that we do have persistence experience of the *contents* of experience (“object-persistence-experience”), just not of the *subject* of experience; here, the “contents” of an experience are just what the experience is *of*, about, or directed towards, while the “subject” of an experience is that which the experience is *for*. We do, apparently, experience persistent objects and events, but we

confuse the experience of persistence with the persistence of experience: we experience persisting contents and jump to the conclusion that the experience of these contents itself persists, though support for this conclusion is found nowhere in SELF-experience. Addressing this point, as well as the bridge problem, Strawson writes:

... the belief in the seamless stream of consciousness isn't comfortably grounded in the basic facts of experience. There's an illegal transfer of smoothness from content to process [consciousness, or subject] [...] one may still be profoundly inclined to think of the self as something that *has* all the interrupted and jumping thoughts and experiences but isn't itself a gappy interrupted thing... however... when I think further about my mental life, I don't find a sensibly continuous process of a sensibly continuous self or mental someone.²¹

In this way, Strawson explains the appeal of the belief in the persistence of the subject (“subject-persistence-belief”), while rejecting its truth, and at the same time denying that we have any persistence experience of the *self*.

Strawson's transience view of the self, according to which I am not the same self that I was last night or even one minute ago, is a common target of objections. I think that the most straight-forward of these objections amounts to the claim that persistence is a necessary feature of the self, and that to reject persistence of the self is just to theorize about some other, non-self entity. In what I take to be anticipation of this objection (and others like it), Strawson writes:

The anti-selfers will agree with the pro-selfers that the selves I claim to exist don't deserve the name, and say that by using 'self' in this way I'm obscuring the fact that nothing deserves the name... If [the introduction of *Selves*] leads you to think that my real answer to the question whether selves exist is No, then you can read everything else in that light. But I'm going to argue that selves exist...²²

This argument will consist of arguing the following two points: (1) SESMETs really are selves, and (2) SESMETs exist. If this two-part argument succeeds, then the objection against him - that persistence is a necessary feature of self - will be question begging.

²¹ Ibid., 245-6.

²² Ibid., 5.

Though I am willing to here grant (2), and am not prepared to attack (1) directly, I am more interested in three related objections: the first is methodological and concerns the bridge problem; the second and third are conceptual and economical, respectively, and concern object-persistence-experience.

Strawson's claim that persistence is an unnecessary feature of the self depends in large part on the bridge problem: SELF-experience (and experience in general) is "gappy," or discontinuous, from moment to moment; building the self on SELF-experience, given the TCoS, accordingly leads to the conclusion that the self does not persist from moment to moment. Here, an additional *metaphysical* commitment plays a crucial role: Strawson assumes that temporal continuity, a standard endurantist test of metaphysical object-persistence, applies to phenomenological subjects.²³ In other words, Strawson assumes that if subjects do not *endure*, then they do not *persist*. Rejecting endurantism about phenomenological subjects, transience does not follow. In Chapter 4 I argue that we ought not take this endurantism for granted. For now, note that presupposing endurantism about phenomenological subjects seems to run counter to Strawson's general methodology of building the metaphysics of the self on phenomenology, and not the other way around.²⁴

Furthermore, explaining subscription to the connectedness and continuity beliefs by appealing to persisting objects prompts conceptual and economical concerns. Historically, it has

²³ Endurance is the position that objects persist from times t to $t+n$ by existing wholly at every moment within that interval. Strawson explicitly targets endurantism in his refutation of the persistence of the self. I suggest, in Chapter 4, that accounts of persistence are not obviously preserved from metaphysics to phenomenology, e.g., endurantism *might* be correct for metaphysical objects, but not for phenomenological ones. Phenomenological persistence *might* not conform to metaphysical persistence.

²⁴ If, prior to phenomenologically determining the content of the self to be investigated, Strawson incorporates the metaphysical claim that subjects do not exist when experience does not, then I suspect that it may straightforwardly follow that – upon phenomenological investigation – selves will be found not to persist. If this is the case, then the subsequent metaphysical claims concerning the persistence of the self may amount to question begging; I am not here concerned with these subsequent metaphysical claims.

been widely claimed (and argued) that object-persistence-experience necessitates subject-persistence; it is unclear how temporally distinct experiences of objects may be related to one another in such a way as to be experiences of *persisting* objects if these experiences do not belong to the same, persisting subject. Strawson relies on object-persistence-experience to explain the connectedness and continuity beliefs, but does not provide an account of how we might avoid concluding that such experience must belong to persisting subjects.²⁵

Strawson might reply: “It is true that I have appealed to the experience of persistent objects to explain the belief in the persistence of experience without offering an in depth account of how the former might be possible in the absence of persistent subjects. However, having rejected persistent subjects on independent grounds (primarily, bridge problem considerations), an account of experiential *objects* is outside the purview of the present work. Though such an account may be useful and informative, it is unnecessary for my account of the self.”

Such a response might be fair. However, if an alternative account of self – just as minimal as Strawson’s – yields an account of the persistence experience of objects, it is to be preferred. In other words, if a notion of self as noncommittal as Strawson’s – an alternative F_P - can be developed which has greater explanatory value, it is to be preferred. Though, as highlighted here, an alternative F_P which accounts for persistence experience of objects would do, *any* F_P which utilizes equal or fewer theoretical resources and yields greater explanatory value *of any kind* will be preferred. I believe that such alternatives are available, but first consider Strawson’s account of agency to better illustrate possible alternative F_P s with higher explanatory payloads than SESMET.

²⁵ Strawson does begin to articulate a kind of causal account, on which distinct selves might interact with and inform one another, but I do not find it to be a particularly developed account, and it seems to only address the present objection tangentially.

3: Sense of Agency

In considering agency, Strawson asks:

Must SELF-experience involve experience of agency, experience of oneself [considered as a self] as something capable of intentional action [...] i.e., voluntarily and deliberately initiated action [?]²⁶ (Strawson 2009)

He answers in the negative. He first clarifies that the sense of self *as agent* is most often a feeling of the authorship of bodily action, rather than mental action. In the case of bodily action, though it is the self that is the felt agent, this felt agency is rooted in the authorship of the body and bodily feeling, and not in that of the subject as a mental thing. He writes:

[...] it is regularly the self, rather than the whole human being, that is felt to be the agent, the agent properly speaking - as much in the case of bodily action as in the case of mental action. One's experience of oneself [considered as a self] as an agent has no special roots, then, in one's experience of oneself as the agent of mental actions; it is doubtless grounded in, and most powerfully fed by, one's experience of oneself as the agent of bodily actions - as is one's experience of agency generally considered.²⁷

Nonetheless, we do frequently have a feeling of mental agency - that we are the deliberate initiators of many of our mental happenings.

Strawson claims, however, that intentional mental action is limited only to “a curiously marginal or merely catalytic role.”²⁸ Though we often think that we are the authors of our own thoughts, and specifically that we are the deliberate and intentional origin of new thought content for ourselves, he argues that our mental lives are, by and large, passive: our thoughts and feelings just happen to us, or occur. The only action in which we partake is the direction, attention, refocusing, and priming of the mind for receiving these thoughts. He writes:

²⁶ Ibid., 186, brackets mine

²⁷ Ibid., 189.

²⁸ Ibid.

[...] no ordinary thinking of a particular thought-content (conscious or otherwise) is ever an intentional action [...] Mental action in thinking is restricted to the fostering of conditions hospitable to contents' coming to mind. The coming to mind itself - the actual occurrence of thoughts, conscious or non-conscious - is not a matter of action.²⁹

Vastly shrinking the sphere of intentional mental action, Strawson claims that very little of our mental life comes with a sense of agency; mental agency seems to be quite exceptional, and the presence of legitimate intentional action (mental or otherwise) needn't be accompanied by a felt sense of agency.

Regarding this last point, and echoing a move made for his transience view of the self, Strawson claims that many people – he included - do not experience a pervasive feeling of mental agency.

What we find in debates about [mental agency] is a deep difference of attitude [...] Some seem pervasively committed to the idea that entertaining new [thought] content - new ideas, making inferential transitions - in thinking, judging, reasoning is a matter of intentional action. Others like me find this mystifying. What might explain this difference of opinion? [...] The deep difference, I think, is just a difference of opinion, or rather feeling - the difference between those who are inclined to experience themselves primarily as agents in their mental lives and those who aren't [...] Some of us are much more likely than others to experience what Wegner calls an 'emotion of authorship' in reason, thought, and judgment. I never experience anything of the sort.³⁰

He ultimately concludes that SELF-experience does not necessarily involve a sense of agency; intentional mental action is the exception rather than the rule, and it is often not the case that we have a felt sense of agency even in legitimate cases of intentional mental action.

I believe that - as in the case of persistence - Strawson's comment concerning the possible interpretation of his view as "anti-self" is anticipatory of his rejection of agency, and that he responds appropriately to the potential criticism.³¹ Furthermore, I do *not* think that my

²⁹ Ibid., 192.

³⁰ Ibid., 190.

methodological concerns pertaining to Strawson's transience view can be adapted to his account of agency: he grounds the lack of a sense of agency in the general lack of intentional mental action, but argues for the latter on what seem to be purely phenomenological grounds, and as such his argument is very much in the spirit of the enterprise. I propose, however, that Strawson's account of agency is subject to an analogue of the economical objection to the transience view, as well as a particular conceptual extension of this economical concern guided by empirical considerations.

Strawson explains our belief that we are agents, largely, in terms of a sense of authorship concerning our bodily actions. Our bodies persist, as do bodily feelings, but these bodily feelings are distinct from oneself considered specifically as a self, and so our sense of agency is not grounded specifically by SESMET. Strawson argues, similarly as concerning persistence, against drawing an illicit inference from the sense of agency in relation to the body to the sense of the self as an agent of mental action. Here, we might ask for an account of exactly how it is that we have a sense of authorship concerning even our bodily actions, and Strawson could again reply: "Having shown that the sense of authorship over bodily action is an unnecessary feature of SELF-experience, providing an in depth theory of this sense of authorship is outside the purview of this work, and unnecessary for a theory of self." In any case, Strawson does admit that many people do have a felt sense of agency concerning their *mental* lives. This too is left as somewhat of an anomaly; if he is correct that not everyone has this kind of experience, then he is also correct that it is a non-necessary feature of SELF-experience and as such needn't be part of his SESMET theory.

³¹ Page 18, above.

These are both perfectly legitimate moves, unless of course an alternative theory of the F_P is available which can explain either or both of these apparent anomalies. Again, reflecting my claim regarding the transience view of the self, I believe that such alternatives exist.

Additionally, there is what I take to be a deeper problem concerning agency. Recall that the sense of self as figured in SELF-experience needn't be an explicitly entertained idea or concept; rather, SELF-experience is just experience informed by or *of* being a self. I take it that the same holds true for the other “experience-determining mental elements” or “experience-structuring mental elements” here under consideration, including SUBJECT, THING, and AGENT. Having rejected agency as necessary for SELF-experience, Strawson claims “that human beings need have no sense of the self as an agent in mental life, and needn't be in any way deficient in humanity if they do not”.³² If it is correct to understand experience of the sense of agency to be experience informed by or of being an agent - or experience structured or determined by the mental element AGENT - then I cannot *quite* agree that human beings without a sense of self as an agent are not deficient in some way.³³

In the case of bodily action, consider being tripped unexpectedly. You are aware that it is your body that is now falling, but you are also surprised by this movement: normally, you have a sense of agency or authorship over your bodily actions - as Strawson grants - but in this case there is no such feeling; you are surprised, and you experience your movement as not your own. In a way, this is still SELF-experience: you experience *yourself* as falling; in this sense, though, I suspect that all experience is SELF-experience. However, pertaining to the particular event, your surprise at the movement of your body is also structured as precisely *not* SELF-experience; it is

³² Ibid., 197.

³³ Though a lack of a sense of agency does not *always* translate to a kind of deficiency, there are clear cases in which it does; I consider such cases – some more peculiar than others – in Chapter 3.

experience of external forces acting unexpectedly against you. In this way, it is a case of what could be called OTHER-experience, due - apparently - to the lack of a sense of agency.

In cases of pathological “thought insertion”, a similar point can be made regarding mental action. Thought insertion is the phenomenon of experiencing some mental activity as authored by an agent or subject other than yourself, i.e., “There is this thought in my head - “Kill God” - but I didn’t think it; David did”. On the one hand, this is SELF-experience: the subject of thought insertion is aware that it is himself that undergoes the phenomenon. However, on the other hand it is OTHER-experience, due - quite plausibly - to the lack of a sense of agency in relation to the “foreign” thought.³⁴

These cases suggest that our experience is perhaps more deeply structured by a sense of agency than Strawson believes.³⁵ Even if this is not the case, however, and if these considerations are not in fact deep problems, they still illustrate one additional path the economical objection can take: at bare minimum, these cases of surprise at bodily and mental action are made quite peculiar if you cannot appeal to an unusual lack of a sense of agency. An adequate explanation of such cases is likely to be complex on any account, but it is unclear how Strawson might develop any explanation without either revising his account of agency or committing to further theoretical resources.

Strawson’s theory of self, of course, needn’t offer an explanation of such cases and may still be a perfectly adequate theory of self, unless of course an alternative F_p is available which can make sense of such cases. Again, I believe that such alternatives are available, and furthermore that they may even account for *all* economical objections proposed here.

³⁴ Such cases can be quite disturbing for the subject.

³⁵ The expression “You don’t know what you’ve got ‘til it’s gone” may here be apt.

4: Conclusion

The foregoing explication and investigation of Strawson's SESMET provides valuable insight into the project of developing a phenomenological theory of self. I hope to have here elucidated and illustrated, to some degree, the significance of the following: phenomenological investigation, cognitive-phenomenology, the sense of self, local vs. general phenomenology, fundamental vs. developed phenomenological (and non-phenomenological) selves, the living present, persistence (synchronic and diachronic unity), the bridge problem, agency, experiential variation across subjects, and explanatory power of a theory of self.

Despite what has been gained, Strawson's view is not unproblematic. The main issues, objections, or quandaries to take from this chapter are the following:

(1) A negative answer to the bridge problem is a source of significant tension amongst thinkers in this area – many find it unacceptable. Furthermore, Strawson's specific negative solution rests on a questionable metaphysical assumption about the persistence conditions of phenomenological subjects. Nevertheless, the bridge problem is a legitimate concern, and lacking a positive solution thereof the default position is, apparently, to reject the persistence of the self. If an alternative F_P can provide an adequate positive solution to the bridge problem, it may be preferable to SESMET.³⁶

(2) Strawson fails to adequately account for object-persistence-experience and the sense of agency over bodily and mental action (when it does occur). If an alternative F_P yields an explanation of these phenomena then this alternative may be preferable.

(3) Strawson's account of object-persistence-experience might be conceptually confused, and it seems that the sense of agency may be more central to SELF-experience than Strawson believes. If an alternative F_P can account for object-persistence-experience, the kinds of

³⁶ Alternative F_P s will generally differ regarding what are taken to be the necessary features of experience.

experience involved in unexpected movement and pathological thought insertion, and the role of the sense of agency in experience generally, then this alternative may be preferable.³⁷

Dan Zahavi's "minimal self" is an initially plausible alternative **F_P**: this notion of self questions Strawson's metaphysical assumptions regarding the bridge problem, accommodates all economical objections presented, and makes sense of object-persistence-experience and a wide range of relevant empirical considerations. Dan Zahavi claims that Husserlian "reflexive self-awareness," a notion developed in Edmund Husserl's account of internal time-consciousness, constitutes THE MINIMAL SELF.³⁸ I explicate this Husserlian framework in Chapter 2, and move to consider THE MINIMAL SELF in Chapter 3.³⁹

³⁷ I only say "may" be preferable to suggest that such alternatives will only be preferable if they are not wildly unsatisfactory in other respects.

³⁸ Dan Zahavi is somewhat unclear as to the *exact* constitution of the minimal self, though it is explicitly Husserlian. I believe Husserlian reflexive self-awareness is the most plausible candidate, but conceptually and with respect to Zahavi's intent, and I proceed to argue with this in mind.

³⁹ Time-consciousness is "internal" insofar as consciousness is fundamentally temporal in structure.

Chapter 2: Time-Consciousness

1. The Living Present

One major motivation for Husserl's account of time-consciousness (and, here, a convenient starting point) was to explain object-persistence-experience. Normally, it seems that we do have experience of objects that survive over time; it seems to me that my laptop existed a minute ago, still exists as I type this sentence, and will continue to exist for some time into the future (I hope). In Husserlian terms, such an object would be called a *temporal object*, that is, an experiential object experienced as having temporal depth, or existing across different times.

I take it to be uncontroversial that we do have experience *as of* temporal objects; whether or not these objects exist outside of experience is a metaphysical question, but they certainly seem to be a part of conscious experience. Strawson also grants as much, depending on object-persistence-experience for his explanation of the subject-persistence-belief.

Husserl similarly depends on our experience of temporal objects to construct his view of time-consciousness, but will not agree with Strawson that an inference from the persistence of "content" to that of "process" must be illicit. He begins with a transcendental question: how is our experience of temporal objects possible, that is, how must our experience be structured in order for us to have experience of temporal objects? Intentionality, the "directed-ness," "about-ness," or "of-ness" of experience, plays a central role in answering this question; our experience *of* temporal objects is experience *directed towards* or *about* temporal objects.⁴⁰ Consequently, Husserl builds his account of time-consciousness on a theory of intentionality.

⁴⁰ "Phenomenologists are primarily interested in intentionality as a decisive feature of consciousness." Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 123-7.

Husserl first establishes what is often called “the generative now,” “the living now of experience,” or “the living present.” In its most basic sense, this is the same living present that Strawson accepts: the now-phase of conscious experience – the conscious experience of what is occurring *now* - is a non-instantaneous interval of subjective-time.⁴¹ Husserl argues for the living present conception primarily by rejecting its negation, the claim that the now-phase of conscious experience is temporally instantaneous or infinitely small. If such an account – a *momentary* account of experience – were correct, then we could not have experience of temporal objects.

Husserl’s rejection of momentary accounts of experience relies heavily on the claims that (1) the succession of experience is not the experience of succession and (2) momentary accounts of experience cannot, without being unfaithful to the actual character of experience, bridge this gap. I do not here wish to provide further explication of these claims, for three reasons. First: some contemporary momentary accounts of experience are more sophisticated than those available to Husserl, and do not obviously fall to this objection. Secondly: nevertheless, many phenomenologists do reject such accounts. This rejection is not implausible, and – dare I say – may be the predominant view. Those who reject momentary accounts of experience tend to implicate some form of temporally extended now of experience; disagreements in this camp tend to concern the exact structure of this now (and the relationships between moments), rather than its temporal extension *per se*.⁴²

Third: though I do not here attempt to conclusively argue against momentary accounts of experience, I think it reasonable to bar them from present consideration. We have already seen that Strawson rejects such accounts, instead endorsing a temporally extended now conception

⁴¹ Most non-momentary phenomenological accounts of consciousness endorse the living present as the fundamental unit of subjective time.

⁴² Barry Dainton, Galen Strawson, and Dan Zahavi exemplify these disagreements.

(though, again, he may disagree as to the structure of the now). My current concern is to articulate Zahavi's Husserlian minimal self and weigh it against Strawson's SESMET, so it satisfies me to note that both notions reject momentariness and instead endorse the living present conception. A failure to reject momentary accounts will be a failure for THE MINIMAL SELF and SESMET alike.

2. *P-I-R*

Having argued for the living present conception of conscious experience, Husserl refines his transcendental question: how must the living present be structured in order for us to have experience of temporal objects? The answer is: protention-primal impression-retention, or "P-I-R." For Husserl, the living present is structured by three abstract functions (or "aspects"), which he calls protention, primal impression, and retention.⁴³

Protention, primal impression, and retention are abstract functions ubiquitous to every moment of conscious experience; these functions provide for the diachronic unity of consciousness and its intentional content, allowing for our experience of temporal objects. Husserl speaks of moments or "phases" of consciousness in order to refer to the intentional content of consciousness as occurring at some time or other, but these phases are merely abstractions; consciousness has a temporal structure, each moment ultimately becoming past and making way for new experience (every experience passes as new experience becomes present). Through the P-I-R structure, the living present is continuous with past conscious experience as well as possible experience to come. Every moment of experience is structured by P-I-R, and so by its abstract functions:

⁴³ The hyphens of "P-I-R" are important. These are abstract features of the living present, which can be conceptually separated for the purposes of analysis, but which are not metaphysically separable. I will illustrate, in the present discussion and also in Chapters 3 and 4, that conscious experience (for Husserl) is a function of all three aspects, and cannot arise from any one or two in isolation. In other words, the living present is a *singular* concrete thing with a complex *abstract* structure – protention-primal impression-retention.

primal impression, which allows for the consciousness of an object (a musical note, for example) that is simultaneous with the current phase of consciousness;

retention, which retains previous phases of consciousness and their intentional content;

protention, which anticipates experience that is just about to happen.⁴⁴

Protention, primal impression, and retention are only *conceptually* separable from one another; these functions are abstract aspects of the intentionality of consciousness, which is itself an indivisible and necessary structure of conscious experience.⁴⁵ Talk of each function individually calls attention to the various temporal dimensions to which consciousness is directed, but every moment of conscious experience – according to Husserl – is necessarily shaped by all three: every phase of consciousness is simultaneously directed-towards what is currently being, has recently been, and could soon be experienced. The hyphens in “P-I-R” are significant, representing the inseparability, from each other and from conscious experience itself, of these three functions – they are different aspects of the singular intentional structuring of any moment of consciousness.

Husserl’s preferred illustrative example was that of a melody. Consider the hearing of a melody, consisting of the sequential notes A-B-C-D. Furthermore, allow that C is the currently sounding note, which you are currently hearing; A and B have already sounded and been heard. Your present conscious experience – the now-phase of experience, or the living present – contains a primal impression of the note C, is directed-towards and about C. The now-phase, then, is an *awareness* of C: a phase of conscious experience is an awareness of some thing, X, insofar as X is intentional content for that phase of conscious experience.

⁴⁴ Shaun Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 191. These definitions are consistent with Zahavi’s usage, and I believe with Husserl’s.

⁴⁵ Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind*, 123-7.

In order for the now-phase to also be an awareness of the melody – to experience a *melody* rather than isolated notes – the now-phase must also be directed towards the notes that have already sounded, as well as the notes that may soon sound; C must be experienced in a certain temporal context. First focus on the notes already sounded. A and B, though past, must also be given to the now-phase of experience, appropriately connected to each other and to C, in order to hear A-B-C as the melody thus far. A and B, however, cannot feature in your current experience in the same way as does C, as primal impression. The primal impression is the consciousness of an object as presently occurring; were A and B still intended as impressions, we would experience them as simultaneous with C, and A-B-C would be experienced as a chord rather than a melody.⁴⁶ Instead, A and B are *retained*, or intended distinctly *as past*; the now-phase is intentionally directed at C as the occurrent note, at B *as* just heard, and at A *as* heard prior to B.

Thus, the living present is not only an awareness of what is occurring now, but also of what has recently occurred. The now-phase, then, is intentionally directed at past experience *as* past experience: A and B are not experienced as simultaneous with C, nor as simultaneous with one another – B is experienced as prior to C and more recent than A. This past (and, as we will see, future) directed-ness of the living present constitutes a temporal horizon, a continuum of conscious experience in which contents are temporally ordered by the P-I-R structure. Figure 2.2 is illustrative.

⁴⁶ More accurately: first as A, then as the chord A-B, and finally as the chord A-B-C. By definition, the primal impression of C provides a consciousness of C as simultaneous with the now-phase. If A and B were simultaneous with the now-phase, they would be simultaneous with C; simultaneity is a transitive relation.

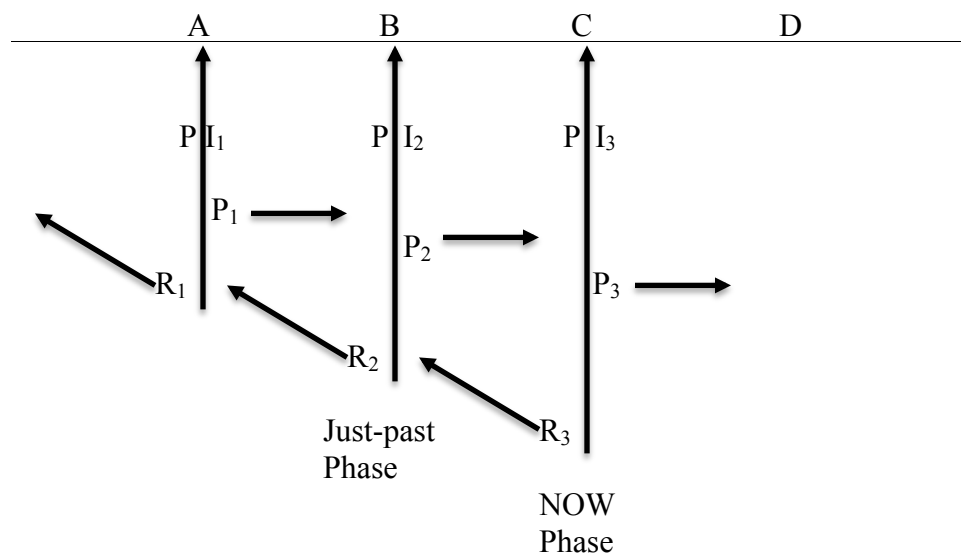


Figure 2.2: Husserlian Time-consciousness⁴⁷

“PI_t” represents the primal impression occurring at time t, with “P_t” and “R_t” as protention and retention, respectively, and similarly indexed. I will here refer to a phase of consciousness occurring at time t by referencing the content of PI_t, e.g., the phase at t=3 is the “C-phase.” The C-phase, here, is also the “now-phase,” the phase occurring *now*.

What is the intentional content of the C-phase? First (patently), the note C. C is the primal impression of the C-phase (and its namesake). The C-phase is an awareness of C as the currently sounding note. Second, the C-phase is directed towards just-past experience; it is a retentional awareness of the B-phase, and thus all of its content – including its own retention of the A-phase. This is how Husserl’s “retentional continuum” gets off the ground. Barring protention for now, the C-phase is a retentional awareness of both PI₂ and R₂. Thus, B is retained by the C-phase as a retention of an impression, while A (and all A-phase content) is retained by the C-phase as a retention of a retention – the retention of the past B-phase. The C-phase is an

⁴⁷ Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 191; this is Gallagher’s illustration, which approximates Husserl’s own model. The latter is, in my opinion, less clear, but amounts to the same thing. Robert Jordan has developed a much more detailed illustrative diagram, which I have found particularly useful, but which is presently superfluous.

awareness of the A-phase by being a retentional awareness of the B-phase, which was itself a retentional awareness of the A-phase.

This gets us a retentional continuum, and thus temporal index of intentional contents of experience. We can symbolize the C-phase retention of the B-phase as $R_3(B)$. R_3 is a retention of all of B's intentional content, and thus of its retention. Focusing on retention, we can further symbolize R_3 as $R_3(R_2(A))$ – the A-phase is a retention of a retention, relative to the C-phase. This recursion stretches beyond our diagram of course, and so we can illustrate the retentional continuum by further symbolizing R_3 as $R_3(R_2(R_1(\dots)))$. Retention is just one abstract aspect of P-I-R, and so each R_t is experienced alongside PI_t and P_t . As intentional contents are further retained, they are experienced as more distant from current experience – A as prior to B, as prior to C, and so on.

Before moving onto protention, it is important to note that this P-I-R structure – the directedness of conscious experience towards past, present, and future experience – is *pre-reflective*, but *experientially manifest* (faithful to and evident in experience). While hearing C, we needn't explicitly recall A and B in an act of reflective memory to be aware of the melody. Instead, we effortlessly *hear A-B-C as a melody* through a pre-reflective impression of C, retention of B, and more distant retention of A. That this process is entirely pre-reflective is clear if we consider another temporal object: a sentence.⁴⁸ Consider the hearing of the spoken sentence “Let's go for a walk.” Upon the hearing of “walk,” there is no need to explicitly reflect on your previous experiences in order to locate the words no longer being spoken; rather, when we hear “walk,” the previous words are still experientially available. We experience sentences *as* sentences, not as sets of isolated words that must be reflected upon and explicitly woven into

⁴⁸ Like the melody, this specific example will illustrate a point about the conscious experience of temporal objects in general.

sentences, nor as sets of simultaneously occurrent words overlapping one another in a kind of incomprehensible verbal mish-mash.

Though this structure is pre-reflective, it undergirds reflection; it is unclear how I might reflect on the note I previously heard had I not heard it to begin with.⁴⁹ The task of reflection is tending to content already given, not to imagine new content. I can reflect on the B previously experienced only if I have previously experienced that B. Furthermore, and importantly, I can also reflect on my previous *experience* of B – I can explicitly recall and tend to my own *experiencing* of B. This entails that the experience itself, and not merely its objective content, is given pre-reflectively.⁵⁰

To summarize P-I-R thus far: impressions are impressions-for some phase of conscious experience or other – they are one intentional aspect of conscious experience – and the same holds true of retentions and protentions, specifically that they are retentions- and protentions-for some phase or other. A retentional continuum is constituted by retention, a recursive process each iteration of which provides a temporal index for corresponding impressions (and protentions). This “index” is manifest in pre-reflectively experiencing some contents as more past than others, since these contents are retained precisely *as past*, more or less distant from the now-phase impression, as reflected by their position in the continuum. As a final note before proceeding: Husserl argues that, as phases fade into the past, so do our retentions of their contents, becoming more indeterminate until they are hardly anything at all in relation to the now, perhaps only being available for reflection, and even then to varying degrees of clarity.⁵¹

⁴⁹ This point is important for the discussion of “ownership” in Chapter 3 and onward. Of course, I can reflect on an imagined note, an abstract “C,” but to do so requires imagination to provide an “experience” of this note; in any case, I must have some experience as of the note to reflect on it.

⁵⁰ This is important throughout Chapter 3, especially in section 5 on subjectivity.

This seems accurate to our common understanding of reflective memory: as time passes, memory becomes less distinct.

So what of protention? Protention is similar to retention, but different in at least one important way: while retention allows a current experience to be directed towards past experience with determinate content, protention allows for an *open-ended* anticipation of future experience. Protention is fallible, and can vary in degree of qualification. First: Insofar as the future is indeterminate, or at least insofar as we cannot reliably predict it, our protention of future experience is fallible – we can always be wrong regarding our expectations. Second: our anticipations can be highly qualified, perhaps as the expectation of highly specific experiential content (such as a particular note); alternatively, they can be immensely minimal, perhaps as the mere pre-reflective anticipation that conscious experience will continue. Retention is not open in either of these ways: it is generally reliable, retaining what has actually been experienced, and is qualified accordingly.

Consideration of the previous examples will help to illustrate that protention is open-ended, pre-reflective, and experientially manifest. If the melody A-B-C-D is a familiar one, or if we are suitably acquainted with musical theory and sensitive to context (the musician's style, the mood of the song thus far, etc...) we will anticipate D.⁵² I believe that the best support for the pre-reflective nature of the protentional structuring of experience is the possibility of surprise. If A-B-C-D is a familiar tune, you would be surprised if a G, not D, followed C. Even if you were listening to the tune as mere background noise, being primarily engaged in thesis work (for instance), you might be surprised to hear this unexpected note.

⁵¹ Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893-1917)*, trans. John Barnett Brough (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 11-75, 89, 110, 116.

⁵² Perhaps more intuitively, upon hearing an A followed by an E, one might expect a G.

Even if the tune is unfamiliar, you might be surprised to hear a note that is out of key; you weren't expecting any note in particular, but you may have at least expected it to be in key. Maybe you didn't even expect this much.... Perhaps, you would only be surprised if the song were to end abruptly on C; all you expected was to continue experiencing the melody, and you were surprised when this expectation went unfulfilled. Whether or not you actively pay attention to the melody, whether or not you explicitly think "The next note will be a D," or "I will continue to experience the melody," or even "I will continue to experience *at all*," you still have certain expectations that can be or fail to be met.

Furthermore, consider the sentence: "Let's go for a..." We very often complete one another's sentences, or guess as to an ending that would make sense.⁵³ Upon hearing "Let's go for a..." you might interrupt with "Walk? Sure!" If the speaker corrected you, "No, I was going to say let's go for a beer," this would likely not shock you, even though you expected something else. Had you not interrupted and instead let the speaker finish, "Let's go for a ceiling fan!" you might be quite confused, and if they didn't finish their sentence *at all*, you would feel completely unsatisfied (perhaps demanding completion: "Let's go for a... what?").

Returning to figure 2.2: the now-phase open-endedly and pre-reflectively protends the D-phase – the intentional contents of the *next* moment of experience (notice: there is no vertical arrow nor P-I-R markers from the D-phase, only an open-ended protention (P₃) directed towards it). Every moment of experience will eventually be past, giving way to a new moment of experience – the *living present* being an indexical referring to the presently occurring phase of consciousness – and we anticipate that this is the case. A new moment of experience will not only follow the current one, but will then *retain* the current one. Just as in the case of retention, the anticipation of future experience will be an (open-ended) anticipation of that experience's

⁵³ For a further elaboration through this example, see Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 192.

contents: the melody will conclude in ‘D,’ the speaker will suggest a walk, or – perhaps – I am utterly unsure of what will happen next, though I am confident that *something* will. We pre-reflectively anticipate some contents or others, but could be wrong; whether or not we formulate explicit expectations, it is precisely when something *unexpected* happens that we can be surprised.⁵⁴

Intentionality, as presented, itself has two abstract aspects. Insofar as each moment of experience is about previous and future possible moments of experience, experience is phase-directed. The past and future intentional contents intended at a given moment are intended precisely as they were or will be experienced – the C-phase does not blindly intend notes in a vacuum, but instead notes as experienced, the notes actually given, in relation to one another, to various phases of consciousness within a continuum.⁵⁵ Husserl calls the phase-directed intentionality of conscious experience “longitudinal intentionality.” Referring to figure 2.2, longitudinal intentionality is represented by the diagonal and horizontal retentional and protentional arrows (respectively). In its longitudinal sense, each abstract phase of consciousness is connected to each other, and this provides for a certain continuity between phases.⁵⁶ Furthermore, in its longitudinal sense, each moment of experience is an awareness of other

⁵⁴ “Explicit” can here be read as “reflective,” i.e., whether or not we reflect on our experience and theorize about what might occur next. These terms might not be perfectly coextensive throughout this work, but I think that this reading of “explicit” is here acceptable.

⁵⁵ Not only are these notes intended specifically as they occur in some temporal context, but they are even presented as objects amongst others – the sound of C comes at the same time as a certain visual perception of my laptop, a tap on the keyboard, etc.

⁵⁶ This is not to argue that experience is not “gappy,” in Strawson’s sense, but does fuel an argument (in Chapter 4, section 3) that those kinds of “gaps” are not necessarily problematic. Longitudinal intentionality at least provides *connectedness* of experiences.

moments, and thus the continuum of experiences is a self-awareness of the continuum.⁵⁷ This self-awareness is the central topic of Chapter 3.

While longitudinal intentionality provides for a unified collection of temporally ordered intentional contents across various moments of experience, “transverse intentionality” is the directed-ness of consciousness towards the intentional objects that these contents and their relations constitute. The awareness of a note is inseparable from its temporal context – from the way in which we experience it – and so is fundamentally a temporal awareness: it is an awareness of a note as constituted by occurrent intentional contents of experience (P-I-R), and thus in relation to other moments of experience. But the note is experienced *as an object*, and not merely as experience: we have an awareness of the note as something outside of consciousness to which conscious experience is exposed to, and that we have an awareness *of*, rather than taking the note to be that awareness itself. The melody is similar, but even more obviously temporal and distinct from one moment of experience or other: the melody is an object constituted by various notes each experienced in certain temporal contexts and in certain relation and continuity to one another; the melody is a thoroughly temporal object, experienced as something singular that persists across the moments of experience to which its constituents are disclosed.

While longitudinal intentionality refers to the awareness of intentional contents as they are experienced – as impressions, retentions, and protentions of various moments in relation to one another – transverse intentionality refers to awareness of the objects which these contents constitute – notes, melodies, sentences... Longitudinal and transverse intentionality are inextricably connected: we experience the impression, retention, and protention for the C-phase

⁵⁷ “Self-awareness” implies the existence of a self no more than does “self-sealing,” attributed to a jar. The jar seals itself, and the continuum is an awareness of itself, implying no entities beyond jars and continuums. (I *believe* this analogy is Strawson’s, but I cannot find the source).

as an experiential object, the note C, experienced in a certain way, this note being itself experienced as a phase of the melody A-B-C-D, an object constituted by our awareness of its constituent notes over time and thus experienced as persisting across those awarenesses. Talk of transverse intentionality allows us to focus on the objects intended by consciousness, while talk of longitudinal intentionality allows us to focus on the way in which these objects are intended: consciousness is directed towards objects by being directed towards our conscious experiences of them.

3. Object-Intentionality

The above considerations are meant to be illustrative of the temporality of consciousness generally. On figure 2.2, A-B-C-D need not refer to the notes of a melody; instead, we can take each letter to designate the impressionable content of some temporal object as presented to consciousness at some time, with our awareness of that object being constituted by our temporal awareness of each impression in its context. At a moment, we may call the impression of some object in its temporal context (the impression, retention, and protention of a given phase of consciousness as directed towards some object) an “object-phase,” e.g., the note “C” in its temporal context is an object-phase of the melody A-B-C-D. An object-phase is just certain object-directed intentional content of some phase of consciousness, which makes essential reference to previous and future phases; the awareness of an object requires the awareness of our experiences of it, in response to Husserl’s transcendental question. In any case, it is transverse intentionality that refers to the object-directedness of conscious experience, and for this reason I will use the terms “transverse intentionality” and “object-intentionality” interchangeably.

4. Conclusion

We now have a phenomenological account of object-persistence-experience: conscious experience is directed towards objects by being directed towards our experiences of them, through the working of the fundamental intentional structure of experience, P-I-R, a pre-reflective and experientially manifest singular structure composed by three abstract functions and derived from phenomenological investigation.

In section 2, I argued that “the continuum of experiences is a self-awareness of the continuum,” on the grounds that it is intentionally directed towards itself through longitudinal intentionality, and therefore is an awareness of itself. Since the continuum of conscious experience, or “stream,” is intentionally directed at itself, we can call the awareness of the stream a *reflexive* self-awareness. In Chapter 3, I argue that the reflexive self-awareness of the stream grounds minimal senses of ownership and agency, “subject-intentionality” (and subjectivity), and therefore a specific kind of subject of experience. Comparing this subject, THE MINIMAL SELF, with SESMET, I argue that they are equally legitimate *prima facie* candidate selves.

Chapter 3: The Minimal Self

1. *Sense of Ownership*

Reflexive self-awareness allows Zahavi to articulate the sense of *ownership* – the pervasive, pre-reflective experience of our conscious states *as our* conscious states. Awareness of anything at all is implicitly self-awareness of the stream; our given experiences are always already experiences of their own givenness, through longitudinal intentionality. Every experience, as it occurs, is experience for the living present – given to the perspective of the now – specifically as it is situated within the rest of the stream with which it is continuous. In other words: every moment of experience, regardless of content, is experienced as belonging to the stream, the way in which we experience shaped precisely by this relation.

The reflexive self-awareness of the stream implicit in any experience, shaping experience as belonging to the stream, also *individuates* streams: for any experience, it belongs to *some* stream but not *others*.⁵⁸ Streams are constituted by the longitudinal connections that unify their phases, and the reflexive self-awareness of any moment of experience is the awareness of the phases to which it stands in longitudinal relation. But your experiences stand in no longitudinal relation to my experiences.⁵⁹ Though I might be able to become aware of your experiences

⁵⁸ Jonardon Ganeri argues that Zahavi's minimal self *qua* reflexive self-awareness does not individuate streams – this is his “attenuation objection”: either Zahavi embraces embodiment, in which case it is embodiment that is individuating, or he does not, in which case streams are not individuated at all for Zahavi. I believe that Ganeri is mistaken in this objection: first-personal givenness, one upshot of reflexive self-awareness *does* individuate streams, as is argued immediately above. The minimal self does not easily fit into Ganeri's (otherwise quite impressive) taxonomy of selves, and it is this sorting failure that fuels Ganeri's objection. Though Zahavi is relatively quiet regarding embodiment, I suspect that he (as does Shaun Gallagher) would endorse the thesis that consciousness is necessarily embodied consciousness. Nevertheless, it can be argued (I think) that it is the minimal self *qua* reflexive self-awareness, rather than embodiment per se, that individuates streams. Thought experiments in which conscious perspectives “switch bodies” illustrate the point, but I cannot further elaborate here. Jonardon Ganeri, *The Self: Naturalism, Consciousness, & the First-Person Stance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

(through expressive behavior, theory of mind, or some other preferred “mind-reading” model), I cannot become *reflexively self-aware* of them; if I could, they would necessarily belong to my own stream. Awareness of *your* experience (visual sensation, pain, thought, etc.) is transverse awareness of that which stands outside of my stream as an object of awareness – albeit a complex one.⁶⁰

This is the crucial point: in being transversely aware of your experiences, even if only as objects of contemplation, I do not *live through them*; to recognize your pain, and even empathize with it, is still not to live through or experience *your* pain. In contrast, I am immediately acquainted with *my* pain – I live through it, and it feels like something to do so. In this way, the experiences within some stream are given first-personally (or “subjectively” – more on this in section 4) for that stream, the awareness of the stream being a reflexive self-awareness of its phases specifically as first-personally given, or lived through. Nothing but some stream’s experiences is given in this way to that stream.⁶¹

Zahavi also refers to this first-personal givenness of experience (experiences of some stream are longitudinally given, as lived through, for that stream alone) as the “for-me-ness” or “mine-ness” or sense of ownership of experience. This sense of ownership is minimalistic, roughly amounting to an experientially manifest structural distinction between the stream that an experience is reflexively self-aware of and everything – streams, melodies, sunsets... – that it is

⁵⁹ I am using “you” and “my” colloquially here, to distinguish empirical persons; I tackle the issue of first-person attribution near immediately above.

⁶⁰ The distinction between the awareness of *my* experience and *your* experience can here be read as a distinction between the awareness of an experience that belongs to the same stream as that awareness of it, and an awareness of an experience that does not; the latter awareness will necessarily be an object awareness, as it cannot be characterized by reflexive self-awareness.

⁶¹ Your experiences might be given that way for you – first-personally, as lived – but they are not given in this way to me. Objects other than experiences, such as chairs, are not even given in this way to me, since they are only given to me through my first-person experience of them. Contents of experience could only be said to be “lived through” insofar we live through our experiences of them.

not reflexively self-aware of. Zahavi's sense of ownership is *perspectival* ownership: experiences are given to the stream first-personally and our awareness of these experiences is implicitly a reflexive self-awareness of the stream as the perspective to which they are given. Perspectival ownership undergirds any *phenomenological* distinction we might draw between "self" and "not self" such that no two experiences will fall on the "self" side if they do not belong to the same stream.⁶²

Zahavi's sense of ownership should be contrasted with what is sometimes called "personal" ownership.⁶³ To *personally* own an experience is to experience it, pre-reflectively, as one's own, as "mine," or perhaps as belonging to the *self* rather than merely the stream. It does not seem possible to experience anything as "mine" had it not been given first-personally to the stream, thus perspectival ownership is necessary for personal ownership; this one reason Zahavi calls the former a "minimal" or "basic" sense of ownership. (Proceeding, I often qualify my use of "ownership", but where I do not, I always use "ownership" in Zahavi's perspectival sense.)

Ownership does not depend on first-personal *attributions* such as "mine" and "I" (nor does individuation depend on second-person attributions such as "yours").⁶⁴ Ownership is reflected in such attributions, however, as a necessary condition of their possibility. Zahavi writes:

⁶² Any experience belonging to your stream is not experienced as "*mine*" by anyone but you. (I believe that Strawson could also accept this point, though he would have to understand "streams" and "self" in such a way as to accommodate his transience view; I don't believe it would be problematic to do so.) I take reflexive self-awareness *qua* first-personal givenness to be a kind of "phenomeno-ecological" feature of experience: it distinguishes the stream itself from everything else that stream may be aware of.

⁶³ Miri Albahari, "Nirvana and Ownerless Consciousness" in *Self, No Self? Perspectives from Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian Traditions*, ed. Mark Siderits et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 84; Zahavi, "The Experiential Self: Objections and Clarifications," 61.

⁶⁴ These attributions needn't be linguistic; we can explicitly consider our own experience as our own even if its ownership goes unarticulated, or even tell stories to "ourselves". These sorts of attributions, as I understand the view, are what Gallagher calls "autobiographical," and to some degree constitute a kind of narrative self.

...it would be impossible to account for these explicit forms of self-ascription, where we recognize an experience as being our own, if it was not for the fact that our experiential life is fundamentally characterized by for-me-ness, and by the primitive and minimal form of self-reference it entails. To put it differently, a minimal or thin form of self-experience is a condition of the possibility for the more articulated forms of conceptual self-consciousness that we incontestably enjoy from time to time. Had our experiences been completely anonymous or impersonal when originally lived through, any subsequent appropriation would be inexplicable.⁶⁵

Experiences are first-personally given, lived through as belonging to an individuated stream constituted by their longitudinal unification. Autobiographical self-attribution implicates the first-personal givenness or sense of ownership already implicit in the subjectivity of experience, at either one moment of experience or the unification of many. Both pre-reflectively and in reflection, we are consciously aware of our experiences as they relate to the rest of their stream; in being first-personally given to some stream, our experiences are primarily given as *owned* by that stream, and this undergirds our more explicit attributions of ownership.⁶⁶

Regarding ownership, not all reflexive self-awareness is equal: retention and protention, in their longitudinal direction, are both directed at moments of experience, but only the moments retained have been given first-personally. Protention provides for some anticipation that an experience *will* be first-personally given to the stream – will be lived through and come to belong to the stream – but this has not yet occurred. I cannot own something I may soon but have yet to acquire.⁶⁷ Therefore, it is the reflexive self-awareness of the stream *as having already occurred* – longitudinal *retention* – that structures experience as first-personally given and owned.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Thor Grünbaum and Dan Zahavi, “Varieties of Self-Awareness” in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Psychiatry*, ed. K. W. M. Fulford et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 221-239.

⁶⁶ Ownership (here) does not implicate an ego (in any strong sense).

⁶⁷ There are different kinds of ownership that I have not here explicated, but I believe that this comment is true of ownership in general.

⁶⁸ Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 193: “The function of retention... is, in part, to provide a sense of ownership for thought”. One subtlety must be noted: experience at the current moment, not just as retained, must be first-personally given as well. I do not think this is problematic, due to my views of present experience and

Zahavi further grounds this sense of pre-reflective ownership as an intrinsic feature of consciousness by arguing against the “internal object” interpretation of Husserlian time-consciousness.⁶⁹ I present this argument in section 5, connecting the sense of ownership with our awareness of the *subject* of experience. First, however, I discuss longitudinal *protention*: we anticipate first-personal experience *yet to be given*, and Shaun Gallagher grounds a basic sense of agency – “the sense of proto-agency,” or just “proto-agency” for short – in this kind of anticipation.

2. Sense of Proto-Agency

Reflexive self-awareness allows Shaun Gallagher to articulate a *minimal* sense of agency – the pre-reflective experience of actions (movement, thought...) as originating within or being generated by our own consciousness or stream. I call this the sense of *proto-agency*, in contrast with what I sometimes call a “full-blown” sense of agency – the pre-reflective experience of being the volitional initiator or source of some action.⁷⁰ All awareness, including awareness of action, is awareness against a temporal horizon, or context in the stream. This temporal horizon is constituted by retention and by protention. While retention provides a sense of ownership over experience, protention anticipates future possible experience *as* experience that will be given to the stream – as experience that will soon be impressed upon and subsequently retained by the stream, in relation to the stream’s other experiences. Protention intends experience as it will be given to the stream – as it will originate within or be generated by the stream – and thus provides a sense of proto-agency over actions thus experienced.

ownership: if an experience is not retained it is as if it had not been given at all, and thus is not owned. This is consistent with Husserl, and I elaborate this point in Chapter 4.

⁶⁹ Dan Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood: Investigating the First-Person Perspective* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005), 59-65.

⁷⁰ I will often refer to this “full-blown” sense of agency simply as the sense of agency.

Minimally, protention will anticipate that some experience or other, *otherwise completely unqualified*, will be given to the stream. Normally we have a sense of proto-agency over our own experiences *qua* experience, though we may not have any such sense over experiential contents. When actions are correctly anticipated in a certain way, they will also be experienced with a sense of proto-agency. Examples help.

In normal cases of intentional voluntary action, the senses of ownership and full-blown agency coincide: when I intend to do something, and I proceed to act accordingly, I experience the action immediately as my own creation and undergoing.⁷¹ Notice that the sense of agency is forward directed, or anticipatory, in this normal case; there is an anticipation of action and a corresponding intent prior to the experience of agented action. The sense of agency is already at play here; were I to intend an action and act appropriately, I would feel my agency to be undermined were it not to occur in accordance with my anticipation.⁷²

The senses of ownership and agency do not *necessarily* coincide, however, and involuntary action clearly illustrates this: when I am unexpectedly shoved, I am aware that I am not the initiator of my movement, but rather that *someone else* has shoved *me*. Similarly, no full-blown feeling of initiation or authorship tends to accompany my unwilled queries, the songs I cannot get out of my head, or other unbidden thoughts. Though we can experience both bodily and mental actions as owned, we can lack a sense of agency over them. Unbidden thoughts, however, are typically accompanied by a sense of proto-agency, while unexpected shoves are not. Gallagher writes, “we have a sense that these thoughts are coming from ourselves, rather

⁷¹ “Intend” does not here refer to directedness or about-ness, as above (in “intentionality”), but rather is meant in the colloquial sense of agentive intent, or willful volition.

⁷² That is, were the action to be other than what I expected/intended, or if it were subverted completely. Gallagher (Ibid.) argues further that agency is forward directed or anticipatory, linking cognitive and bodily actions to the same, forward-directed mechanisms, and independently arguing that a sense of *bodily* agency is anticipatory; this latter point, at least, is commonly accepted.

than from some alien source.”⁷³ Unbidden thoughts, even if *not intended*, are normally experienced as originating within or generated by my own consciousness.

The sense of proto-agency is necessary but not sufficient for the sense of agency.⁷⁴ If some action is not experienced as originating within or generated by my consciousness, it is difficult to see how I might experience it as my own agentic creation.⁷⁵ What else, then, would be sufficient for a full-blown sense of agency? I am not sure. Intent is as good a first stop as any. I have suggested that a sense of agency usually corresponds to intentional, voluntary action, while a sense of proto-agency relative to some action does not entail that the action is experienced as intentional (e.g. unbidden thoughts). However, I can neither argue for the necessity or sufficiency of intent for a full-blown sense of agency, nor am I convinced of either.

I think it is a safe bet, however, to claim that whatever else is necessary will be *contentful*. Proto-agency is the term given to the sense of origination or generation provided by the formal structure of longitudinal protention – minimally, we expect that experience will be given to the stream, and have a sense of proto-agency over such experience. Contents of experience, however, can serve to further qualify and shape this experience-to-be. Habituation, correlative learning, reflection on previous actions (and on our own causal capacities) seem like some fine mechanisms to shape our expectations. Reflection on my previous actions, for example, can not only inform my expectations of content to come, but can also shape the

⁷³ Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 194.

⁷⁴ Gallagher (Ibid., 193) argues that longitudinal protention “underlies the sense of agency for thought, [as a] necessary but not a sufficient condition for the sense of agency” (brackets mine).

⁷⁵ It need not be *true* that some action is generated by my stream, but rather just that I *experience* it so.

affective tonality of experience – how experience feels; If I have previously brought about action X successfully, my intending of X might be shaped by a kind of confidence in my performance.⁷⁶

More fundamentally, however, these contents can inform what I *minimally* expect. In the case of unbidden thoughts, for instance, it seems that we have a sense of proto-agency precisely because we have learned, over time, that any thought we own has been in some way generated by us; our own thoughts correlate with the creative capacities of our own consciousness. This correlation, I claim, can extend or *inform* proto-agency beyond its purely formal application, and endow certain kinds of actions – e.g., one’s own thoughts, regardless of contents and even as unintended – with a sense of proto-agency. This does not necessarily yield a sense of agency, however.

Normal voluntary actions – ones for which we tend to have a sense of agency – seem to have well-qualified intentional content. When I intend to speak, I often have a good idea of what is going to happen (though I could be wrong): there will be sensations of bodily movements, some of which I will have only marginal awareness, words spoken in my voice will be produced and heard, some particular idea will be expressed (hopefully adequately), etc.⁷⁷ It is difficult to think of an action that is only vaguely intentionally qualified over which I nevertheless have an experiential sense of agency. I think it is reasonable to conclude that the sense of agency requires a sense of proto-agency as well as certain intentional content, e.g., a specific action (perhaps intended), as will occur in a certain time-frame and in accordance with my known capacities.

⁷⁶ Gallagher (Ibid., 188) writes: “There is good evidence and there are good arguments to show that intentional content has an effect on the temporal structure of experience (Friedman 1990; Gallagher 1998; James 1890). Temporal structure is not purely formal. Experience speeds up or slows down according to what we are experiencing”. (I believe this claim to be central to Gallagher’s “narrative self,” but that is another discussion.)

⁷⁷ Note that even these specific expectations are, in part, shaped by what we have come to expect (by previous correlative development, including knowledge of our own capacities, cultural norms, etc.).

Though I do not know precisely what kinds of qualifications are required, I am confident that some kind of appropriately qualified content will be necessary for a sense of agency.

Proto-agency and agency may not be *absolutely* distinct, but rather lay on a spectrum: proto-agency, minimally, is formal, but can be informed and extended by intentional contents; if these contents are well-defined, articulate, or otherwise sufficiently qualified, a sense of proto-agency might “slide into” a sense of agency. Proto-agency is apparently the *form* of agency; longitudinal protention provides the sense of proto-agency, which is the structure or framework necessary for a full-blown sense of agency, and the difference between the two senses seems to be primarily contentful and a matter of degree.⁷⁸ This is good news for Strawson: he denies that a sense of agency structures SELF-experience, which I can concede, though I suspect (i.e., insist) that even his own SELF-experience is structured by a sense of proto-agency.⁷⁹

Before supporting these claims with further considerations, note that proto-agency and agency are both *pre-reflective*; these senses are intrinsic to experience, and accompany it (when they do) prior to reflection. Reflective ascriptions of agency, however, implicate the pre-reflective sense of agency already present in certain experiences, which depends on a more primary pre-reflective sense of proto-agency as well as certain intentional contents.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ This difference in terms of content and degree suggest that the connection between proto-agency and agency is not *ad hoc*, but rather that agency is a kind of extension built on proto-agency.

⁷⁹ Strawson seems to suggest that “an endurantist metaphysical lean” is a typical (or perhaps even necessary) characteristic of those who tend to experience themselves as agents. However, we might construe this as a contentful qualification on action, or at least the product thereof (“meshes with my endurantist worldview” could be either a content or an affective tonality based on contents).

⁸⁰ Remember that longitudinal protention is necessary and sufficient for a sense of proto-agency; proto-agency just is the sense of longitudinal protention, which always accompanies experiences themselves (though perhaps not experiential contents) *in normal cases*. I shortly consider abnormal cases.

3. Support from Psychopathology

Shaun Gallagher motivates and supports the above through a philosophical and neurological exploration of various schizophrenia symptoms.⁸¹ He rejects prominent “sub-personal” models (ones that appeal solely to unconscious, neurological mechanisms) of these symptoms, arguing that a phenomenological understanding of the temporal structure of consciousness, i.e., P-I-R, is necessary for an adequate explanation.⁸² I do not here deal with his rejection of sub-personal models, but instead concern myself with his proposed alternative: many schizophrenia symptoms can be adequately explained in terms of protentional malfunction, or failure.

Gallagher claims that schizophrenics suffer general problems related to memory and temporality. He writes: “Schizophrenics have problems, not only with movement and self-reference, but also, among other things, with working, episodic, and autobiographical memory, and narrative construction.”⁸³ Furthermore,

Empirical studies show that schizophrenics experience difficulties in indexing events in time, and these difficulties are positively correlated to inner-outer confusions (manifested in symptoms such as auditory hallucinations, feelings of being influenced, delusional perceptions, and so forth), problems that involve distinguishing between self and non-self (Melges 1982; Melges and Freeman 1977). Other studies suggest that future time-perspective is curtailed in schizophrenia (Dilling and Rabin 1967; Wallace 1956). Schizophrenics have difficulty planning and initiating action (Levin 1984) and problems with temporal organization (DePue, Dubicki, and McCarthy 1975; Klonoff, Fibiger, and Hutton 1970). Bovet and Parnas (1993:584) describe these problems in general terms as an ‘impairment of self-temporalization’....⁸⁴

⁸¹ Ibid., throughout.

⁸² The primary sub-personal account Gallagher considers, Christopher Frith’s, suffers from a number of deficiencies that can more or less be generalized to other sub-personal models. These include “the uncertain status of an intention to think, the redundancy of efference in a system that involves conscious thought, the uncertain role of metarepresentation, the fact that the model does not explain misattribution of agency, and the other global problems” of schizophrenia (Ibid., 189).

⁸³ Ibid, 186

⁸⁴ Ibid. 197. He also notes that Singh *et al.* 1992 and Graybiel 1997 “have linked these temporalization problems with the same neurological dysfunctions involved in the schizophrenic’s voluntary movement.”

The take-away is, simply, that many schizophrenic symptoms would be the expected results of protentional malfunction. Protention, along with retention and impression, constitutes the stream of experience and the indexes of experiences within it; were protention to fail relative to some experience, that experience would be without its normal temporal context, which affects the way in which it is impressed and subsequently retained. Protentional malfunction is just a failure to pre-reflectively anticipate experience in the normal way; such failures could clearly translate to planning and initiation problems, and could constitute a “curtailed future time-perspective,” i.e., a general inability to anticipate experience.⁸⁵

Protentional problems can also manifest, for the schizophrenic, as alienation pathology – the lack of a sense of proto-agency over some bodily or mental action. Schizophrenics often suffer a phenomenon known as “thought insertion,” in which they experience some of their own thoughts as originating outside of and inserted into one’s own consciousness (or stream). This sense of alienation is precisely a lack of the sense of proto-agency typical to one’s thoughts; I will return to the “insertion” part of this phenomenon, “misattributions of agency,” shortly. Alienation can also occur with regard to bodily action, in the form of delusions of bodily control: schizophrenics often report experiencing some of their own actions as created or generated by others, rather than as generated by themselves. A sense of ownership *is* present in both cases, however – the alien action is given to the schizophrenic (“It is inserted into *my* mind – *I* undergo it”).

⁸⁵ According to Gallagher (Ibid., 196), a schizophrenic patient of Minkowski (1993, 277) reports: “There is an absolute fixity around me. I have even less mobility for the future than I have for the present and past. There is a kind of routine in me which does not allow me to envisage the future. The creative power in me is abolished. I see the future as a repetition of the past.” This last claim is especially interesting; if protentional were to malfunction while retention continued to operate normally, we would expect to only experience “the future” as it passed into retention – we would experience what was going to happen only as it already happened and was retained, perhaps as a “repetition” of the past.

The sense of proto-agency is precisely what drops out in cases of schizophrenic alienation pathology. If schizophrenics suffer protentional malfunctioning generally, as suggested by the consideration of their general symptoms, this makes sense: longitudinal protention is an abstract function that structures conscious experience globally, thus structuring both mental and bodily action alike and in terms of where experience may or may not be heading – experience that will be given first-personally to, originating in or generated by, the stream – and providing a sense of proto-agency. Gallagher makes the connection between protention, proto-agency, schizophrenic alienation and general schizophrenia symptoms more clear through another non-pathology example: a sudden shout “Surprise!”

...There is no anticipation of the event, even of the most indeterminate kind. The event passes before I realize it is happening. In listening to someone form a sentence, I have a sense of how it is being formed; but in the case of the sudden shout, I catch onto it only as it comes into retention. Absent a properly directed protention, the sudden and quickly formed event is *already made* by the time I come to grasp it. Over the course of a second or two, however, an adjustment of attention will bring this event and whatever follows into its proper framework; I regain a sense of where the voice is coming from and its significance, and my experience is quickly put back on track. A similar surprise effect may be had, however, if, instead of an external event catching the protentional function off guard, something goes wrong with the protentional mechanism itself. Imagine my surprise if it was I who yelled ‘Surprise’, without any expectation on my part of doing so. Or, if in the case of an unbidden thought for which I have no sense of agency, something goes wrong with the normal anticipatory sense of what my own thinking will be, the result will be a sense that the thought is not generated by me.⁸⁶

In the absence of protention, there is no sense of generation by or origination within the stream. Barring even a minimal kind of anticipation of some action, the action will be surprising, and perhaps even confusing. The result will be the same whether the protentional mechanism itself fails or if some action is merely and genuinely unexpected (a wrong note, a nonsensical end to a sentence, a sudden shout of “Surprise!”...). The former case – mechanical failure – can result in actions *normally* accompanied by a sense of proto-agency (e.g., my own unbidden thoughts)

⁸⁶ Ibid., 195.

being experienced as alien, comparable to the sudden shout or unexpected shove. Gallagher concludes that, in alienation pathology, schizophrenic protentional malfunctioning causes proto-agency to drop out.⁸⁷

Schizophrenia and its symptoms are quite uncommon; what might cause these kinds of protentional malfunctions? Gallagher claims that intentional content (*what* we experience) can affect the temporal structure of consciousness, speeding up or slowing down subjective time.⁸⁸ Certain intentional contents can act as “triggers,” altering the temporality of experience and disrupting our normal protentional functioning. “This disruption [...] could cause a looping effect that would reinforce the affective trigger,” causing the disruptions to become more pervasive.⁸⁹ Schizophrenics may be neurologically predisposed to such disruptions.

I find Gallagher’s response only partly satisfactory; the general idea seems fine enough, but the devil may be in the details. First, we should ask for a more detailed account of these intentional “triggers.” Whether or not Gallagher’s proposal accurately describes schizophrenic alienation depends, in large part, on how we conceive of triggers. As I understand them, triggers are some kind of experiential content that affects the temporality of experience. More detailed information concerning this content would be conceptually useful, and could perhaps have practical applications.⁹⁰ Unfortunately, a clarification here may not even be available; perhaps

⁸⁷ For the intricacies of Gallagher’s illustration of and analysis of schizophrenic symptoms, I defer to his in depth consideration of the following studies: Frith and Done (1988) Shafer and Marcus (1973), Cole, Sacks, and Waterman (2000), Sørensen (2005), Deprati *et al.* (1997), and Franck *et al.* (2001) (Ibid. 173-205).

⁸⁸ See footnote 76, above.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 200: “Without protention, for example, it is quite possible that patients would experience the world as being invasive, ‘on top of them’, too close, etc., which are, in fact, experiences reported by schizophrenics.”

⁹⁰ If we knew precisely what made a content a “trigger,” we *might* be able to use this information to relieve schizophrenic alienation symptoms.

triggers vary widely from subject to subject. As such, I find this request to be an illustration of a potential explanandum rather than a critical demand.

Gallagher does provide *prima facie* support for claiming that intentional content and temporality issues can cause alienation symptoms, by considering certain studies in which visual and temporal perception are manipulated without the subject's knowledge.⁹¹ In one study, an agent is asked to draw a straight line between two points. The subject's hand is gloved and inserted into a box, being visible only through a scope atop the box. This box, unbeknownst to the subject, contains variable mirrors such that the subject will view either his hand or the gloved hand of the experimenter. When viewing the experimenter's hand, thinking it his own, the subject can be fooled by subtle discrepancies – if the tester misses the mark by up to 15 degrees, the senses of agency and proto-agency drop out. Interestingly, however, subjects still believe the hand to be their own up to discrepancies of about 30 degrees, and sometimes report *feeling* their own hand moving as manipulated against their control. Certain unanticipated actions can apparently cause proto-agency and agency to drop out, though retention and ownership not as affected. Similarly, if a temporal discrepancy of up to 150 msec is introduced between a subject's movement and their visual perception of it – perhaps by projecting movements via computer screen – the senses of agency and proto-agency drop out; at higher discrepancies, so does *personal* ownership.

While we might have evidence of a specific kind of trigger, a general conception is still lacking. Even if we had such a conception, however, we should still ask: are schizophrenics really neurologically predisposed to respond to these triggers in the proposed way? Again, Gallagher provides *some* evidence that this may be the case, but it is neither complete nor conclusive. First, we can refer back to the above experiments: schizophrenics lose a sense of

⁹¹ Ibid., 197-201.

personal ownership only at higher discrepancies than non-schizophrenics – about 80 degrees or 300msec. The interval in which schizophrenics potentially experience an action as personally (and thus perspectively) owned but not their creation is much larger than in non-pathological cases.

More support comes through neurological considerations. Many of the same brain areas in the motor, premotor, and prefrontal cortexes activate when performing or imagining one's own motor actions as activate when observing or imagining the motor actions of others.⁹² This overlapping activation is sometimes known as “motor resonance”. Important at present are the *non-overlapping* brain areas; in addition to the overlapping activation, different areas activate based on whether one experiences an action as self-caused or caused by another. When experiencing action as caused by others, there is activation in the right inferior parietal cortex, while action experienced as self-caused corresponds to bilateral activation in the anterior insula. This collection of brain areas, both overlapping and non-overlapping, is sometimes known as the ‘who system’; Bilateral activation in the anterior insula normally corresponds to the experience of agency over some action in question, while activation in the right inferior parietal cortex is associated with experience of actions as caused by others.⁹³ Gallagher concludes that a “close correspondence between all these signals helps to give us a sense of agency,” and that this holds for both bodily and mental action.⁹⁴

⁹² Ibid. 202

⁹³ Gallagher (Ibid.) notes that this activation pattern is “consistent with the idea that actions performed by others are perceptually mapped in allocentric coordinates,” while actions performed by oneself are mapped in egocentric spatial coordinates. Furthermore, “the anterior insula involves the integration of various kinds of self-specifying signals generated in movement: proprioceptive, visual, and auditory ecological information about movement, and the efference copy (or corollary discharge) associated with motor commands that control movement. It is likely, as Farrer and Frith conclude, that a close correspondence between all these signals helps to give us a sense of agency.”

⁹⁴ Ibid.; also see footnote 84, above

Schizophrenics exhibit abnormal ‘who-system’ functioning. During schizophrenic alienation pathology, as well as during the above discrepancy experiments, subjects have increased activity in the right inferior parietal lobe, which normally correlates to the experience of action caused by others.⁹⁵ This brings us back to “misattributions of agency” mentioned above: inserted thoughts, for example, are very often reported to be the work of some other agent, and this report now seems neurologically accurate; the schizophrenic brain registers alienated actions as caused by some other agent, evidenced by increased activity in the right inferior parietal lobe. Misattribution of agency is not a post-hoc explanation of otherwise inexplicable experience, as some thinkers have proposed, but rather a legitimate report of experiencing action as caused by some alien agent.

That there are correlations between time-consciousness and neurology is evidence for the schizophrenic pre-disposition that Gallagher is looking for. Additionally, these correlations evidence the relationship between protention and proto-agency and also support Husserlian time-consciousness as an accurate account thereof.

This brings me to my final concern with Gallagher’s proposed account: given these correlations, we might still ask for the exact *relationships* between the temporal structure of consciousness, intentional triggers, and the schizophrenic neurological pre-disposition in question. While my first two concerns left explanatory “wiggle room,” this concern is more philosophical; there is a neurological correlation here, but the connection is not obvious; we have evidence that there *are* triggers, but what exactly can be a trigger, and why? Granted a clear explanation of these precise relationships and concepts, we may have some idea *why* schizophrenics tend to suffer these problems, rather than just identifying the mechanism by which they do. This inadequacy is not necessarily a strike against the account of proto-agency

⁹⁵ Ibid., 203.

generally; we can still identify *that* longitudinal protention provides a sense of proto-agency, even if it is unclear *why* protention fails at times. Gallagher's account of protentional failure is unsatisfactory in the same way as Strawson's account of our lack of subject-persistence-experience: it leaves something unexplained, yet does not obviously undermine the theory generally.

Disruption in protention can apparently cause general temporality issues and alienation symptoms. Reflexive self-awareness *qua* first-personal givenness is phenomeno-ecological (see footnote 64, above) insofar as it discerns one's own stream from everything else; reflexive self-awareness *qua* proto-agency is likewise phenomeno-ecological insofar as it experientially distinguishes between actions that are self-caused (intended or not) and actions that are not. These distinctions normally provide experience with an affective tonality: the temporal structure of consciousness shapes how experience affects us, or how experience feels, in part by providing our normal pre-reflective senses of ownership and proto-agency. In this regard, Gallagher claims that abnormal protentional functioning can "shake the foundations of ... not only self and world, but self and other."⁹⁶

Ultimately, I find an account of proto-agency (a necessary condition of the sense of agency) in terms of longitudinal protention to be convincing: this phenomenological account uses limited resources to make sense of a wide range of experience, whether or not the underlying causes of protentional failure are specified. Our present considerations also seem to suggest that the sense of proto-agency is a necessary part of SELF-experience, though Strawson would deny that the sense of agency is likewise necessary; I happily concede this point, as I am uncertain of it but inclined to agree.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 201.

4. *Perspectivity and Personality*

Zahavi uses the “sense of ownership” to refer to *perspectival*, rather than *personal*, ownership. It might now be asked if the proto-agency/agency distinction is really an analogous perspectival/personal agency distinction. Proto-agency is a formal function of longitudinal protention that reveals the stream to be a kind of agentive perspective, while the “full-blown” sense of agency seems to be a personal sense of *oneself as an agent*, as the volitional or intentional thing or “me” that willingly brings about action. This may be true, but my choice of language is nevertheless quite deliberate and, I think, well motivated. The subtle differences between agency and proto-agency are somewhat neglected by Gallagher, but have been partially presented above. Focusing on these differences allows us to juxtapose agency with ownership, and illustrate the significant differences at the root of this asymmetry.

Longitudinal protention provides the sense of proto-agency, which can be extended to varying degrees by experiential contents to things we have come to expect. It has been suggested that proto-agency (the *form* of agency) and certain well-qualified experiential contents are necessary for the development of a full-blown sense of agency. I have also suggested that these may be jointly sufficient, but have not argued it.⁹⁷ Importantly, the sense of proto-agency can be extended contentfully and to varying degree, *without* yielding a full-blown sense of agency. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to believe that the difference between proto-agency and agency is a difference in *degree* (of qualified contents), not a difference in *kind*.

Longitudinal retention provides the sense of ownership, the pre-reflective sense that some experience has been first-personally given to the same stream as current experience. This relationship is purely formal, and Boolean: some experience is longitudinally retained specifically as past experience given to the stream, or is not – the specific contents of that

⁹⁷ See Section 2 above.

experience are irrelevant to whether or not they were given. Perspectival ownership does not seem amenable to contentful extension, as is proto-agency. Furthermore, the exact relationship between perspectival and personal ownership, beyond the (obvious) necessity of the latter on the former, is not entirely clear; what does it take to move from perspectival to personal ownership? It is reasonable to assume that any differences here must be either formal or contentful. If they are formal, however, then these kinds of ownership are not related in the same way as are proto-agency and agency, and we likely cannot call perspectival ownership the “form” of personal ownership. If the differences are contentful, then the asymmetry remains: perspectival ownership is not a matter of specific contents at all, no matter their degree of qualification. Therefore, whether the difference between perspectival and personal ownership is formal, contentful, or both, it appears to be a difference in *kind*, not in *degree*.

Longitudinal intentionality is necessary and sufficient for (corresponding) senses of perspectival ownership and proto-agency, but only the latter is amenable to contentful extension. This extension allows for the possibility of highly qualified actions experienced only proto-agentially, and even, perhaps, for less qualified ones to be experienced (at least by others) as thoroughly agentic. Regardless of content, however, every experience retained is retained as perspectively owned in precisely the same way. Personal ownership is not a “full-blown” version of perspectival ownership, but rather is a seemingly distinct *kind* of ownership.

This asymmetry is not all that peculiar, however, and really makes quite good sense: it is grounded in the contrast between protention as open-ended and retention as closed.⁹⁸ The senses of proto-agency and ownership are provided by longitudinal intentionality, and are essentially formal, though only proto-agency is amenable to contentful extension. Since protention is open-ended concerning content, the sense of agency is correspondingly open-ended: the sense of

⁹⁸ See Section 2 of Chapter 2 above.

agency over actions is partly a function of *matching* intentional contents – of an interplay between the abstract features of P-I-R, matching what is and was experienced with what was anticipated. The success of this matching can vary in degree, and agency can be seen as a highly successful matching of the right proto-agential contents (perhaps including an endurantist lean, as Strawson maintains...). Since retention is closed, however, the sense of *perspectival* ownership is correspondingly closed: perspectival ownership over some experience is independent of that experience's specific contents, since retention tends to reflect previous impression. In other words: no matter what is impressed on the stream – whether intended, expected, experienced as my own creation, or as a complete surprise – it is first-personally given and retained, or owned. Therefore, perspectival ownership tends to *correspond* to well-qualified retentional contents, but – unlike the sense of agency – is not *dependent* on (or established by) those contents.

All these senses – perspectival/personal ownership, proto-agency, and agency – are pre-reflective. Perspectival ownership is similar to the proto-agency insofar as they are both provided by the formal longitudinal intentionality of consciousness, but dissimilar in that only the latter is amenable to contentful extension. Perspectival ownership is similar to the sense of agency insofar as they both tend to correspond to well-qualified intentional contents, but dissimilar in that only the latter *depends* on these contents.

According to a Husserlian account of time-consciousness (expanded on, analyzed, and evidenced by, amongst others, Zahavi, Gallagher, and myself), the senses of perspectival ownership and proto-agency are built into the structure of conscious experience. The sense of proto-agency is the *form* of the sense of agency, which plausibly develops with the addition of

certain intentional contents. Therefore, insofar as the sense of proto-agency is built into the structure, so is the form of the sense of agency – its framework.

Though the structures responsible for these senses are formal, these senses shape experience – they provide the affective tonality of experience (the feeling of experience), *the sense of self*. Zahavi claims, “It is possible to describe the first-personal givenness [the sense of ownership] of an experience, that is, its very self-givenness or self-manifestation, as the most basic sense of self.”⁹⁹ Gallagher also connects P-I-R with the basic sense of self, writing:

The retentional-protentional structure of consciousness (specifically in its longitudinal aspect) is constitutive of self-identity within the changing flow of consciousness; it generates the basic sense of *auto-affection* or *ipseity*. This is the basic feeling of identity, of being the perspectival origin or one’s own experience, which is a basic component of the experienced differentiation of self from non-self. This feeling is an ‘affective tonality’ that is implicit to the structure of the stream of experience. We might say there is something it *feels like* to be me; something that is sometimes set askew, as when I’m sick I might say that I don’t quite feel myself today. This includes the sense that *I am the one who is experiencing*, explicated in terms of my senses of ownership and agency.¹⁰⁰

Though reflexive self-awareness provides senses of ownership and agency, it is not clear that we can thereby conclude that it provides a sense of self; recall that, at the outset, I claimed that phenomenological selves are typically figured as – amongst other things – subjects of experience. Any sense of self, or *feeling of being me*, must somehow implicate subjectivity.

5. *The Internal Object Account and Subject-Intentionality*

Zahavi rejects the internal object account of Husserlian time-consciousness, according to which awareness of the stream is an object-awareness (albeit a complex one); the experience of a sunset and the sunset are both experienced *as objects*. This might be true for reflection (I can reflect on my own experience as a kind of object, *perhaps* comparable to other objects), but, as

⁹⁹ Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, 47; drawing on Barry Dainton’s conception, Zahavi (Ibid., 62) calls the sense of self “an ambient inner background of what it feels like to be the conscious being we are” (Ibid. 62).

¹⁰⁰ Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 201.

Zahavi claims, “the crucial question... is whether our experiences are also given as *objects* in inner time-consciousness prior to reflection.”¹⁰¹

Zahavi answers in the negative: the internal object account is descriptively and conceptually problematic.¹⁰² First: the internal object account gets the description of phenomenal experience, specifically how we pre-reflectively experience our conscious states, wrong. We do not experience our conscious experiences, pre-reflectively as first given, in the same way that we pre-reflectively experience objects. We generally attend to objects of experience rather than our experiences of them; we “see straight through” our *seeing* of a computer screen and simply focus on the screen, and we hear through a complex system of sounds straight through to meaningful temporal objects – such as sentences. We experience objects by *living through* our experiences of them.

This reflects the longitudinal/transverse intentionality distinction: our pre-reflective experience of the stream is given longitudinally, not as things experienced but as the way in which things are experienced – as a context in or perspective to which objects are given. In lived experience we tend to objects of awareness rather than our awareness of them – we are implicitly aware of the stream when we are explicitly aware of objects, since experiential objects and object-phases are constituted by our experiences of them. Even in reflection on the stream, we reflect on our experiences from within a certain temporal context (*now*) and perspective within the stream – we live through our reflection – and so are transversely directed towards the stream within a longitudinal perspective.¹⁰³ Our primary awareness of the stream itself is implicit and non-objective; objects are that of which we are aware, experienced as an exposure to the stream,

¹⁰¹ Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, 60

¹⁰² Ibid. 60-61

¹⁰³ I believe that this pinpoints what many philosophers call the “elusiveness” of subjectivity, or of experience itself.

while the stream is that to which objects are exposed and the way in which they are given – longitudinally, temporally, perspectively, as lived through...¹⁰⁴

Second, Zahavi finds the inner object account to be conceptually problematic. According to Husserlian time-consciousness, our awareness of our experiential states is a reflexive self-awareness. While reflexive self-awareness characterizes our awareness of experiential states, it is unclear what it would mean for an object-awareness to be a reflexive self-awareness; objects are not intentionally directed at *themselves* – phenomenologically “about” themselves – but are instead that at which consciousness is transversely directed. We have impressions of objects that we take to be outside of experience and impressed upon it, but these impressions themselves are experienced as within experience, as the way in which objects are disclosed to consciousness. While experiential states are characterized by reflexive self-awareness – by ownership, as awareness *of* experience *for* experience – experiential objects are characterized by alterity, as awareness of *some thing* for experience.¹⁰⁵

Combining these points, Zahavi proposes a dilemma: “To deny that we are aware of the experiences as our own is unacceptable. Yet we cannot affirm that we are aware of them as our own, as long as we maintain that we are aware of them only as objects.”¹⁰⁶ To deny ownership of experience would be to deny longitudinal connections between them, and this is descriptively confused – we do experience our conscious experiences as related to previous and potential future experience. Furthermore, the internal object account is conceptually untenable, since it

¹⁰⁴ Zahavi (Ibid., 64) writes that Husserl “argued that something is given as an object only the moment it is experienced as being in possession of a sort of *transcendence*. It is only when we experience something as a unity within a multiplicity of adumbrations, or as an identity across differences, that is, as something that transcends its actual appearance or that can be intended as the same throughout a variety of experiential states, that we experience it as an object.” This relates directly to transverse intentionality as explicated in Section 3 of Chapter 2, above.

¹⁰⁵ See footnote 104 above.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 61.

conflates object-awareness with self-awareness: consciousness is directed at itself, and at experiential objects, but objects are not directed at themselves. Were consciousness an object-awareness, rather than a reflexive self-awareness, we would have to posit a consciousness for which it was an object, and this is the beginning of a regress.

Careful explication of subjectivity, or the “lived through” aspect of experience, will further distinguish awareness of the stream from object-awareness, leading to a clearer articulation of subject-intentionality, as well as generating a more specific version of Zahavi’s proposed regress. We retain objects of experience as they are experienced – we retain our past experience of objects, and thus the objects they were experiences of. Protention is similar, albeit open-ended. Impression, however, is *intra-phasial*: it is not directed at moments of experience, but instead at objects as currently experienced. Of course, impressions at a time are inseparable from concurrent retentions and protentions, and so every awareness is implicitly a reflexive self-awareness of the stream, effectively marking each impression’s place in that stream. Nevertheless, we have a fundamental distinction between object- and stream-awareness, in terms of impression. Occurrent objects are intended through occurrent impression, but the occurrent impression itself – though open-endedly protended by past experience and eventually retained – is, in the living present, simply *lived through*. We are aware of current impression not by a direct intending towards impression itself, but by the subjective way in which we experience that which it intends. We are, pre-reflectively, aware of current impression as pure *subjectivity*, as that to which experience is given.¹⁰⁷ This generates what I take to be a more specific version of Zahavi’s regress: were we to have an impression of current impression, there would have to be some experience for which that impression is an impression, and so on.

¹⁰⁷ Recall Strawson’s TCoS, on which a subject is entailed for which experience is given. Present considerations illustrate that our awareness of experience, at least at a moment, is an awareness of the subject of experience. This is not, however, to argue for a *persisting* subject.

These considerations illustrate the resistance of Husserlian time-consciousness to an inner object interpretation. In rejecting the inner object account, we have developed the awareness of the stream as a *subjective* rather than *objective* awareness. We live through the present moment of experience as that to which intentional contents are given, and they are given in the subjective way that they are experienced. Longitudinal intentionality retains and protends moments of experience specifically as they were (or may be) experienced, preserving their subjectivity. While we tend to see straight through this subjectivity to objects, the intentionality of which is transverse, it is through our awareness of the subjective way in which they were given that we are aware of the stream itself: if transverse intentionality is object-intentionality, then longitudinal intentionality is subject-intentionality. If longitudinal intentionality is necessary and sufficient for the senses of ownership and proto-agency, then subject-intentionality (which *just is* longitudinal intentionality) is necessary and sufficient for these senses; our reflexive self-awareness of the stream as owner and proto-agent is a reflexive self-awareness of the *subject* as owner and proto-agent.

6. Reflexive Self-Awareness as Minimal Self

Object-intentionality presupposes subject-intentionality, and subject-intentionality is reflexive self-awareness. Reflexive self-awareness is a fundamental aspect of the temporal structure of consciousness, derived only from necessary features of phenomenal consciousness generally.¹⁰⁸ Zahavi and Gallagher argue that reflexive self-awareness constitutes a legitimate

¹⁰⁸ Concerning generality: P-I-R is not a structure of some experience or other, or of the experiences of some subject or other, but rather makes sense of what it means to be a subject *at all*. It *may* be possible for beings very unlike us to have conscious experience very dissimilar to ours, though I would have to stress three points: (1) These beings would have to be *very* unlike us – insofar as anyone could attempt to avoid anthropomorphism and extrapolate what consciousness might be for a dog, I would think that dog consciousness is in some way temporal, in which case P-I-R seems the likely candidate for temporal structure, and I suspect this holds for many creatures even more dissimilar to us; (2) granted such a creature, I am unsure that the term “subject” would apply to it; (3) though the first two points might be seen as “thin,” it is no matter: ultimately, all we have to go on is what seems absolutely necessary for consciousness given our perspective to and understanding of consciousness. As such, if P-I-R is fundamental,

self – *the minimal self* – that, as a subjective awareness that structures experience as perspectively owned and action as proto-agential, provides the basic sense of self. While Strawson’s SESMET was based on an exploration of SELF-experience, the minimal self conception grounds the sense of self and establishes that it informs *all* experience. Rather than focus on this general point, I opt to instead compare SESMET and THE MINIMAL SELF, arguing that if either is legitimate, both are.

Recall Strawson’s conception of self, SESMET: SUBJECT-of-EXPERIENCE-as-SINGLE-MENTAL-THING. This notion was derived from a phenomenological investigation of SELF-experience, and each component is an “experience-structuring mental element.” Also recall that, in developing SESMET, Strawson had ruled out the apparent but purportedly unnecessary experience-structuring mental elements “PERSISTENT”, “AGENT”, “PERSONALITY”, and “DISTINCT FROM WHOLE HUMAN”. Considerations of THE MINIMAL SELF will partly converge with SESMET, though will diverge in important ways.

Let’s begin with convergence, and with SUBJECT-of-EXPERIENCE. Subjects and experiences, for Strawson, are intricately connected according to the thin conception of subjects – a subject exists iff an experience exists for which it is the subject.¹⁰⁹ Reflexive self-awareness makes a related phenomenological claim: if there is experience *at all* there is a subject for which it is experience, as all experiential awareness is reflexive self-awareness of the subjectivity of

then Strawson cannot give any structure *more fundamental* than P-I-R; by his standards, as reflected in my definition of the fundamental phenomenological self in Chapter 1, I believe that we both do an adequate job of deriving fundamental structures of consciousness, though I do think P-I-R is responsible for SELF-experience and so an analysis of the former is more explanatory and less prone to content bias.

¹⁰⁹ Subjects and subjectivity are, according to Strawson, two sides of the same metaphysical coin. Galen Strawson, “Radical Self-Awareness,” in *Perspectives from Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian Traditions*, ed. Mark Siderits et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 274-307.

experience. Though experience is necessarily linked to subjects, reflexive self-awareness says little if anything of whether a subject exists in the *absence* of experience.¹¹⁰

Since SELF-experience is a kind of experience, and all experience is structured by reflexive self-awareness of subjectivity, SELF-experience is structured by reflexive self-awareness of subjectivity. Thus, an investigation of the necessary structures of SELF-experience will, on the minimal self conception, yield the subject of experience as an experience-structuring mental element. Furthermore, SUBJECT-of-EXPERIENCE structures *all* experience, rather than one specific kind, as reflexive self-awareness is ubiquitous to conscious experience. For Strawson, SUBJECT-of-EXPERIENCE ultimately figures in SELF-experience because we take the basic sense of self to entail subjects or subjectivity of experience. The minimal self, however, explains our acquaintance with (or experience of) subjectivity, its ubiquity to phenomenal experience generally, and its fundamental difference from our acquaintance with objects.

The relationship between subjects and experience is intricately connected to the first-personal givenness of experience, or Zahavi's sense of ownership. Experience is first-personally given, subjectively and as owned, to the subject of experience, and longitudinal intentionality relates these first-personally given experiences through their subjective givenness. While SESMET relies on the thin conception of subjects and our colloquial sense of self to establish the connection between subjects and experience, reflexive self-awareness connects them through phenomenological ownership: longitudinal retention provides an awareness of the subjectivity of experience and, through this subjectivity, ownership of experience; reflexive self-awareness is an awareness of subjects as owners of experience. This explicit conception of the subject of experience as the owner of experience does not alone show SESMET and the minimal self to be

¹¹⁰ I address this in Chapter 4, when discussing the bridge problem.

incompatible; I take SUBJECT-of-EXPERIENCE and SUBJECT-as-OWNER-of-EXPERIENCE to be roughly equivalent (at least for present purposes).

The self is SINGLE, according to Strawson, by being synchronically unified. At any given moment of experience, we take the self to be the *single* subject to which experience at that moment is given – the basic sense of self does not imply a multiplicity of selves (nor subjects) within a given living present. SINGLE necessarily structures SELF-experience. The minimal self is also synchronically unified. Reflexive self-awareness *qua* first-personal givenness is individuating of subjects, and the awareness of a subject at a time is the awareness of the singular subjective and temporal perspective to which that experience is given at that time; this perspective constitutes the subject at that time, and this perspective is singular.¹¹¹

I have little to say of MENTAL and THING. Regarding the former, so does Strawson; he states that the self is “trivially” mental, “a mental phenomenon, a mental presence, a mental something,” and that this “follows immediately from the claim that SUBJECT is one of the essential elements of SELF.”¹¹² I agree. If a self grounded exclusively in the fundamental phenomenological structure of experience, in part as the subject thereof, is not something “mental,” then I am not sure what is. Strawson is more comprehensive regarding THING, but the point is similar: SELF-experience figures the self to be a subject of experience, and anything figured as a subject must also be figured as a thing.¹¹³ It has already been shown that the minimal

¹¹¹ It should be noted here that the stream itself is similarly unified – it self-unifies through longitudinal intentionality – and this will become important when considering the bridge problem in Chapter 4.

¹¹² Strawson, *Selves*, 67

¹¹³ This is a Kantian point. Strawson writes: “No experience that presents X as something that *has* experience, or even just as something that can *be in some conscious state or other*, let alone as something that can *think thoughts*, can figure X merely as a property of something else, or as a mere process or event... Kant puts this by saying that ‘everyone must... necessarily... regard himself’, the conscious subject, ‘as a substance’ or thing in the present sense, and must regard all episodes of thought or conscious episodes ‘as being only accidents of his existence, determinations of his state.’ One must apprehend oneself as a thing specifically in so far as one apprehends oneself

self is as likely a subject as any, and that it even articulates the notion of subject beyond Strawson's explication but compatibly with his usage. Since the minimal self is a subject, it is therefore also a thing, by Strawson's own lights. Furthermore, Strawson believes that SUBJECT-as-MENTAL – the subject considered exclusively in regard to its mental being – also entails THING (or, more specifically, THING-as-SUBJECT-as-MENTAL). The minimal self and SESMET are both overtly mental, and therefore are both things.

Strawson's investigation of SELF-experience and an investigation of experience as generally structured by Husserlian time-consciousness both yield a self that is, at least, a SUBJECT-of-EXPERIENCE-as-SINGLE-MENTAL-THING. Insofar as the minimal self is a SUBJECT-of-EXPERIENCE-as-SINGLE-MENTAL-THING, it seems at least as good a candidate self as Strawson's SESMET. Before contrasting SESMET and the minimal self (they are, at the end of the day, quite different), and weighing their respective virtues and banes, I thus draw an intermediate conclusion: the minimal self has as much a claim to legitimacy as does SESMET. One of the strongest denials of this conclusion proceeds by what is called the "thinness" objection."¹¹⁴

7. The Thinness Objection

The general objection is straightforward, as is my proposed solution. It is argued that the minimal self does not do, or is not figured as, some of the things we require of the self – it is too

as a subject. SELF-experience essentially involves the element THING-as-SUBJECT and this is so even if one figures the subject of experience in the most passive way imaginable, as something that merely *has* experiences, something that is *subject to* experiences, and not as something that is in any way active, let alone as something that is an intentional agent of any sort" (Ibid. 170).

¹¹⁴ I was first introduced to this objection during a discussion with Matthew MacKenzie, who has informed me that Strawson explicitly runs it against Zahavi's minimal self. I have not yet been able to find Strawson's articulation of the objection. Nevertheless, it is a fairly straightforward objection to which I have a fairly straightforward reply.

broad, or “thin.”¹¹⁵ From Strawson, I believe the objection takes two important forms: (1) the minimal self, as an abstract and structural entity, neither informs nor is dependent on our sense of self, is independent of what we take the self to be, and thus does not count as a self; (2) the minimal self is not a metaphysical *object*, though SESMET is, and thus is not a “real” self.¹¹⁶

Responding to the general objection, Zahavi accepts that the minimal self does not do everything we want from a self (this is why it is “minimal”). However, the minimal self is the basis of other more developed notions. Comparing the minimal self to SESMET serves the double purpose of clarifying this purported relationship as well as responding to the first Strawson formulation. I will address the second in Chapter 4, when contrasting the minimal self and SESMET.¹¹⁷ If both are legitimate selves, the minimal self is the more foundational and elegant of the two. The minimal self is indeed discovered without specific dependence on the notion of self; it is discovered bottom-up, beginning with a transcendental exploration of the necessary conditions of experience and ultimately being located within these conditions. SESMET explicitly depends on our notion of self; it imports our common understanding of the self, through which we investigate experience, refining the notion of self in an effort to keep what is deemed accurate and discard what is purportedly misled. This process, however, ultimately relies on substantive argumentation utilizing the necessary features of consciousness – the starting points of the minimal self – as its only standard of accuracy.

The minimal self-conception grounds Strawson’s starting point, i.e., SELF-experience. Experience informed by the sense of self is SELF-experience, and the minimal self articulates the

¹¹⁵ Zahavi (*Subjectivity and Selfhood*, 16) admits this, but claims that there are no internal inconsistency with a broad or thin notion of self, and that many other respectable notions of self are likewise broad.

¹¹⁶ I outline in brief Strawson’s argument that SESMET is a metaphysical “object” in Chapter 4.

¹¹⁷ Gallagher takes up the task of explicating this relationship regarding *the narrative self*, in a number of his works, most notably “The Narrative Alternative to Theory of Mind,” in *Radical Enactivism: Intentionality, Phenomenology, and Narrative*, ed. R. Menary (Amsterdam: John Benjamins 2006), 223-229.

sense of self in terms of subjectivity, and the affective and ecological functioning of the senses of ownership and proto-agency. These are features fundamental to the structure of phenomenal consciousness, distinguishing one subject from others as well as shaping the subjective character of *being* a self. A basic sense of self is ubiquitous to all experience, thus Strawson's use of "SELF-experience" either covertly references all experience, or instead some subset delineated otherwise than by its members' structural relation to the basic sense of self; in either case, his investigation of SELF-experience will be an investigation of reflexive self-awareness, at least as instanced in some experience or other. The minimal self informs crucial concepts that Strawson's enterprise depends on: the thin conception of subjects and the basic sense of self (and, thus, SELF-experience).

These considerations begin to resolve the first formulation of Strawson's thinness objection, and also approximate a general solution. Reflexive self-awareness is not *purely* formal. The minimal self does not depend on particular experiential contents, but does structure them in very specific ways. Reflexive self-awareness constitutes subject-intentionality and provides our basic sense of self, accordingly structuring any contents we might experience or ascribe to the self. Furthermore, the minimal self *qua* sense of self is a single mental subject as an owner (and proto-agent) of experience, and is a thing, as is SESMET. The minimal self is an essentially but not purely formal notion, discovered independently of the sense of self but on which the sense of self depends.

8. Conclusion

In its longitudinal functioning, the formal intentional structure of consciousness informs the affective tonality, or feel, of experience: reflexive self-awareness of past and future (possible) experience provides for basic senses of perspectival ownership and proto-agency, respectively.

These senses are functions of subject-intentionality, and provide fundamental features of our basic sense of self – the feeling of being a self – as evidenced by considerations of various ordinary and pathological phenomena. As such, Zahavi claims that Husserlian reflexive self-awareness constitutes the minimal self.

Strawson (and others) object that the minimal self is too *thin* to be considered a self: it does not do (or is not) some crucial things we expect of a self. It has been argued, however, that the minimal self not only captures important fundamental features of the self, but in so doing serves as a foundation for other conceptions of self, **D_{PS}** and **F_{PS}** alike, and including SESMET. Not only does Husserlian reflexive self-awareness ground the sense of self and thus undergird Strawsonian SELF-experience, but it also figures as a subject of experience as a single mental thing *and more*. If the minimal self is thin, then so is SESMET. I believe it is the case that SESMET is unacceptably thin, but also that the minimal self (despite allegations of thinness) is, in a different way, unacceptably “thick.” These claims are the subject of Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Thick and Thin

I. Selves

SESMET is based on what Strawson takes to be minimal SELF-experience, and the minimal self on what Husserl takes to be the necessary temporal structure of phenomenal consciousness. I have thus far operated on the assumption that both notions seem to be perfectly legitimate F_{ps} . I now challenge this assumption: SESMET is unacceptably phenomenologically thin, and the minimal self too metaphysically thick – it claims too much. Fortunately, there is third option; the notions are compatible enough to allow for a convergence of their best features (and dismissal of their worst) as a promising hybrid notion. This notion, however, is still far from perfect, and I note its imperfections in the conclusion of this work; they primarily concern what are called “no-self” views.

First, let’s revisit the formulations under consideration: what does each notion figure the self to be? SESMET is derived from a cognitive phenomenological investigation of SELF-experience, the experience informed or shaped by the sense of self, the feeling of being a self. Genuine minimal SELF-experience figures the self to be a SUBJECT-of-EXPERIENCE-as-SINGLE-MENTAL-THING. Genuine minimal SELF-experience, according to Strawson, does *not* figure the self to be a persisting agent that has a personality and is distinct from the human being considered as a whole. This “whittling” away of persistence and agency is crucial for present purposes.

The minimal self is derived from a phenomenological investigation of the temporality and intentionality of conscious experience, the fundamental structuring of phenomenal experience by P-I-R. We are implicitly (pre-reflectively) and reflexively self-aware of the stream

of experience at every moment of conscious experience. Husserlian reflexive self-awareness of the stream of experience grounds basic (phenomeno-ecological) senses of ownership and proto-agency, which are fundamental features of the basic sense of self. The minimal self is accordingly identified with this reflexive self-awareness of the stream. The minimal self, like SESMET, figures the self as a subject of experience as a single mental thing, but goes further by conceiving of the self as a perspectival owner of experience and proto-agent of action.¹¹⁸

Despite important overlap, SESMET and the minimal self seem to diverge in their starting points, their conceptual formulations of subjects and subjectivity, and their treatments of persistence and agency. In moving forward, readers ought keep in mind the final considerations of Chapter 1 above: an alternative to SESMET is preferable if, using comparable resources, it can (1) provide a positive answer to the bridge problem, (2) explicate our object-persistence-experience and the sense of agency (when and how it might occur), and (3) account for various empirical considerations which suggest that the sense of agency does somehow structure experience.¹¹⁹

2. Resources

Strawson begins with a certain conception of self, correspondingly defines SELF-experience, and applies whittling arguments to these notions from various structures and aspects of phenomenal experience. Proponents of the minimal self start with our object-persistence-experience, theoretically develop the necessary framework for such experience, and find that this structure provides a certain sense of self.

¹¹⁸ Strawson could allow his transient subjects to “own” the experiences they are subjects of; the minimal self is also an owner of diachronically unified experience. Section 3 below expands on this.

¹¹⁹ Section 1.4, 24-26 above

Both notions proceed by investigation of some favored kind of experience: SESMET is extracted from SELF-experience, and the minimal self from object-persistence-experience. Strawson also presupposes object-persistence-experience, however, despite rejecting subject-persistence-experience. He posits object-persistence-experience, diverging from his investigation of SELF-experience to provide a somewhat unclear causal explanation of this object-awareness. The minimal self, on the other hand, explains both object-awareness and subject-awareness without diverging from the investigation into the necessary conditions for the possibility of object-persistence-experience. SESMET involves positing both SELF-experience and object-persistence-experience, while the minimal self only posits the latter: reflexive self-awareness construes every moment of experience as an implicit kind of self-experience, but this is neither taken for granted nor defined at the outset. It is *argued* that reflexive self-awareness provides a kind of self-experience, without utilizing resources beyond the temporal and intentional structuring of conscious experience. Thus, in order to explicate SESMET, Strawson must posit, investigate, and explain two kinds of experience, while the minimal self discovers one from the other.

SELF-experience is also based on a certain sense of self – the eight part self that Strawson takes as his starting point – which is then whittled down. This sense of self is a postulate based on common considerations of self, used as a basis for Strawson’s investigation (which, in all fairness, further informs and refines the postulate). The sense of self is foundational for SESMET, but not the minimal self. Without concern to what we commonly take ourselves to be, Husserlian time-consciousness accounts for object-awareness by theoretically developing a complex temporal and intentional structure that entails subject-awareness. The sense of self need not be appealed to in developing our basic senses of ownership and proto-agency: reflexive self-

awareness provides both (though considering the sense of self confirms these senses).¹²⁰ The sense of self is not foundational for reflexive self-awareness but rather only for deeming it a “*self*”; we recognize that the sense of self corresponds to and is grounded in Husserlian time-consciousness. A properly qualified sense of self is built into the ground floor of SESMET, but is grounded in and qualified by reflexive self-awareness, this sense itself supporting only the claim that reflexive self-awareness constitutes a self.¹²¹

SESMET implicates various concepts sharing the banner “fundamental features of experience,” while the minimal self implicates features of phenomenal experience together, constructing them on top of one another from few resources.¹²² It is not clear if either of these approaches – piecemeal or holistic – is superior. It might be argued that Strawson’s tactic is preferable since SESMET might survive certain conceptual repudiations – such as a rejection of Husserlian time-consciousness – that would cripple the minimal self. Strawson however, crucially relies on a Husserlian notion of the lived present of experience, and therefore Husserlian time-consciousness – at least in part – is indispensable for the minimal self and SESMET alike.¹²³

I have suggested that the minimal self requires fewer resources than SESMET, but do not need this point. Crucially, it is difficult to see how the minimal self might require more resources

¹²⁰ First-personal ascriptions of ownership confirm our account of the sense of ownership; normal and pathological experience (and neurological considerations pertaining to the sense of self) confirms our account of the sense of proto-agency.

¹²¹ Reflexive self-awareness does not do *everything* we want a self to do, but does provide fundamental features of the sense of self. In this way, it constitutes the “minimal” self (on which other more developed notions of self might be constructed).

¹²² Strawson appeals to various conceptual resources as particular purposes require: finding nothing that necessitates a full-blown sense of agency, Strawson whittles agency completely; rejecting subject-persistence-experience, he posits object-persistence-experience; etc.

¹²³ Strawson (*Selves*, 250) denies that “protention, as a ‘horizon of anticipation’, is strictly part of the content of our experience,” instead calling it a ‘dispositional setting’. The latter has also been *our* usage.

than SESMET, and very difficult to imagine how it might require many more. I am content to conclude that these purported selves depend on commensurate resources. So, what do these resources actually yield?

3. *Diachronicity*

Strawson rejects the persistence of selves on two fronts. First, he rejects that we have subject-persistence-experience, or at least that it is necessary for SELF-experience, concluding that persistence is not a necessary feature of the self as defined by SELF-experience. He does accept, however, that we often subscribe to the subject-persistence-belief, and takes it upon himself to explain the source of this belief. Accepting that we do have object-persistence-experience, he claims that people with endurantist leanings often hold the object-persistence-belief and illicitly infer from the continuity of content to the continuity of process (from persistent objects to persistent subjects). Rejecting the connection between persistent objects and persistent subjects is a revisionary claim, however, that requires justification; historically, it has been a theoretically well-supported philosophical claim that experience as of persisting objects requires persistent experience of those objects and, correspondingly, a persistent subject of that experience. Strawson does not adequately account for object-persistence-experience in the absence of persistent subjects, though he presumes that each short lived self can cause or inform the contents of the next. It remains unclear, on a merely causal or semantic account, how experiential contents presented to *different* subjects could be experienced as persistent objects by *one* of those subjects.

The minimal self makes better sense of object-persistence-experience: experiences are diachronically unified by longitudinal intentionality and we are aware of persistent objects as the transverse contents of our unified experiences of them. This kind of diachronic unity entails

connectedness experience of the subject, in terms of first-personal givenness, but does not *obviously* entail continuity experience.¹²⁴ As such, diachronic unity does not necessitate the persistence of subjects, subject-persistence-experience, or the subject-persistence-belief, and thus leaves room for Strawson's impermanentist leaning. In rejecting *connectedness* experience of the subject, Strawson rejects this intentionality constituted diachronic unity and cannot avail himself of its explanations; object-persistence-experience remains unexplained for Strawson.

Importantly, and for objects and subjects alike, the experience of persistence is not the persistence of experience. Rejecting persistence-experience does not prove transience, nor does accepting it prove persistence. If it were that simple, we might all be good object endurantists (even Strawson supposes we do have object-persistence-experience). The questions of subject persistence and the experience or belief thereof are separate, and this motivates Strawson's second argument. Experience itself is discontinuous from moment to moment; consciousness is pervasively "gappy". Since subjects of experience only exist when experience does, subjects do not exist during these gaps. Strawson concludes that subjects do not survive, persist across, or "bridge" these gaps. This is the bridge problem.¹²⁵ The conclusion, however, relies on a metaphysical assumption: temporal continuity, a legitimate endurantist test of object-persistence, is applicable when it comes to phenomenological subjects.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Though diachronicity grounds connectedness of the subject, or of the stream, it is not clear that it grounds connectedness of the *self*. This distinction is made explicit in my final conclusion.

¹²⁵ This formulation of the bridge problem could be more accurately called "the pervasive bridge problem." The general formulation claims that gaps in experience occur, for instance, in dreamless sleep or other comparable circumstances. Strawson, however, takes gaps to pervade experience, existing from moment to moment. This distinction was noted in Section 2 of Chapter 1.

¹²⁶ This *may* be at odds with his claim that "there are no good grounds for thinking that non-experiential, non-mental criteria or principles of unity – of the sort we use to pick out a dog or a chair – are more valid than mental or experiential criteria or principles of unity" (Strawson, *Selves*, 297).

The minimal self challenges this assumption. In brief, Zahavi believes the stream to be *phenomenologically* continuous in some sense even if not strictly temporally continuous – non-consciousness has no place in the stream, and thus does not represent “gaps” in a unity constituted solely by conscious experiences in longitudinal connection. Zahavi does not believe that this establishes the persistence of a substance-like (i.e., object) self, but does think that it resolves the bridge problem: intentionality bridges gaps if the *identity* of the phenomenological self can be explained in terms of diachronic unity.

...the identity of the self is defined in terms of givenness rather than in terms of temporal continuity. To put it differently, experiences that I live through from a first-person perspective are by definition mine, regardless of their content and temporal location. Thus, I don't think there is any mistake or distortion involved in remembering the past experiences as mine. Obviously this is not to say that episodic memory is infallible – I might have false beliefs about myself – I am only claiming that it is not subject to the error of misidentification. But does that mean I take the first-personal self-givenness of the experiences as evidence for the persistence of an underlying enduring self? No, I don't [...] I think this self is real and that it possesses real diachronicity, but [...] I don't think its reality – its phenomenological reality – depends on its ability to mirror or match or represent some non-experiential enduring ego-substance.¹²⁷

Reflexive self-awareness presents experiential states as given first-personally, provides these states with an intrinsic sense of ownership, and thus diachronically unifies them – they are pre-reflectively experienced as belonging together in the same stream as current impression, to the same self (according to Zahavi), and can legitimately be described as such.¹²⁸

The stream, on this account, is diachronically unified in a radically different way than Strawson considers. For Strawson, the stream seems to be an extensive series of experiences mapped onto objective time. This series consists of moments of experience separated by experience-less gaps in objective time. Subjects exist during moments of experience, but do not

¹²⁷ Dan Zahavi, “The Experiential Self: Objections and Clarifications” in *Self, No Self? Perspectives from Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian Traditions*, ed. Mark Siderits et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 74.

¹²⁸ This relates to the minimal self explanation of object-persistence-experience.

within experience-less gaps. Applying the test of temporal continuity, he concludes that subjects do not persist – they do not bridge gaps.

Husserlian diachronicity figures the stream quite differently.¹²⁹ Every awareness discloses impressional content – experience currently occurring – while *simultaneously* disclosing past and future possible experience. Reflexive self-awareness structures every moment of experience, as do all three intentional functions, but we only live – only experience – *now*. Thinking of the stream as a kind of partitioned series of objects or object-phases gets it all wrong, phenomenologically speaking: experience is not a series of links in a gappy chain, but rather a soup simmering in the *now*.¹³⁰ It is precisely *at the current moment of experience* that we are aware of past and future experience, and the experience of the now always becomes past, making way for new “*nows*”. Diachronicity, in other words, is not a unification of various phases of experience that somehow exist as temporally distinct from one another. Husserlian diachronicity is the unification of past, present, and future experience by the simultaneous disclosure of all three to each living present of experience; they exist together experientially. Individual phases of experience are only abstractions used to make temporal judgements regarding experience – x happened at t, y retained x at t+1, etc. – but the stream itself is generated in the now, continually flowing through the now and revealing itself to the now.

The stream, then, is not diachronically unified because the living present is connected to other isolated moments of experiences, but rather because the living present is always, in part, a reflexive self-awareness of those moments.¹³¹ This is what Zahavi means by phenomenological

¹²⁹ Zahavi is not very specific, but I believe the following undergirds phenomenological continuity claims.

¹³⁰ I owe this example to Eric Easley. My own analogy is a spool of yarn, but is not as cogent as soup.

¹³¹ It is important to note that Husserl calls retention and protention “primary” memory and anticipation, respectively. Diachronicity is not a claim about the relationship of ontologically and temporal distinct moments of

continuity and connectedness – the living present is always an awareness of what has occurred, is occurring, and may soon occur, and this is just as true moment to moment as it is when waking from a good night’s deep slumber. Strictly speaking, neither subject-persistence-experience nor the corresponding belief, as formulated by Strawson, are entailed; Zahavi shifts the question of subject persistence away from temporal continuity to phenomenal connectedness and a kind of phenomenal continuity. Zahavi’s idea is that diachronicity provides for the identity of the self at a current moment, which is a self with first-personal subjective access to other moments of experience structured by perspectival ownership; current awareness of past experience is disclosed to the same perspective as is current impression. If identity can be accounted for in this way, then the minimal self needn’t succumb to the bridge problem – there *are* no gaps since experience is diachronically unified *at every moment*, not *between them* – and temporal continuity is correspondingly an inappropriate test of subject persistence. Phenomenal unity and temporal continuity come apart.

Strawson’s conception of the stream might be phenomenologically confused, but it is not unmotivated: his ultimate goal is to defend the self as a metaphysical object, and he picks his ‘stream’ and persistence criterion – temporal continuity – as seem appropriate for that task.¹³² According to Strawson, metaphysical objects are “Strong Activity Unities,” and there is no candidate more worthy of the title than the self.¹³³ He believes that it makes no sense to speak of temporally “static” objects that are not activities or processes, and that all objects are strong unities of temporally extended, “dynamic” activity. Though he does not say much of what makes

experience, but is rather a pre-reflective memorial and anticipatory – a longitudinal intentional – aspect of the current moment of experience.

¹³² It is important to note that by “thing” Strawson in fact means “object” (Strawson, *Selves*, 297-304). He takes a metaphysical defense of the self to be the strongest kind possible; we here experience a deep difference in attitude.

¹³³ Though there might be other things equally worthy of the title (Strawson, *Selves*, 265-320).

an activity unity a “strong” one, he does state that SESMET is (or corresponds to) such a unity. Strawson argues that SESMET must have neural underpinnings, claiming that the existence of a subject implies “the existence of a complex group of neurons in a certain complex state of interaction, a certain sort of synergy,” and that the subject “is literally identical with a part of this synergy, or perhaps the whole of it.”¹³⁴ At the lived moment of experience, this synergy is a strong activity unity, according to Strawson. Interestingly, shifting to metaphysics, it seems that the same could be said concerning the minimal self *at a moment*. At a moment, the minimal self implicates a subject and therefore a synergy – we may have already located part of this Strawsonian synergy pertaining to the sense of proto-agency. At a moment, the minimal self and SESMET both count as strong activity unities and thus as objects. This begins to resolve the second formulation of the thinness objection, presented in Chapter 3 above: the minimal self is as much a metaphysical object as is SESMET.

Does the minimal self qualify as a strong activity unity when considered over time, in Strawson’s sense of diachronicity? It depends on whether Strawson’s sense of diachronicity can be applied to a properly construed phenomenological self, and – if so – where you want to draw the line of “strong unity” with regard to neurological processes. Regarding the former, I have suggested that mapping the stream to objective time is not straightforwardly unproblematic as far as unity is concerned. Granting for the sake of argument that this mapping is not problematic, it may be the case that neurological processes over long intervals of time, perhaps being interrupted in dreamless sleep or even moment-to-moment, do not count as “strong” unities. In that case, the minimal self over time may not correspond to any “strong” activity unity, or metaphysical object. However, phenomenologically, the minimal self may still be as strong a

¹³⁴ Ibid., 273. Strawson also notes that this claim is neither ‘reductive’ nor ‘experience-denying,’ given his formulation of materialism.

unity as any.¹³⁵ The question is whether phenomenological diachronicity is “*strong*” or not, or if the concept of “strong activity unity” is even phenomenologically applicable. More succinctly: does temporal discontinuity weaken phenomenological diachronic unity? If not, then Strawson may have to admit the minimal self as a real yet metaphysically “gappy” object. Even if so, the second formulation of the thinness objection is resolved, since the minimal self is no worse off than SESMET: it is a short-term but real metaphysical object.

(Phenomenological *objects* can certainly be “gappy.” I saw my house this morning and will likely see it again this evening. Though these experiences are temporally discontinuous, I nevertheless take them to be experiences of one numerically identical persistent object – my house.¹³⁶ Of course, phenomenological *subjects* are not phenomenological *objects*; it is unclear if they are gappy even in the same way as phenomenological objects (I think not, but this is complicated). I am therefore hesitant to conclude that discontinuity does not threaten the persistence or identity of phenomenological subjects, even if it does not undermine their diachronicity. I am sincerely unsure concerning the “strength” of phenomenal diachronic unity.)

Diachronicity, persistence, and identity are different questions for Strawson and Zahavi. Strawson is *phenomenologically* unfaithful to the Husserlian framework he sometimes invokes, conceiving of the stream as an extensive series rather than an intensive continuum, but it is unclear whether that framework can, for Zahavi, yield persistence or even identity, particularly as concerning the *metaphysics* of the self. Phenomenal diachronicity affords a useful explanation of connectedness and continuity, but does not obviously entail that certain experiences in

¹³⁵ See footnote 126, above.

¹³⁶ What’s more, I *experience* them as such. My house, as a phenomenological object, could be considered a strong activity unity.

objective time really do belong to one *self*; at the phenomenal level, it might not guarantee that they are even *experienced* as such.¹³⁷

What is clear is that temporal continuity may not be an appropriate test of phenomenological persistence, and should be investigated.¹³⁸ Metaphysically, Strawson's negative solution of the bridge problem is plausible regarding the status of the self as a temporally extended transient object. Phenomenologically, it is debatable whether diachronic unity constitutes identity, and utterly unclear if it is even applicable to Strawsonian metaphysical persistence (though adequate for strong activity unity at a moment). Zahavi's positive solution of the bridge problem is phenomenologically promising and questions Strawson's assumptions even at the metaphysical level, but does not seem applicable to the question of "persistence," particularly as formulated by Strawson. As it more or less dismisses the metaphysical question of persistence without obviously proving even the phenomenological identity of the self, I must tentatively concede Strawson's claims regarding the transience of the self.

Nevertheless, diachronic unity is a crucial feature of the self, as inextricably bound up with the senses of ownership and agency, and as a potential basis for refuting the bridge problem as well as, perhaps, accounting for identity and persistence. Furthermore, diachronicity accounts for object-persistence-experience through phenomenal connectedness experience and continuity. Divorcing diachronicity from persistence may allow Strawson to develop a more accurate phenomenological foundation for his investigation of selves; Zahavi, on the other hand, makes too much of diachronicity, as he takes identity for granted and the metaphysics for settled.

¹³⁷ For example: if the self is taken to be a *personal* owner of experience, then diachronicity does not entail identity.

¹³⁸ Some questions pertinent to the current debate include the following. What exactly are the grounds for distinguishing diachronicity from persistence? What are the grounds for running them together? Do these positions have justification and merit independent of bridge problem considerations? If not, might one or both be ad-hoc? Does diachronicity entail persistence? Might it be the other way around? Are they completely independent of one another? If we must admit the minimal self as a "gappy" object, persistent or not, is this a problem for either view? These questions find legitimate metaphysical and phenomenological applications.

4. Proto-Agency

Strawson denies that SELF-experience necessarily includes a pervasive sense of agency, the pre-reflective experience of being the volitional source or intentional initiator of some action. Specifically, he rejects the sense of *intentional* agency over one's *mental* actions. Any sense of agency we do experience is most strongly rooted in bodily agency, or the felt sense of intentional control over bodily movement. Though bodily agency is typically attributed to the self, it is not a necessary part of the self *considered specifically in its mental being*, and so needn't figure into an investigation of the self specifically as mental. Granting intentional *mental* action, Strawson argues that we needn't experience ourselves as agents thereof; the sense of agency over mental action is the exception rather than the rule. Nevertheless, some people do have a sense of agency over their mental actions. He owes an explanation of the sense of agency when it does occur, both bodily and mentally, and – for Strawson – this explanation comes down to differing metaphysical attitudes (an analogue to his explanation of the subject-persistence-belief).¹³⁹ Finally, he makes the point that lacking a felt sense of agency need not be any kind of deficiency.

Strawson's denial of a full-blown sense of agency is convincing, and I concede that a lack thereof need not be deficient. Though my account could, I think, welcome a full-blown sense of agency, I am here concerned with something more basic: I believe Strawson hastily overlooks proto-agency, and I am unsatisfied with an explanation of discrepancies regarding mental and bodily senses of agency in terms of differing metaphysical attitudes; presumably, one kind of attitude is the accurate one – selves are agents or are not – and the possibility of both kinds of

¹³⁹ Ibid., 190: "What we find in debates about this matter is a deep difference in attitude, one of those deep differences among human beings that exist independently of philosophical training or specifically theoretical predilection. Some seem pervasively committed to the idea that entertaining new content – new ideas, making inferential transitions – in thinking, judging, reasoning is a matter of intentional."

experience does not convince me one way or the other.¹⁴⁰ Not only is a sense of proto-agency pervasive to SELF-experience, but it also provides a more parsimonious and explanatory account of both bodily and mental agency, while simultaneously grounding discrepancies in metaphysical attitude as a differential element determining the presence of felt agency.

Strawson argues that the sense of agency is most strongly grounded in intentional motor action, though it *may* also occur with respect to intentional mental action. Purportedly, neither motor nor mental action need be accompanied by the sense of agency, based on differences in metaphysical attitudes. As argued in Chapter 3, however, motor and mental action share a common neurological and phenomenological basis: longitudinal protention allows for planning, performing, adjusting, and distinguishing our own actions in time, and corresponds with neural activation common to motor and mental action alike. Longitudinal protention provides our sense of proto-agency – the sense of generation by or origination within oneself of some action – and pervades all action experienced as one’s own whether volitional, intentional, or otherwise. To lack a sense of proto-agency over action is to attribute its creation to another, and not to oneself. The experience of some action as SELF-experience is experience of action accompanied by a sense of proto-agency over that action. The experience of some action *without* a sense of proto-agency is OTHER-experience.¹⁴¹

The sense of proto-agency shapes experience of action *as* SELF-experience rather than OTHER-experience, underlying *all* SELF-experience of both motor and mental action. A lack of proto-agency is deficient insofar as it corresponds to an abnormal lack of SELF-experience – it is

¹⁴⁰ This approach makes sense for Strawson’s methodology, beginning with SELF-experience, but a still stronger explanation is available.

¹⁴¹ Proto-agency may be conditional; it applies only to SELF-experience of one’s own actions. If some experience is not of action at all, then there will be no sense of proto-agency, but if an experience of action lacks a sense of proto-agency, it is precisely OTHER-experience. Proto-agency necessarily structures all SELF-experience of action, and its limitation to action does not undermine its necessity.

fine if an action really is the creation of another, but becomes problematic when one's own creations are experienced as alien. At its minimum, the sense of proto-agency is completely independent of metaphysical attitude, but it can be extended by experiential contents, e.g., those attitudes; it undergirds the sense of agency in such a way that discrepancies in the presence thereof might really be issues of difference in attitude. Furthermore, Strawson would be hard-pressed to make sense of alienation cases (or even of differences between unexpected shoves and unbidden thoughts) without appealing to *some kind* of agency. Like diachronic unity *qua* the sense of ownership, I think that Strawson hastily overlooks the sense of proto-agency due to his considerations of the full-blown sense of agency. I also think that he would be amenable to a pervasive sense of proto-agency as part of SELF-experience.

Importantly, his metaphysics already accounts for the sense of proto-agency; he needn't adjust a thing. Recall from section 3 above that, for Strawson, objects are "Strong Activity Unities." He writes that this conception

...essentially involves being an agentive unity, where 'agentive' carries no trace of any implication of intentional agency. It essentially involves being a locus-of-activity unity, a unity specifically as a locus of activity in spacetime. This, I propose, is the fundamental definition of what a physical object or substance is."¹⁴²

Recall that he also endorses E-T, the "equivalence thesis," according to which

...selves exist if and only if there is something that has the properties denoted by those thought-elements that feature in every genuine form of SELF-experience.¹⁴³

If the sense of proto-agency is a necessary part of SELF-experience, then PROTO-AGENT will feature in every genuine form of SELF-experience. According to E-T, then, the self will only exist if there is something that has whatever properties PROTO-AGENT denotes. PROTO-AGENT corresponds to generation by or origination within oneself – it structures SELF-experience as

¹⁴² Ibid., 303; Strawson defends that the self is a physical object or substance, on his form of physicalism.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 55.

experience of the self as a *locus-of-activity-unity*. If this additional thought-element is attached to SELF-experience, Strawson need not do any additional metaphysical lifting to show that the self figured by SELF-experience exists. Similarly, if the self exists, then it must have the properties figured by the thought-elements featured in SELF-experience, and I have argued that PROTO-AGENT is one of these thought-elements.¹⁴⁴

Though Strawson seems justified in rejecting a full-blown sense of agency on phenomenological grounds, he overlooks the sense of proto-agency. Not only is the sense of proto-agency a necessary part of action experience as SELF-experience, but the conception of proto-agency also provides a parsimonious framework for explaining the senses of bodily and mental agency, discrepancies between the presence of the sense of agency based on differing metaphysical attitudes, alienation cases that Strawson has difficulty with, and is already accounted for in Strawson's metaphysics of the self. The take-away is that Strawson neglects the sense of proto-agency at the phenomenological level, rejecting a full-blown sense of agency then hastily shelving the topic altogether, but smuggles this necessary experience-structuring mental element back into his conception of self through his metaphysical account of objects.

5. *Scientific Fecundity*

In his defense of SESMET as a metaphysical object, Strawson assumes that the self has neural underpinnings. Gallagher also states that the Husserlian P-I-R structure (that constitutes the minimal self through reflexive self-awareness) must be cashed out in neurological terms. Gallagher, however, seems to deliver: his considerations of alienation pathology and our experiential differentiations between self-caused and other-caused action lead him to

¹⁴⁴ It is also interesting to note that the self figured by SELF-experience, for Strawson, is a THING, and that THING gets hashed out in terms of strong activity unity. Obviously, our pre-reflective concept of a thing needn't match Strawson's theoretical conception of objects, but interesting it seems that the sense of proto-agency is the sense of being a strong activity unity, or the sense of being a Strawsonian *thing*.

neurological claims regarding the ‘who system’ as a neural correlate of the sense of proto-agency (longitudinal protention), and thus of a fundamental part of the sense of self. There is in principle no reason to suspect that neural correlates could not be similarly discovered for the sense of ownership, longitudinal retention, or even impression.

Gallagher notes various peculiarities that support a shift from a sub-personal purely neurological account of schizophrenia to one that incorporates phenomenological considerations. These include what he calls the “selectivity” and “specificity” problems. The selectivity problem, regarding schizophrenic alienation pathology, is simply that alienated actions and thoughts are *specific* actions and thoughts – as a matter of logical necessity, not *all* thoughts and actions are experienced as alien. Gallagher argues that any purely neurological account will either fail to explain why the report of alienation is not itself experienced as alien, or will at least run into trouble accounting for the lack of proto-agency with respect to some *particular* thought or experience but not others.¹⁴⁵

The problem of specificity refers to the contentful dimension of schizophrenic alienation – for some subject, inserted thoughts tend to correspond to the same *kinds* of contents and to specific foreign agents. “For example, a schizophrenic may report that thoughts are being inserted by a particular person, and that they are always about a specified topic.”¹⁴⁶ To account for this “semantic and experiential consistency and complexity,” we must appeal to phenomenology and not purely sub-personal cognition.

As noted above, Gallagher also claims that the sense of proto-agency over bodily and mental action shares a common neurological and phenomenological basis, and that movement

¹⁴⁵ Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 184-5; his claim is just that “phenomenology [...] needs to constrain the cognitive explanation,” since the actual experience of alienation will correspond to a lack of the sense of proto-agency normally intrinsic to particular thoughts and experiences.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 186.

and thought alike have a protentional or “forward” dimension. However, he reminds us that it also has a *retentional* dimension. Drawing on neurologist Sir Henry Head and phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, he writes:

...movement is organized prenoetically according to the ‘time of the body, taximeter time of the corporeal schema’. And this includes a retentional component: ‘At each successive instant of a movement, the preceding instant is not lost sight of. It is, as it were, dovetailed into the present... [Movement draws] together, on the basis of one’s present position, the succession of previous positions, which envelop each other’...¹⁴⁷

Building on Husserlian time-consciousness and the minimal self conception, a phenomenological investigation into schizophrenia symptoms has yielded a plausible account of these symptoms as well as the neural correlates of the sense of proto-agency, in terms of protentional functioning. The retentional aspect of motor functioning suggests that an account of the neural correlates of the sense of ownership might be similarly developed by a phenomenological investigation into some relevant phenomenon, and that this phenomenon itself might also be illuminated along the way.

I cannot help but draw comparisons between schizophrenia as interpreted by Gallagher and what is sometimes known as pathological “blindsight.” In cases of pathological blindsight, subjects do not consciously experience visual stimuli presented to some area of their visual field. They do not experience any sort of phenomenal gap, however, as sub-personal processes fill in the area.¹⁴⁸ Two points are here crucial. First, subjects react to stimuli that they are blind to (“blind stimuli”). Two kinds of experiment are particularly illuminating. In one experiment, a colored object is presented to a subject’s blind spot. If asked to guess the color of the card, the subject will deny that there *is* any card – that they are phenomenologically blind to it. However,

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 206; Bracketed content is Gallagher’s, and the quotes are drawn from Merleau-Ponty (1968: 173 and 1962: 140, respectively). Merleau-Ponty borrowed the taximeter example from Head, who developed it in reference to the retentional dimension of the “body schema.”

¹⁴⁸ There is some evidence to suggest that our anticipations or expectations of visual experience play a role in this “filling” phenomenon.

if persuaded to guess anyway, the subject will guess correctly significantly above expected success rates. The blind stimulus guides report, and is somehow an input to cognitive systems, despite no reports of phenomenological givenness.¹⁴⁹

If an object is placed in the center of a room, falling within some subject's blind spot, he will likewise report no awareness of the object whatsoever – there is no such object, according to the subject. If asked to cross the room, with the object sitting directly between the subject and the goal, the subject follows a curved path around the object, all the while denying its existence. This, however, is the peculiar part: when asked about his path across the room – was it curved or straight – the subject will *report* having experienced walking a straight line across the room. He fails to report phenomenal experience, yet behaves accordingly; he fails to retain corresponding motor action, but supposedly experiences purely fabricated movements.

I believe that blindsight pathology might be explicable in terms of retentional failure. The obvious but less informative *phenomenological* account might appeal to impression, since the subject reports having no experience of some stimulus, not simply no *memory* of it. However, this phenomenon can be more coherently explained by retentional failure. Reporting experience requires awareness of that experience, and *all* awareness presupposes reflexive self-awareness. Reflexive self-awareness at every moment is constituted by every feature of P-I-R, *not* by impression alone. Impression presents experiential contents as occurring “now”, but our awareness of those contents is inseparable from our awareness of past and possible future; every awareness is an awareness of present contents as well as past and future possible experience. Retention structures the sense of perspectival ownership, and thus without a retentional

¹⁴⁹ Interestingly, color is often considered to be thoroughly phenomenal; reporting color seems to require some kind of *phenomenal* awareness since an awareness of color is inseparable from some thing's phenomenal appearance as colored. In other words, a color only seems identifiable through the way in which it phenomenally appears.

backdrop, concurrent impression has no place in the stream and no reflexive self-awareness or sense of ownership can be attributed to it.

The crucial point is that retention, despite being past *directed*, is not itself past: each moment of experience is a singular, concrete, simultaneous awareness of past, present, and possible future. I do not first experience what is past, then what is now, and then what may occur, and call this trifurcated moment a “living present.”¹⁵⁰ Rather, I am simultaneously aware of what has been given, what is presently given, and what may soon be given. Longitudinal intentionality constitutes the sense of perspectival ownership by inseparably connecting awareness of the present with awareness of the past, thereby presenting them both to the perspective of the now. The perspective of the now is dependent on the place of now within the stream; without the retentional continuum, there is no perspective of the now, but only experience that finds no place within the stream.

I own them *now*, the sense of perspectival ownership necessarily occurring *now*, alongside concurrent impression and protention. These aspects are a singular concrete experience, and in retaining a moment of experience, I retain them all. The perspectivity of experience is constituted by the awareness of the stream as past implicit to every experience, and the intentionality of every experience – in all temporal dimensions – is singular and indivisible. If retention fails to produce a sense of perspectival ownership over past experience, there is therefore no experience of perspectival ownership precisely at the moment of failure; concurrent impression might function perfectly well, providing information about what is presently occurring, but this impressional content, thanks to simultaneous retentional malfunction, will be experienced alongside no sense of perspectival ownership. Such an experience will not be a

¹⁵⁰ This is more akin to the notion of the “specious present,” according to which each moment contains distinct concrete components. (It is often questioned whether the *specious* present has any place in phenomenology.) The elements of P-I-R, however, are inseparable; the living present is *singular*.

reflexive self-awareness of the stream, patently, and thus not a phenomenally available awareness at all.

I can think of two ways in which such impression might nevertheless be cognitively available. The first possibility is general, and regards the moment of impression as first experienced. Though an impression might be given to consciousness, without proper retentional functioning it would be – at best – *necessarily peripheral*; information comes in at a moment, but there is no reflexive self-awareness of it - no perspectival ownership experienced simultaneous with it. In other words, in combination with retentional malfunction, impressional content may presently be given to the stream, but will not be experienced as such, as first-personally presented to a perspective or given to the stream.

The second possibility is specific to report (including those as given by blindsight subjects). Reporting an experience requires awareness of that experience at the time of report; it entails a kind of reflection and objectification on one's experience, and happens in time. Crucially, report requires its own subjective perspective with its own retentional continuum – report is given from some temporal perspective. This retentional continuum provides the contents for possible report; one cannot report experience that one has failed to retain. If an impression occurs but is not retained, it will therefore be unavailable for report.

To sum: Longitudinal retention provides a sense of perspectival ownership by situating subjectively given experience temporally within the stream thus constituting the perspective of the now and this sense of ownership is experienced alongside concurrent impression and protention. Thus the sense of ownership, though constituted by past-direct awareness, is experienced as simultaneous with all other contents and senses implicated in the now. An impression simultaneous with faulty retention will not be experienced with any sense of

perspectival ownership and will find no place in the stream. This general retentional failure entails the report specific failure: impression experienced with no sense of perspectival ownership will fail to be subsequently retained, since retention retains the stream as perspectivally given, and non-retained impressions are unavailable for report.¹⁵¹

Though the first possible failure entails the second, I do not care to argue that the second is strictly dependent on the first; perhaps it could occur independently of any more general retentional malfunction. I believe that retentional malfunction of either kind could offer insight into the apparent lack of conscious awareness regarding some visual or motor experience while making room for the cognitive availability of reportedly inaccessible impressional content. The story is that impressional contents, despite being given for the stream at some time, impressional contents without any corresponding sense of perspectival ownership – whether the lack thereof originates at the time of experience or only as it is subsequently retained – will, at least at the time of report, be as if never given to the stream at all.¹⁵² It *may* be possible for these impressions to nevertheless guide behavior, since, though importantly absent from the stream, they still subjectively occur at a moment. This occurrence in the absence of perspectival ownership makes room for the cognitive availability consistent with blindsight as, I suspect, an *impressional* malfunction account could not: impression functions just fine, but is not in any way owned.

The obvious *non-phenomenological* account of pathological blindsight is that there is no problem with pre-reflective awareness, but rather with what is sometimes called “meta-

¹⁵¹ This discussion is closely related to an objection to Husserl from Jacques Derrida: Derrida argues that, according to Husserl, we are only ever conscious of the past. According to Zahavi (2005, 69-70), Husserl anticipated this objection, carefully rejected it. For those specific details, I defer to Zahavi, but my present comments approximate that discussion. It also seems that Derrida would have been aware of Husserl’s anticipation and rejection of this objection, and therefore it is hypothesized that he in fact *was* aware Husserl’s rejoinder and used the objection rhetorically to better articulate a specific aspect of consciousness that interested him.

¹⁵² The “perspective” to which they are given, if you can call it that, is not correctly constituted; information may come in, but it is not experienced as anything, or at least as anything meaningful.

representation,” or a kind of reflective act by which one can explicitly represent and, therefore, report their experiential states. The claim is that blindsight subjects have ordinary phenomenal experiences – longitudinal retention and all – but cannot report some of them. Gallagher considers an analogous account regarding schizophrenia, concluding that, “in the case of thinking, which is already conscious, [...] metarepresentation [...] is redundant.”¹⁵³ Applying this response specifically to pathological blindsight yields the following rejoinder: phenomenal consciousness entails reflexive self-awareness, e.g., visual experience is *already conscious experience*; any explanation that depends on conscious awareness in order to refute it is not only pitched too high, but also seems conceptually confused.¹⁵⁴

There are also less abstract reasons to view blindsight through the lens of retentional failure. Pathological blindsight corresponds not only to a lack of certain visual experience, but also experience over one’s own motor actions. This seems similar to schizophrenic alienation pathology, in which bodily and mental actions alike can lack a sense of proto-agency. In blindsight, we might think of visual and motor experience alike as lacking a sense of perspectival ownership. Blindsight pathology enjoys a version of the selectivity problem: only a portion of visual and (apparently) corresponding motor experience is lacking; subjects seemingly have normal visual experience, with the exception of the blind spot, and can accurately report most of their motor experience – they even claim ownership over fabricated motor experience, reporting it as first-personally given to them. (Drawing on work by Jaswinder Singh as well as numerous independent considerations, Gallagher argues that “vision tends to override proprioception”).¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 184

¹⁵⁴ My favorite phrasing of reflexive self-awareness comes from, I believe, Zahavi and Gallagher: “When we are aware of something, we are *consciously* aware of it” (I cannot find the exact reference, though I believe this quote is from *The Phenomenological Mind*).

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* throughout, most notably 177.

Whether or not blindsight subjects experience their *actual* motor actions, it seems plausible that their reports are based on deficient visual experience rather than proprioception. Gallagher also notes that vision *tricks* proprioception – when vision “confirms” action, proprioceptive feel illusorily matches visual experience).

Pathological blindsight does *not* seem to enjoy an analogue of the specificity problem, but this is expected on my retentional malfunction account. Alienation pathology has a semantic dimension because protention is open ended; the sense of proto-agency can be extended by experiential contents.¹⁵⁶ Retention and the sense of ownership, however, are *closed*, and are thus independent of experiential content. The sense of ownership normally attaches to all experience regardless of semantic content, and particular experiential contents do not affect the success or failure of longitudinal retention.¹⁵⁷ There would plausibly be no semantic dimension to retentional malfunction. Accordingly, there is likely no blindsight analogue of Gallagher’s proposed alienation reinforcement loop; the retentional malfunction account of blindsight could gently suggest away from a neurological search for this a loop, as it plausibly does not exist.

Another avenue of research, however, opens up on a retentional malfunction account. Schizophrenics suffer from global protentional problems related to memory, planning, future time-perspective, etc. Do blindsight subjects suffer from what seem to be global *retentional* problems? Some such problems might concern reflection, report, forgetfulness, explicit recollection, clarity of recollection, and feel or affective tonality of recollection.¹⁵⁸ This is worth

¹⁵⁶ I suggested in Chapter 3 above that alienation pathology might be thought of, in this respect, as a developmental problem.

¹⁵⁷ Semantic content almost certainly contributes to the psychological *repression* of certain experiences, which could be interpreted as a deep forfeiture of the sense of ownership over them. However, repression presupposed prior successful retention – what was never owned cannot be disowned.

¹⁵⁸ Certain people experience memories as if they are living them for the first time. This can be disturbing, and is generally associated with negative affect. (I came across this information through conversation with Adam Murray,

investigating, as it could potentially improve our understanding of blindsight pathology as well as the self.

I do not hope to have conclusively linked pathological blindsight with retention; it is possible that any retentional malfunction account will miss the mark completely. I have drawn comparisons between Gallagher's account of schizophrenia and pathological blindsight to modestly suggest that a retentional malfunction account is a worthwhile way of thinking about blindsight phenomena. At minimum, an understanding of Husserlian time-consciousness and its role in providing the sense of self provides important distinctions that should be kept in mind when neurologically investigating pathological blindsight.

One such distinction is between perspectival and personal ownership as explicated above. On my retentional malfunction account, perspectival ownership drops out in cases of blindsight, and therefore so does personal ownership. In fact, these senses often coincide, at least insofar as one can report either; perspectival ownership seems necessary for personal ownership, and it is certainly the case that legitimate *ascriptions* of personal ownership are ascriptions of certain kinds of perspectivally owned experiences. If our search for neural correlates of the sense of ownership proceeds by asking subjects to somehow report their experiences while studying their neurological systems, a typical methodology, it might be difficult to isolate neural activation correlated with personal ownership from that which corresponds with perspectival ownership (if there is a neurological distinction).

Insofar as reports are taken to be reliable, however, it seems that these kinds of activation could come apart in depersonalization phenomena. In depersonalization phenomena, subjects retain perspectival ownership over experiences but fail to experience them as personally owned;

a graduate student in the philosophy department of Colorado State University as of fall 2014.) Might blindsight subjects experience something similar, though perhaps to a significantly lesser degree?

some even report asking themselves whether or not their phenomenally accessible experiences are their own. For such people, there will presumably be neural activation in whatever brain areas correlate to perspectival ownership, but not in those correlated to personal ownership. A neurological exploration of depersonalization phenomenon may therefore narrow our search for the neural correlates of Zahavi's sense of ownership. At bare minimum, our distinction between these kinds of ownership must be kept in mind when interpreting data concerning depersonalization generally.

Importantly, SESMET does not seem to offer any advantage over the minimal self with respect to these scientific considerations. The minimal self conception is potentially applicable to scientific investigation and explanation due its Husserlian framework, specifically as entails a conception of diachronicity quite distinct from any explicitly considered by Strawson; all considerations here presented are based on the unification of various moments of experience for each moment of experience by Husserlian intentional functions. Strawson sometimes supposes a Husserlian framework, but explicitly rejects his own formulations of connectedness experience and diachronicity and neglects the crucially relevant Husserlian alternatives. Without Husserlian diachronicity, providing the senses of ownership and proto-agency, I do not see how SESMET – which then diverges from the minimal self primarily in terms of preferred persistence criterion and its rejection of proto-agency – could be scientifically useful. As previously suggested, once phenomenal diachronicity is disentangled from persistence and identity, I believe Strawson could unproblematically incorporate it into his view; by extension, this goes for perspectival ownership and proto-agency. Granting these revisions, SESMET might be made as scientifically useful as the minimal self conception already is, but doubtfully any more.

6. Conclusion

Critiquing some of the more contentious aspects of SESMET – transience and the superfluity of felt agency – have revealed them to have fairly reasonable foundations, once properly formulated. Despite the unappealing pervasiveness of the Strawsonian bridge problem, it is particularly difficult to resolve, and it seems that a full-blown sense of agency may largely be a matter of difference in metaphysical attitudes. I have argued, however, that Strawson has overlooked crucial aspects of the self. Denying persistence, he neglects the importance of phenomenal diachronicity, disregarding the connectedness of the stream and the explanations it could avail him. Insofar as proto-agency really does feature in minimal SELF-experience, SESMET is not really a *self*. Strawson’s own equivalence thesis shows the notion to be phenomenologically thin.

Proponents of the minimal self – here, Zahavi and Gallagher – avoid these pitfalls while developing a very similar account of the phenomenological self: a subject of experience as a single mental thing, diachronically unified perspectival owner of experience and proto-agent of action. This “minimal self” is constituted by Husserlian reflexive self-awareness of the stream of experience, derived from a phenomenological investigation of the necessary structures of experience that even Strawson, at times, presupposes. This framework confers the minimal self its scientific fecundity, while SELF-experience unnecessarily and fruitlessly adds to SESMET’s conceptual resources. What’s worse, SELF-experience arguably illustrates the primacy of the minimal self conception: Husserlian reflexive self-awareness provides the sense of self presupposed by SELF-experience, and resolves some of SESMET’s inadequacies (e.g., alienation phenomena, object-persistence-experience, the role of differing attitudes for a felt sense of agency, etc.).

Yet, the minimal self may be too “thick.” It could be objected that, by taking diachronicity to entail the identity of the self over time, Zahavi constructs a *developed* phenomenological self, or **D_P**, rather than a **F_P**. Joel W. Krueger argues along these lines, claiming that Zahavi “ought to speak instead of transient minimal phenomenal *selves*.”¹⁵⁹ Perhaps this is true.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, for reasons presented above, it seems that even transient minimal phenomenal selves - like SESMET plus proto-agency and Husserlian diachronicity; like the minimal self in its firm Husserlian ground but without making *too much* of diachronicity – represents an improvement over both Strawson and Zahavi. Such a notion gets the best of the minimal self while being fair to SESMET’s strong considerations of transience, not only avoiding the charge of phenomenal thinness but also that of metaphysical thickness. Such a hybrid is seemingly a legitimate **F_P**, while SESMET and the minimal self both fail in that regard.

¹⁵⁹ Joel W. Krueger, “The Who and How of Experience,” in *Self, No Self? Perspectives from Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian Traditions*, ed. Mark Siderits et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 28. (Italics his).

¹⁶⁰ I do not believe Krueger’s argument succeeds: it depends on a very specific conception of “ecological” selves that I do not believe is the relevant conception. I cannot here get into my rejection of Krueger’s argument, though I suspect that his conclusion nevertheless holds. This latter claim is based on independent considerations of Husserl’s account of memory, Zahavi’s account of “first-personal access” over time, and what I believe we know about the neurology of memory. These considerations potentially represent substantial implications for a theory of memory and, as such, are must also be deferred to future work.

Conclusion: Unification

The notion of ‘persistence’ is not unequivocal across the self literature. Galen Strawson concludes that the self is transient based on a particular conception of the stream as an extensive series consisting of experiential states and pervasive gaps between them. These gaps threaten the stream’s temporal continuity, and Strawson claims that the states themselves are not necessarily experienced as connected to or continuous with one another. The significance of temporal discontinuity for the metaphysics of self has not here been questioned, but this endurantist conception of persistence seems inapplicable to a phenomenologically accurate conception of the stream of conscious experience: the stream is not an extensive series but an intensive continuum in which the past and potential future are disclosed simultaneously with the present; each moment of awareness is a reflexive self-awareness of the rest of the stream, a continuum constituted exclusively by conscious awareness in which “gaps” have no place. The stream is diachronically unified *at each moment*, and it is unclear whether Strawsonian persistence even applies. Furthermore, on this Husserlian conception of the stream, the stream is phenomenologically continuous and current impression is always a connection, or experiential intersection, of various moments; connectedness and continuity experience are built into the fundamental temporal structure of each moment of experience, and are thus necessary conditions of the possibility of our experience of temporal objects.

Yet, the Husserlian structure of conscious experience may not constitute a “self,” at least in Dan Zahavi’s use of the term. For Zahavi, the self at the present moment is identical with the self of previous moments, and there is no mistake in describing the self in this way. I have suggested that, actually, there just might be: at one moment of experience, past and potential

future experience are presented to the very same perspective as is present experience, and in this way the self at the moment is the perspectival owner of all those states presented to it. Nevertheless, some argue that perspectivity is not sufficient for a *self*; it is compatible with an egoless conception of the stream, on which the *stream* is the perspectival owner of experience.¹⁶¹ Independent of that charge, I am still not sure that identity-experience at a moment – even of the “self” – is sufficient for identity claim made by Zahavi, or for the type of metaphysical identity that Strawson may find interesting; they both seem to be temporally extended notions.

As far as persistence is concerned, Strawson limits himself only to the metaphysical conception, using his preferred persistence criterion – temporal continuity – as a keystone in his conception of the stream. I have argued that a Husserlian conception of the stream is radically different, and is the correct conception, as illustrated by its structure, explanatory capacities, and scientific fecundity. Thus, Strawson’s methodology of building metaphysics on phenomenology is flawed: he begins with a phenomenologically inaccurate picture of consciousness as a consequence of his metaphysical commitments, and this comes back to bite his account of persistence. Zahavi is not much better off: he hastily takes phenomenological diachronicity (i.e., connectedness and continuity) to settle the question of phenomenological as well as metaphysical identity, and shelves any question of metaphysical persistence. These questions cannot be taken for granted, particularly across the phenomenology/metaphysics divide, the investigation of which requires more careful formulations and terminology than Strawson and Zahavi employ.

The phenomenology and metaphysics of the self, despite the distinctions here illustrated, are nevertheless intricately interrelated. In addition to revealing it to be too “thick” (regarding identity and persistence), consideration of the minimal self also reveals the necessary structuring of SELF-experience (perhaps just ‘self-experience’) in contrast to OTHER-experience: the sense

¹⁶¹ Matthew MacKenzie and Joel Krueger argue this, though they have different conceptions of “egological” selves.

of proto-agency accompanies experience of action caused by oneself but not by others, can be extended by experiential contents as a kind of developmental feat, illustrates the role of Strawsonian differences in metaphysical attitude with respect to a full-blown sense of agency, and can constitute surprising and confusing deficiencies in experiential life when inappropriately absent (i.e., during protentional malfunction). In whittling the sense of agency from SELF-experience, Strawson hastily overlooks proto-agency and, in that regard, SESMET is phenomenologically thin. Yet, Strawson covertly conceives of SESMET specifically as a proto-agent in defending it as a real metaphysical object. If the sense of proto-agency is the experiential side of metaphysical “strong activity unity,” then Strawsonian metaphysics shows that a fundamental aspect of the sense of self corresponds to a real metaphysical *thing*.

Two major conclusions are to be drawn from the preceding. First: SESMET is too thin to be a self, while the minimal self is too thick. I have defended the minimal self from various thinness objections, situated the bridge problem and conceded a kind transience to Strawson, endorsed the sense of proto-agency as fundamental to the sense of self, and accepted the corresponding Strawsonian object metaphysics of self. If it is to be successful, a theory of self must carefully handle persistence, identity, and diachronic unity, qualifying and applying these terms appropriately and consistently, and should respect the sense of proto-agency as fundamental to the temporal structure of consciousness and the sense of self. This kind of “hybrid” view can enjoy the comfort of phenomenological diachronicity and correspondingly, seemingly without sacrifice, cohere with a good metaphysics of self.

Second: Despite the advantages of such a view over SESMET and the minimal self, I have only suggested that it is *seemingly* a legitimate F_p . SESMET is not a self, as it excludes proto-agency, and the minimal self seems too developed. The problem, however, is that this

hybrid may not be a self *at all*. Many no-self views contend just this with respect to the minimal self, and some of these objections might carryover to my view: the stream is egoless, the sense of self is illusory and corresponds to nothing real, the self does not enjoy “independent reality,” or does not respect standard persistence conditions, or does not satisfy some criterion of identity, etc. My rejoinder is two-fold. I do not here claim to have defended the existence of a self rather than to have denied it. Echoing Strawson, if one wishes to read the preceding as a rejection of the self, one may freely do so. I have only indicated, through investigation into two particular theories of self, general considerations a theory of self ought consider if it hopes to be phenomenologically, metaphysically, and (perhaps) scientifically successful.

I also believe that the work here can fruitfully provide bipartisan or neutral insights into the self/no-self debate. Some brief examples are illustrative. Miri Albahari argues that the sense of self is illusory, as it portrays the self as something it is not.¹⁶² Yet, if the sense of self portrays the self as a proto-agent, and proto-agency corresponds to the Strawsonian conception of metaphysical objects as strong activity unities, then it is not clear that the sense of self is illusory. Joel Krueger argues that the self neither persists nor is unconditioned.¹⁶³ But what is the significance of “unconditioned”? The sense of proto-agency, for example, is apparently a conditioned yet fundamental feature of the sense of self. Furthermore, persistence should be treated very carefully, and no-selfers might get good mileage by doing so.¹⁶⁴ Derek Parfit argues that the self does not respect the transitivity of identity, most notably by proposing thought experiments in which the self is split (“fission”) or two selves are fused (“fusion”). These

¹⁶² Miri Albahari, “Nirvana and Ownerless Consciousness,” 79-113

¹⁶³ Krueger, “The Who and How of Experience,” 27-55.

¹⁶⁴ As noted in footnote 160 above, I do not believe Krueger’s argument against the minimal self succeeds, and it is precisely due to his conception of “persistence.” However, I do think he is on the right track and that persistence, when properly construed, may very well undermine the minimal self in much the same way as he hopes.

thought experiments exploit temporality, however, and I believe that taking phenomenological perspectivity seriously here has interesting consequences – and that these consequences neither seem to be distinctively pro- or anti-self.

Obviously, I believe there to be a lot of work left undone. Many issues within the self/no-self debate can be further articulated by the conceptions, structures, and distinctions presented here, but these same aspects might also be fruitfully incorporated into neurological, cognitive psychological, and psychopathological investigation. Prior to dismantling SESMET and the minimal self, and subsequently synthesizing the remainder, the investigation here can further articulate each notion; these notions, particularly the minimal self, contain certain crucial ambiguities. Clarifying each notion may bolster it, but (as illustrated here) may also reveal weak spots – targets at which opposing views generally might aim. I, personally, enjoy considering these theories from both the self and no-self perspectives, and believe that the current considerations provide additional resources for fruitfully doing so.

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