THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Being Human

Being a Thesis submitted in fulfilment of
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by

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All I need to do is quell the doubt
and scepticism that makes me human

Nick Hornby
How To Be Good

Where I am, I don't know, I'll never
know, in the silence you don't know,
you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go
on.

Samuel Beckett
The Unnameable

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Introduction

I

> What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god: the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals! And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?[1]

In his angry and depressed state, Hamlet finds no consolation in his fellow human beings, but that's not to say that he doesn't attribute them with many fine qualities. But what are we to make of this 'quintessence of dust'? What a piece of work is a (hu)man? How are we to understand ourselves? What's more to the point perhaps is, why should we try? One reason springs to mind immediately that we can point to in order to justify an attempt at such understanding. It is surely true that by way of a greater understanding of ourselves we can come to a more complete understanding of 'the way things are' per se. By coming to a greater and more complete understanding of being a human being we can start to see how what we are informs the way we are and vice versa. For instance, the sort of beings that we are as human beings allows us to experience the world around us in a particular way, it may 'open' the world up to us in some respects, whilst 'closing' it off in others. The kind of understanding that I am aiming for involves an exploration and clarification of what it is to be human; what it is to exist as a human being and if there is anything unique about being a human being.

If we look for a dictionary definition of 'human being' we find something like the following: "Of or belonging to the genus *Homo* ... any man or woman or child of the species *Homo Sapiens*."[2] Defining human beings in this way places them firmly in the 'natural order' of things, it makes them one species amongst many. Admittedly human beings are probably the most complex species in the natural world, but nevertheless they are open to understanding in just the same way as any other species be it an oyster, a cat or a chimpanzee. If we are to take this 'speciesistic', biological line then, we should aim to understand human beings in purely natural, materialistic terms supplied by the 'best' theory that science can offer to us at the time of investigation. In doing this though we might worry that we are missing out on something 'special' about human beings, surely there is something that sets human beings apart from the rest of the animal kingdom, for instance the fact that human beings possess the kind of consciousness that they do. In fact this worry goes deeper than just worrying about human beings being 'special' in some way and whether or not they are the only species that possess such consciousness. Indeed, we might think that there is in general something special about each animal species; namely that each one possesses a distinctive viewpoint upon the world and that this is only accessible if one is a member of that species. This is precisely the sort of worry aired by Nagel.[3] Of course if Nagel is

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[1] W. Shakespeare *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene II.
[2] R. E. Allen (ed.) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, p. 574.
[3] See T. Nagel *Mortal Questions* - "What is it Like to be a Bat?".

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right, then human beings should have no problem with access to what it is like to be human beings, but he also argues that such access can never be explained in purely scientific, naturalistic terms.

His argument focuses on attempts to capture experience from the objective perspective of science and he claims that "no matter how the form may vary, the fact that an organism has conscious experience at all means, basically that there is something it is like to be that organism."[4] This being the case, if a scientific naturalist account is to succeed "'something it is like to be' features must be given a physicalist account."[5] Nagel denies that this is a possibility, he claims that

> Every subjective phenomenon is, essentially, connected with a single point of view, and it seems inevitable that an objective, physical theory will abandon that point of view.[6]

According to Nagel, materialist philosophies rest on the fundamental principle that the whole of reality can be described in objective physical terms. The physically objective world is the only world there is and it exists independently of subjective human or animal perspectives.

He describes the materialist conception of reality as saying that underneath the different appearances of things there must lie a reality that is independent of how things appear to human beings or any other animals. The world would exist even if there were no human or other observers in it; hence its true nature must be detachable from how it seems to any observers. This means that according to materialist philosophies, if we wish to reach a conception of the world as it objectively is we have to not think of it from an individual point of view or perspective, and not think of it from a general human perspective. The physical world as it is in itself contains no points of view and nothing that can appear only to one particular point of view. Whatever it contains can be apprehended by a general rational consciousness divorced from the sensory organs of particular individuals or species. Although this conception of reality has been immensely useful in the development of physics, Nagel believes that it cannot be the whole story. He argues that the subjective perceptual points of view which are left out of the objective account continue to exist, furthermore they are the necessary conditions of human beings acquiring evidence about the physical world. Human beings cannot collect evidence except from their spatio-temporal location and this means they must have a perspective; as well as this, the objective conception of the world is formed by mental activity. For Nagel then, a complete explanation of reality will have to take account of these things because they are also part of reality.

In his arguments against a scientific, objective conception of reality, Nagel appears to take an overly positivistic view of science and of philosophical analyses that take

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[4] T. Nagel *Mortal Questions*, p. 166.
[5] Ibid. p. 167.
[6] Ibid.

science seriously. However, I think Nagel is correct though in his attack on materialist theories of mind (and by implication, human beings) even if there are some problems with his arguments.[7] In the next chapter I will show how materialist, conventionally naturalistic theories of human beings miss out on essential features of them, and also how non-naturalist accounts miss out on much the same sort of features. Much of this is due to both of them working with the same sort of disengaged view of the world, just the sort of view that Nagel is so critical of. I don't believe that Nagel's criticisms should make us give up on a naturalist programme altogether though. Rather what we need to do is to draw it in as inclusive a way as possible, a way that takes into account not just the 'objective' features of the world, but also the 'subjective' features of human experience of the world. In Chapter 2, I outline just such an inclusive, broad framework.

Such a framework provides us with the opportunity to explore the continuity between human beings and other non-human animals, whilst at the same time preserving the uniqueness of being human without having to resort to any form of unnecessary or distorting humanism. In other words, it allows us to place human beings alongside other non-human animals firmly in the 'natural order' whilst at the same time recognising human beings unique characteristics. The most interesting of these characteristics is human beings' 'personhood', which I will explore in Chapter 6. However, human beings are also uniquely 'social' beings and I shall look at this fact in Chapter 4 and show how being a social being is an essential feature of being human. This sociality depends in part upon the 'lived' nature of the human beings bodies and I shall look in detail at this in Chapter 3. However, I believe we also need to guard against any unwarranted humanism whereby human beings are overly distanced from other non-human animals. To this end I shall show how human beings can be regarded as unique but at the same time as continuous with the rest of the 'animal kingdom' in Chapter 5.

In the course of this thesis, my primary aim is not to provide conclusive or damning arguments against either conventional naturalism or non-naturalism; rather I hope to weave together the components of an alternative picture, one that presents a more convincing, persuasive and plausible alternative – broad naturalism. As Sherlock Holmes says:

One's ideas must be as broad as Nature if they are to interpret Nature.[8]

In other words I intend to show that to come to anything like a full understanding of what it is like to be a human being we have to adopt a broadly naturalistic framework. Conventional naturalism and non-naturalism will be shown to be lacking because they cannot fully account for human beings' experience of the world or of how they are 'at home' in their world. However, at the same time by taking the broad approach we can

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[7] For instance, see O. Flanagan *Consciousness Reconsidered* and L. Nemirow "Review of 'Mortal Questions'" in *Philosophical Review 89*.
[8] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle *A Study in Scarlet*, p. 46.

accept that there are 'truths' in both conventional pictures and weave these into a cohesive whole that can account for the experience of being a human being. Most of all though a broadly naturalistic account will allow us to see what a wonderful 'piece of work' a human being truly is.

Chapter 1 – Traditional Failings

<div align="center">I</div>

In this chapter I intend to look at two 'traditional' views of human beings: the non-naturalist and the scientific or reductive naturalist.[9] I start with the Cartesian view of human beings, which I take to be a classic example of a non-naturalist account because it stresses that what is important about human beings, what makes them unique, is their immaterial mind. However, there are serious problems with this position, notably the problem of interaction. I then move on to look at a 'traditional' naturalist account of human beings, the one that is given in Darwin's theories of evolution and natural selection, which has been so influential on modern scientific accounts of human beings. It will be my contention that such scientific naturalist theories also fail to give a satisfactory account of being human because they cannot do justice to the experience of being human. Finally I intend to point towards a framework that will enable us to understand human beings as animals - as continuous with the rest of the 'natural world' - but one that also leaves room for a satisfactory account of the uniqueness of human beings. I shall go on to develop this framework in the next chapter.

I also intend to look at a contemporary view of human beings that attempts to overcome the problems inherent in the traditional naturalist/non-naturalist dichotomy, that of McDowell in his book 'Mind and World'. It will be my contention that his view, though insightful, ultimately fails to give a satisfactory, fully rounded account of human beings because it misrepresents the experience and being of animals and is prone to certain humanist preconceptions. To begin with I shall briefly look at the Cartesian conception of human beings, not only because it represents one of the classic statements of a non-naturalistic views of human beings, but also because many of its background assumptions have influenced, and been carried through to modern naturalist accounts.

<div align="center">II</div>

In attempting to show what the nature of being human is, Descartes takes a radically non-naturalistic stance. His 'official' dualistic ontology allows for only two kinds of substance, mind (*res cogitans*) and matter (*res extensa*) and the effect of this is to make a human being an uneasy amalgam of two seemingly incompatible elements rather than an organic whole. This puts Descartes completely at odds with the traditional Aristotelian account of human beings as 'rational animals'; for Descartes human beings' biological nature as a certain species of animal is, if not denied, at least made extraneous to their essence as conscious beings. However, Descartes was reluctant to present his view as one of a complete split between mind and body despite his dualist ontology and is always ready to acknowledge and accommodate facts from everyday human experience and he writes that

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[9] I take scientific or reductive naturalism to be the position whereby scientific modes of explanation are primary and that all other modes of explanation should be 'reduced' eventually to scientific ones.

Nature teaches me that I am not merely present in my body as a sailor is present in a ship, but that I am very closely joined and, as it were, intermingled with it so that I and my body form a unit.[10]

The evidence for this remarkable unity, despite the previous insistence on the stark opposition between mind and matter, is the nature of human beings' sensory experience. So this union of substances is exemplified for Descartes in sensations, for example hunger, pain and pleasure; according to him they are

Confused modes of thinking which arise from the union and, as it were, intermingling of mind and body.[11]

Descartes goes on to suggest that sensory experience is not an essential part of the nature of a human being as a *res cogitans*, but is so in virtue of human embodiment. In doing so he treats sensation as a special mode of consciousness. He also says that a pure *res cogitans* would only be endowed with two modes of thinking, intellect and volition, whilst a purely material creature would not have any experiences at all and would operate as a completely mechanical automaton. However, when a mind is united with a body then we have the distinctive phenomenon of sensory experience which cannot be attributed to either mind or body alone, but which must be attributed to a hybrid entity - to a human being. A human being is the sole example of this 'coming together' of the naturalistic and the non-naturalistic. It is in this way that, for Descartes, human beings are unique. The 'substantial union' that is a human being represents for Descartes a distinct and irreducible category of its own. He writes:

The union which joins a human body and soul to each other is not accidental to a human being, but essential since a human being without it is not a human being.[12]

In the case of non-human animals, Descartes insists that all their relevant behaviour can be explained purely mechanically, without the need to posit any 'animating' principle. Typically, he avoids the word animal to describe creatures like dogs, cats and monkeys, instead he prefers the more down to earth label, 'beast'. The fact that such beasts appear to exhibit complex purposive behaviour does not seem to Descartes to be a decisive objection against his radically reductionist view of them as mechanical automata. As far as Descartes is concerned animals are not thinking things, they are rather just 'lumps' of extended stuff, complex enough in the organisation of their parts, but absolutely devoid of anything that could qualify as consciousness. Denying that animals think is of course not the same as denying that they feel and Descartes sometimes suggests that animals might have some sensations, such as hunger. However, taking into account his view of

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[10] R. Descartes *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* Volume II, p. 56.
[11] Ibid. p. 60.
[12] R. Descartes "Letter to Regius, 31st January 1642" in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* Volume III, p. 209.

sensation as arising from the union of mind and body, it seems that Descartes cannot hold that animals do in fact have sensations. This in turn leaves animals no place in the Cartesian scheme of things except as mere insensible lumps of extended stuff.

However, returning to Descartes view of human beings as a 'substantial union', this is far from unproblematic. He is forced to admit as much in his correspondence with Princess Elizabeth where he confesses that it is very difficult to give a coherent account of how a union between distinct and incompatible substances such as mind and matter could take place. In so far as Descartes can provide an answer to this problem, it is by an appeal to everyday experience, which he seems to suggest, must take over and convince us of what the intellect fails to grasp:

> It is the ordinary course of life and conversation, and abstention from meditation ... that teaches us how to conceive of the union of the soul and the body.[13]

This all demonstrates that Descartes attempt to reconcile the non-naturalistic (mind) - to which he ultimately accords priority - with the naturalistic (matter) into some kind of 'semi-naturalism' is plagued by extreme, and quite possibly, insurmountable problems.

For Descartes then, human beings are part of nature just as other non-human animals are because they too are created and preserved by God; in other words human beings are creatures present in the natural world amongst others. Of course as far as Descartes is concerned human beings are not to be equated with mere things or even with other living things; on the contrary human beings are accorded a specific and special difference, they are endowed with the power of reason and language. Of course, this too is part of God's creation.

It's clear that in Descartes conception of human beings there is a thorough going humanism at work, with human beings' animality being marginalised and their rationality being accorded priority in defining what they are. However, we must be clear as to exactly how we characterise this humanism; for instance, Heidegger describes it as a humanist anthropology which

> Is an orientation thoroughly coloured by the anthropology of Christianity [the conception of human beings as made in God's image] and the ancient world [the conception of human beings as rational animals].[14]

This way of presenting Descartes' dualism seems to place too much emphasis on the idea that the 'Christian tradition' is central to Descartes thinking. For one thing, like all religions, Christianity is not homogeneous and so it's difficult to point to 'its' influence, as the beliefs and doctrines of Christian theology have not constituted a uniform whole

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[13] R. Descartes "Letter to Princess Elizabeth, 28th June 1643" in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* Volume III, p. 227.
[14] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 74.

throughout history. There is also the fact that Christian doctrine does not necessarily lead to Cartesian dualism and so there seems to be no concrete reason for making the relationship between the two as strongly as Heidegger does.

However, whether Descartes' philosophy is 'thoroughly coloured' by Christianity or not is not the main issue; rather what is vital to his whole project is the epistemic underpinning provided by God, who guarantees the truth of all 'clear and distinct' knowledge claims. The fact that the one item of knowledge that survives Descartes' method of doubt intact is that he must exist as a thinking thing is ultimately founded upon God's beneficence shows that essentially his non-naturalistic stance is in the end based upon a kind of 'supernaturalism'. In other words we are presented with a situation whereby God guarantees the uniqueness of human beings, by making them the only rational beings, and thus raises them above the realm of animals. This conception of human beings though is notoriously rife with problems and has been the subject of extended and damaging criticism since its original statement. The most obvious, and seemingly insurmountable problem, is the one outlined above as to how two substances with no common characteristics can somehow influence each other. More recently, Descartes conception of human beings' bodies has also received a great deal of criticism and I will turn to this later in Chapter 3 where I look at the nature of human beings' bodies in greater detail.

<center>III</center>

Even though his idea of a 'substantial union' is wrought with problems, its background idea as to what constitutes 'nature' has had a powerful influence not only on modern philosophy, but also on modern science as well. Descartes says that By "'nature' I ... signify matter itself"[15] and also that

> Nature is the principle of motion and rest. And what is meant by 'nature' in this context is what causes all corporeal things to take on the characteristics of which we are aware in experience.[16]

This has a very familiar ring to it. Nature simply amounts to matter and its movements, with the only difference to modern science's conception being that, according to Descartes, the creation and 'preservation' of this matter is assured by God. Throughout his philosophy, Descartes constructs the material world out of the geometrical natures of length, depth, breadth and the laws of motion. Indeed, the mathematical content of the 'new' science mattered at least as much to him as the impact of that content on consciousness, and there was much in consciousness that Descartes thought was of no use to science.

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[15] R. Descartes "The World, Chapter 7" in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* Volume I, p. 92.
[16] R. Descartes "Principles of Philosophy, Part Two, 23" in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* Volume I, pp. 232-233.

In his first philosophy Descartes was trying simultaneously to explain why one body of learning with scientific pretensions, scholastic physics, should have proved bankrupt and why another body of thought, one largely outlined by Descartes himself, could live up to a billing as true science. Having thrown up anomaly after anomaly, scholastic physics had proved untenable because, as Descartes put it in the 'Discourse on the Method', it drew its foundations from philosophy in which nothing was certain. This was because it relied on a purely qualitative, sense-based and fallible theory of natural substances and the causes of their observed effects. Scholastic physics was also embarrassed by its impious implications, as pyrrhonist critics in the early 1600's pointed out. On the one hand, in the spirit of Aristotle, it purported to deduce from necessary principles the necessity of observed effects. Yet, on the other hand, its principles were supposed to cohere with articles of faith, including the one whereby God was a free and omnipotent agent who might have made natural effects different from what they are. In this way scholastic physics could not both demonstrate the necessity of its effects and keep intact a thesis of voluntarism. Descartes wanted to side with the critics of scholastic physics whilst also trying to demonstrate that a different, geometrical explanation of natural effects was freer of anomalies, independent of the sensory, and compatible with the idea of an omnipotent, benign God.

To do this Descartes needed a theory that would explain the shortcomings of the scholastic/Aristotelian theory of nature and an alternative physics that would be free of these shortcomings. The theory had to explain why science had developed so little since Aristotle, but at the same time if it was to succeed as propaganda for a new, largely untried approach to natural explanation, it could not feed pessimism about the further development of science. Thus it had to undercut the belief of some seventeenth century Europeans that human beings' intellect was caught up in the decay of nature and was deteriorating in such a way that the achievements of the ancients would never be equalled after their time.[17] It had to suggest instead that the human intellect was capable of scientific progress once certain hindrances to it were removed. Descartes suggested that some of these hindrances were natural, contributed by the union of the intellect with a body during the natural life of a human being. Mind/body union accounted for the presence in the intellect of some ideas that, while useful for survival, gave no scientific insight, but were nevertheless improperly made into vehicles or sources of scientific theory. As far as Descartes is concerned then, it is human beings' more 'animal' side that leads them astray and their most 'divine' attribute, the power of pure thought allied with clear and distinct ideas, that can lead them to true scientific discovery and realisation. In this thoroughgoing prioritising of the rational over the 'animal' we can clearly see the implicit humanism of Descartes' non-naturalism.

The theory of ideas that Descartes developed was a branch of what he called 'metaphysics': metaphysics in his sense dealt with principles about immaterial things that had to be known before a systematic natural science could be developed. Foremost among these immaterial things was the mind itself, which Descartes tried to clear of the pyrronhist charge of being incapable of science. According to Descartes it really was

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[17] See R. F. Jones *Ancients and Modern*, Ch. 2.

within human beings' powers to arrive at a systematic and true understanding of nature; for such an understanding was mathematical and its ingredients, ideas of 'simple natures, were present in the minds of human beings. Being implanted by a non-deceiving God, the ideas could not be false; nor was the possession of these ideas a contingent matter. To be able to think; i.e., to be a human being, was to have these ideas, albeit latently. Sense-experience, far from drawing on these innate mathematical ideas, presented the sensible qualities of observed things, qualities that an undisciplined faculty of judgment could falsely ascribe to the natures of observed things. As if the natures of things could be gathered directly from natural phenomena. However, as Descartes' sought to indicate in his 'Optics', all of sense-experience could be explained on the assumption that things acting upon the senses really were very different in nature from how the sensible qualities made them seem.

To explain the sensible qualities of observed things, it was unnecessary to suppose that corresponding real qualities actually inhered in the objects observed: the size, shape, position and speed of the parts of observed things and their continuing medium were by themselves sufficient to account for the quality of experience. This fact was a ground for doubting that the explanation of experience had to be qualitative at all. Thus, for example, apples did not have to be supposed to possess a form of redness in order to seem red. The appearance of redness could be supposed to result from interactions of illuminated external bodies of such and such composition with the eyes and brains of human beings. It follows that what went for redness went for all the other qualities, qualities that underpinned the division of nature into natural kinds by Aristotelian physics.

The lesson of the 'Optics' was reinforced by the metaphysics, which showed independently, in the form of the Dream Hypothesis, that qualitative conceptions of objects might have little or nothing in common with the objects themselves. Even the ideas of non-qualitative simple natures involved in the qualitative conceptions might have no basis in reality, for as the Demon Hypothesis showed, it was conceivable that even one's ideas of simple natures were the products of a demon deceiver. The Dream and the Demon Hypotheses are directed by Descartes against the pretensions of two types of science, on the one hand the science of 'complex things' - e.g. physics, medicine and astronomy, and on the other the science of 'simple things' - e.g. geometry and arithmetic. It is by way of these two hypotheses that his metaphysics engages the traditional Aristotelian sciences and agrees with the pyrrhonists that they are thoroughly doubtful. It is by way of a theological proof of the objectivity of simple natures that Descartes is able to give a pious vindication of the new mathematical sciences.[18]

Looked at in this light we can see that as well as there being a strongly non-naturalistic strand to Descartes work, in his dualism, there is also a strongly naturalistic strand, his attempts to vindicate the new science. In fact in many ways it is his naturalistic project which drives his non-naturalistic one; as perversely his non-naturalistic, humanist account of human beings and their 'untainted' powers of reason provides the

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[18] Mersenne attempted something very similar in the mid 1620's in *La Verite des Sciences*.

cornerstone for his justification of the validity of mathematical science. This in turn seems to be the main thrust of his philosophical project. Of course all of this is finally underpinned by a thoroughgoing theistic supernaturalism. Modern materialist philosophers, whilst arguing against Cartesian dualism, have done so almost exclusively within the boundaries laid down by Descartes' conception of science. I intend to return to this mathematical conception of science, via its other great advocate Bacon, later in this chapter to show what a deep impression it has had on naturalistic views of human beings.

The crucial thing, certainly with regard to providing an account of human beings, about Descartes' early version of scientific naturalism is that he recognises that science alone cannot provide a satisfactory account of being human. This accounts in no small part for his somewhat muddled and problematic decision to argue for a dualistic conception of human beings. We can credit Descartes with the foresight to see the shortcomings of a purely reductively naturalistic view of human beings, whilst at the same time recognising the problems inherent in his solution to those shortcomings. It will be a central argument of this thesis that rather than seeking to add something on to his scientific naturalism, Descartes should instead have 'broadened' his initial naturalism.

However, before we look at a looser, more inclusive version of naturalism we will see in the rest of this chapter how certain ideas have become the definitive explanatory model for what it is to be human. Primary among these have been evolutionary theory and natural selection and along with a rampant scientism these have become virtually the only explanatory methodology that has any credence. This has also led to naturalism being identified with scientism and to an implicit view of human beings as disengaged observers on the world with the prioritising of epistemology. Much of this view can be traced back to Descartes and his emphasis on both disengagement and the scientific method with these 'inheritances' informing modern naturalistic accounts. To untangle this web of interconnected theories we need to look first at the classic naturalistic account of Darwin before seeing how this has been combined with scientism to produce the 'modern' view of being human. From there I intend to move on to look at McDowell's attack on this view. This ultimately fails but at the same time points to many of the shortcomings of the accepted naturalistic view. The shortcomings of McDowell's own view also point towards what is required for a more rounded version of naturalism; not least one which emphasises the continuity between human beings and other animals.

IV

If we look back through history it quickly becomes clear that the idea that human beings evolved from other animals is by no means a recent one. As early as the sixth century BC, the Greek philosopher Anaximander argued that all animals, including human beings, were descended from fishes. However, it is towards the end of the eighteenth century that we find the idea gaining greater and greater currency. The Swedish biologist Linnaeus devised the modern system of classifying plants and animals into

species, genus, family, order, phylum and kingdom. In doing so he found that he had developed a set of criteria that put human beings and chimpanzees into the same genus. However, due to his own unease at this and the strength of the beliefs of the Church at the time, he decided to 'blur' the application of his own criteria. In doing so he left human beings alone in the genus Homo, and in their own special family, Hominidae. It is true to say though that he was not content with what he had done, as evidenced by this extract from a letter to a friend in 1788:

> I demand of you, and of the whole world, that you show me a generic character ... by which to distinguish between Man and Ape. I myself most assuredly know of none. I wish somebody would indicate one to me. But, if I had called man an ape, or vice versa, I would have fallen under the ban of all the ecclesiastics. It may be that as a naturalist I ought to have done so.[19]

We can see though that an important step in the modern belief in the chain of evolution is still missing here. Linnaeus talks of 'generic character' and thus his taxonomy does not actually imply any genealogy between human beings and apes, there is no necessary connection between his taxonomy and evolution. In other words this is still a 'pre-evolutionary' way of regarding animals.

Moving on by a little over fifty years to the mid nineteenth century we find this entry in Darwin's notebook:

> Man in his arrogance thinks himself a great work, worthy of the interposition of a deity. More humble and, I believe, true to consider him created from animals.[20]

It took another twenty-one years from the date of his notebook entry before Darwin considered himself ready to publish in "The Origin of Species" the theory that the different species of plants and animals have evolved by the natural selection of random mutations. Even then Darwin did not dare state explicitly that human beings have also evolved in this manner. He gave just the slightest hint of it, saying that his work would illuminate "the origin of man and his history". Darwin waited another twelve years, until his theory of evolution had achieved a reasonable degree of acceptance within the scientific world, before he released "The Descent of Man" in 1871.

He argued against the idea that each species had been independently created, emphasising instead the gradual evolution of one species into another. His idea was that individuals face a struggle for existence and must compete with each other for limited resources. Those that are best adapted to their environment will be the ones that will survive and leave most descendants. Individuals, even in the same species, will vary slightly from each other and this gives natural selection a chance to operate. Darwin writes:

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[19] Letter from Linnaeus to J. G. Gmelin, 1788 as quoted in P. Singer *Rethinking Life and Death*, p. 170.
[20] C. Darwin *Notebooks 1836-1844*, p. 300.

Owing to this struggle for life, any variation, however slight, and from whatever cause preceding, if it be any degree profitable to an individual of the species ... will tend to the preservation of that individual, and will generally be inherited by its offspring.[21]

As Darwin points out, that means that the offspring will have a better chance of surviving, so that there will be a gradual improvement, step by step, in each species' ability to cope with its circumstances. Given a long enough period, a species could change its nature entirely and a new species come into being. Darwin's emphasis, however, was on the individual members of the species, since it was they, and not the species, which would flourish. It is clear throughout 'The Origin of Species' that Darwin believed that there were no sudden leaps in evolution whereby strange new species popped up, rather he emphasises the gradualness of evolutionary change. According to his theory of evolution each change has to occur through a series of fine gradations. Darwin does ask though why we do not see these linking forms around us, and why all organisms are not "Blended together in an inextricable chaos"?[22] He emphasises the slowness of change and the fact that only a few species would be changing at any one period. However, we ought to be able to see gradual changes recorded in the succession of fossils left us and Darwin was somewhat embarrassed that his theory could not account for gaps in the fossil record.

Darwin's claim was certainly bold for his time; that we had a natural origin as the other animals did. He emphasises in "The Descent of Man" that the differences between human beings and animals are differences of degree, not of kind. He marshals a huge array of facts to support the idea of evolution, so it seems difficult to ignore the likelihood that different organisms are linked by common physical descent. As well as this he proposes the theory of natural selection as a simple and convincing explanation of how evolutionary changes occurred. Organisms vary, and those variations that are favoured by the environment, so the theory goes, will tend to survive and propagate. Evolution works, in other words, through survival of the fittest. In this way the theory of natural selection is more heretical than the idea of evolution itself, because it implies that evolutionary change is without direction or purpose. Some theologians, for instance, were able to reconcile themselves to evolution by supposing that it leads to increasing perfection, with humans just a step away from the angels. But the idea that evolution is just nature's way of capitalising on chance variations goes against all traditional religious teaching. According to Darwinian natural selection human beings are the product of historical accident. In this way he rules out the idea that we find in Descartes account above; namely that the uniqueness of human beings is God given. If reason and 'the mind' are what set human beings apart from the rest of the animal kingdom then they are possessed purely by accident, not by divine gift.

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[21] C. Darwin *The Origin of Species*, p. 115.
[22] Ibid. p. 438.

In fact Darwin's view of species challenged philosophical assumptions stemming from Aristotle and Plato about the essences of things. Living things in general could no longer be seen as sharing the universal characteristics of a species. There could not be anything corresponding to 'horseness' or 'doghood'. There were just lots of individual animals, lumped together in groups by the "the opinion of naturalists having sound judgment and wide experience."[23] Darwin accepts that species are "tolerably well-defined objects",[24] but the changes brought about through natural selection are always for the good of each organism and not of the species. References to 'the survival of the species' are in fact un-Darwinian. Because, too, of the emphasis on gradual change rather than on fixed characteristics, evolutionary history becomes important. The crucial factor is which are the ancestors of the members of a current species, not the superficial similarities they share with other creatures. What enables us to group different species together is what Darwin refers to as "the hidden bond of community of descent."[25]

As we have already seen, Darwin was far from being the first thinker to have suggested that human beings were merely a part of the material world with no special status. Indeed Plato and Aristotle had reacted against the pre-Socratics on this issue precisely because they sought intelligibility and purpose rather than the working of blind chance. Early Greek philosophy had also been fascinated by the question of change and flux and had often emphasised it at the expense of any apparent stability. We can see then that Darwin's stress on variation and evolution and his consequent attack on fixed categories was not novel. However, it did contradict the prevailing Christian ideas of his time epitomised in Genesis where it is stated that "God made wild animals, cattle and all reptiles, each according to its kind."[26] On this view it seemed that each species had been created from the very beginning as it was meant to be. Above all God "ceated man in his own image."[27]

Human beings were therefore not so much complicated animals, as reflections of God himself, this of course being much the same as the idea that we found in Descartes' work earlier. On this view the special status of human beings seemed assured. However, this is far from the case in Darwin's account where the struggle for existence becomes paramount and in which chance variations are selected if beneficial and rejected if harmful to the organism concerned. Purpose has, it appears, been transmuted to chance and a human being as a result becomes just one more animal amongst the many, the chance production of an immensely long and complicated process of evolution.

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[23] Ibid. p. 104.
[24] Ibid. p. 210.
[25] Ibid.
[26] *Genesis* 1.25 (N. E. B.)
[27] Ibid. 1.27.

Darwin tried to justify his position and explain, for instance, how the human mind had developed so much further than those of human beings closest relatives in both 'The Descent of Man' and 'Expression of the Emotions in Man and the Animals'. He did not believe that the mind was a *tabula rasa* capable of indefinite modification by experience and thought that many mental activities are governed by instincts imprinted by evolution. He also tried to show that many aspects of the behaviour of human beings, especially the way emotions are expressed, are relics of the animal ancestry of human beings. As well as this, Darwin took seriously many stories that interpreted animal behaviour in anthropomorphic terms, thus providing evidence that animals possess rudiments of even the highest mental and moral faculties.

As far as morality is concerned, Darwin argued that the higher animals exhibit social behaviour that provides the foundation for human moral values. Social behaviour is governed by the instincts, and natural selection can act upon the variations in such instincts to promote useful behaviour patterns. Since human beings distant ancestors lived in social groups, they have inherited these social instincts and human beings moral values are rationalisations of behavioural tendencies that they feel automatically. Darwin accepted that the mental faculties were produced by the brain, and that the increased brain size of the 'higher' animals is responsible for their increased intelligence and more complex behaviour. Many of his contemporaries assumed that evolution would inevitably produce a steady increase in the level of animal intelligence. However, in 'The Descent of Man' Darwin argues that evolution is not inherently progressive and so finds it necessary to explain why the branch leading to humans has experienced a much greater expansion in intelligence than that leading to human beings closest cousins, the great apes. He argued that the distant ancestors of human beings had stood upright as a means of walking on the open plains, while the apes had stayed in the trees. Human beings intelligence was a by-product of this change of habitat, produced as a means of exploiting the hand's ability to manipulate the environment. There is thus in Darwin's work a clear acknowledgment of the role played by the general environment in the evolution of human beings.

Recently discovered mechanisms like genetic hitch-hiking[28] (where genes lying close to ones actually 'selected' are also selected, but only due to their close proximity to the original genes) imply that evolution, as Darwin thought, need not be a smooth process. This means that evolution can occur in what has been called punctuate fashion[29] and can include characteristics that were not themselves selected in terms of survival value. For example, it has been suggested that the organs of flight in insects were originally selected 'for' as organs of thermal exchange, but it was the hitch-hiking of other genes

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[28] J. Maynard Smith & J. Haigh , "The Hitch-Hiking Effect of a Favourable Gene" in *Genetical Research (Cambridge) 23*, pp. 23 - 35.
[29] S. J. Gould & N. Eldredge, "Punctuated Equilibria: The 'Tempo' and 'Mode' of Evolution Reconsidered" in *Paleobiology 3*, pp. 4 - 15.

that fortuitously gave them their uplifting properties.[30] Gould and Eldredge argue that new species are only rarely created through the gradual, linear evolution that Darwin described; rather, speciation is a relatively rapid event that occurs when a group of organisms veers away from its stable population and embarks on its own genetic course. If this is indeed the case then it would solve Darwin's puzzle over the apparent gaps in the fossil record. In this way Gould and Eldredge argue that speciation must depend not on the kind of adaptive processes described by Darwin, and latterly Dawkins, but on much more particular, complex, contingent factors. Bearing in mind examples such as the one above, one could certainly suppose that similar mechanisms might have produced a discontinuity between human beings and other animals.   Such a discontinuity seems to be accepted by Gould when he writes:

> We are but a tiny twig on a tree that includes at least a million species of animals, but our one great evolutionary invention, consciousness - a natural product of evolution integrated within a bodily frame of no special merit - has transformed the surface of the planet. Gaze upon the land from an airplane window. Has any other species left so many visible signs of its relentless presence?[31]

However this discontinuity is still a 'physical' one; consciousness is not a gift of God or some irresolvable mystery. For Gould then, consciousness is analogous to the power of flight in insects, it is a discontinuity and in some sense it is an evolutionary 'accident'. Certainly in one sense Gould's and Eldredge's idea of 'punctuated equilibrium' solves what would be a problem for any evolutionary theorist, namely the apparent discontinuity between human beings and animals; i.e. if human beings have evolved from other animals why are there no signs of animals with 'intermediate' consciousness? But if it does answer this question, it does so at the risk of introducing another form of humanism into its account. In this case human beings' rationality may be down to lady luck rather than Divine intervention, but it is still something that sets human beings radically apart from other animals. We are left with the problem of what sort of continuity could underlie this discontinuity. It seems that as far as most natural historians and evolutionary biologists are concerned, consciousness is, in theory at least, an 'invention' that will be describable in the same terms as we would describe any other fact about human beings, or for that matter any other animals. In other words if there is anything at all unique about human beings - such as consciousness - then it is to be described via natural history and in the modern understanding of natural history, this equates to scientifically.

VI

There is no single, accepted scientific view of human beings. For instance, a doctor might see a human being as a collection of organs, muscles and bones; a biologist on the

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[30] J. G. Kingsolver & M. A. R. Koehl, "Aerodynamics, Thermoregulation, and the Evolution of Insect Wings" in *Evolution 39*, pp. 488 - 504.
[31] S. J. Gould *Hen's Teeth and Horse's Toes*, p. 250.

other hand might talk in terms of cells, molecules and DNA. As for the more science-fiction minded, they may well even talk in terms of 'carbon based life-forms' or the like. Although all these descriptions differ to some extent, the real difference only lies in the size of the 'packets' that each sees human beings as being broken down into, with the packet getting gradually smaller with each description. Essentially each description takes a scientific taxonomy to be complete and all that is required for a complete account of human beings. So even if it is true to say that there is no universally accepted scientific theory of human beings it is just as true that some form of scientific theory is taken to be the most accurate and complete account that can be given.

This way of viewing human beings also fits in with a more general methodological naturalism, which takes science as being the paradigm of rigorous explanation. It also aligns itself with a more ontologically motivated naturalism, a standpoint from which one might argue that human beings must be explained scientifically as science occupies a central and defining role in our current system of belief. Science is seen as having a higher degree of rationality than common sense, 'everyday' explanations. In this way the perceived advantage of explaining human beings in this scientific fashion is obvious; it means that they are explained in the same way as the rest of the 'natural order', human beings are thus contained under the general umbrella of scientific understanding.

Science and naturalism have, over the course of the last fifty years or so, been virtually indistinguishable. To the metaphysical idea that everything real is part of the natural world, and that there is therefore no non-natural or supernatural reality, has been added the epistemological doctrine that every question about life or the world, or even about their meaning, is amenable to scientific inquiry. If that is, it is to be meaningful at all. Very often the epistemological dimension is primary, in conformity with the casual assumption of three centuries of Cartesian philosophy that epistemology is always primary in philosophy. For example:

> I want a *naturalized* theory of meaning; a theory that articulates, in nonsemantic and nonintentional terms, sufficient conditions for one bit of the world to *be about* (to express, represent, or be true of) another bit.[32]

In all such naturalistic/scientific explanations human beings come to be understood as subsystems within the comprehensive materialist system that is the world. In becoming part of such a system, human beings are understood as being much like everything else, as one object amongst many others, it is what McDowell has called "our proneness to extend an objectifying mode of conceiving reality to human beings."[33] In other words human uniqueness is nothing but a matter of complexity, if humans are the paragon of animals it is only because they are the most intricate, all the more reason one might

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[32] J. Fodor *Psychosemantics: The Problem of Meaning in the Philosophy of Mind*, p. 98.
[33] J. McDowell *Proceedings of the British Academy, Volume lxviii*, "Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge", p. 478.

think to subject human beings to description via the rigours of formalised scientific inquiry.

The idea of a formalised scientific method can be traced back to Bacon, for whom the goal of science is to discover the most general causal principles structuring the world. Only once these are known can complete accounts of the nature of things - including human beings - be given. Prior to Bacon, Aristotelian science when seeking knowledge of the nature of things falling into natural kinds, had been non-interventionist; it could only learn from observation of naturally occurring things and from their natural course of development. Modern science, following Bacon's lead, has departed largely from this ideal of understanding nature as it is and by itself. It is based on the assumption that it is only by disrupting and intervening in the world that an understanding of the forces determining the natural order can be obtained. Nature must be made to yield answers to the scientists questions.

On this model then, science becomes a view that the world is based on cause and effect, mechanics and mathematical explanation. The world becomes abstracted from human concerns and everyday practices; with the 'new' scientific world seen as the real world, an objective world that contains a greater degree of truth than the subjective world of everyday experience. What is often seen as important to us, our day-to-day lives, concerns and values become marginalised on this view. On this scientific view we might say that a human being is an environmentally occurring organism. Following McDowell we can call this way of describing human beings and the world "bald naturalism", this being his term for the philosophical 'opt out' which conceives of human life as fully explicable in the terms of natural science.[34]

<div align="center">VII</div>

The great advantage of taking a baldly naturalistic approach to human beings is that it includes them within a method of explanation that has been spectacularly successful at explaining how the natural world works, it demystifies human beings and makes them understandable wholly in terms of physical processes. The problem is that the picture that such a form of naturalism portrays of what it is to be a human being seems rather empty and lacking in descriptive richness. Bald naturalism may give us some - or even all - the story about the nuts and bolts, it may well tell us what human beings are made of and how they work, but in focusing on the parts it misses out on the whole. This is because it can tell us a lot about human beings but very little about being human. To put this another way, we might say that bald naturalism is very successful at the micro level, but that this is not transferred to the macro level. We can see the failure of this sort of reductionism if we consider sociobiology.

Sociobiology argues that the lowest level predicate by which animate entities can be characterised in order to figure in biological laws is that of 'species', not that of any particular species (such as 'homo sapiens' or 'canis familiaris'), or any particular type of

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[34] J. McDowell *Mind and World*, p. 67.

species (like 'mammal' or 'reptile'). That is, no generalisation about the behaviour of human beings or mammals or even occupants of the earth will be a general law properly so-called as long as these animals are described by means of the particular terms 'human being', 'mammal', or 'occupant of the earth'. These terms refer to entities in virtue of their spatio-temporal particularity - their location on earth, for instance - whereas genuine laws must prescind from such particular designation. The notion of 'species' does precisely this: it refers to any biological line of descent or lineage. As Fay points out this means that

> The theory of natural selection which articulates the laws governing the evolution of species applies to all species including those which might be found on planets other than earth.[35]

This does not mean that terms like 'human being' or 'mammal' have no role to play in sociobiology; it means only that these terms will not figure in its general laws. An example of such a law would be the following from the theory of natural selection: 'If x is a homogeneous subclass of species S and is superior in fitness to the other members of the species, then the proportion of x in the species will increase'. There is no mention here of any particular species; this law governs all species.

Sociobiology is an example of a general conceptual strategy: when the stock of concepts available to describe events proves inadequate to the scientific task of picking out entities and events in a way that makes them suitable for nomological treatment, re-conceive the basis for one's descriptive vocabulary and invent another basis which will prove adequate to the task. This is exactly what happened in physics and in biology; there appears to the sociobiologist to be no principled impediment for its happening in the study of human beings. Of course if such a strategy is followed human beings may not be social scientifically described by means of concepts currently employed in the social sciences - including terms like 'human being' and 'intention'. This would involve some loss: human behaviour and relations would come to be described so generally and without meaning that what seems integral to them would be abstracted out of their description. This is precisely what happens in physics and biology and if, for instance, human behaviour is described non-intentionalistically some important aspects of it will be omitted; but so describing it may make it suitable for figuring in general laws and so render it no longer scientifically mysterious.

If we assume, reasonably I think, that scientific explanations are ultimately nomological and further that sociobiological laws which encompass human actions and products are ascertained, would this vindicate the sociobilogical programme and in turn the bald naturalist? I think we can give at least two reasons why not. In the first place, we may well be interested in the unique and datable events that make up the human record as unique and datable events. A political scientist may be curious about the behaviour of the Nazi party in Germany as the particular party it was and not merely as an instance of the behaviour of political parties in general. In other instances anthropologists may be

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[35] B. Fay *Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science*, p. 165.

interested in the thoughts and feelings that went into the actions of particular groups and in such cases sociobiology cannot capture what is of interest about such human phenomena. We are interested in differences here and not similarities.

This interest in the particular as particular is reinforced by the second reason. Human actions and products are peculiarly non-homogeneous and open. They are peculiarly non-homogeneous because their similarity in terms of their meaning is compatible with dramatic physical differences, for instance all the different ways of signalling. They are open because they can be extended in highly creative ways: what constitutes a particular sort of intentional phenomenon can radically change as a result of conceptual innovation. For example we might think of fitness as it applies to human societies. It is often said that in human history physical evolution has been superseded by cultural evolution. This means that what constitutes fitness for human beings depends more on the power of cultural imperatives than on bodily characteristics. Moreover, what constitutes success, and what imperatives will lead to success, will vary immensely from one cultural setting to another. In part because of conceptual innovations in communication, medicine and political organisation, the abilities apt for success have changed dramatically from one cultural setting to another. To appreciate the particular ways fitness is achieved in human settings some reference to cultural meanings will thus be required. From the laws of natural selection we may know that a group of people succeeded because it was more fit than another, but this will not in itself explain why this success took the particular form it did. In order to understand this, the cultural imperatives in question must be described in intentional terms. Thus we need to appreciate the demands and opportunities of particular cultures; in this case intentional behaviour described in intentional terms must supplement sociobiology for a full appreciation of human evolution.

The attempt at using only scientific methodology to explain what it is to be a human being fails then because it is too restrictive and does not provide us with the tools required to do justice to the full range of human experience. It attempts to explain a human being as just another animal, but in doing so, arguably it misses being a complete explanation of animals as well.[36] In fact the attitude that the methods and aims of science, which are taken by 'bald' naturalists to be the paradigm of explanatory clarity and clear understanding, may well represent a significant obstacle in coming to grips with what being human is all about. My aim is not to say that bald/reductive naturalism is wrong as such; rather it is to show that as an explanatory and descriptive vehicle it lacks the range, inclusiveness and scope needed to approach an understanding of what it is to be a human being. Because of this it lacks the persuasiveness to really convince us of its conclusions. The sort of picture that I will provide will, I hope, present an alternative that is both more plausible and more persuasive. It will draw on science as one tool for understanding the world and human beings but not take it to be the only such tool available.

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[36] For instance see T. Nagel *Mortal Questions*, "What is it Like to be a Bat?"

Indeed, it is the prioritising of the scientific method that is the downfall of bald naturalism, it is attractive because "it conforms to a scientism that shapes much contemporary thinking"[37] but at the same time it is damaging because science is not the only, or always 'the best' explanatory framework available. We can understand further this mistaken appropriation of scientific methodology to all forms of explanation if we look at Husserl's comments on it. Husserl criticises philosophy for misunderstanding Galilean science - a misunderstanding that Galileo himself contributed to. Galileo's great achievement according to Husserl was both to conceive and implement "the completely new idea of *mathematical natural science.*"[38] Such a science aims to discover laws of nature which can be expressed in the form of mathematically specified functional relationships between measurable variables; such as the laws for pendular motion and the free fall of bodies. However, Husserl argues that Galileo's mistake, and also that of many who have followed him, was to claim that the only real properties of objects were those which could be directly represented by those variables, e.g. shape, size and so on.

Husserl rejects this identification of the 'real' world with the mathematical nature of Galilean science and the consequent relegation of what he calls the 'life-world' (*Lebenswelt*) to the status of mere subjective appearance. He claims that the main reason for Galileo's philosophical error here was his failure to recognise that the concepts employed in the new science were themselves formed through abstraction and idealisation from the life-world. It follows from this that the physical universe, the inanimate, material world studied by the physical sciences, is merely one partial and dependent aspect of the life-world. It is an aspect that is revealed as a consequence of our having abstracted from all the social, psychological, cultural, moral and aesthetic aspects with which that life-world is also permeated.

When we see science in this light it becomes clear that it can only give us part of the picture as regards to being human. By its very nature science, and by implication any sort of naturalism that relies entirely on its methodology, gives us an idealised, abstracted account of being human. This is also true of any other sort of animal - certainly any sort of animal with a recognisable way of being, i.e. in terms applicable to all animals. Science may give us a nigh on complete picture of amoebas, but even ants start to seem problematic when we consider them as social beings and it certainly seems to be lacking something when it comes to animals such as chimpanzees. The sort of features outlined above by Husserl then start to play a part. It seems difficult to attribute any of them to the lives of amoebas, but ants have their own form of sociality and this is true of chimpanzees to whom one can attribute certain psychological states and who knows what else from the list. The sort of account that is required then is one that can take into account not just biology and not just psychological characteristics, but both at the same time. To put it another way we need an account that can encompass the uniqueness of being human but is at the same time rooted in the flesh and blood of

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[37] J. McDowell *Mind and World*, p. 76.
[38] E. Husserl *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, p. 22 - 3.

animal existence. Arriving at just such an account is in fact the major thrust of this work.

So not only do extreme forms of naturalism miss out on human qualities, it seems that they also miss out on many animal ones too. Reductive/scientific/bald naturalism is the great leveller, it seeks to explain everything in the same way and so give a unified theory whereby one theory suits all occasions. The great benefit of this is that it shows the similarity between all things, that in many (possibly all significant) ways human beings are just like animals, who in turn are just like everything else. All that varies are degrees of complexity, and this is all that human uniqueness amounts to, human beings are the most complex 'objects' known to human beings. In this way conventional forms of naturalism stress similarity and they do this by seeking to go beyond description and to explain why things are as they are. However, as we have seen, in seeking to cast its net wide enough to catch everything and then pull it tight enough to contain them all, this net misses too many important things and is thus unacceptable. Thus my aim is not to present a range of arguments against bald/reductive naturalism, but instead to weave together the components of an alternative picture that will be more convincing, inclusive and descriptively powerful and that will lead to a greater understanding of being a human being.

VIII

As we have already seen above, central to Descartes non-naturalist ('supernaturalist') understanding of human beings is the idea of disengagement from the world. That which is crucial to making each human being what they are is a disembodied ego - the *cogito*. In this way human beings are necessarily distanced from the world. However, this is also true for the sort of naturalist understanding just outlined. The prioritising of the mechanistic, scientific method of understanding and explanation means that all 'true' explanation has to be objective, freed from its subjective 'human', content. Of course this was also precisely the thrust of Nagel's argument outlined earlier.[39] Thus both the non-naturalist and the naturalist methods of explanation see the paradigm point of view as that of the uninvolved external observer. As Taylor points out, "both dualism and mechanism are ... ontologies of disengagement."[40] However, not only is this view central to both conventional non-naturalistic and naturalistic theories, it has, as Taylor also points out:

> To some extent colonised the common sense of our civilisation [and] offers us the picture of agents who in perceiving the world take in 'bits' of information from their surroundings and then 'process' them in some fashion, in order to emerge with the 'picture' of the world they have; who then act on the basis of this picture to fulfill their goals, through a 'calculus' of means and ends.[41]

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[39] See Introduction p. 1-2.
[40] C. Taylor *Philosophical Arguments*, p. 67.
[41] Ibid. p. 63.

This idea of the disengagement of human beings from the world, the notion that we are primarily spectators on the world is one that I shall return to in greater detail, when I consider I the human body and human being-in-the-world. However, what can be said at the moment is that as a view it prioritises human beings' relationship to the world as one of knowledge. Unlike all other animals, human beings are not involved in the world in a non-epistemic fashion; first and foremost human beings relation to the world is one of coming to know it via reason and it is this relation - whatever its origin - that makes human beings unique. In other words conventional naturalistic and non-naturalistic theories see human beings' relation to the world as primarily one of disinterested observers rather than as engaged participants. As far as such theories are concerned, human beings are only contingently connected to the environment; this is certainly true for Descartes and has been implicitly accepted by much modern thought.

IX

As we have seen, if we suppose that there are two domains: that of the world and that of the mind, each with its own internal structure and principles of operation, then the idea of commerce between them will seem to involve some kind of causal exchange with attendant 'interactionist' difficulties. Such epistemological dualism is the target of McDowell's form of direct realism in 'Mind and World'. His suggestion is that there can be no general gap or barrier between thought and world; what human beings think and what is the case must be one reality: "Thinking does not stop short of the facts. The world is embraceable in thought."[42]

This also counts as our systematic view of reality. Such influence as the world exerts on thought is already in the order of reason rather than that of material causes. Also according to McDowell, we are to identify two domains: the realm of law and the space of reasons. The first is nature conceived as the order of physical objects and events held together by law-like causal relations. The second is the intentional/rational/normative sphere of perception, thought and action. McDowell says that

> Modern science understands its subject matter in a way that threatens, at least, to leave it disenchanted, as Weber put the point in an image that has become a commonplace. The image marks a contrast between two kinds of intelligibility: the kind that is sought by (as we call it) natural science, and the kind we find in something when we place it in relation to the other occupants of 'the logical space of reasons' … It was an achievement of modern thought when this second kind of intelligibility was clearly marked off from the first.[43]

Returning to 'bald naturalism' then, it is the view that seeks to explain everything human in terms of the realm of law. On the other hand, what McDowell calls 'rampant platonism' is the position that both denies this possibility and regards responsiveness to meaning, reason and value as wholly autonomous of the natural order. The first view

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[42] J. McDowell *Mind and World*, p. 33.
[43] Ibid. p. 71.

fails in general inasmuch as it cannot account for the normativity of reason and the subjectivity of thought. However, it also fails as far as our present purposes are concerned because even if it can (arguably) what human beings 'are', it is incapable of explaining 'how' they are, i.e. what it is to be a human being. The second preserves this but at the unacceptable cost of severing human subjectivity and occupancy in the space of reasons from any grounding in nature. The opposition of these two views is traced back by McDowell to the conflict between 'modern' science and Aristotelian/Scholastic natural philosophy, a conflict that is epitomised in Descartes' philosophy as we have already seen. Where the latter characterised and explained nature in teleological and intentional terms, the scientific revolution aimed to purge such elements from nature as the object of natural science once and for all. But it has thereby become difficult or impossible to find a place for human intentionality, and thus for the space of reasons definitive of rational conceptual thought, in nature conceived of in this way. Rationality as such threatens to be 'extruded' from nature and as McDowell goes on to say:

> Animals are, as such, natural beings, and a familiar modern conception of nature tends to extrude rationality from nature. The effect is that reason is separated from animal nature, as if being rational placed us partly outside the animal kingdom. Specifically, the understanding is distanced from sensibility. And that is the source of our philosophical impasse. In order to escape it, we need to bring understanding and sensibility, reason and nature, back together.[44]

In responding to the ontological problem about the relation of human beings' minds and the world, the threat that rationality as such might be extruded from nature, we should according to McDowell avoid two traditional strategies. We should avoid bald naturalism that seeks to incorporate the space of reasons into the realm of law through some kind of philosophical reduction or construction; i.e., a reconstruction of reason from within the domain of nature as the object of modern natural science. Equally, however, we should avoid a rampant platonism that pictures the space of reasons as existing somehow independently of empirical nature, as "autonomous in that it is constituted independently of anything specifically human."[45]

The true solution rather, is to appreciate an Aristotelian insight into human beings' 'second nature' as rational animals. The space of reasons definitive of conceptual thought is not to be dualistically set over and against human beings' animal nature. On the contrary, initiation into the space of reasons is simply a normal part of the maturation of adult human beings, rational animals who thereby acquire a second nature in which natural or animal processes such as sensory perception (which belongs, as it were, to human beings' 'first nature') become infused with conceptual meaning. From this it follows that nature as the object of modern natural science, nature conceived of as a meaningless realm of law, is not the whole of nature. Nature also includes human beings' nature, rational animals whose initiation into the space of reasons gives them a

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[44] Ibid. p. 108.
[45] Ibid. p. 77-78.

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"foothold in the realm of law"[46] that avoids both bald naturalism and rampant platonism.

McDowell thus sets the stage for a 'middle way', which he calls 'relaxed naturalism' or 'naturalised platonism'.[47] Briefly, McDowell sees human beings as animals and as such as part of nature. However, they are also thinkers and doers; and in virtue of their being conceptually, and rationally structured, human beings thoughts and actions both have meaning and are liable to normative assessment. Below the space of reasons lies the realm of the law; here the patterns of things are geometric and causal. Thus while there may be correlations between these two sets of structures, there is no way in which the causal explains the rational order. At best we might regard it as a material precondition. McDowell also says that

> It would be crazy to regret the idea that natural science reveals a special kind of intelligibility, to be distinguished from the kind that is proper to meaning. To discard that part of our intellectual inheritance would be to return to medieval superstition. It is rather to set a high value on the kind of intelligibility we disclose in something when we place it in the realm of law, and to separate it sharply from the intelligibility we disclose in something when we place it in the space of reasons.[48]

X

McDowell's strict dualism of law and reason gives rise to two important questions. First, what is to be said about animal experience if it is assumed that animals are not concept users? Second, how is human beings ascent to rational intentionality to be explained if it is also assumed that they originate in and remain attached to the realm of nature as that is conceived by modern science? McDowell addresses these questions, but the answers he provides appear unsatisfactory.

The first problem is to make sense of the idea of animal experience without crediting animals with perception. Following Kant, McDowell wishes to maintain that

> The objective world is present only to a self-conscious subject, a subject who can ascribe experiences to herself; it is only in the context of a subject's ability to ascribe experiences to herself that experiences can constitute awareness of the world.[49]

This seems overly intellectualist, as it seems that perceptual experience can be attributed to animals; their behaviour is responsive to features of the environment in ways that license the attribution of discriminatory powers. Also the question of abstract

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[46] Ibid. p. 84.
[47] Ibid. p. 89 & 91.
[48] Ibid. p. 109.
[49] Ibid. p. 114.

conceptualisation does not arise as we contemplate the actions of animals. However, as Haldane points out

> There is space for further organisational principles between, on the one hand, patterns of sensation, and on the other, conceptual relations between abstracted universals. In this space may lie percepts: individuating perceptual sortals constituted out of the sensible and behavioural features of things.[50]

There seems to be a strong case for positing these as they are implied by familiar styles of experience attribution. We describe and explain animal behaviour by reference to what they are looking at and how things of that sort feature in their lives.

McDowell's second problem is how to explain the emergence of human beings' distinct form of existence in such a way as not to lose touch with nature conceived as the realm of law. He also has to try and show why mature human beings naturally belong to both the space of reasons and the space of law without supposing that concepts of the former space, or particulars falling under those concepts, in any way owe their naturalness to their location in the latter space. McDowell moves towards an account of human beings' 'second nature', in virtue of which they are at home in the space of reasons, by offering an analogy to Aristotelian conceptions of how mature human beings are related to ethical requirements. On such views

> Ethics involves requirements of reason that are there whether we know it or not, and our eyes are opened to them by the acquisition of 'practical wisdom',[51]

That McDowell takes as his model

> For the understanding, the faculty that enables us to recognize and create the kind of intelligibility that is a matter of placement in the space of reasons.[52]

What is rationally required of human beings is always open to scrutiny. However, when human beings have a 'decent upbringing' and this initiates them into the 'relevant' way of thinking, which will be 'rooted in' a certain tradition of thinking, their eyes are opened. When this happens, human beings' grasp of the 'detailed layout' of the space of reasons is "indefinitely subject to refinement."[53]

Human beings, according to McDowell are born into their 'first nature', that of an animal who belongs to the realm of law. He says, "human infants are mere animals,"[54]

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[50] J. Haldane, "Rational and Other Animals" in *Verstehen and Humane Understanding* (ed. A. O'Hear), p. 25.
[51] J. McDowell *Mind and World*, p. 79.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid. p. 82.
[54] Ibid. p. 123.

although they have a capacity for acquiring a faculty of spontaneity. He goes on to say that it is

> Not even clearly intelligible to suppose a creature might be born at home in the space of reasons,[55]

though it is not clear why this is the case. What McDowell wants us to accept then is that human beings acquire conceptual powers after birth, and only in the presence of suitable interaction with their environment - including other thinkers. He defends this view by stating that "nothing occult happens to a human being in ordinary upbringing."[56] However, he seems to infer far too quickly that human beings are introduced into their second nature in a way that makes it appropriate to speak of either learning or the crucial role played by culture and tradition.

The physical changes associated with adolescence, for example, are manifested only given suitable environmental conditions such as a proper diet; and even though such changes occur late in development, they are predominantly determined by the child's genetic endowment. Similarly it seems possible that human beings may come to acquire their second nature at the age of reason mainly because that is when the relevant portion of their genetic endowment kicks in. Where the truth lies with respect to rational capacities, between rabid nativism and the view that everything of interest is in the stimuli, seems to be a matter for empirical inquiry. However, the history of attempts to formulate worthwhile learning hypotheses that are subsequently confirmed is far from inspiring. It is true that one does not acquire conceptual truths in a vacuum, but what McDowell says seems to add very little to this truism.

Only at the very end of his lectures does McDowell raise what seems to be the key question: how does it happen that some animals acquire a second nature? He rightly notes that

> Mere ignorance about how a human culture might have come on the scene in the first place is hardly a plausible starting point for an argument that initiation in to it must actualize an extra-natural potential in human beings.[57]

But this doesn't seem to be a reply to anyone suspicious of extending the notion of 'nature' beyond the realm of law. Sceptics will want to be told how human beings are initiated into their alleged second nature as creatures at home in the *sui generis* space of reasons. McDowell gives "pride of place to the learning of language."[58] He wants to say that human beings acquire their second nature by acquiring their first language. McDowell thus holds that we should approach via a consideration of language any questions we might have about thought. But for him language is not primarily a vehicle

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[55] Ibid. p. 125.
[56] Ibid. p. 123.
[57] Ibid. p. 123-4.
[58] Ibid. p. 125.

of thought, nor is it primarily an instrument of communication. The crucial feature is rather that

> A natural language ... serves as a repository of tradition, a store of historically accumulated wisdom about what is a reason for what.[59]

It has been argued, by Chomsky amongst others, that this is a theoretically fruitless conception of language; but the important point in this instance is that it appears that acquiring a McDowellian language just is acquiring whatever it takes to be at home in the space of reasons. This being the case, it is unilluminating to be told that human beings acquire their second natures by acquiring their natural language. In the last forty years or so a great deal has been learned about the phonology, syntax, and semantics of human languages (in Chomsky's sense of language), but this has shed no appreciable light upon how a 'mere' animal comes to be a fully rational being. So in McDowell's sense of 'language', language acquisition seems to be as much a mystery as ever. As well as this, if one abstracts from appeals to tradition, the fact that a non-human animal does not speak a language in the intuitive sense cannot establish that it lacks a second nature. For those who believe that being rational has little to do with being part of a tradition, this will suggest that McDowell is not entitled to assume that non-human animals lack states with conceptual content.

As a whole then, McDowell's strategy seems flawed in two ways. Firstly, the original question remains to be answered; i.e. what is to be said about animal experience if it is assumed that animals are not concept users? To continue to press this point is not to urge a move to reductionism. On the contrary the force with which it arises stems from the manner and strength of McDowell's own division between the natural and the personal/human realms. Secondly, to say that 'human infants are mere animals distinctive only in their potential' fails to address the point of how it can be that such a potential is possessed. We are offered the intriguing idea that human beings acquire a second nature in virtue of which they cease to be mere animals, but at the same time we are not offered a satisfactory account of how this takes place.

Finally then, McDowell struggles to maintain his distinction between nature and reason because it is too strictly drawn. As such not only does it fail to fully account for animal experience, it also cannot account for human beings' experience of, and connection to, the world due to its over-intellectualisation of it. In other words, McDowell is guilty of a form of humanism that places human beings 'above' animals and does not overcome the disengaged view prevalent in both Cartesian and scientific views of human beings. The problem that underpins McDowell's project is that he seems to accept that the answer to his problem of reconciling the space of law and the space of reasons lies in forming an uneasy alliance between naturalism and non-naturalism. However, it appears that as hard as he tries to overcome the conflicts between the two, there is always an unresolved tension present which means that the 'truths' of both views remain in conflict.

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[59] Ibid. p. 126.

In this chapter then, we have seen how both non-naturalistic and conventional naturalistic conceptions of what it is to be a human being fail to convince. We have also seen that they often fail for very similar sorts of reasons. This is largely because they are underpinned by a view of human beings as primarily disengaged observers rather than as beings that are actively engaged in their world. As we have already seen this disengagement is a hangover from Cartesian philosophy and its prioritising of epistemology. Whereby it is taken for granted that human beings' primary relation to the world is one of knowledge, rather than seeing human beings as firstly involved in the world and then coming to 'know' it. Again, this is due to the prioritising of the scientific point of view above all others. We have also seen that as novel and thought provoking as it is, McDowell's characterisation of being human also ultimately fails because it misrepresents animal experience, clings to a form of humanism and also falls prey to seeing human beings as disengaged from the world. I believe that rather than trying to reconcile naturalism and non-naturalism as McDowell does, we should rather pursue a further alternative that seeks to be inclusive without trying to reconcile two essentially conflicting traditions. Such an alternative can then provide us with a broadly naturalistic framework in which we can come to a greater understanding of, and do justice to, being human. It is to this that I now turn.

Chapter 2 - Broad Naturalism

<center>I</center>

In the last chapter we saw, by example, how both conventional naturalist and non-naturalist accounts of being human failed. The latter failed because it was not possible to reconcile the non-natural features with the natural world. In the case of the former, because it could not capture important psychological factors of being human, due largely to traditional naturalist accounts taking all explanation to be methodologically and ontologically continuous with modes of explanation in the natural sciences. We also saw how an attempt to reconcile these two accounts - McDowell's – ran into difficulties because it could not do justice to the uniqueness of being human and also because it misrepresented animal experience, specifically the animal character of being human. As well as this it became clear that underpinning both the traditional naturalist and non-naturalist accounts was a background view of human beings as first and foremost disengaged, dispassionate and uninvolved observers of the world who become involved only after an act of ratiocination. This is a view that naturalist accounts, particularly those of the 'bald' variety, have inherited from Descartes and Bacon and have made their own so to speak.

It is this background idea of human disengagement that I believe must be dispensed with if we are to arrive at a clearer and more coherent idea of what it is to be a human being. In this chapter, I intend to outline a 'broad' naturalistic framework that can overcome the problems encountered in the last chapter, such as the continuity between human beings and other animals and the over reliance on scientific methodology. There are of course certain implications that must be taken into account when adopting a naturalistic outlook, however broad it may be.

In taking a naturalistic course we are committed to the view that everything is 'natural', i.e. that everything there is belongs to the world of nature, and so can be studied by methods which in turn are appropriate for studying that world. However, the question as to what these methods may be is open to debate. We need to be clear that the adoption of naturalism does not necessarily entail the adoption of materialism or in any way the maintenance of the view that eventually all explanation can be made in scientific terms. We can recognise the importance of scientific explanation without confining ourselves solely to it. Thus the broad naturalism that I advocate accepts that everything there is belongs to the world of nature but it also maintains that this world is to be described in ways other than just those of science; for example in terms of natural history. Utilising such an inclusive form of naturalism will allow us to do justice to all the aspects of being human. I believe that we find just such a broad naturalism in the later work of Wittgenstein.

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When Wittgenstein claims that he provides "remarks on the natural history of human beings"[60] it may seem that he is supporting a theory whereby biological human 'nature' in some way determines the way that human beings act and react. In other words that he is advocating some form of scientific naturalism, where science provides us with a paradigm of explanatory clarity for understanding both the world and human experience of it. Indeed it might appear that he is advocating precisely the sort of 'bald' naturalism that we rejected as too restrictive in the last chapter. However, this is not the case as Wittgenstein's subject matter is human beings' use of language. Of course traditionally speaking this has an important bearing on what it is to be human, with many philosophers, notably Aristotle, marking it out as the defining characteristic of being human. Also, in his later work, Wittgenstein's aim is not so much to provide an account of science itself, but to contrast it with other forms of discourse, such as philosophy, and to warn against the imposition of its methods on such differing forms. He says

> Philosophers constantly see the method of science before their eyes, and are irresistibly tempted to ask and answer questions in the way science does. This tendency is the real source of metaphysics and leads philosophers into complete darkness.[61]

This contrast is independent of the tenability of his views on science, since it presupposes only that scientific theories and hypotheses try to provide causal explanations of empirical phenomena. In contrast philosophical problems cannot be solved by experience or causal explanation since they are conceptual, not factual. They require not new information or discoveries but a greater degree of clarity about the grammar that is used. This contrast is exemplified when Wittgenstein writes:

> It was true to say that our considerations could not be scientific ones. It was not of any possible interest to us to find out empirically 'that contrary to our preconceived ideas, it is possible to think such-and-such' - whatever that may mean. And we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations.[62]

Wittgenstein's idea - the one that inspires 'Ordinary Language Philosophy' - is that people do not ordinarily confuse one activity with another, one use of language with another; but that deep philosophical perplexities arise when such confusions occur. To resolve them and defend against them, Wittgenstein proposes to follow a motto from 'King Lear': "I'll teach you differences!" In fact this was so important that he once told M. O'C. Drury that he thought of using it as a motto for the 'Philosophical

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[60] L. Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations* (Henceforth, *PI*), 415.
[61] L. Wittgenstein *The Blue and Brown Books* (Henceforth *BB*), p. 18.
[62] L. Wittgenstein *PI* 109.

Investigations' as a whole.[63] Monk repeats this comment and remarks on Wittgenstein's concern with differences:

> His concern was to stress life's irreducible variety. The pleasure he derived from walking in the Zoological Gardens had much to do with his admiration for the immense variety of flowers, shrubs and trees and the multitude of different species of birds, reptiles and animals. A theory which attempted to impose a single scheme upon all this diversity was, predictably, anathema to him. *Darwin had to be wrong: his theory hasn't the necessary multiplicity.*[64]

Throughout the 'Philosophical Investigations' he forsakes theory and explanation, exhorting us instead to rely upon examples and description, "Don't think, but look!"[65] he tells us with 'seeing' continually taking priority over 'thinking'. He cautions that adequate deductions only follow from the meticulous examination of data. Don't guess, he admonishes; be there, look, observe. For Wittgenstein, seeing refuses what is hidden and supposedly more fundamental, it demands that we consider what is open to view. In our search for answers we should not let what is right before our eyes, the obvious, pass us by in favour of what we think may be somehow hidden. In fact he would surely agree with Sherlock Holmes when he says:

> The world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes.[66]

Moreover, seeing is grounded in the shared world and it connects human beings to each other as well as to the world. By not losing sight of its applications, seeing resists the temptation to get lost in theoretical possibilities. From the distant, theoretical standpoint of thought, everything seems methodologically possible, even if thoroughly unworkable in practice; one only has to look at Descartes' dualism to see this.

With his turn to seeing from the unqualified rationalism of the 'Tractatus', Wittgenstein abandons his faith in logic's ability to describe the world. He also abandons a methodology and a long time prejudice of philosophers against looking, giving examples, examining details and remaining within the domain of the everyday. As far as Wittgenstein is concerned, Genova points out that:

> Unlike Prospero, philosophers cannot don the cape of thought and wave some magic equations to get reality straight; they must descend to Caliban's mud and look and see.[67]

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[63] R. Rhees *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Personal Recordings*, p. 171.
[64] R. Monk *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, p. 537, my emphasis.
[65] L. Wittgenstein *PI* 66.
[66] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, p. 31.
[67] J. Genova *Wittgenstein A Way of Seeing*, p. 61.

Yet in rejecting rationalism and turning to seeing, Wittgenstein is not recommending any simpleminded empiricism. In fact, he is critical of strict empiricist methods and never tires of poking fun at the naiveté of empiricists:

> Don't always think that you read off what you say from the facts; that you portray these in words according to rules. For even so you would have to apply the rule in the particular case without guidance.[68]

His reservations are evident in his constant questioning about how it is that we learn from experience, or how it is that experience teaches us such and such. Neither seeing nor experience is sacrosanct; they both easily flounder aimlessly in a mass of information. Thinking accomplishes much that sight can never attain; it shows the range of possibilities and allows an exploration of terrain in advance of sight. Without it we would be like flies in the fly-bottle banging stupidly against the glass. Wittgenstein's point is that on their own both the techniques of looking and thinking are limited, especially as they are polarized by the conflicting claims of empiricists and rationalists. His practice is to interweave them, alternating back and forth between "seeing connections" and "inventing intermediate cases."[69] Inventions made possible by thought investigate the problem to find the right point of attack and once the range of possibilities is at hand, seeing returns us to the 'rough ground'. It grades the suppositions and cancels those that fail to have an application; reaffirming our trust that only some applications make sense.

It is in this way that Wittgenstein enjoys greater success than McDowell does in bringing together the rationalist and empiricist traditions. Rather than achieving an uneasy and ultimately unsatisfactory combination of the two as McDowell does with his naturalised platonism, Wittgenstein 'dissolves' the one into the other by refusing to accept their presuppositions. Indeed in his final philosophy, Wittgenstein abandons the thinking/seeing dialectic for "acting":

> Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end;-but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately *as* true, i.e. it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game.[70]

In the end for Wittgenstein, as well as in the beginning, was the deed.[71]

It is clear then that Wittgenstein was not a bald, reductive naturalist and that he believed that there should be a division between science and philosophy's reflection on human beings' conceptual apparatus, and finally that the imposition of the methods of one upon the other can only lead to confusion. For Wittgenstein, natural history is to be elicited

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[68] L. Wittgenstein *PI* 292.
[69] Ibid. 122.
[70] L. Wittgenstein *On Certainty* (Henceforth *OC*), 204.
[71] See Wittgenstein's quote from Goethe's *Faust* I, *OC* 402.

on what facts human beings' uses of language depend, with this presupposing that human beings are language using creatures. The division in labour between philosophy and science is emphasised by Wittgenstein in his 'Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough'. In it he provides us with concrete examples of his opposition to reductive naturalistic theories that attempt to explain being human. We can also see throughout it an outline of his philosophy's own broadly naturalist direction.

III

According to Frazer in 'The Golden Bough' earlier peoples are taken to have had a false idea of the course of nature; their beliefs are taken to be proto-scientific, that is to be essentially the same kind as our own scientific knowledge. The gulf between 'us' and primitive peoples is explicitly underlined by Frazer and it fits in well with his wider project. Impressed by Darwin's account of how human beings evolved, Frazer sees himself as contributing to a psychological anthropology charting the course of human psychological development. Frazer intended his accumulation of facts to provide the basis for theories that would lay bare the general principles or laws of this development and of human action in general. Such theories would be psychological and reductive in nature, such as when he claims that the most powerful force in the creation of primitive religions was probably fear of human dead. His scientific aims are also evident in his accounts of how ritual practices arose. For instance popular peasant ceremonies in spring, at midsummer and at harvest are explained on the hypothesis that they

> Were originally magic rites intended to cause plants to grow, cattle to thrive, rain to fall and the sun to shine.[72]

We can see then how Frazer's account adheres to the sort of broadly naturalistic assumptions outlined above in that he attempts to impose a single explanatory framework based upon science on all the phenomena that he encounters. On the other hand, Wittgenstein provides an anti-programmatic account of being human.

Wittgenstein's criticism of Frazer focuses precisely on this attempt to explain what are ritual practices in scientific terms, with his first move being to deny that Frazer has explained such practices at all. Instead, Wittgenstein argues that all that Frazer has done is, arguably, to make such practices plausible to people of the same background as himself. By claiming that ritual practices rest on mistaken scientific hypotheses, Frazer offers an easy way to understand them, but one whose persuasiveness is undermined because it presents ritual practices "as, so to speak, pieces of stupidity."[73] The practices only come to seem stupid though because Frazer fails to see the distinctive features of them that set them apart from other types of activity. As Wittgenstein puts it,

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[72] J. Frazer *The Golden Bough*, p. xviii.
[73] L. Wittgenstein *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough* (Henceforth *RFGB*) in *Philosophical Occasions*, p. 119.

The same savage, who stabs the picture of his enemy in order to kill him, really builds his hut out of wood and carves his arrows skillfully and not in effigy.[74]

It is certainly not the case that the ritualistic practices that Frazer discusses arise from "faulty views about the physics of things"[75] and to claim that they do is, as Wittgenstein points out, "nonsense". In fact Frazer's

Explanations of primitive practices are much cruder than the meaning of the practices themselves.[76]

So not only does Frazer misrepresent the practices, he also manages to make the people who carry them out seem stupid when they are not; rather it is that their practices do not conform to the method of explanation that Frazer attempts to impose upon them.

By trying to impose an unsuitable explanatory framework onto the rituals concerned, Frazer completely loses sight of what is important in such practices. He misses that they have a significant role in the lives of the people who partake in them and that they have nothing at all to do with faulty or mistaken views about science. The situation is similar to a scientifically minded person observing people celebrating on New Year's Eve and thinking that the celebrants believe that if they don't celebrate, then the New Year will not start. In a similar fashion, Wittgenstein notes that primitive peoples celebrate rites invoking the sun towards morning, when the sun is about to rise, but not at night when they simply burn lamps. So these people are anything but 'stupid' and are so to speak 'in tune' with the natural world that they are part of. Wittgenstein sees Frazer's attempt to explain ritual practices in terms of their origins as fundamentally misguided. He claims that

The very idea of wanting to explain a practice - for example, the killing of the priest-king - seems wrong.[77]

The reason for this is that such actions in a certain sense allow of no explanation. If we can understand why people act in this way it is not because we can explain their action, but because we can see its significance. Explanation in terms of cause and effect misses the point because that is not what is at issue in these cases; culture, tradition, history etc. are the sorts of considerations that are important. Wittgenstein illustrates this point with reference to Frazer's central example:

If a narrator places the priest-king of Nemi and 'the majesty of death' side by side he realises that they are the same. The life of the priest-king shows what is meant by that phrase.

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[74] Ibid. p. 125.
[75] Ibid. p. 129.
[76] Ibid. p. 131.
[77] Ibid. p. 119.

Someone who is affected by the majesty of death can also give expression to this through such a life. - This, of course, is also no explanation, but merely substitutes one symbol for another. Or: one ceremony for another.[78]

What Wittgenstein shows here is that the nature of understanding that we are after in this context is totally different from the understanding of a natural process provided by a scientific explanation of the sort that Frazer attempts to impose upon the practices which he writes about.

IV

In stark contrast to Frazer's 'scientistic anthropology', Wittgenstein when discussing the ritualistic practices in question takes an entirely different anthropological method. We need to remember that anthropology is a two-fold discipline; it refers to both the study of human beings and their customs and societies as well as the study of the structure and evolution of human beings as animals. Frazer's methodology is - arguably - relevant to the latter of these two functions, but seems peculiarly ill-suited to the former. This is why Wittgenstein believes that an anthropologist cannot be wholly scientific in their outlook, for instance he says that

> One could begin a book on anthropology by saying: When one examines the life and behavior of mankind throughout the world, one sees that, except for what might be called animal activities, such as ingestion, etc., etc., etc., men also perform actions which bear a characteristic peculiar to themselves, and these could be called ritualistic actions.[79]

So certain examples of human behaviour are open to scientific description, like ingestion; but this is by no means true of all human behaviour and in fact probably accounts for a small percentage of what human beings actually do. Far from being the paradigm then, examples of scientifically pertinent accounts of human behaviour are the exception and not the rule. Wittgenstein also says that in the case of the life and behaviour of human beings, "one can only *describe* and say: this is what human life is like."[80] In focusing on describing what human beings do rather than trying to find explanations for their actions, we can see that Wittgenstein is a naturalist of some sort but, as is clear from what has been said above, not a scientific one. However, it seems as though Frazer does fit into the 'scientific' category as he takes human practices and attempts to explain them via psychological mechanisms. Wittgenstein's general objection to this is that in doing so we suppose that we can identify such psychological mechanisms independently of the practices themselves.

Wittgenstein's anthropology follows the grammar of human actions in its effort to show how we can come to an understanding of human life through pertinent cross-cultural

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[78] Ibid. p. 123.
[79] Ibid. p. 129.
[80] Ibid. p. 121.

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comparisons. In this way description's purpose is to provide a more "perspicious representation" of how things are in the world. Wittgenstein places a great deal of importance on this, he says

> The concept of perspicious representation is of fundamental importance for us.
> It denotes the form of our representation, the way we see things.[81]

So this enables us to see the structure and the workings of the symbolic practices of another culture in the context of, and from the vantage point of, the people of that culture. This is central to his criticism of Frazer because it is precisely what Frazer's account lacks. By seeing the 'primitive' practices as part of an early step on the way to human evolutionary 'progress' from primitive to rational, Frazer completely misunderstands the practices because he takes them out of the appropriate context. However this still leaves us with the problem of moving from description to understanding, of this problem Wittgenstein says:

> We also say of some people that they are transparent to us. It is, however, important as regards this observation that one human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn this when we come into a strange country with entirely strange traditions; and, what is more, even given a mastery of the country's language. We do not *understand* the people. (And not because of not knowing what they are saying to themselves.) We cannot find our feet with them.[82]

There seems no doubt that he was keenly aware of the estrangement and alienation from others that human beings, both singly and in groups, often feel. But the point here is that understanding depends on "*customs* (uses, institutions)."[83] We might say that it depends on both form and content. These breakdowns, however poignant they may be, are contingent and corrigible, since they result from not having learned the practices rather than from not having the capacity to learn them. So Wittgenstein believes that on the one hand we can fairly clearly determine what these people in a strange country are saying to themselves. We can determine in what ways the beliefs and customs they have, have meaning within their own lives and this we do by description. On the other hand we may not understand these beliefs and customs, we may not have "found our feet with them".

It is the achieving of this kind of understanding that lies at the heart of Wittgenstein's 'Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough' where he attempts to show how a different form of understanding of the actions of people could be grasped by other people who do not share the same culture. Despite all Frazer's explanations of rituals and practices he offers no way of connecting these strange ceremonies with our thoughts and feelings. They seem no less strange and disquieting after all his hypotheses and theories about

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[81] Ibid. p. 133.
[82] L. Wittgenstein *PI* p. 223.
[83] Ibid. 199.

them. Wittgenstein insists that although we might find a way of seeing how those whose myths and practices they are stand in relation to them by giving an interpretation of them - scientific or otherwise - we still have to come to an understanding in ourselves. We must find our feet and determine how we stand to the myths, rituals and practices that confront us in a strange culture. This makes Wittgenstein's project both more universal and more particular. The universality of Wittgenstein's project can be seen in its making points about human beings in general, but that these facts can be brought out only by looking at behaviour in particular communities evidences its particularity. It is also universal in that he sees the relevance of tying the feelings and actions expressed in one culture to similar ones expressed in another, those of the observer. In relating this point back to Frazer's investigation Wittgenstein writes:

> Nothing shows our kinship to those savages better than the fact that Frazer has on hand a word as familiar to himself and to us as 'ghost' or 'shade' in order to describe the views of these people.[84]

In other words, it is obvious that we share something in common with these people because we can talk about it.

The project becomes more particular because the desired understanding comes from within a community and this is informed by communal ways of acting and speaking and it is aimed at a different culture which has its own background. It is against such an inherited background that any understanding arises and it is because he forgets about it that Frazer

> Represents these people as if they had a completely false (even insane) idea of the course of nature, whereas they only possess a peculiar interpretation of the phenomenon. That is, if they were to write it down, their knowledge of nature would not differ *fundamentally* from ours. Only their *magic* is different.[85]

It seems that Wittgenstein's point here is that all humans encounter nature in primarily the same way, what differs is how each culture comes to describe it. The differences that he is concerned with in 'The Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough', like those he discusses in his other philosophical works, are not differences among individuals nor among nations and cultures. Rather, they are differences among human activities and uses of language and these are the differences that he wants to 'teach' us about. These differences do not divide humanity but are common to its diverse linguistic and cultural groups. They constitute an important aspect of human beings natural history and distinguish them from animals. For this reason it is our human natural history that we must look at next.

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[84] L. Wittgenstein *RFGB*, p. 133.
[85] Ibid. p. 141.

Dogs and cats do not talk, and we should remember that Wittgenstein takes human natural history to be based on human beings' use of language, but we might ask why is it the case that cats and dogs do not talk? Wittgenstein criticizes an attempted explanation of this in the following remark:

> It is sometimes said that animals do not talk because they lack the mental capacity. And this means: 'they do not think, and that is why they do not talk'. But: they simply do not talk. Or to put it better: they do not use language - if we except the most primitive forms of language - Commanding, questioning, recounting, chatting, are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating drinking, playing.[86]

The first sentence of this remark Wittgenstein clearly takes as being a description of something people sometimes say. The rebuttal begins with a description of animal behaviour and it seems to describe a matter of fact. Wittgenstein then concludes with what he sees as another matter of fact; that certain uses of language are as characteristic of humans as are certain animal activities. Wittgenstein does not suppose that these facts are "natural necessities", nor that they are synthetic a priori, nor that they are not really crucial to the argument. Given that he wishes to maintain the dichotomy between philosophy and science, this means that he must make a sharp distinction between natural history and natural science.

Wittgenstein takes the facts of natural history to be purely descriptive, avoiding necessity, explanation, hypothesis and proof. Essentially natural history has to do with simple statements of plain facts that often escape notice because they are so familiar. We might say that such facts are always before our eyes and so we miss them because we come to take them for granted. For instance:

> The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something - because it is always before one's eyes.) The real foundations of his enquiry do not strike man at all. Unless *that* fact has at some time struck him. - And this means: we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and most powerful.[87]

And even more tellingly

> What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings; we are not contributing curiosities however, but observations which no one has doubted, but which have escaped remark only because they are always before our eyes.[88]

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[86] L. Wittgenstein *PI* 25.
[87] Ibid. *PI* 29.
[88] Ibid. 415.

The plain statements of fact envisaged here differ from science because they are purely descriptive: they avoid all necessity, all explanation, all hypotheses and all proof. This dichotomy between philosophy and science means that philosophy should avoid statements about empirical possibility or necessity, avoiding theory and explanation. This may seem to be at odds with what Wittgenstein says elsewhere about explanations often being included in the domain of philosophy.[89] However, he is clear that it is explanations of meaning that remain within the domain of philosophy, explanations which clarify and do not justify, or which convey how certain things are rather than how they must be. It is explanations and predictions of fact that fall within the domain of science, since such explanations and predictions exhibit some fact or event as necessary relative to some law or theory.

Returning to the remarks and observations mentioned above in Section 25 of the 'Philosophical Investigations'; what Wittgenstein is talking about are the actions, practices and behaviour that are so common place that they are never called into question but are so obvious that they escape attention and seem unimportant. But what would count as an example of our natural history for Wittgenstein? A central example as far as he is concerned would seem to be 'thinking'. For instance when he says "What does man think for?...-we shall say human beings do in fact think"[90] and that is the most we can really say. Sometimes we may think for a particular reason, or it may have a particular cause, but at the bottom of all this humans simply think; it is a fact of human natural history. Also, as has already been noted above, language belongs to human natural history and not to that of animals. Finally, as far as Wittgenstein is concerned, the existence of language appears to be presupposed in some forms of thinking. For example he writes:

> One can imagine an animal angry, frightened, unhappy, startled. But hopeful? And why not?[91]

Why can't we imagine an animal as 'hopeful'? Because hope is an example of a kind of consciousness which requires language as do such things as making predictions, guessing, remorse and a whole host of other things which are only possible for human beings with complicated forms of language. Might someone not argue though that despite all that has been said, Wittgenstein is just a scientific naturalist in disguise, that really all that he has mentioned as human beings' natural history could actually be explained biologically? In other words that physical human structure is at the root of human natural history. But we should recall that Wittgenstein wants a sharp distinction between natural history and natural science, whereby natural history does not involve 'theory' like natural science does. As we saw earlier in this section he takes the facts of natural history to be contingent. For example that human beings look where the finger is pointing instead of at the finger is a contingent fact of human natural history;

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[89] Ibid. 3, 30, 43, 288 for example.
[90] Ibid. 466.
[91] Ibid. p. 174.

nonetheless such facts add up to a constitutive account of what human beings are like. This is made even more apparent if we go on to look at what Wittgenstein calls "facts of nature".

<div align="center">VI</div>

Exactly what 'facts of nature' amount to for Wittgenstein is never really spelled out but it is certainly true to include among them human beings' common biological nature. However, this is certainly not a reductionist move by him nor does biology in some way underpin his naturalism rather it is as Baker and Hacker point out "part of the framework within which we construct and engage in our language-games."[92] This means that human beings' shared biology provides a framework for a common form of representation but it does not provide a justification for it. For instance, human beings' perceptual capacities allow them to discern certain colours and Wittgenstein asks us to imagine men with different perceptual capacities who express shades of orange by means of a kind of binary decimal and says that

> They would be related to us roughly as people with absolute pitch are to those who lack it. *They can do* what we cannot.[93]

Here is a case of a language-game that we cannot learn as they do, because our language-game with colours like all our language-games "is characterised by what we can and cannot do."[94] So rather than making perception a question of the biological make-up of human beings, Wittgenstein makes it a matter of abilities, abilities that are characterised and exemplified in activity.

In a similar way human beings seem to be born with an aptness to learn quickly from training and likewise their shared patterns of reaction allow them to teach. For instance, unlike other animals, human beings look at where the finger is pointing and not at the end of the finger and when teaching a technique, for example counting in a series human beings agree on how to carry on. As Wittgenstein notes:

> If we teach a human being such-and-such a technique by means of examples, - that he then proceeds like *this* and not like *that* in a particular case, or that in this case he gets stuck, and thus that this and not that is the 'natural' continuation for him: this of itself is an extremely important fact of nature.[95]

Thus that human beings agree in how to do things and in their judgments is a fact of both their human nature and the nature of the world. This is not something that can be 'explained' away as a God-given ability or as a result of some evolutionary process;

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[92] G. Baker & P. M. S. Hacker *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, p. 234.
[93] L. Wittgenstein *Zettel* (Henceforth *Z*), 368.
[94] Ibid. 345.
[95] Ibid. 355.

rather it is simply something that human beings do and other animals do not do. There is no mystery or problem that needs explaining, it's just part of the natural world.

That human beings do mathematics is likewise a fact of nature. Wittgenstein argues that human beings' mathematical concepts are just as influenced by their nature and that of the world that they inhabit as any other. Human beings cannot take in numerals with fifty digits, but we can imagine a case where they could not take in three digits, in which case the notation now used would be useless. It might be that human beings could not distinguish a triangle from a rectangle and if their memory span was that of a goldfish, they could not undertake lengthy calculations. Hand in hand with this is another fact of nature that provides clear evidence of Wittgenstein's broad naturalism, that is the importance of the relative stability of the world itself. This is a fact of human beings' natural history in that it is the environment in which they live. In turn he sees it as a precondition for the application of concepts. If the world was different in certain ways - for instance, if objects grew and shrank randomly - then human beings would not employ the relevant concepts. This is not because the concepts would be incorrect but because the point of using them would be lost. This is clear from the following passage in *Zettel*:

> "It is as if our concepts involved a scaffolding of facts."
> That would presumably mean: If you imagine certain facts otherwise, describe them otherwise, than the way they are, then you can no longer imagine the application of certain concepts, because the rules for their application have no analogue in the new circumstances.[96]

We can see how this would be the case if we consider Wittgenstein's 'cheesey' example of weighing:

> The procedure of putting a lump of cheese on a balance and fixing the price by the turn of the scale would lose its point if it frequently happened for such lumps to suddenly grow or shrink for no obvious reason.[97]

These background regularities of the natural world and human beings' interaction with it are not component elements of their concepts, they are not parts of the explanations of these concepts. Rather the natural world is part of the framework - the "scaffolding" within which human beings' language-games are played and not part of the games themselves. The problem is that this scaffolding is often 'invisible' to human beings precisely because they are so accustomed to it and it accompanies even their most mundane activities, as Wittgenstein points out:

> The *facts* of human natural history that throw light on our problem are difficult for us to find out for our talk *passes them by*, it is occupied with other things. (In the same way we tell someone: "Go into the shop and buy..." -not: "Put

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[96] Ibid. 350.
[97] L. Wittgenstein *PI* 142.

your left foot in front of your right foot etc. etc., then put coins down on the counter etc. etc.".[98]

Facts of nature then provide the implicit background to all our actions, for example that we walk as we do and so on. They are accepted as being part of our actions and are so 'everyday' that they "pass us by" and go unnoticed. They don't have to be explained because they are shared, but this is not to say that they cannot change. We might imagine the onset of some strange disease that left legs useless and such the concept of walking would be thrown into total confusion. Such a change would not show that the concept of walking to be false, but it would make the concept useless. We must remember though that facts of nature do not force our concepts upon us, they are by no means inevitable or unavoidable. Different conceptual structures can be formulated within the naturalistic framework provided by human and worldly facts of nature, as Baker and Hacker point out

> The Russians distinguish two different colours where we distinguish only two shades: light blue and dark blue.[99]

It is a fact that different cultures have strikingly different colour-grammars, as indeed do people within the same culture. We only have to think of an artist with his palette and the scientist with a list of colour frequencies. What Wittgenstein is attempting to do is to provide a broadly naturalistic framework in which both of these colour-grammars can happily coexist, where neither is right and the other wrong, and where neither is privileged above the other. Likewise it is not only science, specifically biology, that can inform us of what it is to be human, folk psychology, history, sociology art and so on all have a part to play.

Our concepts, our rules and agreement, our formulas and so on all occur within a naturalistic framework; that is, against a background of facts of nature. Although these facts of nature constitute a necessary condition for our ways of doing things they are not a sufficient condition. After all, wide variations in human behaviour are consistent with facts of nature. Different logical and mathematical systems can exist against the wide background of facts of nature. However it seems that there is a class of facts of nature that are particularly significant in bringing out what it is to be a human being and these are human beings' primitive reactions, the paradigm of which is pain.

VII

Wittgenstein states clearly in the *Investigations* that

> Words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation and used in their place ... the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it.[100]

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[98] L. Wittgenstein *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology Vol. 1*, 78.
[99] G. Baker & P. M. S. Hacker *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, p. 237.

So what we have is one 'primitive, natural' reaction replacing another when we speak of being in pain. Language is not based on nor reduced to behaviour, but is rather a more sophisticated, if still natural, form of it. This is made clearer if we consider what Wittgenstein has to say in *Zettel*, that is:

> Our language-game is an extension of primitive behaviour. (For our *language-game* is behaviour.) (instinct).[101]

Human beings do not identify a sensation as painful and then report it verbally. Wincing, groaning, going "ouch!" or saying "that hurt" are all increasingly sophisticated versions of the same primitive reaction. But what exactly does Wittgenstein mean by 'primitive'? If we turn again to *Zettel* and in particular paragraph 541 he says that the 'primitive' involved in a 'primitive reaction' means that the sort of behaviour involved in pain-behaviour is *'pre-linguistic'* and

> That a language-game is based *on it,* that it is the prototype of a way of thinking and not the result of thought.[102]

Remembering also his equating of 'primitive' with 'natural' above, it seems clear that Wittgenstein wants us to see primitive reactions as outside the realm of justification, as simply being something that human beings do, in other words as a fact of their nature. We can see how animals also display natural reactions to pain; if someone stands on a dog's paw, the dog will yelp and snatch its paw away. Even in the case of a "wriggling fly" "Pain seems to be able to get a foothold."[103] In the same way that a human being will snatch their hand away from a flame without having to think about it first, so the dog snatches its paw away. So some animals display natural reactions to pain as human beings do, the difference between them being that animals cannot display the more sophisticated reactions. What is crucial though is that Wittgenstein's broad naturalism allows us to see the continuity between the natural reactions of human beings and those of other animals. The fact that human beings can speak and delineate their pain in a more fine-grained way makes them more 'sophisticated' than non-human animals, but it does not mark human beings out as being radically different to non-human animals.

It is important to remember that the natural, primitive reactions that we have been talking about do not happen in isolation, but rather in a much wider context. Part of this contextualising of reactions involves the appropriateness of the background to them. For instance, Wittgenstein asks:

> Why can't a dog simulate pain? Is he too honest? Could one teach a dog to simulate pain? Perhaps it is possible to teach him to howl on particular

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[100] L. Wittgenstein *PI* 244.
[101] L. Wittgenstein *Z* 545.
[102] Ibid. 541.
[103] L. Wittgenstein *PI* 284.

occasions as if he were in pain, even when he is not. But the surroundings which are necessary for this behaviour to be real simulation are missing.[104]

When Fido's owner tells him to roll over and howl, the dog is doing as he is commanded, he is following his owner's instruction and not simulating pain. For behaviour to be an expression of pain, and likewise fear, joy etc., it must occur in a specific context. For behaviour to be the pretence of pain, it requires an even more far-reaching, complex context.

However, it is not difficult to make sense of human simulations of pain. For instance, a young child claims to his father that he has a severe headache and thus cannot go to school. The child simulates the natural reactions to the 'headache'; he moans and groans, asks for an aspirin and sits quietly in a darkened room with his head in his hands. Does the father believe his son's pretence? At first he does, but he is less inclined to do so when he realises that the boy is due to take a spelling test at school that day, which he knows the boy is keen to avoid. The necessary conditions in this case appear to be present. These include the boy having had time off school before because he had, or had successfully feigned having, a headache, that the father cares about his son's well-being and, of course, the immanence of the test. Thus the conditions of appropriateness are fulfilled and are done so largely because the boy realises what is required for the pretence and has a reason for attempting it. Unfortunately for the unlucky boy, his father can see through his son's pretence and so sends the hapless lad off to school. In Wittgenstinian terms the logical 'environment' is present in the boy's case, whereas it is lacking in the dog's case.

Although we can, and need to, ascribe sensations to animals and indeed to very young infants, As Hanfling points out:

> The concepts of lying and pretence have no place here, as they have in the full language-game of sensation that is played among human adults.[105]

There are also limits to the kind of pain that might be ascribed. For example, could we say of a dog that it has a headache? What would this mean and under what circumstances would we need to say it? Of a dog that has hurt its head we might well, and no doubt would given suitable behaviour, say that it feels pain in its head. But, crucially, this would not be the same as speaking of a headache. Perhaps the problem is that we usually ascribe a headache to someone because they tell us that they have one, rather than on the basis of non-verbal conditions, such as might exist in the case also in the case of a dog or another animal.

By looking at things in this Wittgenstinian way, we can see that the grounds for attributing pain to an animal are of the same kind, and may be no less strong, than those for attributing it to a human being. This is true even if it is the case that human beings

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[104] Ibid. 250.
[105] O. Hanfling *Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy*, p. 105.

can also use language to express their pain. This conclusion has implications for moral questions concerning the treatment of animals. It is sometimes thought that these must be answered on the basis of scientific knowledge about neural processes in the brains or bodies of animals, their DNA genetic material and the like. Such findings are thought to make it more or less likely that animals feel pain, have consciousness and so on. But these views rest on a misunderstanding of the language involved and, consequently of the moral considerations that are applicable. When a human being complains of pain and behaves accordingly, we generally do what we can to help. But helping in this way does not depend on an inference that the individual concerned really is in pain; nor is it contingent on the presence of certain neural processes or DNA inside the human being. There are cases when we do infer that someone is in pain, for example if we observe them taking a painkiller, and in such cases the desire to help, if any, would be mediated through that inference. But in other cases, indeed in most cases, we see, and do not infer, that someone is in pain. Any desire to help comes from this observation and not from any inference. Similarly, we may see that an animal is in pain and again our desire to help it comes from what we perceive and is not contingent on scientific findings regarding neural processes etc.

Another natural reaction that we can consider is an instinct in a human being. Wittgenstein mentions it at the end of *Zettel* as already noted, but it also crops up earlier in the same section when he writes:

> Being sure that someone is in pain, doubting whether he is, and so on, are so many natural, instinctive kinds of behaviour towards other human beings.[106]

And it is earlier in *Zettel* that he gives his clearest indication of what he takes "our concept of 'instinct'" to be:

> It could very well be imagined that someone knows his way around a city perfectly, i.e. would confidently find the shortest way from any place in it to any other ,-and yet would be quite incompetent to draw a map of the city. That, as soon as he tries, he produces nothing that is not completely wrong. (Our concept of 'instinct'.).[107]

So once again it seems as though he is equating 'instinct' with some sort of 'naturalness', how human beings find their way around without guidance or reference to a method. As human beings it is just a thing that they naturally do. This relation between instinct, primitive - and by association natural - reactions and language is stated forcefully by Wittgenstein in the following remark from *On Certainty*:

> I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct but not ratiocination. As a creature in a primitive state. Any

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[106] L. Wittgenstein *Z* 541.
[107] Ibid. 121.

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logic good enough for a primitive means of communication needs no apology from us. Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination.[108]

Again Wittgenstein emphasises that language is grounded in human beings' primitive reactions, that it comes about naturally and also that instincts precede rationality. So just as the fact that human beings agree in their judgments required no explanation - it's just something that they do - likewise that human beings are language users doesn't need explaining away as a gift from God or as part of their brain's 'hardwiring'. Biological facts are certainly important, that the human voice box allows for the production of a wide range of sounds for instance, and this may be explained in evolutionary terms, but this does not tell us why humans speak, only how they do so. It does not tell us 'why?' because this is a badly formed question, rather it is just a fact of nature that human beings do speak.

Returning to the example of 'pain', what Wittgenstein wants to say is that human beings' attitude to their own pain and towards that of others is a fact of nature. It is part of human beings' biological and anthropological natural history that they act and react as they do when in pain themselves and to others when they are in pain. Grimacing saying "ouch" and so on are part of human beings' natural human world, but we might try and imagine another alien culture where 'smiling' is the natural reaction when in pain. However, it is by no means clear that human beings could 'find their feet' with a culture that reacts naturally to pain by 'smiling'. Smiling has no role in human beings' grammar of natural reactions to pain. To say that someone smiles naturally when in pain doesn't make sense. So to say that an alien's natural reaction to pain is to smile doesn't make sense either. In such a case it seems clear that a different concept to either that of 'pain', 'smiling', or possibly both is being applied. In other words, if the alien is smiling it's not in pain. Such aliens would certainly seem to be further away from us than the people of 'The Golden Bough' because they don't behave in a way that comes naturally to us, that is, naturally to human beings. If we try to analyse pain behavior in a purely reductive, scientific way - possibly via some theory of stimulus and response - then we lose the explanatory power of seeing it as a natural reaction. This is because by looking at pain-behaviour purely scientifically it becomes an abstract set of data that cannot capture the richness, complexity and spontaneity of human behaviour, to which we as fellow humans naturally respond. In this way pain-behaviour is important because it tells us something about what it is to classify someone as a human being.

<div align="center">VIII</div>

Bearing all this in mind I think we can now come to see that when Wittgenstein talks of human beings' "form of life" he must be seen to be talking naturalistically. 'Form of life' as a concept has been seen as crucial to understanding the 'Philosophical Investigations' by both Strawson and Malcolm, with Malcolm describing it as a "landmark" of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. When Wittgenstein writes near the start of the 'Philosophical Investigations' that

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[108] L. Wittgenstein *OC* 475.

The term 'language-*game*' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life,[109]

we can once again see his naturalistic attitude coming into the open. As Malcolm points out:

> [Form of life] is found in natural history, where different species of animals are described in terms of posture, locomotion, habitat, feeding, breeding, social organisation, the sounds they make, the way they play ...Using language in many different ways (different "language-games") belongs to human natural history as much as living in trees belongs to the natural history of monkeys.[110]

Malcolm goes on immediately to say

> In seeking to clarify the meaning of some bit of language, Wittgenstein persistently asks - with what action is it joined? What role does it play in our lives.[111]

So meaning does not require another domain of reality; describing characteristic activities that are aspects of a form of life is one way of responding to a query about the meaning of what is said or done. Since the clarification is achieved by means of a description rather than a definition or analysis or justification, natural history is an important part of Wittgenstein's aim to "Do away with all *explanation*."[112]

Malcolm also points out that the role of natural history in Wittgenstein's work is that it "Brings requests for explanations and justifications - for *reasons* - to a stop!"[113] We can see that certain grammatical remarks play the role of bringing requests for explanations and justifications to an end and this makes Wittgenstein's association of grammar with natural history less bizarre than it first appears. As Malcolm observes "the logic of our language is based on many facts of nature, including human nature."[114] Such facts include ones that might occur in grammatical remarks, such as that human beings do not speak or calculate in this way or that way:

> In certain circumstances, for example, we regard a calculation as sufficiently checked. What gives us the right to do so? Experience? May that not have deceived us? Somewhere we must be finished with justification, and then there remains the statement that *this* is how we calculate.[115]

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[109] L. Wittgenstein *PI* 23.
[110] N. Malcolm *Wittgenstein: Nothing is Hidden*, p. 237-8.
[111] Ibid. p. 238.
[112] L. Wittgenstein *PI* 109.
[113] N. Malcolm *Wittgenstein: Nothing is Hidden*, p. 238.
[114] Ibid. p. 239.
[115] L. Wittgenstein *OC* 212.

As well as this, Malcolm points out that it is only through such naturalistic accounts that we can come to understand words and sentences, he says that

> Words and sentences can be understood only in terms of the circumstances, the contexts, the life surroundings, in which they are spoken.[116]

What we see here is an alternative to understanding that proceeds in terms of analysis and definition; with these being precisely the tools of scientistic, bald naturalism. Thus by being based on natural history rather than natural science, Wittgenstein's broad naturalism provides a much more liberal, inclusive framework than that of bald naturalism. His naturalism is richer and more satisfactory than McDowell's 'naturalised platonism' though because Wittgenstein's natural history of human beings comprises grammar, language-games and the everyday reality of human life. These activities of human beings involve norms as well as facts and so it seems that Wittgenstein really does provide 'space' for both laws and reason, whereas McDowell can only provide an uneasy, and ultimately unsatisfactory, union of the two.

Some of the norms of human language are arbitrary; however, others are so tightly woven into the fabric of human beings form of life that they are both culturally invariant and seemingly indispensable, for instance the mastery of a language. What human beings say is not the issue, rather it is that they speak at all that is important, i.e.,

> It is what human beings *say* that is true and false; and they agree in the *language* they use. That is not an agreement in opinions but in form of life.[117]

It seems clear that Wittgenstein wants to emphasise that human beings' language-games develop against a background of what they do, rather than from what they might or might not think. That human beings' natural reactions provide the framework for what they say. Language's connection to action is nicely etched in the idea of calling language a refinement, that is, something that improves upon action:

> The origin and the primitive form of the language-game is a reaction; only from this can more complicated forms grow.
> Language - I want to say - is a refinement. "In the beginning was the deed."[118]

He is also emphasising of course that primarily language is an activity, it is speaking that is important because it is what we do. Speaking is one of our practices and just as the practices of the people in 'The Golden Bough' do not stem from their opinions, so the more general practice of speaking, of language, does not stem from an opinion. We don't decide to speak it is something that as humans we do because it is part of our shared form of life. By focusing on what human beings do rather than what they 'think', or even what they 'see', Wittgenstein is able to escape the problems of traditional

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[116] N. Malcolm *Wittgenstein: Nothing is Hidden*, p. 239.
[117] Ibid. 241.
[118] L. Wittgenstein *Culture and Value*, p. 36e.

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naturalist accounts by including non-naturalistic considerations, such as cultural ones, without making them seem problematic or an inconvenience that have to be 'explained' away.

IX

But how are we to understand this idea of a 'form of life'? It seems to be crucial to understanding the naturalism of Wittgenstein's later work and yet there are only five references to it in the most important of these later works, 'Philosophical Investigations'.[119] With regard to getting a clear idea of form of life

> The fourth passage is a key passage for understanding Wittgenstein's concept. It provides the most detailed information about the relation of a language-game to a form of life, and it furnishes clear support for believing that Wittgenstein views human beings as having a common form of life.[120]

This 'fourth' passage reads as follows:

> Can only those hope who can talk? Only those who have mastered the use of language. That is to say, the phenomena of hope are modes of this complicated form of life.[121]

The form of life referred to here is that of those who can talk and this being the case it can only mean the form of life determined by having mastered the use of language. So Wittgenstein could not have expressed himself in this way if he supposed that there are various forms of life that presuppose linguistic competence. If mastery of the use of a language determines a form of life of which the phenomena of hope are modes then the phenomena of forecasting, regretting, counting, naming colours, giving orders, obeying them and so on, are all also "modes of this complicated form of life". But why should we see it as 'complicated'? It is true that there are many subtle nuances of hope, but they would seem to be a rather insubstantial basis for calling the form of life complicated. What complicates it are all the other possibilities beside just the phenomena of hope. Here we have an echo of an earlier passage in which Wittgenstein spoke of form of life. That is, this form of life is complicated because it involves "countless different kinds of use of what we call 'symbols', 'words', and 'sentences'."[122]

This way of seeing 'form of life' conforms with Wittgenstein's comment that "to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life."[123] It makes no difference whether we think of Japanese or Swahili instead of English or German: the same complicated form

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[119] See L. Wittgenstein *PI* 19, 23, 241, p. 174 & p. 226.

[120] N. Garver *This Complicated Form of Life*, p. 252.

[121] L. Wittgenstein *PI* p. 174.

[122] Ibid. 23.

[123] Ibid. 19.

of life (differently worked out) is associated with the mastery of one of them. However, it seems that we cannot see the language of the 'builders' in this way. Bearing in mind Rhees'[124] reservations about such a language it appears that such a language would certainly not be recognisably human and it appears it could not constitute a language at all. A language cannot be conceived merely in terms of words and syntax but only as it is used, as it is integrated into the activities of some sort of living being - again we can see the parallel with Wittgenstein's criticisms of Frazer. I cannot understand the words without understanding the activity and I cannot understand the activity without seeing how it fits into the life of the speaker. Finally, I cannot do this without understanding the general form of life of the speaker.

It is my argument that speakers all have the same form of life - they are all human beings; in other words that there is a single human form of life. This is by no means an uncontentious or widely accepted view, in fact it is often held not to be the case. For instance Danford says that "we cannot make a list of all human forms of life"[125] and Whittaker claims that

> The scope of what we call 'forms of life' will vary according to the discourse
> in question and the needs at hand.[126]

His grounds for this are that he thinks that Wittgenstein uses *Lebensform* and *Sprachspiel* "interchangeably" in Section 23 of the 'Philosophical Investigations'. As well as this, Stroud talks of "our human practices and forms of life"[127] which seems to suggest that practices and forms of life might be identical and implies a plurality of human forms of life. Hilmy goes so far as to present an elaborate argument that identifies 'form of life' with 'language-game'.[128] However, not all commentators on Wittgenstein's philosophy subscribe to this plural interpretation.

Kripke for instance, though only in passing refers to "our form of life"[129] and in a different vein, Hunter argues for an "organic account" of forms of life. He wants

> To see speaking or language-using, which is what Wittgenstein says is a form
> of life, as a biological or organic phenomenon.[130]

But there are problems with Hunter's account in that he misses the connection between forms of life and natural history and rejects the connection between form of life and the

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[124] R. Rhees *Discussions of Wittgenstein*

[125] J. W. Danford *Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy*, p. 117.

[126] J. H. Whittaker "Language-games and Forms of Life Unconfused" in *Philosophical Investigations 1*, pp. 44-45.

[127] B. Stroud "Wittgenstein and Logical Necessity" in *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations* (ed. G. Pitcher), p. 495.

[128] S. Hilmy *The Later Wittgenstein: The Emergence of a New Philosophical Method*, Ch. 5.

[129] S. Kripke *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, p. 96 & 105.

[130] J. F. Hunter "'Forms of Life' in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*" in *American Philosophical Quarterly 5*, p. 235.

common behaviour of human beings. He also lapses once into a commitment to a plurality of human forms of life due to a misreading of Section 23 of the 'Philosophical Investigations'. Malcolm, on the other hand, clearly implies that there is just one human form of life when he says that

> We go on, all agreeing, following rules in new cases - without guidance. Other than the past training, there is no explanation. It is an aspect of the form of life of human beings. It is our nature.[131]

In determining whether there are many or only one human forms of life it is crucial to remember that a language cannot be conceived just in terms of words and syntax but only as used; as it is integrated into the activities of some sort of living being.[132] We cannot understand the words without understanding the activity, we cannot understand the activity without seeing how it fits into the life of the speaker and we cannot do that without knowing what general form of life the speaker has. It is a very general fact that speakers all have the same form of life; they are all human beings. It is a great strength of Wittgenstein's naturalism that it makes this clear. What he has achieved by showing language to be an activity of human beings is to make it an integral part of being human. If we are to see human beings as part of nature, we must see language in the same way, which is as a fact of human nature and as part of the form of life of being a human being. As well as this the fact that there is a single human form of life means that we are justified in talking about human beings per se and about certain facts being true of human beings as a whole.

The whole question of there being a human form of life rather than a plurality is important because if we can talk of one form of life rather than many, then we can rightly talk about very general facts about human beings rather than just trivial contingencies that happen to be the case. In the last three passages in the 'Philosophical Investigations' to mention "form of life",[133] where agreement in form of life is invoked as a stopping point for inquiry, such activities as naming colours, measuring, hoping and grieving are at stake. It seems absurd to imagine that any of these characteristically human activities depend on having some particular life-style. In other words that there is a human form of life is important because it means that we can talk about characteristics of human beings in general.

X

If we grant that there is a distinctive human form of life and that this can be described in a broadly naturalistic way, it seems that we still have to ask how this relates to other naturalistic issues. For instance the status of animals: how does animal natural history fit with that of human beings? How are we to understand the continuity between human beings and other animals? We have already noted above the importance of the passage

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[131] N. Malcolm *Wittgenstein: Nothing is Hidden*, p. 181.
[132] This seems to be the point of *PI* 19.
[133] L. Wittgenstein *PI*, 241, p. 174 & p. 226.

at the start of page 174 of the 'Investigations', in that passage Wittgenstein makes explicit the connection between form of life and natural history when he writes:

> One can imagine an animal angry, frightened, unhappy, happy, startled. But hopeful? And why not?
> A dog believes his master is at the door. But can he also believe his master will come the day after tomorrow? -And *what* can he not do here? -How do I do it? -How am I supposed to answer this?[134]

These are 'bits' of natural history. Wittgenstein notes certain characteristics which distinguish dogs from human beings and it seems from the nature of the questions that he asks - particularly the last one - that he is convinced that these differences can only be noted, that is described and not explained. It is clear from the sequence of this passage that he thought of forms of life in connection with facts of natural history and that he meant to distinguish the human form of life from the canine, and by association all other animals.

The appeal to facts of human natural history to distinguish the human form of life from that of animals is further emphasised when Wittgenstein says

> A child has much to learn before it can pretend. (A dog cannot be a hypocrite, but neither can he be sincere.)[135]

If form of life is given as part of natural history, then the form of human life can be equated, as Haller[136] has noted, with the common behaviour of humans. This is the reason that my estrangement from a person who is a complete enigma to me, one who I cannot "find my feet with" is entirely different from my estrangement from a 'talking' lion, because as humans "If a lion could talk, we could not understand him."[137] There are ways to overcome the enigmas of a foreign culture, which are perhaps minimally present in the case of the 'builders' and are completely absent in the case of the lion. Wittgenstein's example of the explorer in a foreign country shows how understanding an alien culture presupposes a common form of life:

> Suppose you came as an explorer into an unknown country with a language quite strange to you. In what circumstances would you say that the people there gave orders, understood them, obeyed them, rebelled against them and so on? The common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language.[138]

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[134] Ibid. p. 174.
[135] Ibid. p. 229.
[136] R. Haller *Questions on Wittgenstein*, p. 130.
[137] L. Wittgenstein *PI* p. 223.
[138] Ibid. 206.

This explains why human beings could not understand the lion, since there is no common behaviour of lions in which they use sentences at all.

However, not everyone agrees that this is the case; Clark says that it

> Is implausible because lions, after all, are social mammals, predators, cousins of the familiar cat who has no difficulty in speaking to us and being understood ... [we] could understand a talking beast as well as any talking person.[139]

It seems that Clark may well have been watching too many episodes of 'Skippy' or been overly influenced by 'Aslan'! Cats do not talk to us, they meow and behave in recognisably feline ways, and there is a recognisable feline form of life. If a cat, large or small, did 'talk', its speech would be part of its form of life and would be a complete mystery to human beings. Clark appears to be led to his startling and misguided conclusion because of Wittgenstein's comments on a stalking cat[140] and he says that

> If Wittgenstein could not understand that cat, how could he interpret it as 'stalking'?[141]

To answer Clark's question, we can understand the cat 'stalking', because 'stalking' is part of the cat's form of life, whereas 'talking' (except perhaps in a metaphorical sense) is not. Of course 'stalking' is also part of the form of life of human beings and is just one example amongst many where there is continuity between the form of life of human beings and that of other animals. There are a myriad of such connections, for example eating, hunting, washing, communicating, pain behaviour and so on. Speaking, however, is only part of human beings' form of life and this is the force of Wittgenstein's comment on the talking lion. But by understanding all forms of life, including the human one, as part of a broadly naturalistic framework we can describe and understand the continuities and differences between them.

XI

In conclusion then, we can say that from the moment human beings are born they participate in the human form of life. It is as part of this form of life that they acquire their beliefs, knowledge, and understanding. Human beings' form of life is the 'bedrock of the river of their lives' upon which human lives are built and this is what Wittgenstein seems to be alluding to when he says: "What has to be accepted, the given, is - so one could say - *forms of life*."[142] It is interesting to note that in this case he refers to "forms of life" for the only time. This has been the source of some controversy, that is, as to whether there is more than one human form of life. I have argued above against such a pluralist reading, but the above passage has led to people supposing that there are

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[139] S. R. L. Clark *Animals and their Moral Standing*, p. 145-6.
[140] L. Wittgenstein *PI* 647.
[141] S. R. L. Clark *Animals and their Moral Standing*, p. 146.
[142] L. Wittgenstein *PI* p. 226.

different human forms of life. They go on to argue that if there are such different human forms of life, then 'ardent Wittgenstinians' have to accept that within the Nazi form of life Jews were seriously, and for that form of life appropriately, called parasites and poisoned humanity.[143] It is hard to imagine that Wittgenstein would have been happy to accept such morally relativistic consequences[144] and, as such the latter appears to be an incorrect reading. This is not only because Wittgenstein generally refers to 'form' rather than 'forms' of life, but also because it seems reasonable to think that in this case he uses the plural because it is not just the human form of life that is given, but all others as well. Human beings' given is their form of life, a dog's given is the canine form of life and so on. This is what we must accept, which is not to say that this 'given' is not prone to change, these may be gradual and virtually imperceptible - erosion over time changes the bedrock. Or the changes may be monumental - a sudden eruption also changes the bedrock. But whatever the change our form of life remains our starting point and because of this difficult to recognise, as Wittgenstein himself says

> It is so difficult to find the *beginning*. Or, better: it is difficult to begin at the beginning. And not try to go further back.[145]

The 'beginning' of human beings as far as Cartesian non-naturalism is concerned is God, for a Darwinian it would be the first recognisable sign of life on Earth, and for a reductive, scientific naturalist it might be the Big Bang. With regard to the sort of broad naturalism outlined above, the 'beginning' in some way encompasses all these things, but to talk of a beginning of being human makes no sense. Rather we have to take the fact that human beings exist with other animals as part of the world, as a kind of 'given'. The fact that the world is the way it is has shaped the way that human beings are, had it been even slightly different, human beings might have been very different themselves, even to the point where there might have been nothing recognisably 'human', or for that matter animal. Human beings have also shaped the world to a far greater extent than other animals, as Gould rhetorically asks, "Has any other species left so many visible signs of its presence?"[146] So we might say that human beings belong to the world, because in part they have made it what it is and our broadly naturalistic way of seeing things can include these 'human' features in its description of the world. This is because, unlike conventional forms of naturalism, it concentrates on description rather than trying to provide an explanation. We can appreciate this bond if we consider the example of the small, rural communities that farm and live on Snowdonia, as Anthony Hopkins says:

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[143] See R. Nieli *Wittgenstein: From Mysticism to Ordinary Language*, p. 241.
[144] This is especially so if one remembers Wittgenstein's own eperiences with the Nazi State. See for instance D. Edmonds & J. Eidinow *Wittgenstein's Poker*, Chapter 13.
[145] L. Wittgenstein *OC* 471.
[146] S. J. Gould *Hen's Teeth and Horse's Toes*, p. 250.

The preservation of their culture, traditions and language is bound up with the preservation of the landscape. It's an almost mystical interdependence which was once explained to me as *cynefin*.[147]

He goes on to explain that *cynefin* is a Welsh word that defies translation, that it is linked with the idea of a sense of place, but that it goes deeper than that. In Snowdonia it is used to express the bond that ties a farmer to his land. As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, such phenomena resist explanation and the only way that we can come to any sort of understanding is by description rather than explanation. All human beings, whether they live in Snowdonia or New York, are tied to the world. The power of Wittgenstein's broad naturalism is that it allows us to view human beings in the same way as we do other animals and the rest of the world, whilst not losing sight of what are unique facts about human beings. These facts are not just physical, biological ones but also encompass cultural ones, social ones and so on. Such a broad theory also allows us to appreciate the tight connection between human beings and the world that they inhabit, again not just the physical connections but also the sort embodied in concepts like *cynefin*. In the next chapter I intend to explore this bond via a consideration of the human body, human beings' connection with their world.

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[147] A. Hopkins *The Observer(Review) 16th August 1998*, p. 5.

Chapter 3 - The Human Body

<div align="center">I</div>

Much of the way we think of the human body has been informed by Cartesian dualism. This is because, as we shall see, Descartes develops a picture of the body where it is only contingently a part of being human, what is really important is the mind. The body on the other hand is an object like any other in the world and best understood via anatomical investigation. This is the inheritance taken up so readily by the reductive naturalists, where the important issue is to explain the mind in terms of the brain (and in some cases a small part of the central nervous system). The rest of the body is left on the sidelines, the boring container for the brain and suitable for investigation by physiologists and really only a subject for medicine.

However, it is my aim in this chapter to show that this objectified view of the human body is not the only one, and indeed is not the primary or most basic one. Further, I aim to show that it is crucial to understanding human beings' most basic relation to, and understanding of their world that we escape from the false image of the human body that is presented in conventional naturalist and non-naturalist philosophies.

I will begin by returning to Descartes, and specifically his treatment of the human body. As we shall see he takes the body to be one more object in the world, an extremely complicated 'machine', but nevertheless it is still an object. This objectification of the body has been carried through to modern reductive naturalist theories with the human body seen as an object of study for anatomists and physiologists and as having very little to do with 'mental' phenomena.

This common thread of 'objectification' leads to problems for both types of account in describing everyday human actions and it is by pointing this out that Merleau-Ponty shows up their inadequate view of the body. We also have to remember that human beings do not experience there bodies as 'objects' except in unusual or exceptional circumstances; in the everyday flow of life my body is anything but an object for me. It is by considering and describing these everyday phenomena that Merleau-Ponty goes on to present his positive account of the human body as a 'lived', 'synergetic' entity; one that can be an object for anatomical study, but at its most basic is somewhere between pure 'object' and 'subject'. As Priest points out, for Merleau-Ponty

> Human beings have self-awareness as lived bodies not by thinking about their bodies, nor by observing them, but by being them. Their existence as thinkers and observers is made possible by their lived bodies acting in a physical world. The relation between human beings awareness of themselves and their knowledge of space is mutually dependent. They know what kind of movements they are capable

of by following a spatio-temporal route through the world and manipulating physical objects.[148]

So we are also forced to rethink the traditional concepts of knowledge and motivation as we arrive at a realistic view of the human body and its role. As we shall see, that Merleau-Ponty provides an understanding of the body via a description of the acquisition of everyday habits and skills, also provides an obvious link with the sort of broad, 'Wittgenstinian' naturalism outlined in the last chapter.

II

As we have already seen, Descartes splits human beings into two very unequal parts, which when united form a human being. As he says

> First came the thought that I had ... the whole structure of limbs that is observable also in a corpse, and that I called 'the body'. Further that I am nourished, that I move, that I have sensations, that I am conscious, these acts I assigned to the soul.[149]

In the Sixth Meditation, Descartes goes on to say that he must

> Begin by observing the great difference between mind and body. Body is of its nature always divisible; mind wholly indivisible.[150]

From this, he asserts that the mind and body must be totally different and also that the mind is in no way directly affected by the whole of the body, but only by the brain and possibly only one small part of that. Lastly, Descartes goes on to say that:

> Since any given disturbance in the part of the brain that directly affects the mind can produce only one kind of sensation ... man as a compound of body and mind cannot but be sometimes deceived by his own nature. For some cause that occurs, not in the foot, but in any other of the parts traversed by nerves from the foot to the brain, or even in the brain itself, may arouse the same disturbances as is usually aroused by a hurt foot; and then pain will be felt as [though] it were in the foot, and there will be a natural illusion of sense.[151]

Descartes maintains then that human beings have both minds and bodies that are radically and irreducibly different sorts of thing (or substance), that exist in an intimate union. But he goes further than this by saying that the union is not a partnership of equals. This is because while Descartes insists upon the reality and irreducibility of the

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[148] S. Priest *Merleau-Ponty*, p. 75.
[149] R. Descartes second med.
[150] R. Descartes sixth med.
[151] Ibid.

body, he also holds that the body is only something that human beings have, whereas the mind (or soul) and that alone is what human beings are. He regards the human body as a kind of machine and explicitly uses the term "machine" to characterise it at several points in the 'Meditations'. For Descartes, the body is a thing essentially similar to other things in the world; the existence and nature of which are established along the same lines, and at the same time, as are those of other things in the world

We can get a clearer idea of Descartes' view of the body if we consider the 'inspiration' behind it and the background to it. Seventeenth Century French society, of which Descartes' philosophy was a part, was strongly hierarchical and still largely theocentric. The King was king by divine right and the social order was blessed and approved by the church and there was little tolerance towards new ideas. This religious atmosphere surely had some effect on Descartes' thinking,[152] with some commentators going so far as to suggest that it was due to his religious beliefs that Descartes chose to effect his philosophical split between mind and body; for instance Langer writes:

> Religious belief prompted Descartes to ascribe primacy to the former [the mind] rather than the latter [the body], and to rest his case on a non-deceiving God.[153]

This seems to be overstating the religious aspect of Descartes' thought though, as there are sections of the Bible that explicitly talk of the importance of the human body; for instance, as far as St. Paul is concerned human beings' existence is always somatic. The body is constitutive of the being of human beings and St. Paul cannot conceive of them without a body. For him, a human being is a unity and the body is a characteristic way of being. There is no hint of human beings being compounded of a material substance called a body and an immaterial substance called a soul.[154] It seems that a far more telling influence on Descartes' view of the body was his own investigation into human anatomy.

The scientific revolution of the Seventeenth Century involved two related developments. Firstly a whole series of changes in scientific practices reflected in the founding of new scientific societies, such as the Académie Royale des Sciences; and secondly a complementary change in how philosophers, such as Descartes, described the kind of knowledge that resulted from the new scientific practices. Descartes' generally mechanistic approach to nature, outlined in Chapter 1 above, was extended into his programme for physiology. Where previous physiologists had invoked powers, faculties, forms or incorporeal agencies to account for the phenomena of living things, he would only invoke matter in motion, organised to form a bodily machine. Descartes claimed that he had observed no part of the body in his many dissections that he could not explain through purely material causes, both as to its formation and its mode of

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[152] The first edition of the 'Meditations' had prefixed to it a dedicatory letter to the Theology Faculty of the Sorbonne.

[153] M. Langer *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 7.

[154] For more on this Pauline view of the body see J.Macquarrie *An Existentialist Theology*, pp. 40-46.

operation. In this way he projects a purely mechanistic account of the human body based upon the assertion that, in forming the parts of the body, nature acted according to the laws of mechanics. He also defended Harvey's view that the blood circulates and therefore rejected the then dominant view of a slow ebbing of venous blood and a separate arterial distribution of rarefied blood.[155] As Hatfield points out, Descartes innovation

> Which was truly radical, came in his reliance on mechanistic categories alone in explaining how bodily functions are performed.[156]

Descartes takes his anatomical study of dead bodies to be the paradigm for the body in general. It is in this way, by seeing the body as a subject for scientific study, indeed as "a corpse", that he fitted the human body into his overall project of bringing science and philosophy together under one method. He doesn't think that the mind 'animates' the body in the literal sense, as animals are animate but lack minds according to Descartes; but he does appear to confuse conscious being and living being. In doing this he initiates a split between mind and body, making the mind the essence of what it is to be human and the body an insensible object of anatomical study.

III

This concentration, and preoccupation with 'the mind' has continued in modern naturalistic philosophy, with the body being relegated to little more than a side issue to what is 'really important'. This is very apparent in the work of Turing, he says:

> There was little point in trying to make a "thinking machine" more human by dressing it up in ... artificial flesh[157]

And he goes on to say "we need not be too concerned about legs, eyes, etc."[158] The thinking that Turing promotes need not be dressed up in flesh; the mind can be known directly without detour through real or artificial bodily material. A human being need not see, hear or touch their respondents in order to gain access to their cognitive processes. It is clear that this desire to draw a sharp line between mind and body, between sensation and intellectuality, lies at the heart of traditional Cartesian dualism. It is at the very least paradoxical that the traditional naturalistic desire to provide a material account of the mind is so often founded in its opposite: the desire for a radical distinction between cognition and the human body.

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[155] However, he did disagree with Harvey's account of the motion of the heart in the explanation of the efficient cause of circulation.
[156] G. Hatfield "Descartes Physiology and its Relation to his Psychology" in *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes* (ed. J. Cottingham) p. 341.
[157] A. Turing "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" in *Mind 236*, p. 434.
[158] Ibid. p. 456.

Turing endorses his argument about the optional nature of legs, eyes, and so on by using the example of Helen Keller; almost as if her deaf, blind and mute body was no body at all. However, she was completely dependent on her ostensibly non-cognitive body, particularly her hands, for thought and communication. Helen Keller's body was not the secondary vehicle for cognitive processing that had been animated elsewhere; rather "it appears that her hands were the generative organs of cognitive possibility."[159] Strangely then, Turing argues for the dispensability of the body to cognition via a figure who demonstrates exactly the reverse.

Despite the problems with accounts such as Turing's and other naturalistically reductive strategies, such as the mind-brain identity theory in either its type or token forms, it has become popular and scientific orthodoxy that thinking is in some way located in the brain, with the body merely following its instructions. We can see this in the case of philosophical behaviourism[160], which takes behaviour as constitutive of mentality. According to this position, having a mind just is a matter of exhibiting, or having the propensity to exhibit, certain appropriate patterns of observable behaviour. There have been various arguments against this position, one such is based on the following problem. Any attempt to say what behaviour follows from a given state of mind can shown to be false by producing a counter example in which the state of mind is present, but owing to the addition of new beliefs or desires, the behaviour does not follow. More recently, the human mind has come to be 'equated' with or reduced to[161], mapped onto[162], or replaceable by to[163] the human brain. In all these cases, the mind is what the brain does and each theory, whether explicitly or implicitly, uncritically relegates the body to the status of the brute, mechanical, non-cognitive body of Cartesian dualism. In other words both reductive naturalism and non-naturalism are united in their displacement of the body from the scene that determines the mental.

The human body that is implied in contemporary reductive naturalistic theories, but rarely if ever explicitly discussed, is the same degraded, unthinking, unknowing body that we found in Descartes. It is a body that can be approached via physiology,

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[159] E. A Wilson *Neural Geographies*, p. 111.

[160] This needs to be differentiated from psychological behaviourism, which emerged from a particular conception of scientific method as applied to psychology. This brand of behaviourism dominated experimental work in psychology until the 1960s when it was eclipsed by the information-processing model, a model inspired by the advent of computers.

[161] D. Armstrong "The Causal Theory of the Mind" in *Mind and Cognition* (ed. W. G. Lycan), pp. 37 - 47. Armstrong is a functionalist, but one, along with D. Lewis, of a particular kind. They take mental properties to be functional properties, but go on to identify these with their 'realisers' i.e. brain states. Has Armstrong has put it, the concept of a mental state is that of an internal state apt to be caused by certain sensory inputs and apt for causing certain behavioural outputs. See also J.J.C. Smart "Sensations and Brain Processes" in *Philosophical Review*, LXVIII, (1959) pp. 141-156 and U.T. Place "Is Consciousness A Brain Process?" in the *British Journal of Psychology*, XLVII, (1956) pp. 44-50.

[162] A. Luria *The Working Brain: An Introduction to Neuropsychology*.

[163] P. M. Churchland "Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes" in *Mind and Cognition* (ed. W. G. Lycan), pp. 206 - 23. As an eliminativist, Churchland concludes that most psychological categories and modes of explanation are either 'reducible' to more fundamental neurobiological categories, or apply to nothing and hence are expendable.

biomedicine, biophysics, microbiology, biochemistry and so on but it remains inarticulable as a cognitive or 'mental' body. As Wilson points out

> The sequestration of cognitive effects in the brain and the concomitant evacuation of psychical effect from the body forces an ontology that is violent and restrictive in its effects.[164]

What we see in all these cases then is not so much the ignoring of the body but rather it being conceived of in a particular way; i.e. as something that does not think and that has a very restricted role to play in human beings' mental lives.

<div align="center">IV</div>

As we can see then, traditional naturalist and non-naturalist conceptions of the human body share a common problem; they see the body as 'lifeless'. This is because both take the same paradigm for the body, that of the anatomical object. In the case of non-naturalism this body is 'moved' or 'affected' by the mind, with the brain fulfilling the same role in reductive naturalistic theories. What both accounts fail to do justice to though is the experience of actually being a living human being, the fact that human beings are not accidentally or contingently embodied, rather that they are essentially or necessarily embodied. We need to appreciate that human beings could not exist in the way that they do as part of a broadly naturalistic world if they were not embodied in the way that they are. To do this we once again need to escape from the non-naturalist/reductive naturalist dichotomy that we encountered in the last chapter.

Fortunately there are alternatives to this dichotomy. The human body plays a crucial role in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, but it is not the inert object of Descartes that continues to predominate in reductive naturalist philosophy, rather it is a lived, active entity that is both shaped by, and shapes, the world around it. However, to fully appreciate this account of the human body and how it fits into the broadly naturalistic framework already outlined, we need to take a step back and appreciate Merleau-Ponty's critique of the view of the body taken by non-naturalist and naturalist philosophies. These are views which at first appear contradictory, but which actually have much in common. Having done this we will be in a position to appreciate his positive conception of the lived human body.

Merleau-Ponty is critical of reductive, naturalist theories of the human body (theories which he calls "empiricist") primarily because of their attitude towards human behaviour. Traditional naturalist theories fall down in their atomistic approach to behaviour, they fail to see that it is better understood as a dialogue between human beings and their environment. At the root of this attitude is the empiricist belief that human experience is the recording of sensations or impressions received from the environment which means that experience is isolated from its context. However, human

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[164] E. A. Wilson *Neural Geographies*, p. 124.

beings do not normally experience isolated instances of sensations, but rather points on an horizon, figures on a ground, and so on. Such naturalistic empiricists also pay no heed to the varying degrees of attention that human beings give to their experience that influences its intensity and duration. The way that such strategies reduce all experience to causal and physiological mechanisms also make it extremely difficult to understand the meaning and significance that human beings project around themselves.

Instead of viewing the world as a collection of externally related facts, as naturalism does, for non-naturalism (or "rationalism" as Merleau-Ponty calls it) the world is the result of the constituting process of consciousness. As we have already seen this view is exemplified in Descartes work, where the non-material mind gives meaning to the world and its mode of operation can be grasped in pure reflection. On such a view, the human body is entirely marginalised, although it is not completely done away with as in Idealism. In doing this the sensations, reflexes and so on that naturalism posits as the elementary stuff of the world are accepted and the mind is added to inject these with meaning to give a picture of the world. Once again we can see how traditional naturalistic and non-naturalistic theories share the presupposition of an objective world which is in itself meaningless.

This leads Merleau-Ponty to identify two errors which both naturalistic and non-naturalistic accounts fall prey. One is to see the mind as outside the scene it observes, viewing it impartially; the other, another version of the first, consists in considering the human body as just another object in the world. In both cases what is forgotten or ignored is the fact that all human knowledge of the world is limited by human beings' perspective. In reductive naturalistic theories, the distinction between object and horizon disappears and objects are defined as if they were seen from nowhere[165] and this leads to the objectification of the world as a whole. For Merleau-Ponty, the crucial moment in this process is the objectification of the body because

> Since the genesis of the objective body is only a moment in the constitution of the object, the body by withdrawing from the objective world, will carry with it the intentional threads linking it to its surroundings and finally reveal to us the perceiving subject as the perceived world.[166]

The sense that a human being has of their body as they live their life through it is not that of an object. This is not to say that the human body never plays the role of an object within human experience, each human being can see and touch different parts of themself, but rather that it plays no such role essentially. For most of human experience, the body does not function as an object of awareness, rather it functions 'transparently'. For instance, when a man drinks a glass of wine, his hand does not manifest itself as an object that raises the glass to his lips, nor then his throat as an object that swallows the wine.

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[165] Nagel is also highly critical of this tendency which is particularly prevalent in scientific naturalism. See T. Nagel *The View From Nowhere.*
[166] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 72.

In Merleau-Ponty's case, to see the human body as "lived" rather than as an empirical object entails that, contra Descartes, the human body is not to be identified primarily with the entity that the physiologist studies. The command that human beings have of their bodies, as active subjects, is not experienced by them as a command of the physiological processes which underlie their activity. The practical know-how employed in human beings' bodily behaviour neither includes nor depends upon any knowledge of physiological theory. This is not to say that Merleau-Ponty is ignorant of, or disregards the fact that human beings' bodies have a certain anatomical make up. To fully appreciate his characterisation of the human body we need to distinguish two different understandings of embodiment in his central work, 'Phenomenology of Perception'. On the first understanding, human embodiment refers to the actual shape and innate capacities of the human body - that it has arms and legs, a certain size and certain abilities. The second is the peculiar way that it is 'situated'. With regard to the first we might say, following Wittgenstein, that certain "facts of nature" are true of it. Merleau-Ponty writes:

> In so far as I have hands, feet, a body, I sustain around me intentions which are not dependent upon my decisions and which affect my surroundings in a way which I do not choose. These intentions are general ... they originate from other than myself, and I am not surprised to find them in all psycho-physical subjects organised as I am.[167]

Merleau-Ponty points out in his critique of Sartre's extreme view of freedom that mountains are tall for human beings, and that where they are passable and where they are not is not up to human beings, but is a function of embodied human capacities. That the shape and physical capacities of the human body is reflected in what human beings see is a powerful argument against Sartre's overestimation of human freedom. The related view that as human beings refine their skills for coping with things, things show up as soliciting their skillful responses, so that as they refine their skills, they encounter more and more differentiated solicitations to act, plays a crucial role in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. He uses 'habit' as synonymous with 'skill', so when he refers to skill acquisition he speaks of "the acquisition of a habit."[168] Indeed, for him human beings' ability to perceive is like an already acquired bodily skill:

> The analysis of motor habit as an extension of existence leads ... to an analysis of perceptual habit as the coming into possession of a world. Conversely, every perceptual habit is still a motor habit and here equally the process of grasping a meaning is performed by the body.[169]

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[167] Ibid. p. 440.
[168] Ibid. p. 143.
[169] Ibid. p. 153.

The peculiar mobility and spatiality of the body also serve to distinguish it from other objects. Strictly speaking it is not located in space; it is situated in space, as Merleau-Ponty says "it inhabits space and time."[170] So human beings' bodies are unlike any other object for them, it is via their bodies that they locate themself in the world and define their position. For each human being, everything is relative to their body, it is the centre in relation to every location, it is the "first co-ordinate". All other co-ordinates in which objects are located are external to it; as Merleau-Ponty points out:

> The word "here" applied to my body does not refer to a determinate position in relation to other positions or to external co-ordinates, but the laying down of the first co-ordinates.[171]

So the lived human body and not the mind, or the brain, is what is essential in human beings relating spatially to the world. Also, human beings do not need to locate the various parts of their bodies in objective space in order to have them at their command and they do not, in the course of everyday activity, move their bodies from place to place in the way that they move objects. For instance, a man may well have to look for his pen, but he does not have to look for the hand with which he searches for the pen. As we have seen earlier, the human body is other than an object, it does not have to be looked for, but is that which every act of searching presupposes. It is much closer to the sense of human beings' experience, according to Merleau-Ponty, to say that their bodies move themselves or even that, in a way reminiscent of Marcel, that they are their bodies. Human beings' bodies as lived are the vehicles, not the objects, of their intentional movements. These intentions do not originate elsewhere and then come to animate the body as a puppeteer animates a puppet. Intentional movements are embodied from the start, prepossessed of that tacit understanding of the body's place and potential which is self-knowledge in action. In showing this Merleau-Ponty succeeds in showing how mistaken reductive naturalists and non-naturalists are in treating the body in the same way as any other object. He shows how human beings intentional relation to the world is dependent upon their embodiment.

V

Merleau-Ponty presses this point, and indeed develops it as a critique of traditional naturalist/non-naturalist ontological prejudices towards the body with his analysis of the case of "Schneider". What he does via this case study is show that objective thought - which is a feature of both ontologies - fails to recognise the active, purposive nature of human beings' bodies, their practical orientation towards various tasks and goals and their 'attitude' towards the world.[172]

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[170] Ibid. p. 139.

[171] Ibid. p. 100.

[172] One can almost here an echo here of Wittgenstein's quote from Goethe "In the beginning was the deed".

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The Schneider case was one that was investigated and elaborated by the neuropsychologists Goldstein and Gelb.[173] Schneider suffered a brain injury from a shell-splinter penetrating the back of his skull (the occipital region). This had caused damage to the visual cortex, an area of the brain within which the 'processing' of visual data is generally believed to take place and consequently his sight was defective.[174] However, Merleau-Ponty's main interest is in the defective character of Schneider's range of bodily movements and sense of body location. This obtained despite the fact that there had been no apparent damage to the tactile-motor area of the cortex, which amongst other things is generally regarded as controlling movement. Adopting Goldstein and Gelb's terminology, Merleau-Ponty says that whilst Schneider performs concrete movements reasonably well, he has considerable difficulties performing abstract movements. Concrete movements are those performed in the immediate practical tasks of everyday life. For instance, Schneider can perform such movements as removing a handkerchief from his pocket to blow his nose, or scratching his leg where he has just been bitten by a mosquito.

In contrast, abstract movements require one to detach oneself from these everyday tasks so that it is one's body itself - the movement and position of its main parts - that become the main focus. When Schneider is asked to point to his nose, he cannot do so. Likewise, he has great difficulty in answering questions about the overall spatial arrangement of his limbs; for instance, whether he is standing or lying down. When asked to perform a military salute, he goes through a lengthy process in which he self-consciously adjusts his whole body so that it conforms to his mental picture of a salute. Schneider uses similar self-conscious and abnormal means in attempting to perform other abstract movements, as Merleau-Ponty points out:

> If the subject is asked to trace a square or a circle in the air, he first 'finds' his arm, then lifts it in front of him as a normal subject would to find a wall in the dark and finally he makes a few rough movements in a straight line or describing various curves, and if one of these happens to be circular he promptly completes the circle.[175]

Normally the human body is an expressive and lived unity of its parts, so that all movements are undertaken and acted intuitively and as a whole from beginning to end, without any need for intellection. However, Schneider is unable to pattern his actions; he evolves either an ideal formula for an action or launches himself into a series of blind efforts in an attempt to perform it. He lacks what is presupposed in any normal action: the background of its envisaged completion, so that the whole movement is orientated and directed from the start. Schneider experiences his body not as an 'intentional unity',

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[173] Goldstein and Gelb worked in an institute set up during the First World War to treat patients suffering from brain injuries. Both were strongly influenced by Gestalt psychology, and Goldstein was an influential proponent of anti-reductionist biology.

[174] For another neuropsychological study of a patient with difficulties similar to Schneider, see A. R. Luria *The Man with the Shattered World*.

[175] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 110.

but as a series of isolated parts; he has to think through his actions instead of living them. As far as Merleau-Ponty is concerned, for reductive naturalism to be true, human beings would have to be aware of their limbs in order to move them. They do not do this, therefore reductive naturalism must be false. Similarly, Schneider has no trouble performing concrete actions, but struggles enormously to perform abstract ones. He is only able to perform these latter actions by inferring the location of parts of his body from facts about his body as a whole. If non-naturalism were true, human beings' awareness of their own bodies would be by inference. This is not the case and therefore as far as Merleau-Ponty is concerned, non-naturalism must be false.

VI

However, are things quite as clear cut as Merleau-Ponty seems to take them to be; in other words do reductive naturalism and non-naturalism fail as completely as he suggests? In the case of reductive naturalism, he doesn't profess to provide a 'knock-down' argument against it; he merely claims that equally convincing, but conflicting, hypotheses can be presented to try and explain cases like Schneider's. What is clear he says is "that the facts are ambiguous, that no experiment is decisive, and no explanation final."[176] Even though he only presents two conflicting hypotheses - one to the effect that Schneider relies on visual sense due to a defective tactile one, the other the opposite - he believes that the same could be shown for others.

The problem for naturalistic theories of the body that rely on science is that when it comes to such phenomena as abstract movements, the 'variables' involved - vision and touch - cannot be defined independently of each other. What counts as vision necessarily refers to touch and likewise what counts as touch refers to vision. Furthermore, if one cannot define either vision or touch without reference to movement, one will be bound to discover apparent "correlations" between all three of them. However, since these "correlations"[177] are due to the "internality"[178] of the relationships, they cannot be taken to support claims of causal determination, which in turn are crucial to the reductive naturalist's project.

This is not to say that non-naturalistic theories fare any better. If one is prepared to accept causal explanations of concrete movements, for instance by reference to physiologically based reflex patterns - whether conditioned or unconditioned - it is arbitrary to reject such explanations of abstract movements also. This is because from the standpoint of physiological explanation, there is insufficient difference between the external stimuli, muscular contractions and physically describable behaviour which are involved in the two kinds of movement. For example:

> Between the mosquito which pricks the skin and the ruler which the doctor presses on the same spot, the physical difference is not great enough to explain

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[176] Ibid. p. 116.
[177] See M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 119-20.
[178] Ibid. p. 119.

why the grasping movement is possible, but the act of pointing is impossible.[179]

Thus, according to Merleau-Ponty, "it is impossible to set limits to physiological explanation"[180] in this way since, within the scientific framework of objective thought, there is no criterion by which one could appropriately distinguish the two kinds of movement. However, if we assign abstract movement to the power of a conscious subject, there is no basis for refusing to regard concrete movement in the same way. In this way non-naturalist analyses of Schneider's problems fail because they require the drawing of a radical distinction between concrete and abstract movement. But the concepts employed to do this are such that they inevitably fail to preserve the distinction that they were intended to characterise, with the two kinds of movement being assimilated. This assimilation occurs because the non-naturalist privileges abstract movements and ultimately tries to explain concrete movements as a form of abstract ones. As Merleau-Ponty says:

> Any physiological explanation becomes generalised into mechanistic physiology, and any achievement of self-awareness into intellectualist psychology, and mechanistic physiology or intellectualist psychology bring behaviour down to the same uniform level and wipe out the distinction between abstract and concrete movement, between *Zeigen* ['pointing'] and *Greifen* ['grasping'].[181]

For him, Schneider represents a parody of the non-naturalist's view of a human being. The non-naturalist views intelligent, purposive action as the application or exercise by human beings of the various cognitive capacities which define them as being genuine subjects; and these capacities are regarded as existing independently of the various bodily performances based upon them. They are capacities of the human subject and this subject is not itself a body, but rather a consciousness which guides its body's activities in the light of its knowledge, aims and so on. However, this is exactly what Schneider does, even if in a rather inferior manner. As far as Merleau-Ponty is concerned

> It is precisely this divorce between 'thought' and 'action' which characterises Schneider's abnormality.[182]

The basic error of non-naturalism is to abstract the thought and knowledge of human beings from the bodily practices through which they are supposedly displayed. As well as this we have to remember that Schneider was the victim of an injury to his brain and more specifically to the visual cortex. Non-naturalism, by abstracting human beings'

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[179] Ibid. p. 123.
[180] Ibid.
[181] ibid. p. 124.
[182] M. Hammond, J. Howarth & R. Keat *Understanding Phenomenology*, p. 176.

cognitive capacities from the realm of bodily experience, is unable to account for the effects of that injury upon them:

> The damage to his [Schneider's] sight was serious, but it would be ridiculous, as we have said, to explain all the other deficiencies in terms of the visual one as their cause; but no less ridiculous to think that the shell splinter directly struck symbolic consciousness. It was through his sight that the mind in him was impaired.[183]

So although the reductive naturalist is mistaken in attempting to provide causal explanations for Schneider's difficulties, there is at least one important virtue of this position. That is that it emphasises the contingency of human abilities, their dependence upon the specific character and organisation of the human body, upon certain "facts of nature", and hence their vulnerability to damage and disorders of various kinds. As far as the non-naturalist is concerned, it is as if human beings could possess any kind of body at all, and their abilities not be diminished by the loss of sensory faculties or limbs.

<div align="center">VII</div>

But what then of normal, everyday human behaviour? Merleau-Ponty argues that mechanistic accounts of the body, upon which conventional naturalist and non-naturalist accounts rely, fare no better than they do in accounting for 'abnormal' cases like Schneider. To show this he turns his attention to normal, habitual activities - motor skills such as typing, driving or playing a musical instrument.

Merleau-Ponty argues that a traditional naturalistic account has to explain the acquisition of such skills via a process of learning, through which certain 'stimuli' come to be associated with certain bodily 'responses', both of these being physically defined. Thus the skill that a human being acquires must in principle be capable of being specified in terms of a determinate repertoire of behaviour that takes place in a similarly specifiable set of circumstances. Such a naturalistically mechanistic account, Merleau-Ponty argues

> Runs up against the fact that the learning process is systematic: the subject does not weld together the individual movements and stimuli but acquires the power to respond with a certain type of solution to situations of a certain general form.[184]

His main illustration of these claims is that of playing a musical instrument. He gives the example of an organist who needs only hour's practice to be able to perform successfully his musical programme on an unfamiliar instrument. The physical movements required to play the new instrument are radically different from those which, following a naturalistic account, he could be thought of as having previously acquired.

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[183] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 126.
[184] Ibid. p. 142.

However, it is inconceivable that within such a short period of time that such a new set of conditioned responses could have been learnt. To enable this rapid transfer to take place what must have been acquired from the outset, argues Merleau-Ponty, was the ability to "respond with a certain type of solution" to a situation of "a certain general form."[185] He goes on to argue that both the situation and solution are specifiable ultimately only in relation to their musical significance for the organist.

Merleau-Ponty also claims that the way in which the organ player familiarises himself with his new instrument shows what is wrong with a non-naturalist account of the acquisition of bodily skills. In accordance with such an account one would expect the organist to proceed by examining carefully the unfamiliar instrument and drawing a 'mental map' of its arrangement, which he would then apply in practice. However, the organist

> Sits on the seat, works the pedals, pulls out the stops, gets the measure of the instrument with his body, incorporates within himself the relevant directions and dimensions, settles into the organ as one settles into a house. He does not learn objective spatial positions for stop and pedal, nor does he commit them to memory.[186]

However, notes Merleau-Ponty, one might object that the acquisition of new bodily skills, as distinct from the modification of already habituated ones, is perhaps more susceptible to a non-naturalist account. For instance:

> Is it not the case that forming the habit of dancing is discovering, by analysis, the formula of the movement in question, and then reconstructing it on the basis of the ideal outline by the use of previously acquired movements, those of walking and running?[187]

The idea seems to be that if we imagine a case where a human being was faced with learning a new dance movement, he might proceed by first watching it being executed by another; then break it down into its sequential elements, and finally utilising his previously acquired repertoire of movements, attempt to apply this "formula", monitoring his attempt to do so by reference to a mental picture of what he is aiming to achieve. Merleau-Ponty's replies to this objection by saying:

> But before the formula of the new dance can incorporate certain elements of general motility, it must first have had, as it were, the stamp of movement set upon it. As had often been said, it is the body which 'catches' (kapiert) and 'comprehends' movement. The acquisition of a habit is indeed the grasping of a significance, but it is the motor grasping of a motor significance.[188]

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[185] Ibid. p. 144.
[186] Ibid. p. 145.
[187] Ibid. p. 142.
[188] Ibid. p. 142-3.

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It may well be that in acquiring this new skill, a certain amount of conscious analysis and mental imagery is involved. But there is also an irreducibly bodily element of 'understanding', without which the crucial transition from the established to the new movement cannot occur. However carefully the new movement is analysed, it is ultimately the human body which has to "grasp" this relationship, to "sense" how this transformation can be executed, to "feel" initially what the new movement would be like, and so on. There is a point at which the human body "knows what to do", and "knows how to do it"; and without this practical knowledge on its part, a purely intellectual grasp will be of no use. We must accept that

> It is the body which 'understands' in the acquisition of habit. This way of putting it will appear absurd, if understanding is subsuming a sense-datum under an idea, and if the body is an object. But the phenomenon of habit is just what prompts us to revise our notion of 'understand' and our notion of the body.[189]

<center>VIII</center>

We can see what is wrong with traditional naturalist and non-naturalist accounts that rely on the objectification of the human body if we consider the example of learning to drive. In the case of a complete novice, the instruction process might begin with the instructor breaking down the task into context-free features that the beginner can recognise without the benefit of experience of driving. For instance, the learner driver learns to recognise such interpretation free features as speed, indicated by the speedometer, and is instructed to change to second gear when the speedometer shows ten miles per hour. As the learner gains experience actually coping with real situations, he begins to note perspicuous examples of meaningful additional aspects of the situation. After seeing a sufficient number of examples, the novice learns to recognise them. In this way the advanced beginner driver uses engine sounds ('situational') as well as speed ('non-situational') in his gear changing rules. He changes gear when the engine sounds like its straining. He also learns to observe the demeanor as well as position and velocity of other drivers and pedestrians; to tell the difference between an alert but impatient driver and a distracted one. No list of objective facts enables one to predict the behaviour of a pedestrian at a Zebra Crossing as well as can the driver who has observed many pedestrians at crossings under a variety of conditions.

With more experience, the number of potentially relevant elements of a real-world situation that the learner is able to recognise becomes huge. At this point a sense of what is important in any particular situation is missing. To cope with this problem and to achieve competence, human beings learn, either through instruction or experience, to adopt an hierarchical perspective. They learn to prioritise the important elements of the situation. The competent performer thus seeks new rules and reasoning procedures to decide upon a method or perspective. But these rules are not as easily come by as the

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[189] Ibid. p. 144.

rules given to beginners in books or by instructors. The problem is that there are a vast number of different situations that the learner may encounter, many differing from each other in subtle ways. There are in fact more situations than can be named or precisely defined so no one can prepare for the learner a list of what to do in each possible situation. Returning to the example of a learner driver, if he is leaving a dual carriageway on a curving exit road, after taking in to account speed, road conditions, criticality of time, closeness of other vehicles etc. he may decide he is going too fast. He then has to decide whether to ease of the accelerator, remove his foot altogether, or apply the break. As the competent performer becomes more and more involved in his task, it becomes increasingly difficult to draw back and adopt the detached rule-following stance of the beginner. While it might seem that this involvement caused interference with detached rule testing and improving would inhibit further skill development, in fact just the opposite seems to be the case. What appears to happen is that the detached rule-following stance of the novice and beginner is replaced by an active involvement with the situation and the world in general.

If we suppose that events are experienced with involvement as the learner practices his skill, and that, as a result of both positive and negative experiences, responses are either strengthened or inhibited. Should this happen then the performer's theory of the skill, as represented by rules and principles will gradually be replaced by situational discriminations accompanied by associated responses. Proficiency appears to develop if, and only if, experience is assimilated in this atheoretical way and intuitive behaviour replaces reasoned response. As human beings acquire the ability to discriminate between a variety of situations entered into with involvement and concern, plans are intuitively evoked and certain aspects stand out as important without them standing back and choosing those plans or deciding to adopt that perspective. Action becomes easier as human beings simply see what needs to be achieved rather than deciding, by a procedure of calculation, which of several possibilities should be selected. An involved and experienced performer sees goals and salient facts, but not what to do to achieve these goals. This is because there are far fewer ways of seeing what is going on than there are ways of responding. The human being that is proficient in a skill has not yet had enough experience with the wide variety of possible responses to each of the situations he can now discriminate to have rendered the best response automatic. For this reason the proficient performer, seeing the goal and important features of the situation, must still decide what to do. The proficient driver, approaching a curve on a rainy day, may realise intuitively that he is going dangerously fast. He then consciously decides whether to apply the brakes or merely to reduce pressure on the accelerator. Valuable moments may be lost while a decision is consciously made, or time pressure may lead to a less than optimal choice. But this driver is much more likely to negotiate the curve safely than the competent driver who spends additional time deciding based on speed, the angle of the curve, and felt gravitational forces, that the car's speed is excessive.

We can see then that human beings that are proficient performers, immersed in the world of their skillful activity, see what needs to be done, but decide how to do it.

However, if we were to describe someone as an expert, they would not only know what needs to be achieved, based on mature and practiced situational discrimination, but also know how to achieve the goal. A more subtle and refined discriminatory ability is what distinguishes the expert from the proficient performer which allows the immediate intuitive response to each situation which is characteristic of expertise. Driving a car probably involves the ability to discriminate a large number of typical situations. The expert driver, generally without any awareness, not only knows by feel and familiarity when slowing down on an exit road what is required; he knows how to perform the appropriate action without calculating and comparing alternatives.

So the expert does not have to go through the sort of calculations that the novice has to. This is because the expert's body has become 'habituated' - his actions are 'second nature' - he doesn't have to consciously think about what he is doing (as objectivist thought would have us believe), rather his body 'thinks' for him. We might go so far as to say that he 'lives' through his actions rather than performing them, or that the lived body allows human beings to be effortless in a way that objectivist philosophy can never explain. The fact that human beings can become experts or masters of a particular skill is down to the fact that they are embodied as they are and that they are engaged participants in the world as Dreyfus puts it:

> Only emotional, involved, embodied human beings can become proficient and expert.[190]

IX

His reliance on the capabilities of the lived body is crucial in Merleau-Ponty's move away from the conventional naturalists' usual emphasis on the biological nature of the human body. The examples that he uses emphasise the human body's capacity to act, the "I can", rather than its structure as its essential trait. This is intimately connected to his account of what leads human beings to act as they do. The philosophical tradition following from Plato has held that what motivates animals and human beings to acquire skills and act on them is the desire to achieve certain goals. These goals are worth achieving because they are associated with certain satisfactions. However, as we have seen above, once a human being has a skill they are solicited to act without needing to have in mind a goal at all.

According to Merleau-Ponty, in everyday, absorbed, skillful coping, acting is experienced as a steady flow of activity in response to the sense of the situation. Part of that experience for a human being is that when their situation deviates from some optimal body-environment relationship, their motion takes them closer to that optimum and thereby relieves the "tension" of deviation. Crucially, a human being does not need a goal or intention to act, the human body is solicited by the situation to get into equilibrium with it:

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[190] H. Dreyfus *On The Internet*, p. 48.

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Whether a system of motor or perceptual powers, our body is not an object for an "I think", it is a grouping of live-through meanings which moves toward its equilibrium.[191]

When everyday coping is going well human beings experience something like what athletes call flow, or playing 'out of their heads'. Activity is completely geared into the demands of the situation; we might say that what

> Is imposed on us to do is not determined by us as someone standing outside the situation simply looking on at it; what occurs and is imposed are rather prescribed by the situation and its own structure; and we do more and greater justice to it the more we let ourselves be guided by it, i.e., the less reserved we are in immersing ourselves in it and subordinating ourselves to it. We find ourselves in a situation and are interwoven with it, encompassed by it, indeed just "absorbed" into it.[192]

To get clearer on this we might consider the tennis player volleying at the net. If the player is a beginner, he might make an effort to keep his eye on the ball, keep the racket at a particular angle to the court, hit the ball squarely and so on. However, we might consider Steffi Graaf at the top of her game and absorbed in it. What she experiences is more like her arm going up and its being drawn to the appropriate position as her whole body moves into the shot, with the racket forming an optimal angle with the court, an angle she most probably is not aware of. All of this so as to complete the gestalt made up of the court, her approach to the net, her opponent's position and movement, and the oncoming ball. Such skillful coping does not require a mental representation of its goal. It can be purposive without the agent entertaining a purpose. As Merleau-Ponty puts it

> A movement is learned when the body has understood it, that is, when it has incorporated it into its 'world', and to move one's body is to aim at things through it; it is to allow oneself to respond to their call, which is made upon it independently of any representation.[193]

This is exemplified in the case of pilot instructors. Such pilots teach beginners a rule determining the order in which they are to scan their instruments. The pilot instructors teach the same rule that they were taught and as far as they are aware, still use. However, psychologists have studied the eye movements of instructors during simulated flight and found that the instructors were not following the rule they were teaching; in fact their eye movements varied from situation to situation and did not seem to follow any rule at all. Presumably they were responding to changing situational solicitations that showed up for them in the instrument panel thanks to their past experience. The

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[191] Ibid. p. 153.
[192] A. Gurwitsch *Human Encounters in the Social World*, p. 67.
[193] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 139.

instructors had no idea of the way they were scanning their instruments and so could not have entertained the goal of scanning the instruments in that order.[194]

This phenomenon of purposive action without a 'purpose' is not limited to bodily activity; it also occurs in 'intellectual coping'. Many instances of apparently complex problem solving which seem to implement a long-range strategy, e.g. a crucial move in chess, may be best understood as direct responses to familiar perceptual gestalts. After years of seeing games unfold, a chess grandmaster can play master level chess simply by responding to the patterns on the chessboard while his deliberate, 'analytic' mind is absorbed in something else. Such play which is based on previous attention to thousands of actual and book games incorporates a tradition which determines the appropriate response to a situation, and then to the next and so on. It makes long range, purposive play possible without the player needing to have in mind a plan or purpose.

According to Merleau-Ponty skillful action is motivated in human beings (and higher animals) because they are always trying to get a maximum grip on their situation. His inspiration for this comes from perception and manipulation. When human beings are looking at something they tend, without thinking about it, to find the best distance for taking in both the thing as a whole and its different parts. When grasping something, they tend to grab it in such a way as to get the best grip on it. Of this Merleau-Ponty says:

> My body is geared into the world when my perception presents me with a spectacle as varied and as clearly articulated as possible, and when my motor intentions, as they unfold, receive the responses they expect from the world. This maximum sharpness of perception and action points clearly to a perceptual ground, a basis of my life, a general setting in which my body can co-exist with the world.[195]

The actual structure of the body is however, also essential for understanding human beings' skillful being-in-the-world. Presumably human beings have to learn by trial and error which types of situation to respond to in similar fashions, i.e. which situations count as similar. If we were to accept the traditional explanatory frameworks of non-naturalism and reductive naturalism then these would have to be able to explain how this is possible for a disembodied being, i.e. one that is 'essentially' mind or brain. The puzzle here though is how can this be explained for human beings understood as having lived bodies, let alone 'disembodied' ones. The question seems to be how do human beings ever learn to generalise like other human beings so they can acquire the skills needed to get around in the human world? As Dreyfus puts it:

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[194] This example is taken from H. Dreyfus "The Current Relevance of Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Embodiment" in *Perspectives on Embodiment* (eds. H. Haber & G. Weiss).
[195] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 250.

If everything is similar to everything else in an indefinitely large number of ways, what constrains the space of possible generalisations so that trial and error learning has a chance of succeeding?[196]

Here is where the human body comes in as it constrains the space of possible generalisations in three ways. The first is due to the body's perceptual apparatus. The possible responses to any given stimuli must be constrained by this. This innate structure accounts for phenomena such as the perceptual constants that are given from the start by the perceptual system as if they had always already been learned. Merleau-Ponty calls these "déjà monté". This alone would not be a great enough constraint so that all human beings learned to respond to the same stimuli as similar. This depends upon the second constraint, the interaction of the embodied individual and the structure of the world. For example, what affords reaching will be experienced early and often, while what is too big or too small or too far away will not. In this way the human body provides the second constraint.

The third constraint depends on what counts as success. For a human being in the world, success would seem to depend upon some sort of measure of satisfaction. Merleau-Ponty claims that this satisfaction is not defined most generally by accounts such as that of the behaviourists who rely on some variety of pain/pleasure feedback, but rather by the sense of equilibrium experienced when a human being is able to cope successfully with their environment. Thus we might say that 'success' is movement towards "maximum grip", which is a function of the lived human body. So these three functions of the human body, or facts of nature, may be all that are needed to explain why all human beings generalise in roughly the same way and also acquire the skills necessary for getting around in the human world.[197]

All this would put the 'not essentially embodied' human being of traditional non-naturalist and naturalist accounts at a serious, quite possibly insurmountable disadvantage when it comes to learning to cope in the human world. Nothing is more alien to human beings than a world with no up or down, front or back orientation, no interior or exterior distinction, no preferred way of moving, such as moving more easily forwards than backwards, and no tendency towards acquiring a maximum grip on its world. For human beings the lived body acts as their anchor in the world, or to put it another way, as their initial point of orientation. If a human being had no body then they would have no start point, no point of departure. It would be as if one had a map but had no way of knowing where one was on the map. In other words human beings without a body would be lost in their world. The odds against a being that did not have a lived body being able to generalise as human beings do, and so learn to classify situations and affordances as they do, to distinguish the relevant and irrelevant, to pick up on what is obvious and so on seem overwhelming.

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[196] H. Dreyfus "The Current Relevance of Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Embodiment" in *Perspectives on Emdodiment* (eds. H. Haber & G. Weiss), p. 106.
[197] For a more complete and detailed version of this argument see H. Dreyfus *What Computers Still Can't Do*, Chapter 7.

Once we have revised our concept of understanding so that it is no longer regarded as an act performed by a disembodied subject – whether that subject is a mind or brain – but is instead directly attributable to the non-objective human body, we need to revise our concept of knowledge. The human body 'knows' the world upon which it operates and 'knows how' to deal with it successfully in a way that does not require any explicitly formulable thought or beliefs on the part of a conscious object. As Merleau-Ponty says:

> Our bodily experience of movement ... provides us with a way of access to the world and the object, with a 'praktognosia' [practical knowledge], which has to be recognised as original and perhaps primary. My body has its world, or understands its world, without having to make use of any 'symbolic' or 'objectifying function'.[198]

There are two claims here about the human body's practical knowledge. It is 'original' in the sense that it cannot be analysed further by reference to more basic concepts, i.e. it is irreducible. For instance it is not susceptible to a non-naturalist account as the practical application or exercise of the subject's cognitive abilities. Secondly, this practical knowledge possessed by the human body provides the foundation of other forms of knowledge; it is in this sense 'primary'. For example, although human beings can articulate the knowledge of spatial relationships involved in abstract movement in the form of explicitly stated propositions, we

> Should not regard this cognitive 'representation' of spatiality as rooted in, and derivative from, the practical knowledge displayed in the actual ability to perform such movement.[199]

Perhaps even more fundamentally Merleau-Ponty argues that we also need to revise the usual non-naturalist and naturalist conceptions of intentionality, which rely on a disembodied mind or brain, i.e.

> These elucidations enable us clearly to understand motility as basic intentionality. Consciousness is in the first place not a matter of 'I think' but of 'I can'.[200]

Here we see Merleau-Ponty making much the same point that we saw Wittgenstein make earlier: human beings are first and foremost agents. Wittgenstein showed that human language-games are based on activity and here we can see the point being widened to show that human beings basic 'contact' with the world depends upon them

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[198] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 140-1. There are parallels here with Ryle's distinction between 'knowing how' and 'knowing that'. See G. Ryle *The Concept of Mind*, Chapters II and IX.

[199] M. Hammond, J. Howarth & R. Keat *Understanding Phenomenology*, p. 180.

[200] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 137.

being embodied agents. Merleau-Ponty is also saying that the irreducible and foundational form of intentionality is that which is involved in human beings' ability to act upon the world. In such action it is human beings' bodies which are 'directed towards' that world. For example:

> In the action of the hand which is raised towards an object is contained a reference to the object, not as an object represented, but as that highly specific thing towards which we project ourselves, near which we are, in anticipation, and which we haunt.[201]

The hand 'seeks out its object'; it aims to reach this object and its movements are organised so as to achieve this aim. In performing such actions, the human body is not seen as guided by an intentional consciousness that exists independently of it. The intentionality belongs to the body itself, and provides the basic 'connection' between human beings and the world, without the need for intervening 'representations' of it either from a disembodied mind or brain.[202]

XI

What we have seen then is that with regard to understanding what it is to be human, getting a clear picture of the nature and role of the human body is vital. If we take the objectified view of the body that is central to traditional naturalist and non-naturalist accounts we end up with false and self-contradictory theories of everyday human thought, behaviour and knowledge. Rather we need to see the body as "lived" as Merleau-Ponty does and start with an account of it as it is 'experienced' in day-to-day activity. However, if Merleau-Ponty sets such great store in the everyday nature of human experience, why does he pay attention to a case of pathological bodily action like Schneider's?

A paramount reason seems to be that Schneider's difficulties in performing abstract movements and the abnormal means by which he attempts to do so, are intended by Merleau-Ponty to draw our attention to familiar, everyday abilities that are so common that they often pass us by.[203] Such a pathological case operates as a heuristic device that makes us see what is taken for granted. It is a way of gaining distance from what is familiar so that we can appreciate it.

However, Merleau-Ponty was not entirely happy himself with his characterisation of the human body in the 'Phenomenology of Perception', and in his later work he seeks to develop his account via a reconfigurement of *entre-deux* as the concept of "flesh". The

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[201] Ibid. p. 138.
[202] This marks a clear break with what Husserl had said in the *Cartesian Meditations*. R. M. Zaner in *The Problem of Embodiment*, Part III, Chapter III offers an Husserlian objection to Merleau-Ponty on this point.
[203] Once again we can see the connection with what Wittgenstein said in the previous chapter about missing things before our eyes; e.g. see *PI* 415.

example that he uses to demonstrate this is that of one human hand touching another. The commencement of and participation in a tactile world occurs in the interplay between the two hands, with each felt from 'within' and simultaneously accessible from 'without' or tangible for the other hand. Thus each hand takes its place among the things it touches, becoming a tangible being in the process:

> Through this crisscrossing within it of the touching and the tangible, its own movements incorporate themselves into the universe they interrogate, are recorded on the same map as it.[204]

He is at pains to point out that the human body qua body subject is not an object like any other in the world, still the human body and the objective world do stand in complex relations of mutual dependence. In particular

> My body is made of the same flesh as the world (it is perceived), and moreover ... this flesh of my body is shared by the world, the world reflects it, encroaches upon it and it encroaches upon the world (the felt at the same time the culmination of subjectivity and the culmination of materiality). They are in a relation of transgression or of overlapping.[205]

If something is flesh it either perceives or is perceived or both. It follows that the body is "paradigmatically flesh because it both perceives and is perceived."[206] Merleau-Ponty says, "My body is made[207] of the same flesh as the world"[208] because both body and world are perceived. Nothing can be flesh if it neither perceives nor is perceived. For Merleau-Ponty, flesh denotes everything that may be described phenomenologically: everything that is 'surface'.

For Merleau-Ponty, "the world reflects the flesh of the body". By this he means that the way the world is as it is for human beings is due to facts about the human body qua subject. The world is just what one would expect to be constituted by an embodied human being and an embodied human being is just what one would expect to be constitutive of such a world. The two positions are mutually consistent. As Priest points out:

> Although a description of the subjective properties of the human body cannot be *logically* derived from a description of the objective properties of the world, those objective properties are essentially bestowed by that body-subject.[209]

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[204] M. Merleau-Ponty *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 133.

[205] Ibid. p. 248.

[206] S. Priest *Merleau-Ponty*, p. 73.

[207] It is worth noting that the term 'made'(*'fait'*) is ambiguous: *'fait'* can mean 'made' just in the sense of 'composed', or it can mean 'made' in the sense of 'fabricated' or 'deliberately composed' (by an intelligent agency). When Merleau-Ponty says that his flesh is 'made' he means it only in the sense of 'composed' or 'constituted' and not in the sense of 'fabricated'.

[208] M. Merleau-Ponty *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 248.

[209] S. Priest *Merleau-Ponty*, p. 74.

In this sense, human embodiment and world are ultimately mutually constituting, despite all the emphasis Merleau-Ponty placed just on the subjective constitution of the world in the 'Phenomenology of Perception'. Neither would be what it is without the other. We can see that he believes that embodied human beings and the world are dialectically related: they are mutually constituting.

Characteristics of the human world, for instance what affords walking on, squeezing through, reaching and so on are correlative of human bodily capacities and acquired skills. J. J. Gibson goes on to add a further distinction to this;[210] this is that letter boxes afford posting letters. This shows up another aspect of embodiment because 'affords-posting-letters' is clearly not a cross-cultural phenomenon based solely on body structure, nor a body structure plus a skill all human beings acquire. It is an affordance that comes from experience with letterboxes and the acquisition of letter-posting skills. Thus the cultural world is also correlative with the human body, with human beings' acquired cultural skills.

These ways that human beings' bodies determine what shows up in their world, the innate structures, basic general skills and cultural skills can be contrasted by considering how each contributes to the fact that to Western human beings a chair affords sitting. Because human beings have the sorts of bodies that get tired and that bend backwards at the knees, chairs can show up to them, but not cats etc., as affording sitting. But chairs can only solicit sitting once humans have learned to sit. Finally, only because Western Europeans are brought up in a culture where one sits on chairs do they solicit sitting upon. This would not be the case in traditional Japan.

Only via an understanding of the human body as lived and as falling within the broad naturalistic framework outlined in the last chapter can we fully appreciate how important it is to being human. Traditional objectifying philosophies only let us see the body as a biological entity, they do not allow us to understand it as we actually experience it - as somewhere between 'subject' and 'object', in Merleau-Ponty's terminology, as "ambiguous". They also don't allow us to appreciate that the human body is a cultural entity. Human beings are essentially, not contingently, embodied. The fact that human beings are essentially embodied also presents us with a strong case for broad naturalism. This is because as we have seen such embodiment cannot be explained in purely biological terms.

However, not only does the body play a central role in understanding what it is to be human and provide us with a strong argument for broad naturalism, it is also crucial in coming to understand human beings as social beings, as we shall see in the next chapter.

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[210] See H. Dreyfus "The Current Relevance of Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Embodiment" in H. Haber & G. Weiss *Perspectives on Emdodiment*, p. 109.

Chapter 4 – Other Human Beings

<div align="center">I</div>

So far what has been said has related by and large to individual human beings and very little has been said about how human beings relate to each other. For instance, would what it is to be human be any different if there were only one human being? The central thrust of this chapter will be that we can only appreciate what it is to be human if we recognise that human beings are essentially social, communal beings. In other words, to be human is to be a part of humanity.

Traditionally in philosophy, the relation between one human being and another has at root been seen as one of epistemology; it has resulted in the so-called 'problem of other minds'. It is argued that each human being knows the nature of their own sensory states, but can they know the nature of the sensory states of others, or even that there are any other minds to have sensory states that are not their own?

This problem arises because of two related theses. The first is Cartesian Dualism, which states that human beings are composed of two independent substances - the 'subjective' mind and 'objective' body. The fact that these are independent means that we cannot validly infer, on the basis of knowledge of a body, any conclusion about a mind. The second thesis concerns the nature of knowledge. It is a basic thesis of reductively naturalistic philosophy that knowledge derives from the senses, and that knowledge claims are justified by being 'traced back' to sensory input.[211] A knowledge claim which cannot be traced back is suspect. One does not have direct sensory contact with other minds and since human beings comprise a union of mind and body, the natural place to look for evidence of other minds is other bodies. Knowledge of other bodies does derive from the senses, but knowledge of other minds cannot be based on other bodies, so an impasse is reached.

In the course of this chapter we will see that this whole approach is confused and confusing, largely because it ignores the reality of everyday human experience and because it relies upon the distorted views of objectivist philosophy. Instead we need to continue with the broadly naturalist line already outlined which is free of the prejudices of non-naturalic and reductively naturalistic theories.

The first thing that we need to get clear about is that each human being's relation to others is not a question of knowledge, indeed that such a relation lies 'beyond justification'. We will also see that each human being is born into a 'pre-existing' human world, a world that has been shaped and moulded by other human beings. It is a cultural world and one in which each human being can 'sense' the presence of others via

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[211] For instance see A. J. Ayer *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge.*

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the cultural objects that are part of the world. We will also see how the phenomenon of language, and specifically dialogue, presupposes not just the existence of other human beings but also the necessity of there being a plurality of human beings if there is to be language. Language viewed in this way is seen as a human activity, where speaking is more basic than writing.

Following this we will see how communality is an essential quality of being human via an investigation of the flaws in Sartre's account of the relations between human beings which puts conflict at the heart of such relations. Merleau-Ponty shows that such conflict is a real phenomenon of human relations, but that crucially it is dependent upon a more basic state of human sociality. Moreover, this mistaken view arises largely from Sartre's retention of the subject/object distinction of non-naturalism. This is a distinction that is also present in reductive naturalism, one of its aims being the reduction of the subjectivity to objectivity. From this we shall see how seeing the human body as 'lived' helps to overcome the problems of objectivist philosophy and helps to demonstrate that in the end human beings are essentially social beings. We shall conclude by seeing how the very fact that human beings can understand each other not only demonstrates this sociality, but also depends upon it.

II

Traditionally the response to the problem of each human being arguing from their own existence to that of others has been to retain the two theses briefly outlined above and seek to show that there is a legitimate way to argue from sensory data about bodies to claims about minds.[212] Some type of move along these lines seems both necessary and obvious if we are to take a non-naturalist line where the mind is immaterial. This type of arguing by analogy involves arguing from observed similarities to unobserved similarities. If two items have been found to have a great many features in common, and one of them has a further feature which is not open to testing in the other, one is justified in inferring that the second also has that feature. For instance, when I am in a certain physical state of behaving angrily, shouting, red-faced, stamping etc., I am also in a certain mental state of feeling angry. Another human being's body is like mine in all these observable respects, so it is reasonable to conclude that the body 'contains' a mind that is angry like mine.

However, this argument faces numerous problems. For example, Wittgenstein points out that this is not an accurate picture of human beings actual experience of other human beings. Human beings do not go through subtle processes of reasoning to come to the conclusion that others are in fact 'like' them. Wittgenstein dismisses the 'argument from analogy by saying:

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[212] For instance, A. J. Ayer "One's Knowledge of Other Minds" in *Philosophical Essays*.

> You say you take care of a man who groans, because experience has taught you that you yourself groan when you feel such-and-such. But in fact you don't make any such inference, we can abandon the argument from analogy.[213]

In other words the argument from analogy doesn't capture everyday human experience. Surely though, this is only a problem if we take a non-naturalist line. However, if we take the reductive naturalist line about human beings, that what is important about being human is the brain, then we have a related problem. When I look at another human being I still see their body and not their brain. Certainly with correct training and equipment I could look inside their head to see if they had a brain, an option that isn't open to the non-naturalist 'looking' for the mind. I might even run tests on the brain, for instance a NMR scan, and 'see' the activity in the brain. However, I cannot do these things to myself, I cannot look inside my own head and see my brain, so this analogical argument fails. It is also true of course that in their everyday lives human beings do not go through this convoluted and tortuous procedure to recognise another human being, so Wittgenstein's point above would be just as applicable.

Essentially then, both non-naturalists and reductive naturalists are forced in the same direction with two variations of the argument from analogy but both fall prey to the same problem; the sort of reasoning that is required can only be carried out in language. We have already seen how Wittgenstein calls our attention to natural actions and reactions that come before language and are not the result of thought:

> It helps here to remember that it is a primitive reaction to tend to treat the part that hurts when someone else is in pain; and not merely when oneself is – and so to pay attention to the pain-behaviour of others, as one does *not* pay attention to one's own pain behaviour.[214]

The problem here is that human beings do not justify their beliefs that other human beings exist; the 'belief' that other human beings have minds is beyond justification and any account that relies on probability must be flawed. No such account can adequately capture the actual experience of human beings interacting with each other. This experience is extremely important, Sartre goes so far as to refer to the experience of others as a "second cogito". A human being cannot doubt the existence of others any more than they can doubt their own existence.

<center>III</center>

This 'doubting of doubt' is also a strategy that Merleau-Ponty employs in characterising human beings relation to each other (although as we shall see there are crucial differences between his and Sartre's wider approach). Merleau-Ponty claims that if we pay careful attention to our 'natural', pre-philosophical view of the world then doubt regarding the existence of others is senseless. His starting point is to say that:

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[213] L. Wittgenstein *Z* 537.
[214] Ibid. 540.

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We are interrogating our experience precisely in order to know how it opens us to what is not ourselves.[215]

To answer this one needs to adopt the 'natural', pre-philosophical attitude to the world:

Let us therefore consider ourselves installed among the multitude of things, living beings, symbols, instruments, and men.[216]

Central to this is the fact that a kind of self-not-self distinction is presupposed by the 'natural' view of the world and this is a distinction that is to be found in everyday human experience. It is not an intellectual construct that is retrospectively imposed upon human beings' experience of the world. It is one that obtains when a human being uses an instrument, encounters another human being and so on. It seems clear that Merleau-Ponty takes these claims to be self-evident for any human being if they pay clear and authentic attention to their everyday experience. For example, a human being can see and feel where they cease and the rest of the world continues. He describes how the self-world distinction and self-other distinction are drawn pre-philosophically:

Our first truth – which prejudges nothing and cannot be contested – will be that there is presence, that 'something' is there, and that 'someone' is there.[217]

Although 'presence' is a notoriously ambiguous and problematic concept,[218] if we remember his claim that "we are interrogating our experience" then we can construe "there is presence", "there is 'something'" and "there is 'someone'" as direct reports of human beings' experience. This means that Merleau-Ponty is using these expressions to refer to human beings' ordinary (natural), 'primitive', pre-philosophical experience and he is free from the usual attendant baggage of 'presence'. In everyday life human beings never doubt that they are presented with objects and other human beings; in the presence of friends, passers-by, houses, books etc. it is not a psychological option to doubt that one is in the presence of someone and something.

This is not the kind of indubitability sought by reductive naturalists or non-naturalists, it is not the claim that it is an a priori or necessary truth that human beings are confronted with other human beings and physical objects. Nor is Merleau-Ponty claiming that empirical error is impossible; one may mistake one human being for another or one object for another. What he means is that in everyday life when human beings are confronted with an object it is impossible for them to doubt that it is presented as something other than to them. It is presented as at some distance away, as something they could walk towards, and possibly around and so on. As Merleau-Ponty says:

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[215] M. Merleau-Ponty *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 159.
[216] Ibid. p. 160.
[217] Ibid.
[218] For instance, see D. H. Mellor *Real Time*.

Even if the thing, upon analysis, always lies beyond proof and figures as an extrapolation, still the fact remains that we see pebbles, shells.[219]

Physical objects are presented to human beings in radically different ways than they are presented to themselves (as we saw in the last chapter). Similarly in everyday life, when a human being encounters another it is not a realistic psychological option to doubt that one has met another human being. This experience is qualitatively dissimilar from encountering an inanimate object. The other is presented as 'someone'; as well as this, as someone friendly, intimidating, hateful and so on. Crucially, these are ways in which other human beings are presented, not later reactions to others derived from earlier beliefs (I will return to this in more detail later in this chapter).

With his commitment to the importance of the pre-philosophical – the 'natural' – we can see that Merleau-Ponty's thought falls within the broadly naturalistic form that was described in chapter 2. As Moran points out:

> Merleau-Ponty's philosophical outlook may be characterised as a kind of *dialectical naturalism*, though he himself does not employ the word 'naturalism' which he associates with various forms of biological reductionism and scientism.[220]

His outlook is broadly naturalistic in that it sees human beings as integrated into the natural order, as fundamentally belonging to the world, though not merely as objects in the world as their presence generates the social world of culture:

> Man and society are not exactly outside of nature and the biological; they distinguish themselves from them by bringing nature's 'stakes' together and risking them together.[221]

More specifically Merleau-Ponty expresses the intimate relation of the human body and the world as follows:

> Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism; it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system.[222]

We can think of his naturalism as dialectical in the sense that he sees relations between human beings and the world as so intertwined as if by a kind of 'pre established harmony'. The world's colours proclaim themselves to human beings' visual systems; space reveals itself through human beings' bodily gestures and their desires to transverse distances. Traditional philosophy and science have not adequately managed

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[219] M. Merleau-Ponty *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 162.
[220] D. Moran *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p. 403.
[221] M. Merleau-Ponty *Signs*, p. 125.
[222] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 203.

to describe the nature of this interaction or 'intertwining' between human beings and the world and it is this that leads Merleau-Ponty to be such a careful and strident critic of non-naturalism and reductive naturalism in all his work.

IV

Merleau-Ponty observes that, just as one finds oneself surrounded by the natural world, so one also finds oneself in a cultural world. This cultural or social world is shared by subjects in the community with each other and is, like the natural world, experienced as self-evident, as beyond sceptical doubt. Objects in this world are artefacts, made by people for the use of people. He claims that these artefacts result from natural objects being moulded to human use, and these human uses, the behaviour patterns involved in using the artefact, are visible in it:

> Just as nature finds its way to the core of my personal life and becomes inextricably linked with it, so behavior patterns settle into that nature, being deposited in the form of a cultural world.[223]

Merleau-Ponty goes on to describe some structural features of being-in-the-world, one is surrounded by natural objects and:

> Not only do I have a physical world, not only do I live in the midst of earth, air and water, I have around me roads, plantations, villages, streets, churches, implements, a bell, a spoon, a pipe. Each of these objects is moulded into the human action which it serves.[224]

It is clear here that he is proposing that humans belong to the sort of natural world argued for earlier in chapter 2 and also that what one might call 'mentality' partly consists in the existence of artefacts, i.e., in a human-manipulated world. As well as this the behaviour patterns which are 'deposited' in cultural objects are not the behaviour patterns of any particular human being. Artefacts are not only for one's own use nor for the use of any other specified individual, but for the use of any human being whatsoever. The subject of the cultural world is, Merleau-Ponty says, an 'anonymous' subject:

> In the cultural object, I feel the close presence of others beneath a veil of anonymity. *Someone* uses the pipe for smoking, the spoon for eating, the bell for summoning, and it is through the perception of a human act and another person that the perception of a cultural world can be verified.[225]

For him then, the grasp of the other is very direct. In perceiving artefacts, in perceiving the cultural world, a human being perceives other human beings.

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[223] ibid. p.347.
[224] ibid.
[225] ibid. p.348.

Merleau-Ponty continues by arguing that objective thought, whether it is that of the reductive naturalist or the non-naturalist, can not give an adequate account of an anonymous subject. Objective thought he says would typically claim that one comes to understand the anonymous subject, 'one' or 'they', by analogy from one's own case. For example, when one sees another person using an artefact, one understands the other's behaviour by analogy with one's own: the other is doing the same thing one does oneself when one uses the artefact. Hence one concludes that others, like oneself, have inner experiences 'directing' their actions. So anyone using the object is like oneself, a conscious subject. But Merleau-Ponty observes that this line of reasoning does not explain how one comes to understand the anonymous subject, but rather presupposes that one already has that understanding. It is a premise of this argument from analogy that one does perceive others doing the same thing as one does oneself. But this 'analogical perception' involves using, and so already having an understanding of the anonymous subject: to 'read' actions as the same whoever does them is precisely to experience the anonymous subject. So any argument from analogy used to explain one's awareness of anonymous subjects assumes what it is trying to prove.

As well as this objective thought is unable to explain how one could possibly perceive others as analogous to oneself. Perceiving another as like oneself would have to involve one perceiving a body as displaying a state of consciousness, and a consciousness as visible in that body. But proponents of objective thought give accounts of the body and of consciousness which make this kind of perception paradoxical. As we saw in the last chapter, objective thought conceives of bodies as mechanisms that mysteriously hide, but cannot display states of consciousness. The objectivist's conception of consciousness is of inner states and processes; thus defined consciousness has no outside, no capacity to be seen, and so cannot be perceived in the bodies of others:

> Other men, and myself, seen as empirical beings, are merely pieces of mechanism worked by springs, but the true subject is irrepeatable, for that consciousness which is hidden in so much flesh and blood is the least intelligible of occult qualities.[226]

So Merleau-Ponty's claim is not that one does not perceive others analogically; his claim is that objective thought cannot explain analogical perception of others and so cannot appeal to its occurrence to establish the existence, intelligibility or the possibility of knowing other subjects.

He also argues, more generally, that in the framework of objective thought, the perception of one subject by another involves a contradiction. In so far as it is a subject, the perceived other human being must be for-itself, a self constitutor; but as an object of perception, the perceived other human being must be in-itself, constituted. According to objective thought, nothing can be both for-itself and in-itself, both constitutor and constituted, and there is no third category. Hence one can never experience other

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[226] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, p.349.

subjects; the concept of an other subject or ego makes no sense, and so objective thought is inevitably solipsistic.

The fact that the world contains artefacts shows that other human beings exist and further that their existence is prior to mine. The artefacts are already there for me to discover and add to. In other words I am born into a pre-existing world of other human beings, a social and cultural world. This cannot be understood as coming from 'particularity', but has to come from anonymity as the artefacts are there for all. Objective thought cannot properly describe the perception of artefacts because it cannot give an accurate description of 'anonymous humanity'.

<div align="center">V</div>

Merleau-Ponty's talk of an 'anonymous subject' bears quite a resemblance to Heidegger's analysis of being-with. Heidegger also tries to escape from the need to provide an epistemic foundation for being with others and according to him the sort of traditional categorical interpretations are wholly inadequate and distorting. For Heidegger, being a human being should not to be thought of as the 'internal' presence to itself of an isolated ego-thing. Instead:

> the 'subject' character of one's own Dasein and that of Others is to be defined existentially - that is, in terms of certain ways in which one may be. In that with which we concern ourselves environmentally the Others are encountered *as* what they *are*: they *are* what they do.[227]

In this way Heidegger completely rejects the traditional assumption that being a human being ('subject') is a matter of being an entity which possesses attributes that are manifested directly 'internally' or in a distinctively first-personal way - as a matter of 'self-presence'. As opposed to this, Heidegger suggests that the 'being inside' that defines human beings subjective character should be conceived in terms of their capability over 'ways in which one may be'. In other words in terms of being on the inside of methods of acting that are always 'outside' in the world and wholly apparent to others. For Heidegger, this is an existential Being-with, "those among whom one is too."[228] Heidegger's analysis proposes that Dasein is "in-itself, essentially Being-with."[229]

Dasein having the being that it does means that the possibility of being with others - the possibility of determining something like a 'we' - is already in place. Heidegger does not want to contradict the fact that "one must always use a *personal* pronoun when one addresses [Dasein]."[230] As well as this he is not trying to establish that 'I' am never

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[227] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p.163.
[228] ibid. p.154.
[229] ibid. p.156.
[230] ibid. p.68.

alone.[231] Instead he is aiming to show why any such phenomenal Being-oneself or Being-alone presumes the intelligibility of the 'there' of Dasein's disclosedness is always such that, in each case, the possibility of a 'being-there-too' of others is already necessarily implicated in its structure:

> The 'who' [of everyday Dasein] is not this one, not that one, not oneself, not some people, and not the sum of them all. The 'who' is the neuter, the 'they' [*das Man*] ....*The 'they' is an existentiale; and as a primordial phenomenon, it belongs to Dasein's positive constitution* .... The 'they' itself prescribes that way of interpreting the world and Being-in-the-world which lies closest. Dasein is for the sake of the 'they' in an everyday manner, and the 'they' itself articulates the referential context of significance. When entities are encountered, Dasein's world frees them for a totality of involments with which the 'they' is familiar ...Proximally Dasein is 'they', and for the most part remains so.[232]

Heidegger is thus insisting that the intelligibility of Dasein's everdayness is, in each case, characterised by a constant anonymous publicness; indeed in summarising Heidegger's view, Glendinning describes it as "something like an 'originary sociality'."[233] The world is such that, within it, an encounter with 'another like oneself' is in each case, necessarily possible for Dasein; i.e., 'Being-in is *Being-with* Others'. Also:

> By 'Others' we do not mean everyone else but me - those over against whom the 'I' stands out. Rather, they are those for whom, for the most part, one does not distinguish oneself - those among whom one is too.[234]

This lack of 'distinguishing', this 'anonymity' marks human beings 'original' state of being in the world, not as one alone, or even one among many, but rather as a part of an amorphous whole. We can see the obvious connection here with Merleau-Ponty, with his 'anonymous subject' corresponding to a human in this primordial state. This is a pre-personal state, with as yet no fixed identity or sense of self or 'ownness'. At this stage there is no 'I' or 'other', rather there is simply being-in-the-world; or to put it another way, there is humanity.

VI

In order to show that the social and the shared precede the personal or egotistic, one of the examples that Merleau-Ponty uses is that of human beings engaged in dialogue. For Merleau-Ponty, human beings are essentially expressive beings and in the course of a

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[231] ibid. p.157.
[232] ibid. pp.164-167. Quoted in S. Glendinning *On Being With Others*, p.59.
[233] S. Glendinning *On Being With Others*, p.59.
[234] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p.154.

conversation, he claims, the use of language is a shared activity. There can emerge, in the interchange, thoughts whose authorship is joint, not personal:

> In the experience of dialogue, there is constituted between the other person and myself a common ground; my thought and his are inter-woven into a single fabric, my words and those of my interlocutor are called forth by the state of the discussion, and they are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator.[235]

Only when one of the speakers reflects later on the dialogue does it appear as their personal activity and only then does it become questionable whether the other was indeed a comprehending and contributing part of the dialogue.

> It is only retrospectively, when I have withdrawn from the dialogue and am recalling it that I am able to reintegrate it into my life and make of it an episode in my private history, and that the other recedes into his absence, or, in so far as he remains present for me, is felt as a threat.[236]

It seems that the speakers dialogue is first and foremost a human activity, it is primarily pre-personal and any conversation can only take place against a background of human socialility and communality. In fact this example is crucial as it supports Merleau-Ponty's more general claim that solipsistic doubts are the product of reflection. But reflection requires some pre-reflective activity upon which to reflect, and pre-reflective activity involves communication in the social world. The temporal development is from the social to the personal.

Therefore, contrary to the claims implicit in all objective thought, the notion of anonymous subjects doing the same thing, communicating and interacting, does not develop out of the notion of one's personal self. This means there is no need to explain, by the use of the argument from analogy or in any other way, any such development. Similarly there is no need to combat solipsism at the level of anonymous subjects: such subjects are first and foremost in communication with each other, with this communication being made possible by the background of the initial state of human communality and sociality.

For Merleau-Ponty meaning is both pragmatic and social. The idea of meaning as a mental process, or as a psychological accompaniment of language, is an illusionary abstraction from the lived reality of the human world. In a strikingly 'Wittginsteinian' turn of phrase, Merleau-Ponty says:

> I begin to understand the meaning of words through their place in the context of action, and by taking part in a communal life.[237]

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[235] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, p.354.
[236] Ibid. p.354-5.
[237] Ibid. p. 179.

Just as Merleau-Ponty privileges the spoken over the written in language so does Wittgenstein. For him language is not a representational structure, but a presentational act; he emphasises the importance of speech over language where "the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life...".[238] We can say that language is essentially embedded in structured activities that go towards constituting the form of life of human beings. Almost all the activities that human beings engage in are ones that are intrinsically connected with, or somehow grounded in, their use of language.

Human beings' learning of language is essentially connected with acquiring mastery of countless kinds of language-games. This means that they become acculturated, they come to participate in a vast network of structured activities that fundamentally employ language. Wittgenstein's idea that the structure and function of language are revealed only *in situ*, when it is embedded in the active lives of the human beings that speak it, acknowledges that the diverse uses of language are an essential part of it. It is the structures and distinctions that are revealed in human beings' actual use of language that demonstrate how language functions. Crucially, when human beings learn to speak, to use language, they are entering a pre-existing and impersonal ('anonymous') human form of life.

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VII

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Merleau-Ponty considers a possible criticism of what he has said, the sort of criticism that Sartre would make.[239] It might be objected that his description of the anonymous subject in its social world cannot be a complete solution to the problem of others, since it has not explained how one ego can perceive another, but rather has eliminated the distinction between different egos:

> But is it indeed other people that we arrive at in this way? What we do in effect is to iron out the I and Thou in an experience shared by a plurality, thus introducing the impersonal into the heart of subjectivity and eliminating the individuality of perspectives. But have we not, in this general confusion, done away with the alter Ego as well as the Ego?[240]

He then offers a description of this 'individuality of perspective' which he also calls 'the uniqueness of the cogito' and of 'subjectivity'. The way in which one experiences one's own conscious states is crucially different from the way one experiences those of another individual:

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[238] L. Wittgenstein *PI* 23.
[239] See J-P. Sartre *Being and Nothingness*, Part3, Chapter 3, Section III.
[240] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 355-6.

The grief and anger of another have never quite the same significance for him as they have for me. For him these situations are lived through, for me they are displayed.[241]

However closely one interacts with others, one's own experiences of that joint activity is uniquely one's own and indeed one can never have someone else's experience of that activity:[242]

> If, moreover, we undertake some project in common, this common project is not one single project, it does not appear in the selfsame light to both of us...[243]

This individuality of experience, though a development out of anonymous activity, is nonetheless a genuine phenomenon. Though objective thought misconstrues this individuality, it does not invent it. What is crucial to remember is that individuality, the personal, is possible as a result of, and against a background of shared human communality. Indeed, we can go so far as to say that such communality is a necessary condition for the emergence of the personal. Individuality gives rise to at least prima facie problems concerning how one perceives others. Merleau-Ponty is by no means unaware of the problems of how one can perceive this individuality of experience in others:

> The difficulties inherent in considering the perception of others did not all stem from objective thought, nor do they all dissolve with the discovery of behaviour, or rather objective thought and the uniqueness of the *cogito* which flows from it are not fictions, but firmly grounded phenomena ...[244]

Merleau-Ponty's response to this difficulty is to accept that, as an adult, one does experience in this individual and personal way. But he denies that such experience could serve as a support for any solipsistic conclusion, for any argument against the existence of others. One argument that he gives is that presentation of solipsist arguments is self-defeating since any such presentation involves using language, a cultural object, and assuming an audience to understand and be persuaded by the argument. It presupposes, contrary to the conclusions of solipsism, that there is a cultural world, that people do communicate with each other:

> I can evolve a solipsist philosophy but, in doing so, I assume the existence of a community of men endowed with speech, and I address myself to it.[245]

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[241] ibid. p. 356.
[242] This seems to bear a close relation to Nagel's argument in his essay "What is it like to be a bat?" in *Mortal Questions*, Chapter 12.
[243] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 356.
[244] ibid. p. 356.
[245] ibid. p. 360.

His chief line of reasoning against drawing solipsist conclusions from premises that appeal to the individuality of experience takes the form of arguing that individual experience presupposes inter-subjective interaction. The cultural world shared by anonymous subjects is not just temporally, as his earlier examples aimed to show, but logically prior to individual experience. In other words, the human world characterised by communality is logically prior to the individual or personal world. Individual experience cannot be adequately characterised without reference to the social world that is implicit in it. In presenting this thesis, Merleau-Ponty first claims quite generally that, though one is the unique subject of all one's experiences, one is also nonetheless a unique subject 'situated' in the social world:

> *I am given*, that is, I find myself already situated and involved in a physical and social world - *I am given to myself*, which means that this situation is never hidden from me ...[246]

Withdrawal from this social world is an option, but any such withdrawal is a response to and so a recognition of the social world. It is also a withdrawal into some other world, some other situation. One cannot withdraw entirely into one's individuality: it is an individual perspective and, as such requires a world onto which it is a perspective:

> Even the 'indefinite refusal to be anything at all' assumes something which is refused and in relation to which the subject holds himself apart.[247]

For Merleau-Ponty it is not just others that are at least partially hidden from one; one's understanding of oneself is also never complete and can never be quite accurate. He deploys the concept 'postponement'[248] to undermine the idea that one may be fully present to oneself in self-understanding:

> My possession of my own time is always postponed until a stage when I may fully understand it, yet this stage can never be reached.[249]

What Merleau-Ponty is saying is that self-understanding can never quite achieve the complete self-presence that that concept seems to require, that such self presence is perpetually deferred or postponed, because the moment of full self-understanding "can never be reached."[250] In a striking reversal of a fundamental Cartesian tenet, Merleau-Ponty says "I am never quite at home with myself".[251] There could be various interpretations of this. For instance that consciousness of oneself is never numerically identical with oneself as the object of that consciousness. However, it could also be that due to the essential anonymity of each human being qua being human there is

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[246] ibid.
[247] ibid.
[248] ibid. p. 346.
[249] ibid.
[250] ibid.
[251] ibid. p. 347.

always a part of each human being that remains hidden, or to put it better, that is transparent. In human beings communality, there is a facet of each human being that is not open to inspection from a singular standpoint.

<div align="center">VIII</div>

As we have already mentioned, Sartre places great importance on the experience of others - the "second cogito" as he calls it. He begins Part III of 'Being and Nothingness' by describing a kind of experience which is neither a reflective experience of oneself as an object, nor an experience of one's being-for-itself. He claims this experience indicates a new "ontological structure" not so far introduced:

> This ontological structure is *mine*, it is in relation to myself as subject that I am concerned about myself, and yet this concern (for-my-self) reveals to me a being which is *my* being without being-for-me.[252]

What one experiences on certain occasions when another human being is present is oneself, but oneself as viewed from a standpoint of other than one's own. One experiences oneself "before", in the eyes of, another human being. Sartre gives as an example of this experience, shame:

> By the mere appearance of the Other, I am put in the position of passing judgment on myself as on an object, for it is as an object that I appear to the Other.[253]

One experiences oneself as judged, as endowed with a significance, a meaning, of which one is not the author. One is no longer a being-for-itself but a being-for-the-other: the other dictates how one's behaviour is to be regarded and interpreted:

> The For-itself refers to the For-others. Therefore if we wish to grasp in its totality the relation of man's being to being-in-itself, we can not be satisfied with the descriptions outlined in the earlier chapters of this work.[254]

In 'Being and Nothingness', part 3, chapter 1, section IV, entitled "The Look", Sartre explores in more detail this phenomenon of being-for-others. He describes two different kinds of experience and the relation between them. He begins in a way that is very like Husserl's horizonal description of perceiving other human beings. Each human being perceives another as a purposive being interacting with their environment: "This man sees the lawn, ... in spite of the prohibiting sign he is prepared to walk on the grass, etc."[255] In seeing something as a purposive being in the world, human beings also

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[252] J-P. Sartre *Being and Nothingness*, p. 221.
[253] Ibid. p. 222.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Ibid. p. 254.

thereby perceive that world as having aspects that they do not experience. The aspects of the world that the other experiences "escape" one, they are experienced as absent:

> This green turns toward the Other a face which escapes me. I apprehend the relation of the green to the Other as an objective relation, but I cannot apprehend the green *as* it appears to the Other.[256]

So far, this account of perceiving other people is, Sartre repeatedly reminds us, an account of the experience of others as objects of consciousness: "None of this enables us to leave the level on which the Other is an *object*."[257] At this stage then, perceiving other human beings never makes it more than highly probable that the bodies that are perceived are the bodies of other human beings with perceptions and purposes. They might be robots, or they might have quite different purposes from those one takes them to have:

> First, it is *probable* that this object is a man. Second, even granted that he is a man, it remains only probable that he *sees* the lawn at the moment that I perceive him; it is possible that he is dreaming of some project without exactly being aware of what is around him, or that he is blind, etc., etc.[258]

No account has yet been ventured of the experience of the other as a subject. Hence the true issue, as Sartre sees it, of characterising a relation between subjects, has not yet been touched upon. What Sartre wants is an account of how one experiences the other as a subject. Sartre notes in his criticisms of Husserl that the relation between subjects should be one of being and not knowledge, and also that this relation be one which does not leave one's own being unaffected. He has also stated earlier in his own account that he wants his account to explain the basis of one's certainty - a certainty which, like one's certainty of one's own existence, is beyond all intelligible doubt - that other subjects exist.

The next move in Sartre's account is to argue that, since perceiving others as objects has "horizons of absence" - that is, one perceives others as conscious but does not experience their consciousness - these "absences" "refer to a presence", an experience one could have of the other's consciousness. Hence, Sartre believes that achieving the certainty of other human beings' existence must involve finding some direct experience of the presence of another consciousness. Sartre then finds this experience in the phenomenon with which he began the chapter: one's being-for-others. Here he takes the example of being looked at:

> If the other-as-object is defined in connection with the world as the object which *sees* what I see, then my fundamental connection with the Other-as-

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[256] Ibid. p. 255.
[257] Ibid. p. 256.
[258] Ibid. p. 254.

subject must be able to be referred back to my permanent possibility of being *seen by* the Other.[259]

Sartre offers a twofold interpretation of this experience. Firstly, it is the experience of oneself as an object. This objective self, one's being-for-others, is an object, not in one's own world, but in the world perceived by the other, the world as it "escapes" one:

> Now, shame, as we noted at the beginning of this chapter, is shame of *self*; it is the *recognition* of the fact that I *am* indeed that object which the Other is looking at and judging.[260]

Here Sartre recognises 'my world' and 'his world' but says very little about the relationship between them. It appears as if both the other and I can somehow 'travel' between the two, but exactly how this is possible is not spelled out. Also Sartre does not say how things come to be shared across these worlds - why is something a tree for the other as well as being a tree for me? How do we come to share this, even if our perspective upon it is different? These aspects at least point to a shared world, a world that we are both part of, 'our world'.

Secondly, it is an experience of the other as subject:

> If I am wholly engulfed in my shame, the Other is the immense, invisible presence which supports this shame and embraces it on every side.[261]

That it is another subject who looks at one is apparent, Sartre claims, since the experience of being looked at is incompatible with looking at the other human being. Indeed one employs precisely that looking at the other, turning the other into an object of one's perception, as a defence against one's being looked at. The possibility of success for this defensive strategy relies on the two experiences, of the other as subject and the other as object, being incompatible:

> The Other is in no way given to us as an object. The objectivation of the Other would be the collapse of his being-as-a-look. ... In the phenomenon of the look, the Other is on principle that which can not be an object.[262]

In so far as one experiences oneself as an object, one is not unaffected by the experience. In so far as one experiences the other as subject, the other is not related to one merely by knowledge. So, it is a relation of being in which one stands to the other. This experience of being looked at is the "second cogito" which Sartre believes there must be if the existence of others is to be certain and not merely a matter of probabilistic knowledge:

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[259] Ibid. p. 256.
[260] Ibid. p. 261.
[261] Ibid. p. 269.
[262] Ibid. p. 268.

> If the Other's existence is not a vain conjecture, a pure fiction, this is because there is a sort of *cogito* concerning it.[263]

It seems then that, like Merleau-Ponty, Sartre insists that recognition is not a self-contained act of conscious reflection. However, unlike Merleau-Ponty, he theorises his account of the look solely from the perspective of the subject. In Sartre's account of human consciousness self-recognition is essentially intersubjective in nature in so far as it is occasioned by the challenge presented to the self-made the object of an other's look. At issue for Sartre is the freedom to define oneself through one's own actions and free choices in the face of an unavoidable opposing consciousness, or an other's self-interested objectifying point of view. In contrast Merleau-Ponty stresses the impossibility of seeing the other as an opposing point of view. Instead, for Merleau-Ponty, as a seer I borrow my ego from others, and from their bodily comportment I represent them as sharing visual experiences in common with me. Rather than the other's look contesting my own, in order for me to see at all I must be visible for an other.

What is distinctive about Sartre's account of the relations between subjects is that all relations with others are based on confrontation and conflict. Whenever another person is an object of one's consciousness, one's experience indicates that one can become an object of the other's consciousness. When this occurs, one experiences one's being-for-others. This experience in its turn indicates that one can reverse the situation by making the other an object of one's consciousness again. So, relations with others are essentially unstable in the sense that they are ever fluctuating between one's being an object to the other's subject and one's being a subject to the other's object. Sartre further presents this dynamic of human interaction as one that is experienced as threatening. It is, according to Sartre, a struggle for dominance which can never end or be reconciled for, at each stage, one experiences the other as a threat to one as a conscious (and free) subject: other people not only "affect" one's being but appear to endanger it. One experiences the other as a threat, and one can neutralize this threat only by threatening the other. It is this uneasy dynamic which, for Sartre, constitutes the certainty that others exist.

This is a crucial area of disagreement between Merleau-Ponty and Sartre as to the phenomena that should be explored to achieve certainty that others exist. Where Sartre believes that conflict lies at the heart of this certainty, Merleau-Ponty believes that the certainty is first evidenced in experiences of communality. Further, he believes that the experience of communality is presupposed by the phenomena of conflict and that the Sartrean conflict involves reflection on and withdrawal from communality. Merleau-Ponty's criticisms are primarily aimed at Hegel, but they could equally well apply to Sartre. This is because although Hegel disagrees with Sartre as to the essential nature of

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[263] Ibid. p. 251.

the individual's conflictual relationship to others, they do agree that the primary experience is one of conflict.[264] Merleau-Ponty writes:

> For the struggle ever to begin, and for each consciousness to be capable of suspecting the alien presences which it negates, all must necessarily have some common ground and be mindful of their peaceful co-existence in the world of childhood.[265]

His point is that if one experiences another's world as in competition with one's own world , or the other as threatening, this can only be because of a more basic awareness of being similar and sharing a common world.

IX

Merleau-Ponty also turns his attention to the kind of example on which Sartre bases his account of interpersonal relationships; these involve a fluctuation between objectifying and being objectified by the other. In Merleau-Ponty's opinion Sartre fails to overcome the duality of subject and object in his philosophy. This is because if, as with Sartre, the individual is regarded as a subject, as a pure consciousness, then the world, including other people, is for this subject no more than an object of consciousness. Thus when two people meet each reduces the other to an object, an opaque thing-in-itself where each subject can observe the other, but neither can share in the other's perceptions and feelings. In this case intersubjectivity is not possible and we have says Merleau-Ponty "the paradox of a consciousness seen from the outside."[266] Such a view of human relations is mistaken because humans are not subjects in Sartre's sense, since they are not subjects in the sense of a "constituting consciousness."[267] Far from being a threat to my subjectivity the other is an extension of it because the other's perceptions confirm mine. This is because we are both bodily beings grounded in the same dialectic with the primordial world. Clearly I am not totally transparent to the other since I am not so to myself and so our perceptions cannot be identical as we both start from our unique 'situation', whether it is spatial, socio-cultural or both. But because we both, through our bodies, open on to the same natural world and draw meaning from it, our perceptions must overlap considerably and we are able to create common areas of meaning, an 'interworld' between us.[268]

It is worth noting here that the fact that humans first and foremost communicate with each other is in stark opposition to Sartre's claim that conflict lies at the heart of human relations. There seems little way of avoiding the fact that the threat of the other's competitive perspective is an important mode of our being-with-others; but he is

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[264] See J-P. Sartre *Being and Nothingness*; Part III, Chapter I, Section III and G. W. F. Hegel *The Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 218-240.

[265] M. Merleau-Ponty *The Phenomenology of Perception*, p.355.

[266] ibid. p. 349.

[267] ibid. p. 351.

[268] We might remember here Wittgenstein's comment that even though another human being may be a complete enigma to me, this can in time be overcome (*PI* p. 223). See earlier, chapter 2, section X.

mistaken in taking it to be the phenomenon in which one originally experiences the subjectivity of others. Sartre's mistake lies in his failure to understand the threatening, shaming, objectifying look as founded upon the original transfer of corporeal schema, as a disruption of the primordial state of syncretic sociability. By founding the entire sphere of intersubjectivity on negation, Sartre commits himself to a profound pessimism in the understanding of human relations. Because "conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others", all attempts to create human solidarity or cooperation culminate in an irresolvable dialectic of dominance and submission. In Sartre's world love is necessarily a vain pursuit.

However, Sartre's failure is not merely the result of a one-sided and incomplete understanding of 'the look'; rather, it is the inevitable consequence of adopting a neo-Cartesian ontology predicated on the bifurcation of being into mutually exclusive spheres of immanence and transcendence. For Sartre, as for Descartes and Husserl before him, humanity resides in the immanent sphere, in pure interiority, in a subjectivity that can be known only through first-person reflection. As Merleau-Ponty analyses the Sartrean account:

> If the other is really the other, that is, a For Itself in the strong sense that I am for myself, *he must never be so before my eyes*; it is necessary that this other For Itself never fall under my look, it is necessary that there be no perception of an other, it is necessary that the other be my negation or my destruction.[269]

I can never see the other as human subject because the other's subjectivity does not admit of embodiment within the context of Sartre's ontology. The other's body, both for him and for me, can only be an object. Once again we can see the failure of objectivist philosophy, whatever form it takes, to accurately describe being human. The reverse is of course also entailed, with the consequence that my subjectivity is negated, which further goes to show the error of Sartre's methodology.

Merleau-Ponty's claim is that, so far from precluding the possibility of inter-subjective recognition, these cases actually presuppose such recognition in two ways. They involve withdrawal from, and so recognition of, the social world; they also involve perceiving the other as having withdrawn from such a world into their own individuality. These are examples of refusing to communicate and as such depend on the realisation that communication is possible. Merleau-Ponty appears to endorse Sartre's view that one finds such situations 'unbearable' and 'embarrassing'; but cites these responses in support of his own interpretation:

> The objectification of each by the other's gaze is felt as unbearable only because it takes the place of possible communication. A dog's gaze directed towards me causes me no embarrassment. The refusal to communicate, however, is still a form of communication.[270]

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[269] M. Merleau-Ponty *The Visible and the Invisible*, p.79
[270] ibid. p. 361.

Feelings and thoughts, whether our own or others', are not simply objects of knowledge, they are things which necessarily find expression and so can be communicated to others. At the simplest level the expression of feelings in particular takes the form of gestures, facial expressions, 'body-language', etc.; at a more sophisticated level, particularly in the expression of thought, this is verbalised in language. There certainly seems to be a sense in which, when we recognise these expressions in another, we are in direct contact with the other's thoughts, feelings and so on. Alternatively, withdrawal might take a philosophical form of 'retreat' to the standpoint of the transcendental ego. But Merleau-Ponty claims that this still presupposes inter-subjectivity:

> The philosopher cannot fail to draw others with him into his reflective retreat, because in the uncertainty of the world, he has forever learned to treat them as consorts...[271]

X

When considering the status of the other, specifically in the light of Sartre's ideas on 'objectification', the body plays a crucial role for Merleau-Ponty. It cannot be adequately characterised by any set of third person singular physical ascriptions, as reductive naturalism would have us believe, no matter how large or complete they might be. This is not because the body is inhabited by a Cartesian consciousness; rather it is because the body is not only an object but also a subject, it is a psychophysical whole. Indeed Merleau-Ponty says that the body forms "a third genus of being."[272]

Merleau-Ponty also takes the body to be expressive and claims that this notion is prior to the idea of the body as an object. As Priest points out

> This is a version of his theory of bodily subjectivity and is broadly analogous to Strawson's idea of the person as logically primitive (*vis-à-vis* the mind-body distinction).[273]

When discussing the other, Merleau-Ponty states that:

> In order to think of him as a genuine I, I ought to think of myself as a mere object for him, which I am prevented from doing by the knowledge I have of myself. But if another's body is not an object for me, nor mine an object for him, if both are manifestations of behaviour, the positing of the other does not reduce me to the status of an object in his field, nor does my perception of the other reduce him to the status of object in mine.[274]

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[271] ibid. p. 361.
[272] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 350.
[273] S. Priest *Merleau-Ponty*, p. 189. For Strawson's view see his *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, Chapter 3 "Persons".
[274] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 352.

Here, Merleau-Ponty begins with a concept that he holds is primitive to the self-other distinction: the concept of the body as manifestation of behaviour. We also have to bear in mind that the relationship between the body and behaviour is very close - it is not as though behaviour could logically exist in abstaction from bodily subjectivity. Merleau-Ponty's concept of behaviour is phenomenological and not behaviourist. Behaviour in this sense is largely an expression of 'mentality'.

It is central to this account that "another's body is not an object for me."[275] This means not only a physical object and not only an intentional object. This is because, although being expressive of behaviour simply rules out being an object in either of these senses, it is not logically inconsistent with the body of the other being at least a physical object and at least an intentional object. Correspondingly, my body is also not only an object for the other. If we consider human beings to be psychophysical wholes, then Merleau-Ponty is right to suggest that we should think of the cases of self and other as ontologically symmetrical. In this regard, Priest claims that

> Merleau-Ponty may be usefully read as advocating a kind of identity theory - not a reductionist or a materialist identity theory, but a subjectivity-objectivity identity theory.[276]

Although the living conscious human body is the subject of its own perceptions and the object of others' perceptions, there are not two numerically distinct entities: a subject and an object, the self that one is the self that is perceived. The fact that a self perceives does not rule out the possibility that that same self is perceived. In perceiving another we are not failing to perceive a Cartesian entity, a hidden mind, we are perceiving another perceiver. Once again we can see the importance of arriving at an account of the human body as 'lived' in coming to understand what it is to be human.

Bearing in mind the fact that the body is 'lived' that it is 'alive', then we can see once again how objectivist philosophy is deficient. This is because the attribution of certain concepts would not be possible if the body were an object like any other. For instance "only of what behaves like a human being can one say that it has pains."[277] Wittgenstein continues by asking us to:

> Look at a stone and imagine it having sensations. - One says to oneself: How could one so much get the idea of ascribing a *sensation* to a *thing*? One might as well ascribe it to a number! - And look at a wriggling fly and at once these difficulties vanish and pain seems to get a foothold here, where before everything was, so to speak, too smooth for it.[278]

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[275] ibid.
[276] S. Priest *Merleau-Ponty*, p. 190.
[277] L. Wittgenstein *PI* 283.
[278] Ibid. 284.

When we look at how psychological concepts function, we begin to see that the cut which language makes lies between bodies of different kinds. The boundary between the stone and the fly reflects a conceptual, not empirical, relation that exists in language between sensation concepts and bodies of a particular kind: living human beings and what resembles them, however slight the resemblance may be. What we have is a distinction between the living and the non-living.

Wittgenstein also says "a corpse seems to us quite inaccessible to pain."[279] At death the human body becomes a thing, an object that is inaccessible to psychological description. As McGinn points out "the difficulty is in recognising how profound this difference is."[280] It is not just a difference in how things are described because the division between the living and the non-living that is drawn into language enters into the fundamental structure of the human form of life. It is tied up, not just with what human beings say, but with all their ways of acting and responding to the world. We have here two distinct categories of 'object', a "transition from quantity to quality."[281]

Something of the nature of this "qualitative transition" is revealed in the following aspect of human experience:

> Think of the recognition of *facial expressions*. Or of the description of facial expressions - which does not consist in giving the measurements of the face! Think too, how one can imitate a man's face without seeing one's own in a mirror.[282]

Recognising a face as friendly, bored, aggressive and so on amounts to recognising the significance or meaning of another's look. The descriptions that human beings give of facial expressions are rich in terms that apply a particular significance to them: a friendly smile, a shocked stare and so on. Human beings do not see or describe physical features disposed in a physical relation to one another, but human faces whose expressions have a significance. As we saw in the last chapter, this is precisely the sort of human experience that reductive naturalism and non-naturalism cannot capture. Also if a man wants to imitate another's look - his smile for instance - the man does not have to look in the mirror and arrange his features in the same way as the other. Again, in the last chapter, we saw how Merleau-Ponty showed how philosophy that treats the body as an object cannot capture this.

XI

We have seen then that each human being is situated in a social world that they share with other subjects who are like them, and with whom each one can communicate. At this level, there is no question that others exist and that we can be certain that they do.

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[279] Ibid.

[280] M. McGinn *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations*, p. 153.

[281] L. Wittgenstein *PI* 284.

[282] Ibid. 285.

We might say that each human being is part of a human world and that when we come to understand that world clearly, it is obvious that each one belongs there with others; it is a shared world. Questions and doubts can arise only if one 'withdraws' from the social world, but implicit in any such withdrawal is the recognition of the world from which one has withdrawn. It is true that one cannot experience another's individuality as one does one's own; but one can and does perceive and relate to others as having such individuality: as implementing their projects by their actions, as being committed to those projects, and as being able to change those projects and adopt others without ceasing to be the same individual:

> As soon as existence collects itself together and commits itself in some line of conduct, it falls beneath perception. Like every other perception, this one asserts more things than it grasps: ...when I say that I know and like someone, I aim, beyond his qualities, at an inexhaustible ground ...[283]

What Merleau-Ponty's account of intersubjectivity has done is to make sense of the everyday facts of human recognition, pathos and communication; areas that traditional ontologies render inconceivable. If human beings are conceived in terms of consciousness and that consciousness in terms of immanent reflection, and then that reflection is conceived of as absolutely private and inaccessible to others, then the humanity of each human being will always be invisible to every other human being. This forces upon us the absurd consequence that each human being can never experience another's humanity or even arrive at the idea of another. The other 'traditional' hypothesis, that consciousness is a myth and that human beings are merely organic mechanisms which are fully explicable in terms of causality - reductionist physicalism, is equally untenable. This is because in conceiving consciousness as 'nothing' it denies the reality and efficiacy of human sociality and communality: love and hate, pride and guilt, intention and desire, in other words the entire sphere of motivation and choice, freedom and responsibility have to be regarded as illusory and inconsequential. If I am only a cogito, I am absolutely alone; if I am only a sort of mechanism, I cannot be alone because the concept has lost all meaning. We have no choice then but to reject ontologies that grant being only to mutually exclusive domains of unextended thought and unthinking extension.

By making humans essentially social, Merleau-Ponty shows that they are not only part of a 'biological' world but also that they inhabit a shared human world. Human beings are social beings because they necessarily communicate their thoughts and feelings to each other by means of signs of different sorts. Some of these signs are more obviously 'facts of nature' than others; for example basic facial expressions and gestures. Such signs appear to have a fairly direct connection with human biological constitution. However, Merleau-Ponty contends that no sign is fully or simply open to biological/scientific description; even within the limits set by our biological constitution there is room for divergence between the gestures that belong to one culture and those of another. For example, white is the 'colour' of mourning in Asia whereas it is

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[283] M. Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 361.

traditionally black in the West, showing how expressions of grief can vary across cultures. At the level of more complex thoughts and feelings, the cultural variation becomes even greater. To speak of this variation as merely 'conventional' though is misleading says Merleau-Ponty as it implies that the variation is only in a superficial sign, rather than in the feeling or concept signified. It is not just the word for 'love', for instance, which varies from culture to culture, it is love itself; the feeling is differently expressed because it is a different feeling.

However, this is not to say that such differences cannot be expressed across cultures, even if the full meaning or import of it cannot be grasped. For instance, the meaning of the 'Gallic shrug' may not be completely clear to me as I am English and part of a recognisably different culture from its French performer. But I can 'loosely' translate it - depending in part on the situation- because of the framework of human communality, the form of life, of which we are both part. There is no doubt that "one human being can be a complete enigma to another,"[284] but it is also true that this 'enigma' is always partly, if not wholly, reconcilable; unlike, for instance, the case of a lion which does not share the in human form of life. As Wittgenstein goes on to say, "If a lion could talk, we could not understand him."[285] For Merleau-Ponty then, what ultimately determines the meanings of our signs is the culture of the society to which we belong, not anything reductively naturalistic or biological. It is through human sociality and communality that meaning comes to exist.

In conclusion then, to be human is to be a part of humanity. We cannot make sense of being human if we consider a human being in isolation from other human beings. Being human is necessarily to be part of a shared human world and each human being can only understand their experience against this background of human communality. We might say that human beings are necessarily social animals. However, this still leaves the question of human beings relation to the rest of the animal world. It is to that that I will now turn.

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[284] L. Wittgenstein, *PI* p. 223.
[285] ibid.

Chapter 5 – "The Paragon of Animals"

I

In this chapter I intend to look at the question of the uniqueness of human beings, or to put it another way, what sets human beings apart from other non-human animals. I intend to argue that it is only by understanding human beings as being 'continuous' with other non-human animals that we can come to see what is unique about human beings. It has been my contention throughout this work that only by way of a broadly naturalistic methodology can we understand the way that human beings are 'in' the world and how they act, react, behave and live as part of that world. As this chapter develops I will show how such a broadly naturalistic view allows us to see that although human beings are animals they have unique but essential features that set them apart from non-human animals. Crucially, we will also see that these features can best be explained within this framework and not by appealing to any form of humanism.

To do this I will look at the implicit humanism of Heidegger's account of Dasein and show that it is fundamentally misguided and misleading. I will also show that when this humanism is dispensed with, then this actually improves his argument by making it more inclusive. At the end of this chapter, we will see that by embracing a broad, inclusive naturalism we can not only come to a clearer understanding of being human but also see how it provides the background to personhood.

Having already established that human beings belong to the world and that that world is a social, communal one; and also that we can only understand a human being in relation to other human beings, we can return to the world. In particular we can start by investigating the way that human beings encounter the world. To this end, Heidegger asks us to consider a way of Being-in-the-world with which human beings are already familiar prior to taking up a contemplative stance, which is "Again and again *passed over* in explicating Dasein ... Dasein's everydayness."[286] Everydayness characterises that unspecific "way of existing ... which [Dasein] has proximally and for the most part."[287]

For Heidegger entities are typically encountered in Dasein's everyday world in two different ways: either as ready-to-hand or as present-to-hand. This contrast relates to two modes of Dasein's everyday Being-in-the-world; modes which can be denoted as, respectively, active (or practical) and contemplative (or theoretical). Clearly the sort of 'disengaged', 'objectivist' reductively naturalistic and non-naturalist views above take the latter, the present-at-hand, to be how human beings primarily relate to the world. It is human beings encountering the world as present-to-hand that sets them apart from other animals. Indeed, traditionally philosophy has prioritised the theoretical encounter with things, things as they are to sight. Sight stands at a distance and seeing does not

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[286] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 69.
[287] Ibid.

interfere with the things seen. Against this traditional metaphysical view, Heidegger emphasises that human beings' initial contact with objects is in terms of their use and availability to human beings for certain tasks, which are generated by their interests. Human beings tamper with and manipulate things as determined by their interests and goals. Things initially present themselves with this kind of 'available' being, this "readiness to hand", what Dreyfus calls "availability."[288] Heidegger resists the thought that encountering entities in their readiness-to-hand is founded on human beings' having discovered it beforehand as something present-at-hand. He introduces the idea of encounters with entities in their readiness-to-hand with the famous example of someone using a hammer:

> In dealings ... our concern subordinates itself to the 'in-order-to' which is constitutive for the equipment we are employing at the time; the less we just stare at the hammer-Thing and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become, and the more unveildly is it encountered as that which it is - as equipment. The hammering itself uncovers the specific 'manipulability' of the hammer. The kind of Being which equipment possesses in which it is manifest in its own right we call *'readiness-to-hand'*.[289]

The hammer is encountered in its readiness-to-hand and it might seem that Heidegger is implying that all human activity can ultimately be reduced to some kind of productive manipulation of tools. However, this is not the case as he was to make clear by saying:

> It never occurred to me ... to try and claim or prove ...that the essence of man consists in the fact that he knows how to handle knives and forks or use the tram.[290]

There are many human activities that are not equivalent to using things in order to produce a useful result; for example playing the guitar or making a political decision. These activities can all involve things, but they cannot be reduced to utility. What Heidegger is intending in using the examples that he does to help us recognise that human beings are engaged agents who dwell in the world as a significant whole.

When human beings examine ready-to-hand things they may be tempted to describe them as if they were present-at-hand things, in terms something like the following: "'A continuous surface', he announced at last, 'infolded on itself. It appears to have' - he hesitated - 'five outpouchings, if this is the word.'" The speaker here is stating true facts about the object, but as long as he maintains a purely theoretical attitude, he does not really understand what it is. "Later, by accident, he got it on, and exclaimed, 'My God, it's a Glove!'".[291] The person in question ("Dr. P.") has somehow lost the ability to

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[288] H. Dreyfus *Being-In-The-World* pp. 60-87.
[289] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 98.
[290] M. Heidegger *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, p. 177.
[291] O. Sacks *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat*, p. 14.

connect what he sees to what he does. Without a link to normal human activity, his observations are correct but completely misguided. It is only by using things that he can realise what they are. When human beings conceive of ready-to-hand things as if they were present-to-hand they are putting themselves in the position of Dr. P. In the case of a human being wearing gloves on a cold winter evening, they understand the gloves not primarily by observation, but by use. This is the 'special' kind of 'sight' that is proper to using things, which Heidegger calls *Umsicht*, the sight that occurs in the *Umwelt* (environment). This 'circumspection' is a know-how that reveals the gloves to human beings as what they are. In Wittgenstein's words we employ them "blindly."[292]

According to Heidegger however, it is precisely at such times that the entity is most primordially disclosed or encountered in a kind of transparent way as that which 'in itself' it is. Thus he is suggesting that it is when something like gloves or the hammer are encountered most relationally and least thematically that they are encountered in a way that, in classical terms, would be called most objectively. We can juxtapose two different ways of formulating Heidegger's views to make this apparent puzzle more explicit:

> Heidegger ...claim[s] that Dasein's capacity to encounter objects as ready-to-hand involves grasping them in relation to its own possibilities-for-being[293] [and] there is no disclosure without Dasein; but what is disclosed are entities as they are in themselves.[294]

As Glendinning continues, if there is a tension here it

> Would be between affirming the essentially 'relational' conception of what is disclosed in Dasein's everyday world and affirming the idea that *that same disclosure* affords Dasein with access to entities as they are 'in themselves'.[295]

Heidegger certainly seems to want to affirm both. This position seems prima facie problematic, if not contradictory. How can we grasp the essence of a thing if we are considering it in a particular situation or setting? Surely to get at the core of what something is we must isolate it from its situation and investigate it 'objectively'. The question remains as to how it is possible to jointly affirm both of Mulhall's interpretations. In order to see how they can, we need to take into account Heidegger's anti-humanist anthropological analysis of Dasein; implicit in his characterisation of Dasein's openness to entities is a contrast with approaches in which human beings are conceived, in the first instance, as an organic animal presence in the world. In doing so we need to examine at the same time his account of the being of animals.

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[292] L. Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations*, 219.
[293] S. Mulhall *Heidegger and Being and Time*, p. 78.
[294] Ibid. p. 104.
[295] S. Glendinning *On Being With Others*, p. 52.

Heidegger offers an interpretation of animality in a lecture course entitled 'The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics'. The second half of this lecture takes up a path which, in 'Being and Time' leads to the issue of a radically individualising anticipation of death: the path towards an analysis of the world of Dasein in its connection with finitude and individuation. While the apparent topic of this second part is the question of the 'world' of Dasein, the discussion is mainly directed towards a reply to the essence of life in general. Employing a method which is also central to the procedure of 'Being and Time', the analysis is pursued through a 'comparative examination' of the sense of 'having a world' in relation to three kinds of beings: the stone, representative of material objects, animals, and human beings. The method is employed to conceive "the essence of the animality of the animal [and] the essence of the humanity of man."[296]

In many ways his analysis is continuous with the critique of humanist anthropology which begins in 'Being and Time'. In that he had subjected anthropology, as an ontical science, to the ontological clarification of human being's being and in the 1929-30 lectures, Heidegger argues that the biological and zoological sciences presuppose, but do not exhibit, an ontological determination of 'life'. However, the question remains as to whether Heidegger's 'statements of essence' actually escape the scope of the humanist anthropology he opposes.

Heidegger describes the first example entity, the stone, as 'without world'.[297] Quite simply stones lack any access at all to entities; in other words, stones have no experience and no world. We cannot even say of a stone that it is doesn't care about Being without resorting to anthropomorphism. As Heidegger puts it, it is "neither indifferent nor not indifferent to Being".[298] Glendinning glosses this thus: "The being-without-world of the stone is absolute".[299]

As far as human beings are concerned, Heidegger's analysis offers an account that is diametrically opposed to that of the stone. Human beings are characterised as 'weltbildend',[300] a term that can be translated either as 'world-forming' or 'world-picturing' and has aspects of both. By utilising this description, he indicates that human beings have access to entities and so 'have' a world and also that they have access to entities as such and in their Being. Human beings 'see' the objects that they encounter as the things that, in their Being, they are; as a desk, a book, a house and so on. This capacity possessed by human beings to grasp something, as something, is not due to their possession of a language such that they can name things as this or that. Instead the opposite is true: that the phenomenon of language is possible for human beings is explained because the kind of Being-in-the-world that it is, is open to entities in the

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[296] M. Heidegger *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, p. 179.
[297] Ibid. p. 177.
[298] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 68.
[299] S. Glendinning *On Being With Others*, p. 66.
[300] M. Heidegger *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, p. 177.

mode of something as something. This is why when Heidegger insists that this *Weltverstehen* or 'world-understanding' is made explicit in a language:

> We do not, so to speak, throw a 'signification' over some naked thing which is present-at-hand ... but when something within-the-world is encountered *as such* the thing in question already has an involvement which is disclosed in our understanding of the world.[301]

The total absence of the possibility of an encounter with an entity in the above manner is for Heidegger what characterises the peculiar lack that characterises animal existence. The fact that animals 'lack language'[302] does not explain why they are thus lacking; but Heidegger still takes it to be decisive in demarcating the distinction between humanity and animality. In the 1929-30 lectures Heidegger registers this ontological distinction by describing animals - his second example- as being '*weltarm*' or "poor in world."[303] This means that animals are not wholly worldless but that their world is impoverished. Instead of standing out into past, future and present, animals are merely caught in an instinctive "ring".[304] For instance, the impoverished world of a cat is a closed set of opportunities for eating, hunting, mating and so on. Since the cat's Being is not an issue for it in the way that human beings' is for them, the cat cannot struggle with the meaning of its environment. It cannot make free choices within this environment, or decide who it is going to be on the basis of who it already is. A cat cannot transcend its own instincts and be exposed to the difference it makes that there is something rather than nothing. It can encounter beings as alluring or threatening, but cannot encounter beings as beings.

This unfolding of the second example from 'The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics' is, as Derrida notes, "median in character": it is "the animal *between* the thing and the human".[305] In other words

> 'the animal' is defined by double contrast to 'the stone' and 'human beings', the latter pair themselves being defined as polar opposites.[306]

In contrast to the stone, the animal is not absolutely without access to entities. The animal can encounter things as alluring or threatening, and in this sense it can be said to have a world. When compared to human beings though, the animal is impoverished: its mode of having a world takes the form whereby an animal does not have a world as such. This characterisation of animality is not a simple contradiction. The animal 'has' a world to be bereft of which the stone does not, it has access to entities, but it does not have the kind of *Weltverstehen* which characterises the Being-in-the-world that belongs

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[301] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 190-91.
[302] M. Heidegger "The Letter on Humanism" in *Basic Writings*, p. 230.
[303] M. Heidegger *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, p. 177.
[304] Ibid. p. 255.
[305] J. Derrida *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, p. 57.
[306] S. Glendinning *On Being With Others*, p. 67.

to human beings. This means that the deprivation at issue in the case of animals cannot be equated to the 'privation of the kind of seeing in which one merely understands' that human beings are capable of. Animals have an altogether 'other' relationship to entities than one that is merely non-conceptual or sensory in character.

Heidegger explains this relationship in terms of the way in which the 'circle' of biological drives which supposedly characterise an animal organism is 'disinhibited' by external factors.[307] His view of animals is closely tied to the biology of his day which saw animal existence as a series of blind, non-conceptually mediated, instinctual reactions activated by the animal's meeting up with certain entities in its environment.[308] Derrida sums up Heidegger's position by saying that

> The animal can have a world because it has access to entities, but it is deprived of a world because it does not have access to entities *as such* and in their Being.... The lizard on the rock in the sun does not relate to the rock and the sun as such ... And yet, however little we identify with the lizard, we know that it has a relationship with the sun - and with the stone, which itself has none, neither with the sun nor the lizard.[309]

This relates closely to what Heidegger has to say in chapters 3 and 4 of Division I of 'Being and Time' about how Dasein encounters entities. He believes that the notion of encountering applies solely to human beings' lives. This is because encountering something means experiencing it as something and in Heidegger's view animals do not experience the objects they run up against in their environment as objects; for human beings objects can have a different significance depending, for instance, upon the situation. Rather, for animals these objects serve simply as causal releases for instinctual drives. In the 1929-30 lectures Heidegger tries to spell out the difference between the way lizards sun themselves and human beings sun themselves. He repeatedly reminds us that the animal cannot ask about the sun as sun, but seems to assume that this is exactly what every human sun-worshipper does.

III

Derrida advances three related objections to Heidegger's account. The first is that it massively underestimates the innumerable structural differences that in fact separate one species of animal from another. That is, it assumes that 'animality' is 'one thing', that there is "one homogeneous type of entity, which is called animality *in general*".[310] According to Derrida this is the "dogmatic hypothesis of the thesis". Heidegger rejects

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[307] M. Heidegger *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, p. 255.

[308] The 1929-30 lectures are notable for their extensive use of scientific findings about animal behaviour, but this seems to be a great drawback. The danger for Heidegger is that by tying his conclusions to those of the biology of his day he leaves his conclusions open to dismissal if the biological findings are discredited.

[309] J. Derrida *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, p. 51-2 (as quoted in S. Glendinning *On Being With Others*, p. 68).

[310] Ibid. p. 57.

traditional hierarchies, all talk of 'lower' and 'higher' animals, for example amoebas and apes. However, he does not pause to ask whether or not his search for 'animality' - an essence - gives rise to other hierarchies. He talks of 'poverty' and 'deprivation' and defines the poverty of the animal world in terms of deprivation without wondering whether such talk reinstates the sort of hierarchies he wants to dismantle. As far as Heidegger is concerned there seems to be an abyss of 'essence' that separates animals from human beings.

Derrida's objection is important because it highlights the magnitude to which Heidegger's analysis seemingly ignores the possibility that different animals can be, in various respects, 'another like myself'. For instance, one only has to think of the numerous books and wildlife documentaries that delight in pointing out the similarities between human beings and higher order apes; such as the complex societies that each participate in. We should be careful about drawing too many conclusions form these similarities, but there seems to be no way to ignore their existence.[311] However, given that Heidegger encloses animality as a whole within a sphere of organico-biological drives, he limits any investigation of such similarities to little other than a cursory and grudging acknowledgment of human beings' "abysmal bodily kinship with the beast".[312]

This line of criticism is developed in Derrida's second objection, when he says that:

> The animal is not a *Dasein*, nor is it *Vorhandensein* [present-at-hand] or *Zuhandensein* [ready-to-hand] for us, as the original possibility of a *Mitsein* with it is not seriously envisaged, one cannot think it or talk of it in terms of *existential* or of *categorical*, to go back to the pair of concepts which structure the existential analytic of *Sein und Zeit*.[313]

It seems as though Heidegger's best friend was never - and could never be - his dog.

Both these objections lead us to a third objection to Heidegger's account of animal existence: namely that Heidegger's "discourse on privation, cannot avoid a certain anthropocentric or even humanist teleology".[314] Derrida's claim here is that:

> Whether one wishes to avoid this or not, the words 'poverty' and 'privation' imply hierarchy and evaluation.[315]

However, Derrida seems to appreciate the motivation for Heidegger's analysis and says that he doesn't wish to "criticize this humanist teleology" and that

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[311] We should remember here how Wittgenstein points out the continuity of human beings form of life with that of other non-human animals (see chapter 2, section X). The recognition of the importance of this continuity and the need for our explanatory methodology to reflect it was one of the reasons for arguing for broad naturalism.
[312] M. Heidegger "The Letter on Humanism" in *Basic Writings*, p. 203.
[313] J. Derrida *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, p. 57.
[314] Ibid. p. 55.
[315] Ibid. p. 56.

It has remained *up till now* ... the price to be paid in the ethico-political denunciation of biologism, racism, naturalism etc.[316]

The "up till now" is crucial here because even though he doesn't offer an alternative to the sort of traditional rivalries between naturalism and non-naturalism that we have already looked at, Derrida is clearly not ruling one out.

Returning to Heidegger then, his "humanist teleology" is precisely what invalidates his claim to provide an analysis of human existence that avoids the distortions of the more traditional metaphysics of the subject. However, it might be suggested that the unsatisfactory aspects of Heidegger's account of animality are in fact only a marginal problem and as such can be discounted and rectified. Schatzki claims that Heidegger has simply imported 'the biology of his day' into his account of animality, where

> Animal existence is a series of blind nonconceptually mediated, instinctual reactions activated by an animal's meeting up with certain entities in its environment.[317]

He goes on to add that 'a more contemporary view' that explicitly acknowledges certain analogies and similarities between human beings and animals can take its place without affecting the basic structure of the existential analytic.

However, as Derrida's second objection shows animality is problematic for Heidegger because it originates from the conceptuality that lies at the very heart of his account. The world is initially divided between the Being of human beings and that of 'things', with no space being given to the Being of animals. Derrida's interpretation of this is to claim that animals have to be assigned the *a priori* determination of being poor in world [*weltarm*] because Heidegger has left "no category of original existence for it".[318]

This way of stating the objection though falls a little wide of the mark. Derrida is right when he points out that 'Being and Time' only specifies a distinction between existential and categorical 'characters of Being', the latter being a sweeping term for the "characteristics of Being for entities whose character is not that of Dasein".[319] As well as this Derrida is obviously right to insist that, for Heidegger, the animal

> Is evidently not a *Dasein*, nor is it *Vorhandensein* [presence-at-hand] or *Zuhandensein* [readiness-to-hand].[320]

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[316] Ibid.

[317] H. L. Dreyfus & H. Hall (eds.) *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, T. R. Schatzki - "Early Heidegger on Being, The Clearing and Realism", .p. 83.

[318] J. Derrida *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, p. 57.

[319] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 70.

[320] J. Derrida *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, p. 57.

But as Glendinning points out, "the problem with Heidegger's account would not be removed by adding an additional category".[321] That Heidegger's existential/categorical distinction fails to make space for the Being of animals is not the issue here. The problem is not that his distinction is exhaustive, rather it is that he requires us to make it so distinctly. This is because limiting human beings by such a sharp distinction from all entities whose character is not that of human beings means that one confers on the unique exemplar, human beings, a special status from the outset; "one which is essentially, indeed ontologically, something more than a living thing".[322] In other words the absence of a place for the animal is not what is so problematic about Heidegger's basic concepts, rather it is the unexamined privileged status conferred on human beings that is entailed by them. In particular the problem is that Heidegger from the outset re-imposes the humanist dogma that human beings are separated from other animals 'by an abyss'.

This seems to be the feature of Heidegger's analysis that defies revision. He treats his distinction between human beings and any entities whose character of Being is not that of human beings as marking a distinction of absolute rigour. The result of this is that animality and humanity are excluded *a priori* from anything like a Being-with. The account cannot be saved by the notion of 'bodily kinship' because given the restriction or limit of Being-with to human beings, an animal cannot be included in a circle of a 'we'; animals cannot be included, even in a distinctive way, with those 'among whom one is too'. The fact that this limit depends upon Heidegger's initial separation of being into that of human beings and that of objects, with animals almost being an afterthought, seems to indicate that no amount of revising can overcome it. The limit is too embedded in his overall scheme.

IV

So according to Heidegger, the ontological difference of human beings to animals is best expressed with the thought that, in virtue of being such that it is only in an understanding of Being, "the essence of man consists in his being more than merely human.[323] In doing this he draws a essential contrast between human beings *qua* Dasein and the animal kingdom in general. For the latter "are as they are without standing outside their Being as such and within the truth of Being",[324] adding that the existence of human beings is not a standing outside its essence. On the contrary "[man] preserves in such standing the essential nature of its Being".[325] This means that since human beings 'are' only in an understanding of Being, we arrive at the apparently contradictory conclusion that to be more than merely human is of the essence of a human being. On this conception, 'mere animals', for example apes, have a completely instrumental, relational openness to the world. This is the sense of them being 'lodged'. By contrast

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[321] S. Glendinning *On Being with Others*, p. 69.
[322] Ibid.
[323] M. Heidegger "The Letter on Humanism" in *Basic Writings*, p. 245.
[324] Ibid. p. 229.
[325] Ibid.

the openness characteristic of human beings *qua* Dasein is openness to entities within the world in their Being.

Bearing this analysis in mind we can now return to the two interpretations from Mulhall's reading outlined earlier. We can now see that the contradiction that there appeared to be is only true if we insist on an overly pragmatic or anthropological reading of Heidegger. Rather we have to remember that for Heidegger, Dasein is essentially more than just a human animal. We have to remember that a definite characteristic of Dasein's Being is an understanding of Being itself. This is manifest by the disclosing of entities in relation to Dasein's own possibilities-for-being. In such cases entities as they are in themselves are disclosed. This conception has both its positive and its negative aspects. Positively, we can point to the following:

> Man - one being among others - 'pursues science'. In this 'pursuit' nothing less transpires than the irruption by one being called 'man' into the whole of beings, indeed in such a way that through this irruption beings break open and show what they are and how they are. The irruption that breaks open, *in its way*, helps beings above all *to themselves*.[326]

On the other hand, negatively, the 'humanism' of this picture seems to ascribe an insupportable special, essentially privileged, position to human beings. In the guise of an account which claims to overcome the humanism of traditional metaphysics, the conceptuality of 'Being and Time' conspires instead to re-impose it. Heidegger's reaction against classical humanism is a stance that

> Criticises the traditional metaphysics of the subject not because it sets human beings too high but, in Heidegger's words, because it fails to 'set the *humanitas* of man high enough'.[327] For Heidegger, that is to say, a human being as the *animal rationale*, as *homo animalis*, still remains too much of an animal.[328]

The world as world is, on Heidegger's account, essentially the world of humanity, a world that has to be absolutely distinguished from the world of animality. The idea of something which is manifest as something but which is not manifest to human beings is, for Heidegger, inconceivable; the animal is separated from the 'essence' of human beings by an 'abyss' and thus access to the incomparable 'as such' belongs contingently, but essentially, to human beings alone. There seems to be no escape from this position for Heidegger because his initial characterisation of animals as being 'poor' in world means that their access to the world is necessarily limited. We might try and say that the way the world is manifest to animals is part of the way that it is manifest to human beings, but this seems to ignore the realities of animal experience. For instance, the gazelle is manifest to the lion in a way that it isn't to human beings. To say that the way the world is to the lion is simply part of the way that it is to human beings is to do a

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[326] M. Heidegger *Basic Writings*, p. 95; quoted in S. Glendinning, *On Being With Others*, p. 53.
[327] M. Heidegger "The Letter on Humanism" in *Basic Writings*, p. 233-4.
[328] S. Glendinning *On Being With Others*, p. 70.

disservice to the world of the lion. It would also be an anthropocentric and far too humanistic line to follow.

In this way Heidegger's analysis distorts the facts it aims to describe without prejudgment. Such an approach is distorting because it does not do justice to the existence of animals but also crucially because it presents as descriptive a determination of human beings that is idealising in its inception. As far as Heidegger is concerned, human beings are absolutely privileged: the centre of the 'being there' of the world as world.

So even though it overcomes the problem of disengagement, the Heideggarian answer does so at too high a price as it sets human beings outside the animal kingdom, a kingdom to which they belong if we are to believe the overwhelming evidence of evolution. The Heideggarian stance would also place human beings outside of the broadly naturalistic framework that we have positioned them in so far. What remains then is to find a way to do justice to human beings' natural history, to their place in nature and their powers of reason. To do this we need to turn our attention next to Wittgenstein.

V

As we saw in chapter II, Wittgenstein's view is that concepts are grounded, so to speak, in 'forms of life' which must be accepted as a kind of given. If we then add to this the idea that the forms of life that belong to other animals are incommensurable with that of human beings, it becomes clear that, for Wittgenstein, the conceptual intelligibility that characterises human beings openness presents the kind of 'closed horizon' already identified in Heidegger's analytic of Dasein. For instance, the 'spirit of a lion' is absolutely opaque to human beings: "If a lion could talk we could not understand him".[329]

This is not the whole story though. If we remember Wittgenstein's insistence on 'family resemblance', whereby there need not be one thing common to all instances of a concept, then there is no reason to assume that what might be 'another like myself' must be defined with regard to only one feature or only one respect. The exploitation of such 'resemblances' is characteristic of Wittgenstein's later work; appealing as he does to clear patterns of animal life in order to enlighten us to the obscure 'depth grammar' of human language-games. As Glendinning points out, for Wittgenstein,

> Humanity and animality are not absolutely distinguished from each other: human beings are themselves living things, not something essentially different from other living things as the humanist insists.[330]

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[329] L. Wittgenstein *PI*, p. 223.
[330] S. Glendinning *On Being With Others*, p. 71.

Even though Wittgenstein resists the assumption that animals form a uniform set which must be completely distinguished from human beings, he does accept that a human being's understanding of the lives of non-human living things is limited in a distinctive fashion. Indeed, he stresses a difference of order in the 'opacity of the other' that a human being can encounter in their respective relations with other human beings and other animals:

> One human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn this when we come into a strange country with entirely strange traditions; and, what is more, even given a mastery of the country's language. We do not *understand* the people. (And not because of not knowing what they are saying to themselves.) We cannot find our feet with them.
> If a lion could talk, we could not understand him.[331]

This is because the form of life of a lion includes no characteristic activities in which words or sentences play a role. Its life is just too different from a human life for there to be the kind of 'transparency' that one human being can present to another human being. However, once again this conception is not humanist in character. One of the outstanding features of Wittgenstein's later naturalism is its willingness to acknowledge a non-appropriating openness to the form of life of many other living things. This acknowledgment does not contradict the intuitive thought that the form of life of the lion is not that of human beings. On the contrary, the intuitive thought presupposes such acknowledgment. It is only because the form of life of the lion is already manifest as such, i.e. as a radically other form of life that human beings can attest to the fact that 'if a lion could talk, we could not understand him'. The Being-with of human beings as envisaged by Heidegger is not at issue here, but it does possibly allow for a variety of cases of an 'original Being-with' of human beings and non-human beings, which is inconceivable in Heidegger's analytic of Dasein.

VI

However, even if it is the case that human beings couldn't understand a talking animal, that doesn't mean that they cannot come to understand animals nor that they don't share certain important features, or ways of being 'in' the world. For Heidegger, human beings are 'in' the world not merely by being located in it as a thing would be, but by dwelling in it. The world is not just a place where human beings happen to be it is an inseparable part of human being's being. If someone is a cheerful Yorkshire pig-farmer, this means that his world is a world whose happy and pleasing features stand out for him, a world organised around the concerns of a particular county and a world in which many important references involve caring for pigs. He 'is' how things show themselves to him. Thus Heidegger can say *"Dasein is its disclosedness"*,[332] it is its own world, or "there", or "clearing".

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[331] L. Wittgenstein *PI*, p.223.
[332] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 171.

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In light of what we have said above though, we might ask whether the pig-farmer's pigs also 'dwell' in the world. It seems reasonable to suppose that we could describe the pigs as 'contented', they inhabit a large sty, receive as much good food as they need and are well treated by the farmer. Theirs' is also a world whose happy and pleasing features stand out for them. Just as this makes sense, it makes no sense to suppose that the pigs consider themselves as 'Yorkshire-pigs' or that they are concerned with providing the farmer with a comfortable living, or indeed with the price of bacon. We might say that the pigs' dwelling is 'coarser' than that of the farmer. His world is a much more 'fine-grained' one than that of the pigs.

In his discussion of the type of Being that human beings partake in due to their Being-in-the-world, how we are "there", Heidegger makes much of Dasein's capacity to be affected by the world and how the entities and situations it faces matter to it. In other words, human beings' 'attunement'. He labels this *Befindlichkeit* and it designates human beings' moods as ways of finding themselves in the world. It is generally translated as 'state-of-mind' but this seems inappropriate as Heidegger consistently tries to avoid giving the impression that Dasein exists inside a subjective sphere, such as a mind. As well as attunement[333] we might also think of *Befindlichkeit* as 'disposition' because this helps us to think of human beings' moods as what 'positions' them in the world, giving them an orientation.

The most familiar existentiell manifestation of this existentiale is the phenomenon of mood. Depression, boredom, cheerfulness and so on are affective inflections of Dasein's temperament that are typically experienced as 'given', as states into which one has been thrown. For instance, human beings talk of moods and emotions as things that they suffer rather than inflict, where suffering signifies more submission than pain. As well as this, human beings' affections do not just affect others but also mark their having been affected by others. For example, human beings cannot love and hate as we want, but instead they think of their affections as captured by their objects, or as making them vulnerable to others, open to suffering.

As far as Heidegger is concerned, for human beings such affections are unavoidable and their impact pervasive. They constitute a fundamental condition of human existence. However, they also constitute a fundamental condition of animal existence. We can imagine a range of moods being associated with different animals; for example, a happy dog, a contented cat and an awkward donkey. As Wittgenstein remarks: "One can imagine an animal angry, frightened, unhappy, happy, startled. But hopeful? And why not? ...the phenomena of hope modes of this complicated form of life".[334] So human beings share some moods with animals, but not all moods; when Wittgenstein refers to "this complicated form of life" he surely means that of human beings, in other words, that hope is a characteristically human mood. But this does not mean that animals don't suffer moods, its just that a wider range of moods are available to human beings, why this is the case will become apparent as we go on.

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[333] This is the word used by Stambaugh in his translation of *Being and Time*.
[334] L. Wittgenstein *PI*, p. 174.

There is no doubt that sometimes human beings, and other animals, can overcome or alter their prevailing mood, but only if that mood allows, and only by establishing themselves in a new one; once in their grip, moods can colour every aspect of their existence. In so doing they determine our grasp upon the world, they inflect human being's relation to the objects and possibilities amongst which it finds itself. In this sense moods are disclosive: a particular mood discloses something, sometimes everything, in the world as mattering to a human being in a particular way; as fearful, boring, hateful and so on. In turn this reveals that, ontologically speaking, human beings are open to the world as something that can affect them.

Of course some human beings are more sensitive to the meanings of moods than others. Those who are less sensitive will tend to assume that moods separate human beings from reality. For instance, a cheerful mood pleasantly distorts reality by viewing it through 'rose coloured spectacles', whereas jealousy is a pair of spectacles that skews the world in a less agreeable 'green' way. We might suppose that an 'objective' thinker would remove the subjective mental 'spectacles' and look at things as they really are, neither good nor bad, neither ugly nor beautiful, but simply a set of hard facts. However, Heidegger argues that moods are 'disclosive'. They show human beings things in a more fundamental way than theoretical propositions ever can. Surely they are also disclosive for non-human animals, in fact it often seems that animals are more likely to 'pick up on' a prevailing mood than a human being. Again the range of moods that can be 'sensed' by non-human animals is not as broad as that for human beings. A dog might enter a room and 'sense' the happy state of those in it, as evidenced by its wagging tail etc., but one would presume not the aura of 'hope over expectation' that might pervade the crowd at Hull City before the start of each home game.

It might be easy to accept the idea that moods disclose something about human beings and other animals, but it seems much harder to accept that they reveal anything about the world. Since human beings undergo moods, the claim that someone is happy or fearful could be said to record a fact about them. But surely one might argue, someone's mood does not pick out a fact about the world because moods do not pick out objective features of reality, rather they are subjective responses to a world that is itself essentially devoid of significance. If this is the case then as Mulhall points out "there can be no such thing as an epistemology of moods".[335] Heidegger rejects any such conclusion. Since moods are an aspect of Dasein's existence, they must be an aspect of Being-in-the-world. As he says:

> A mood is not related to the physical ... and is not itself an *inner condition* which then reaches forth in an enigmatical way and puts its mark on things and persons ... It comes neither from 'outside' nor from 'inside', but arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such being.[336]

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[335] S. Mulhall *Heidegger and Being and Time*, p. 77.
[336] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 176.

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Heidegger reinforces this claim with a detailed analysis of fear. Firstly, there is that in the face of which human beings fear - the fearful or fearsome - something in the world which human beings encounter as detrimental to their well-being or safety. Secondly, fearing itself is human beings response to that which is fearsome and thirdly that about which human beings fear is their well-being or safety, i.e. themselves.

So fear has both a 'subjective' and an 'objective' face. On the one hand it is a human response and one which has the existence of the human being who fears as its main concern. This is because, as far as Heidegger is concerned, Dasein's Being is an issue for it; however, Dasein's Being is put at issue by something in the world that is genuinely fearsome, that poses a threat to the human being who fears. This reveals not only that the world that human beings inhabit can affect them in fundamental ways, that they are open and vulnerable to the world, but also that things in the world are really capable of affecting human beings. The threat posed by a hungry lion, the sort of threat to which human beings' capacity to respond to things as fearful is attuned, is far from illusory. Once again we can compensate for Heidegger's implicit humanism here by including some other animals in this analysis. In the case of the hungry lion, one would imagine that a gazelle is even more attuned than a human being.

We should not forget that whether something really is fearful is in an important sense an objective question; the fact that human beings can find some things fearful when they don't merit the response, for example the fear of house spiders, shows this to be the case. Human beings' capacity to discriminate the genuinely fearful from the non-fearful is an affective response that reveals something about the world. To take a more cheerful example from Heidegger's earlier work, "we are in the habit of saying that 'love is blind' [but] love really gives us sight".[337]

As far as Heidegger is concerned a situation gives off its own distinctive 'feelings' and through human beings' moods they can 'tune into' them. Someone who gets a 'bad feeling' from a room full of people will be in that room in a special way, will notice things that others may not and may understand the situation quite well. For instance, he might recognise that the crowds' mood is angry. Someone else who is in a different mood may not pick up on the 'bad feeling' and may completely miss the meaning of the situation, even though they may be able to list many facts about the others there. Thus not all moods are equally disclosive. Someone may be trapped in an inauthentic or inappropriate mood. In this case, the mood still shows things, but it shows them in an overly restricted way. This is why Heidegger believes that human beings need to gain some control over their moods; he says:

> Dasein can, should, and must, through knowledge and will, become master of its moods".[338]

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[337] M. Heidegger *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 296.
[338] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 175.

For Heidegger, the goal of human beings is not to escape from moods altogether, but to find the right moods. Unfortunately, he says very little about how to do this.

Other ways of talking about moods shed even more light on attunement. For instance, a friend might ask me "How's it going?" I reply "Not so good." What we might ask is the 'it' here? It is nothing in particular, things in general, life, or as Heidegger calls it "*Being-in-the-world as a whole*".[339] A human being is always attuned in some way to their overall situation. This is how human beings are there, or how human beings are their 'there'. Sometimes the 'it' is more specific: for instance, I might reply that I am angry or sad about particular events. These moods are about individual features of my life. Heidegger claims that moods that open up Being-in-the-world as a whole are more important and more revealing than moods that are about specifics.

To my friend's original question I may also reply "I got out of bed on the wrong side this morning". This is also revealing because it points to the fact that attunement involves having a past. Human beings find that they have been thrown into the world in a particular way. In other words my getting out of bed on the wrong side is not just a bygone occurrence that is here no more, it is an ongoing burden. In Heidegger's terms, human beings thrownness is not just 'factuality', but facticity'; as he says:

> *Facticity is not the factuality of the factum brutum of something present-at-hand, but a characteristic of Dasein's Being...*[340]

A factical entity is faced everyday with the task of being what it has already been and choosing what it can be.

Since it is hard to carry the burden of existing, it is little surprise that most moods are inauthentic and evasive, often moods can do more to 'veil' an environment than they can to 'disclose' it. In the case of me saying that I got out of the wrong side of bed, my answer is as misleading as it is revealing. In general human beings have a tendency to dismiss moods as random and meaningless and thus moods lose their power to be disclosive. Because human beings are always thrown into the world in some way, they can never become 'moodless'. A human being with no attunement at all would be nothing because such an entity would have no way of being enmeshed in the world. Human beings, and many non-human animals, can never simply get rid of their thrownness, their past.

<div align="center">VIII</div>

The relation of moods to the human beings undergoing them should not be understood in an overly subjective way. For Heidegger, since Dasein's Being is Being-with, its individual states not only affect, but are affected by its relations to others. This has two

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[339] Ibid. p. 173.
[340] Ibid. p. 174.

very important consequences. Firstly, it implies that moods can be social: a given human being's membership of a group might lead to them being thrown into the mood that grips that group. This point is reinforced by the fact that a human being's everyday mode of selfhood is the they-self:

> Publicness, as the kind of Being that belongs to the 'they', not only has in general its own way of having a mood, but needs moods and 'makes' them for itself.[341]

When we see the Prime Minister making policy on the back of a wave of moral panic, he is responding to the public mood. Being part of, and responding to, this public mood, being part of the 'herd mentality' is even more a part of non-human animals' everydayness. For instance, when one sheep bolts for whatever reason so do all the others around it. In fact, part of what sets human beings apart from other animals is their ability to overcome the mood of the herd.

Secondly, the socialness of moods also implies that a human being's social world fixes the range of moods into which he/she can be thrown. Ontically speaking any human being is capable of transcending or resisting the dominant social mood; their mood doesn't have to simply reflect that of the public, but even if it does not, the range of possible moods open to them is itself socially determined. This is because human beings' moods arise out of Being-in-the-world, and that world is underpinned by a set of socially defined roles, categories and concepts. This means that the underlying structure of human beings seemingly most intimate and personal feelings and responses is socially conditioned.

This Heideggarian idea underpins Charles Taylor's notion of human beings as self-interpreting animals.[342] It's worth noting here that Taylor is not prone to Heidegger's implicit humanism. He follows Heidegger's tripartite analysis of moods and argues that an emotion such as shame is related in its essence to a certain sort of situation, e.g. a shameful or humiliating one, and to a particular self protective response to it, e.g. hiding or covering up. Such feelings thus cannot even be identified independently of the type of situations that give rise to them, and so can be evaluated on any particular occasion in terms of their appropriateness to their context. But the significance of the term employed to characterise the feeling and its appropriate context is partly determined by the wider field of terms for such emotions and situations of which it forms a part. Each such term derives its meaning from the contrasts that exist between it and other terms in that semantic field. For instance, describing a situation as 'fearful' will mean something different according to whether or not the available contrasts include such terms as 'terrifying', 'worrying', 'disconcerting', 'threatening' and 'disgusting'. The wider the field, the finer the discriminations that can be made by the choice of one term as opposed to another and the more specific the significance of each term.

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[341] Ibid. p. 178.
[342] See C. Taylor *Philosophical Papers*, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man" and "Self-interpreting Animals" as well as *Sources of the Self*, Part One.

This being the case, the significance of the situations in which a human being finds him or herself, and the importance and nature of the emotions felt, are determined by the range and structure of the vocabulary available to that human being for their characterisation. A human being cannot feel shame if they lack a vocabulary in which the circle of situation, feeling and goal characteristic of shame is available. The precise significance of that feeling will alter according to the semantic field in which that vocabulary is embedded.

It is not that the relationship between feeling and available vocabulary is a simple one. In particular thinking or saying does not make something the case; not just any definition of human beings' feelings can be forced upon them, and as we have seen above some which they take up are inauthentic or deluded. However, neither do vocabularies simply match or fail to match a pre-existing array of feelings for human beings; access to a more sophisticated vocabulary makes a human being's emotional life more sophisticated. We should not be misled by the term 'vocabulary' here; it doesn't just denote an array of signs, but also the complex of practices and concepts within which alone those signs have meaning. In the case of non-human animals, their 'vocabulary' is far more primitive than that of human beings; hence the more 'sophisticated' moods that are open to human beings, for instance that of hope as in the example above, are not open to non-human animals.

It is also true that 'vocabulary' can be historically and culturally specific. For example, when one claims that no-one in present day Britain can experience the pride of a Samurai warrior because the relevant vocabulary is unavailable, 'vocabulary' refers not just to a set of Japanese terms but to their role in a complex web of customs, assumptions and institutions. Because human beings' affective life is conditioned by the culture in which they find themselves, their being immersed in a particular mood or feeling is revelatory of something about the world, i.e. it is cognitively significant in a further way. If a human being feels horrified, this not only registers the presence of something horrifying in their environment; it also shows that the human being's world is one in which the specific complex of feeling, situation and response that constitutes horror has a place. In other words it is a world in which horror has a place.

This is why Heidegger and Taylor claim that the relationship between human beings' 'inner life' and the vocabulary available to them is such an intimate and important relationship. Also, since that vocabulary is itself something that each human being inherits from the society and culture within which they happens to find themself, the range of specific moods or feelings into which each human being may be thrown is itself something into which each human being is thrown. Significantly, it is this societal and cultural inheritance which is not present in the case of animals. They cannot be thrown as human beings are because there is nothing for them to be thrown into. Crucially, how things might conceivably matter to a human being, just as much as how they matter to that human being at any given moment, is something determined by their society and culture rather than by their own psychic make-up or will-power. It is this

double sense of throwness which is present in the case of human beings that is invoked when Heidegger says:

Existentially, a state-of-mind implies a disclosive submission to the world, out of which we can encounter something that matters to us.[343]

IX

With this in mind, it seems that we must question the ancient assumption that accounting for what is distinctive in human life must lead us away from human beings' natural, animal history, as if their *humanitas* places them with one foot or even both feet outside nature. Not only are there respects in which the lives of human beings have uncanny, if not matching, parallels in the lives of other animals, but even the existence of human language cannot be adduced to support the idea of a radical gulf or 'abyss' between humanity and animality. Hence the attempt to position humanity as the centre of an absolutely privileged and closed horizon of intelligibility cannot be sustained. We might say that humanism, of whatever ilk, has lost itself in its first utterances, being already defeated by the phenomenon of human language. In this respect we should remember that language is not something that we should think of merely in terms of words and syntax. Rather we have to think of language as it is used, as it is incorporated into the lives of living human beings. In Chapter 2, Section IX we saw that language is a part of the human form of life, it is part of the natural history of human beings. As such it is continuous with human beings' other ways of negotiating their environment, of finding their way around their world, and not the radical break with such ways that some humanists would have us believe.

Heidegger's recoil from classical humanism is that it is insufficiently anti-naturalistic, in other words that the 'rational animal' remains too much of an animal. His basis for this claim is his view that a human being's body is quite other than an 'organic thing' which occurs in the world and which turns out to be, in a more or less mysterious way, the point of occupancy for a subjectivity or personality. On this point, Heidegger's argument against classical humanism seems correct. However, what seems wrong about it is that we should see it as posing a challenge to our thinking about human beings alone. It points to a rethinking of what it is to be an animal. This rethink should not be an 'as well' but an enterprise that includes human beings.

It is essential to re-evaluate the reductively naturalistic assumption rejected by both classical and Heideggarian humanism that the essence of human beings consists in being animal organisms. This re-evaluation has to target the idea that the sub-human, and for instance, sub-canine, accounts offered by the sciences in this area exhaust what can sensibly be said of the life of an animal. As if everything that we say about animals and the behaviour of animals must ultimately have a baldly naturalistic explanation; for example, all attribution of psychological states to the behaviour of living things is just a 'folk' way of talking and not a response to the facts. It is precisely when we do

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[343] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 177.

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conceive an animal organism, and animality in general, in a baldly naturalistic way that, especially when it comes to considerations about human beings and the use of language, the humanists supplement, whatever its form, seems almost unavoidable.

Freed from this narrow conception of animality, it is no longer problematic to reject the humanist assumption that human life is separated from animal nature by an 'abyss'. We can reject conceptions of human behaviour that reduce it to the complex workings of anatomical apparatus; but this no longer forces us to conceive human beings' most distinctive form of behaviour, their use of language, as separate from, or as separating them from, the lives of animals.

This conception does not ignore the differences between human beings and animals. But it surrenders nothing to the scientism of reductive naturalism; rather it is smoothly and inclusively naturalistic. It also allows the lifting of the Heideggarian restriction of Being-with to entities with Dasein's character of being and in doing so makes it possible to affirm quite generally that as Wittgenstein puts it, "to see the behaviour of a living thing is to see its soul".[344]

We can also see via the example of certain moods that human beings are 'continuous' with other non-human animals; that the example of moods, in their primitive forms at least, apply to both human beings and non-human animals. It is against this background of continuity between human beings and other non-human animals that we can now look at what it is to be a person.

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[344] L. Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations*, 357.

Chapter 6 - Persons

I

So far I have concentrated solely on looking at being human via a consideration of shared characteristics. In the preceding chapter we saw that human beings are 'continuous' with other non-human animals, and that they can only be understood in terms of a broad, non-reductionist, but still naturalistic, framework which leaves room for important social and cultural considerations as well as biological ones. We have also seen that to understand what it is to be human, one has to understand the essential 'sociality' of human beings; i.e., that to be human is at least in part to be a 'social animal'. However, so far I have said very little about how we are to understand individual human beings. Each human being may be a part of the human 'whole', but at the same time each human being is also identifiable as an individual. However, there seems to be a problem in generating a satisfactory notion of individuality from what has been said so far. This is because in showing that 'sociality' is an essential feature of being human, i.e. that to understand what it is to be human we must understand what it is to be part of the human community (being-with), we seem to have made 'anonymity' an essential feature of being human. How can human beings be anonymous and individual, unique at the same time? One solution to this problem would be to appeal to some form of humanism, for example to say that each human being has a soul that makes them unique. The problem with this approach is that any form of humanism was discounted in the last chapter because it places an unacceptably wide gulf between human beings and other non-human animals. As well as this it was also rejected because any form of humanism is difficult, if not impossible, to accommodate within the broad naturalistic framework that we have employed. In terms of explanatory usefulness then, humanism is a non-starter.

Another solution to the problem might be to dispense with the starting point of the social nature of human beings altogether. This also creates problems though. If we are to explain human individuality without reference to the fact that part of being human is being-with-others, we have at some point to explain how one is related to the other. One way around this might be to argue that when we talk about individual human beings we are actually talking about 'persons'. Thus we can give separate accounts of human beings and persons and are not necessarily faced with the problem of reconciling the two, they are merely different ways of explaining the same 'thing'. This seems something of an evasion though. If indeed we have two accounts of the same 'thing' it seems reasonable to suppose some points of connection between the two accounts, some common ground that the accounts both utilise. It is my intention in this chapter to show that there is a connection between being a human being and being a person and that rather than being something that is an explanatory nuisance, this connection is precisely what allows us to fully understand each concept. In what follows we shall see how being a person necessarily develops from certain characteristics of being human. As well as this we shall see that it is only from the understanding of what it is to be a human being that has already been outlined that we can arrive at an understanding of

what it is to be a person. The upshot of this is that conceptually being human and being a person are inextricably linked and that to fully understand each concept, one must understand the other. To start with I will look at the question of whether there is a difference in meaning between 'human being' and 'person'. Then I shall move on to briefly look at some definitions of personhood that either take the connection between human beings and persons for granted, or choose to ignore it completely. After this I shall move on to investigate how personhood actually arises from being human, utilising Heidegger's work on the 'individualising' of Dasein.

II

A question that always seems to present itself at some point when we talk of human beings is that of their status as persons. Are all human beings persons, and vice versa? Is a person 'the same thing' as human being, or can we point to differences that are both interesting and enlightening? Answers to the questions of what it is to be a human being and a person are inextricably linked not only historically, but also I believe conceptually and it is part of the aim of this chapter to show this, as well as arriving at a greater understanding of both. It has been central to this project so far to show that arriving at anything like a complete understanding of 'human being' requires that it be treated conceptually and not merely empirically. I believe that the same is also true of 'person'. A full understanding of either is not possible if we simply try and compile a list of facts; as such, I believe purely scientific answers will always be lacking, however completely they may be drawn. This is not to say that such facts are not important, rather that they are not the be all and end all.

There are also the ethical implications of any such investigation to bear in mind. Theories about human beings, persons and ethics have long been interlinked, as this quote from the "Encyclopaedia of Ethics" shows:

> For as long as human beings have engaged in ethical thought, persons have occupied its central position. Virtually every issue in ethics rests on postulates about the normative status of persons.[345]

However, the status of persons - what it is to be a person - has warranted little discussion, as the same entry goes on to point out:

> The presumption that ethics is for and about persons has, historically been so ubiquitous and unquestioned that explicit reflection on the concept of a person has been infrequent. Most often, the importance of personhood is taken for granted rather than overtly stated.[346]

In the last decade or so this is not as true as it once was. The 'explosion' of writings in the field of bioethics has seen more authors focusing on questions and issues involving

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[345]L.C. Becker & C.B. Becker (eds.) *Encyclopaedia of Ethics*, p. 950.
[346] Ibid.

both persons and human beings. However, this only goes to show how important a clear understanding of both is in the field of ethical inquiry and beyond.

However, do we really need to speak of an understanding of 'both' i.e. of 'human being' and 'person'? Is there any such distinction that needs to be made? I believe that the answer to this is 'yes' and that the distinction is not only vital but that it can also do a great deal of philosophical work for us.

<div style="text-align:center">III</div>

Returning to Hamlet's declaration at the start of this work, is it in virtue of the much vaunted power of human reason that we should 'define' ourselves as humans? The answer that we have reached so far is 'no'; however, there certainly seems to be an historical impetus towards actually answering 'yes'. For instance, Aristotle classifies human beings as rational animals. Like other animals, human beings move from place to place and perceive via their senses; but alone among animals they possess a rational soul (*psyche*). For Aristotle, this is what marks humans out from the 'crowd' of other animals; it is human beings capacity for rationality that makes them special. Rationality is still taken to be an important feature of human beings, even if it isn't considered the defining feature of human beings. We now also tend to think of human beings as 'ethical creatures', the sort of beings that it is appropriate to talk about using terms such as 'good' and 'bad'. However, a problem is encountered here; many people think that it is not human beings that we do - or should - talk about ethically, rather that it is - or should be - persons.

Aristotle makes no distinction between human beings and persons, it wasn't until Locke that we start to see such a distinction being drawn; with human beings being associated with 'material' qualities - the body - and persons associated with 'mental' qualities - memory. Locke himself acknowledges that we often use the terms 'human' and 'person' interchangeably, but he nonetheless insists that these properly stand for distinct ideas. For Locke, the idea of a human being is that of a corporeal being, whereas that of a person refers to something incorporeal as it has to do with a connected flow of consciousness. He also holds that 'person' is a "forensic" term. We hold persons accountable for actions only insofar as we assume that the person who is subjected to praise or blame is the same person as the one who carried out the action in question. This is much the same conception that is used in modern law, where for instance a company can be a 'person'. Normally, to be the same person is to be the same human being, but Locke believes that divergence between the two is possible. Whether this is indeed possible remains open to question at this stage, as does the question of whether there is a worthwhile distinction to be made between 'human being' and 'person'.

Much modern thought takes it that no such distinction exists, that Locke's distinction is not only wrong, but also fundamentally misguided and should not have been made in the first place. On this view persons are all and only human beings. This sort of definition corresponds most closely with common usage; however, few philosophers

who take personhood to be a morally important concept are willing to accept such a definition. However, the fact that philosophers are not keen to accept a definition is no reason to simply dismiss it, indeed there are those who would say that it is a point in its favour.

'Human being' and 'person' are generally thought to refer to the same 'thing', and as well as this to have essentially the same meaning. In fact we might give a reductionist argument to this effect along the lines of that in the case of lightening and electrical discharge. In this example it is argued that all the explanatory work that is done by the term 'lightening' can be done equally well, if not better, by the more basic term 'electrical discharge'. It is further argued that explanation in the form of this reduction is preferable as it increases our understanding of the original phenomenon - lightening - by placing it within a rigorous and well proven scheme of explanation, i.e. science. It also obeys the command of Ockham's Razor, i.e. that we shouldn't postulate more than the minimum number of different objects, properties or events necessary to explain what we want to explain. In the case of 'human being' and 'person' the argument would run that instead of using 'person' we should use 'human being' instead as the latter not only captures everything explained by the former; but also that 'human being' has an established place in scientific discourse. This would mean that 'human being' is thus a better understood and more 'concrete' explanatory vehicle than 'person'. Of course for this to be the case, then what is true for one term would have to be true for the other. I intend to show that this is by no means the case.

IV

That such differences in meaning between 'human being' and 'person' exist can also be highlighted using the following example. For instance, we can consider the following statement: "As a person, I find him witty and amusing; but as a human being I find him reprehensible". We can easily imagine this being said about someone, for instance Winston Churchill. We might find some of his quips and jokes amusing, but judge him reprehensible on account of his opinions and attitudes on other matters. In both cases we would be judging him qualitatively, but the crucial point is that in each case we would be applying different criteria by which to reach our conclusion. As above, exactly what these criteria are is not the question at the moment (although 'personality' surely plays a part), what is important is that the criteria involved in being a human being and a person are different. That there is such a difference becomes even more apparent if we 'reverse' the original statement: "As a human being, I find him witty and amusing; but as a person I find him reprehensible". It seems clear that this second statement does not make the same sense as the first, if it makes any sense whatsoever. What the examples show is that 'person' has something to do with 'personality', whereas 'human being' doesn't. It is also clear that this sort of example undermines the notion of reducing 'person' to 'human being'; they do not mean the same thing and are not interchangeable. To put this in a slightly different way, we might say that the grammar of 'human being' and 'person' is different. Especially if we understand 'grammar' in a Wittgenstinian sense whereby it relates to our use of words and to the

structures of our practices of using language. When we look at 'human being' and 'person' in this way we can see that each has a distinctive pattern of use that characterises our employment of it.

In everyday life, when we refer to a human being or a person, we generally take ourselves to be referring to the same 'thing'. However, there seems to be no reason why this necessarily has to be the case. For instance, there has in the last couple of years been an attempt in New Zealand to have gorillas recognised in law as persons, were this to become the case then when we refer to persons we would have to differentiate between 'human persons' and 'gorilla persons'. The rights and wrongs of according gorillas the same rights as persons is not the issue here, what is at issue is whether 'human being' and 'person' refer to the same thing, in which case it would not seem to make sense to talk of 'gorilla persons'. We can clarify this if we consider the example of the kind of identity that holds between water and H2O. There are different criteria for identifying water and H2O, we might say that in the case of the latter they are 'chemical' and in the case of the former they are 'sensory'. However, something could not be water and not also be H2O and vice versa. There is no logical necessity involved here, but there seems to be something stronger than a merely contingent connection between the two; if there was another world that contained water it would also have to be H2O to count as water. We might say then that the identity that obtains between water and H2O is one of metaphysical necessity. If we now think of 'human being' and 'person' in the same way it is clear that there is no logical necessity involved. However, neither is there any metaphysical necessity; we can easily imagine another world where there were non-human persons, for instance the 'Vulcans' in 'Star Trek' or the 'Replicants' in 'Bladerunner'. In the case of human beings and persons' it seems that they are only contingently identical.

It is also true that on occasion human beings and persons can be characterised in similar ways. For instance, we can make sense of both 'he's an evil human being' and 'he's an evil person'; however we have to be careful not to read too much into an example such as this because the similarity of the grammar of the two expressions is misleading. The reasons for ascribing evil in each case may well be different. We might describe someone as an evil human being if they had done something that offended our common ideas of 'humanity', for example Hitler. But describing someone as an evil person brings to mind a more 'particular' kind of act, such as persistently bullying and abusing another. Then there are cases where both terms may appear to be applicable, for instance in the case of Peter Sutcliffe. Part of the problem here of course is the confusion that surrounds the applicability of 'evil', but this shouldn't overly diminish the difference in its being applied to human beings and persons. The difference in the application seems to rest on the fact that in the case of human beings, there is reference to the class of human beings, whereas in the case of persons there is no class to refer to. We might say that what makes a person evil is the same thing that would make a demon evil.

What the above considerations also highlight is that 'human being' and 'people' are separable conceptually. In much the same way we can talk about pure water and pure H₂O and not mean the same thing. Pure water (such as 'Evian') may well contain trace elements that are present in it due to the sort of rock and earth it passes over. Pure H₂O on the other hand is chemically pure; it contains only hydrogen and oxygen. Different criteria are involved in judging each to be pure, just as different criteria are applied in judging the 'evilness' of a human being or a person.

V

In seeking to differentiate between 'human being' and 'person' it is also instructive to consider cases in which each the qualities that we associate with each are absent; i.e., when things have been either 'dehumanised' or 'depersonalised'. To illustrate this we can begin by considering the following passage from Primo Levi's 'The Drowned and the Saved':

> The human ashes coming from the crematoria, tons daily, were easily recognised as such, because they often contained teeth or vertebrae. Nevertheless, they were employed for several purposes: as fill for swamplands, as thermal insulation between the walls of wooden buildings, as phosphate fertiliser; and especially notable, they were used instead of gravel to cover the paths of the SS village located near the camp.[347]

In this example it's clear that the remains are those of human beings, yet they are not treated as such; instead of being treated with the respect normally accorded to human remains they are instead used as fertiliser and gravel. In doing this the SS sought to send out a clear message not only to their own soldiers, but also to the Jews that they were persecuting and murdering; namely that the Jews were less than human because they did not deserve the respect accorded to dead human beings. Thus the Jewish prisoners were dehumanised not only in the eyes of their captors, but also in the eyes of each other.

What we can see in this case the is that the SS robbed the Jewish prisoners of recognisably human characteristics, i.e. they were not treated in a way that we would expect human beings to be treated. Of course the treatment of the prisoners remains was merely the final indignity heaped upon them. Their mistreatment began with them being herded into cattle trucks to be taken to the camps, then being held in pens and virtually starved to death, until they were finally killed in a way hardly fit for animals. This treatment meant that it was easier for the guards to treat the prisoners as they did because the no longer saw them as human beings, the guards no longer saw the prisoners as being like them, they became a 'resource' to be used as seen fit. No doubt it's difficult to regard another as like yourself when each day you return home by walking over their ashes. Looking upon this with hindsight we now think of the guards themselves as inhuman, i.e. lacking in certain basic qualities that all human beings

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[347] P. Levi *The Drowned and the Saved*, p. 100.

share, such as having a basic respect for other human beings and putting at least some value on their lives. In looking at how the concentration camp guards treated the prisoners we believe that they could only do what they did if they lacked certain, if not all, human qualities.

If we now consider the case of depersonalisation we can see that the qualities lost are not the same as in the case of dehumanisation. If something is depersonalised then it is made less individual. Returning again to the example of the Jewish prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps, each prisoner was given the same basic striped 'uniform' to wear, all their heads were shaved and each had a number tattooed on their arm. In this way each prisoner's individuality was suppressed until it virtually disappeared. Again, this meant that it was easier for the guards to treat the prisoners as a 'resource' because they no longer saw them as persons, rather the prisoners became faceless and lacking in any individuality.

In the concentration camp guards attitude towards, and treatment of, their Jewish prisoners then we can see an example of both dehumanisation and depersonalisation. In being dehumanised the Jews were, in the eyes of the guards, deprived of certain shared human qualities; whereas each was depersonalised by the attempt on the guards part to rob them of any trace of individuality. That something different is being lost or removed in each case has three important consequences. As regards this thesis, it shows firstly that conceptually 'human being' and 'person' are separate concepts and secondly how important both concepts are to what 'we' take ourselves to be. Thirdly, in a much wider context, it shows the importance of both concepts and particularly the dangers of allowing either to be restricted or marginalised.

VI

We can now return to the question of whether 'human being' and 'person' mean the same thing. If this was true, then everything that was considered to be a human would also have to be taken to be a person. On the whole this does indeed seem to be the case; but of course the reverse would also have to be true, i.e., everything that is a person is also a human. This is far from obviously the case. For instance, were I to be confronted with an elf would I take this non-human creature to be a person? I think it is hard to give an answer to this one way or another. However, the fact that we cannot give a definite 'no' points towards a problem in taking persons to always also being human beings. What this example highlights is the fact that in the case of an elf the concept of personhood at least gets a foothold in the way that it could not if we were considering a tree for example. It seems that we can look on the example of an elf as being analogous to that of the fly in Wittgenstein's writings on pain when he says: "...look at a wriggling fly ... and pain seems to get a foothold".[348] Whether we can say that the fly actually is in pain is unclear, but it certainly makes sense to suppose that it might be. In the case of an elf, the foothold would presumably be more extensive; for instance there seems no problem in supposing that an elf could indeed be in pain.

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[348] L. Wittgenstein *PI* 284.

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Much of what is at issue here seems to be the question of resemblance - but resemblance to what and in what way or ways? Does the elf resemble a human, a person or both? We might ask the more straightforward question, to what extent does the elf resemble one of us i.e., a creature that is considered to be both a human being and a person? We might consider further the case of 'pain' and imagine the following situation. My elf companion - Legolas[349] - and I are walking in the forest and Legolas stubs his toe on a tree root. Upon doing this he jumps up and down whilst rubbing the hurt toe and appears to curse in a way I have never heard before (presumably in 'elfin'). Later, while cutting some fruit, the unlucky Legolas slips and cuts his hand with his knife and what appears to be silver 'blood' comes from the wound.

It seems clear from this that Legolas cannot be human, after all its plain that he doesn't bleed human blood and presumably were I to cut him open, then his anatomical make-up would be significantly different to that of a human being. A high degree of biological similarity would seem to be an important condition for accepting something as a human being. If the question of ascribing pain to an elf is purely an empirical one then we could look at the elf's nervous system and compare it to the human nervous system; if they are sufficiently similar, then we can say that under the right conditions, then the elf should be able to feel pain. However, as Wittgenstein points out, pain is irreducible to talk of nervous systems, as this cannot capture the richness or range of pain-behaviour. So the question of the elf feeling pain is an ontological one; i.e., how applicable is the concept in the case of the elf? It seems as though it is perfectly applicable for two reasons. Firstly, he behaved much as I would have done had I stubbed my toe - by nursing the sore area and cursing. The fact that I couldn't understand what he said is not overly important here. That Legolas can speak is what matters, as presumably I could learn his language and enter into a dialogue with him, much as I could with a Frenchman should I want to. As well as this, we shouldn't underestimate the importance of the 'face'- for example, its expressiveness - in this example; if Legolas was faceless the possibility of dialogue would certainly be impaired, even if he could communicate via a 'disembodied' voice. To this end I think it is illuminating that elsewhere in "The Lord of the Rings", Tolkein's characters "the Ents" - intelligent, talking trees - have a face.

Secondly, it is not just a question of Legolas's behaviour; an important consideration here is also my reaction towards him, that I would presumably be concerned for him - that he wasn't hurt too badly - that I would offer sympathy and consolation. Now I might also do these things had I been walking with my dog in the forest and he had stepped on a thorn. However I would not share a joke about the dog's clumsiness with him as I might with Legolas about his; after all as an elf, he's supposed to be light on his feet. The dog may be man's best friend, but the elf can be 'one of us' in a way the dog can never match. It is clear that we can enter into a whole range of complicated and intricate relations, one might go so far as to say 'interpersonal' relations, with Legolas that we never could with a dog.

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[349] This is one of the elves from J. R. R. Tolkein's *The Lord of the Rings*

From the above it seems clear that we cannot describe Legolas as a human being - by virtue of his biology. It is after all a fact of nature that all human beings share roughly the same biological characteristics. I don't think the question of Legolas's personhood has been clearly decided either; however, what is clear is that the conditions which need to be fulfilled for consideration of something as a human being or a person are significantly different. I think that it is now clear that when we talk about a 'human being' and a 'person' we are talking about something different. From what I have said above it seems clear that there are historical, 'grammatical' and conceptual reasons for making a distinction between 'human being' and 'person'.

<div align="center">VII</div>

Returning to the nature of personhood, there is a common thought that a human being simply is a person, while members of other species are not. The reason often given for this is that human beings' psychology is more complex than that of non-human animals. But the kinds of psychological complexity thought to qualify a human being for being a person vary. For instance, Frankfurt has said that what matters are having second-order desires. Non-human animals want things, but persons also want to have some desires rather than others.[350] On the other hand, Dennett has suggested that having a sense of justice is necessary for being a person,

> To the extent that justice does not reveal itself in the dealings and interactions of creatures, to that extent they are not persons.[351]

This exclusion of anyone who is completely unjust seems to draw the boundary rather too narrowly. However, at the other extreme, the view has been expressed in the abortion debate that a newly fertilised human egg is a person. Much of that debate illustrates the way the concept of personhood is often shaped to fit the values of those concerned. A widely held view of the abortion issue is that whether a foetus has a right to life depends on whether it is a person. It is hard to avoid the impression that participants on both sides of the debate start with an attitude to abortion, and to animals, and then decide the question of personhood accordingly. In fact Tooley is quite open about this; he gives an account of personhood in terms of moral considerations, which he takes to be prior to the issue of whether the foetus is a person.[352] The problem, amongst others, with this approach is that the moral attitudes are in need of some form of justification.

This shows that identifying what a person is, and that the considerations that are important in making the identification are very important; one of these considerations seems to be the moral nature of persons. In the case of Locke for instance, morality is central to personhood and in particular the idea of responsibility. This stems largely

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[350] H. Frankfurt "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person" in *Journal of Philosophy 68*.
[351] D. Dennett "Conditions of Personhood" in *Brainstorms*.
[352] M. Tooley *Abortion and Infanticide*.

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from the fact that Locke sees 'person' as a forensic term, i.e. as a moral/legal term. As he says:

> ['Person'] is a Forensick Term appropriating actions and their Merit. ... This personality extends it *self* beyond present Existence to what is past, only by consciousness, whereby it becomes concerned and accountable, owns and imputes to it *self* past Actions, just upon the same ground, and for the same reason, that it does the present.... And therefore whatever past Actions it cannot reconcile or appropriate to that present *self* by consciousness, it can be no more concerned in, than if they had never been done.[353]

In this way Locke's concept of personhood is closely connected with the practice of attributing responsibility and distributing rewards and punishments. Following from his contention that if one cannot remember a past deed, then one cannot be the person that did that deed, Locke believed that a person should not be held responsible and punished for deeds which they have no recollection of performing. However, he does go on to concede that in practice an excessive loophole could indeed be created for criminals if courts always had to prove that a defendant had such a recollection. There does seem to be something in what Locke has to say though. Surely we do in fact talk of a person being responsible for their actions and perhaps we can agree with this part of Locke's conception of personhood while at the same time rejecting his 'memory criterion' for personhood. We might ask though, whether we need persons at all in order to fulfill this idea of responsibility; why can't we just say that human beings are responsible for their actions?

When we ask "Who did that?", we are asking which individual was responsible for the deed we are concerned with; in other words we want to know which person did 'it'. When assigning responsibility we do not assign it to a human being, we assign it to a person. There are occasions when this is not the case, for instance when we ask something like "How could human beings have done this?" In cases like these though we are interested in collective responsibility, we want to know how a group of human beings could do what they have done. For instance, in the recent cases of 'ethnic cleansing' in Kosovo we are not as interested in how one person could do this to another, but more as to how one set of human beings could do such terrible things to another set.

<center>VIII</center>

Returning to the case of 'personal' responsibility it is crucial to remember that this isn't just a 'moral' notion. When we ask which person is responsible, there may well be a normative force to the question, but this isn't necessarily the case. For instance, we might say that in the 'Mona Lisa', Leornado Da Vinci is responsible for the most famous work of art in the world and we understand what the proud father means when he says that his child is responsible for the best results in his class. The fact that

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[353] J. Locke *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II.xxvii.26.

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'person' is not a purely ethical concept seems to greatly undermine theories such as Tooley's which make personhood completely reliant on ethical considerations, and likewise to do great damage to Dennett's theory as that makes the normative concept of justice central to personhood. However, if responsibility isn't an entirely moral notion, how are we to understand it?

First and foremost we have to think of responsibility as inextricably linked with choice. If someone commits an act but has no choice, we would not hold them responsible for that act. Of course the act does not have to be a moral one; for instance, if I use too many beans in making the coffee then I am responsible for making the coffee too strong. This doesn't make me a bad person, merely one who makes coffee that's too strong. However, choice is a way of individuating people, whatever choices I make they are mine and no one else's, one might say that I am responsible for my choices. But I cannot, and I do not, choose in a 'vacuum'. Each choice I make is against a background, a background that is informed by my previous choices, by the attitudes, moods, actions and so on of those around me and more generally by the culture of which I am part.

This means that in many ways the burden of my choosing is on my shoulders, if I am free to choose, then it is my fault if I make the wrong choice. When I choose wrongly then it is up to me to take responsibility for doing so. If we were thinking of this phenomenon in a legal or moral sense then we would say that if I had done something wrong, then I was guilty. However, as we have already seen we cannot think of choice in a purely moral way, which is why we cannot in this respect think of guilt as being a purely moral notion. By using too many beans, I am guilty of making coffee that's too strong; this doesn't make me a bad person, just a bad coffee maker. This seems to be what Heidegger has in mind when he says:

> The idea of guilt must not only be raised above the domain of concern in which we reckon things up, but it must also be detached from relationship to any law or 'ought'.[354]

When talking about guilt we normally associate it with one having caused something that one shouldn't have, or with not causing something that one should have caused. It is from this everyday notion that Heidegger extracts the formal concept of "Being-the-basis of a nullity."[355] In this sense then, guilt involves some sort of foundation and some sort of negativity, or 'not-ness'. As Dreyfus points out 'guilt' (*Schuld*) in Heidegger's existential analysis also has connotations of 'indebtedness' and 'responsibility',[356] and it is through the past that one is indebted. As a human being I was thrown into a world - a society and culture - which I had no control over, I did not bring myself into the world but this does not change the fact that I am indebted to my humanity. As well as this I cannot change what I have done and have been, but I have

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[354] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 328.
[355] Ibid. p. 329.
[356] H. Dreyfus *Being-in-the-World*, p. 305.

to work with what I have been in order to be someone. For instance, I have to deal with the fact that I find myself in this time and place with the experience and habits that I have gained along the way. It would be wrong of me to think that I can create myself anew and have complete control over my existence, what I become in the future is always based in some way on my past.

However, at the same time as being 'indebted', I am 'responsible' as well. In Heideggarian terms this is because upon the foundation of my past, I project possibilities that are not other possibilities. In other words I cannot be everything at once but am forced to choose an approach to the world that excludes other approaches. If I continue to be a philosopher I am excluding other career and life possibilities, such as being a merchant banker.

The sort of existential personal guilt that is at issue here is "an empty formal indebtedness";[357] it is the condition of possibility for any ordinary sense of debt or responsibility. As Heidegger says:

> This essential being-guilty is...the existential condition for the possibility...for morality in general and for the possible forms this may take factically. Primordial 'being-guilty' cannot be defined by morality, since morality already presupposes it.[358]

In this wider sense then, 'guilt' does not reveal a person's recognition of their moral faults or lapses; rather it reveals an essential structure that is definitive of any person, namely that each person is not wholly responsible for the person that they are. As Heidegger reminds us:

> As being, Dasein is something that has been thrown; it has been brought into its 'there', but *not* of its own accord.[359]

We might say that a person does not choose in a vacuum. Each choice that a person makes is against a multi-faceted background of other choices, cultural and social attitudes and opinions, roles that have been chosen, assigned and accepted or denied. In other words when a person chooses this, that or the other option they do so within the context of their human thrownness. We might say that this is the 'positive' dimension of human thrownness, that it makes choosing possible.

IX

As well as being the background against which I, as a person, choose, my human thrownness also acts as a constant temptation, as an escape from responsibility. Being a person is not an easy option, because as well as making decisions that they are happy

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[357] Ibid. p. 306.
[358] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 332.
[359] Ibid. p. 329.

with, persons make mistakes and must in turn accept responsibility for them. The choices that I have made in the past preclude certain choices from me now; the fact that I didn't train night and day to improve my football skills when I was younger means that it is now too late for me to become a professional footballer. I face this fact with a sense of regret. It seems to be the case that as persons we 'actualise' some choices rather than others that makes regret possible, for instance I might regret that there were certain things that I didn't say to my father while he was still alive. In this way 'regret' seems to be a uniquely human emotion; one cannot imagine an animal feeling regret at things left undone in much the same way that one cannot imagine a dog as being 'hopeful'.[360] But feeling regret is also a very personal emotion, my regrets are very much my own; there may be similarities between my regrets about things I didn't say in the past to those of another (for instance, my brother), but in its details my regret is very much my own.

It is no wonder that when a person recognises that each choice that they make may have irrevocable consequences for the rest of their life that they are confronted, at times at least, by an overwhelming feeling of anxiety. Of course not all our choices are this important and so we don't feel anxious all the time. Rather we should see such feelings of anxiety as revelatory, in particular when I feel anxious I am most aware of my own existence as a person, as one who is faced with the burden of choosing and as one whose existence is an issue for them. In this way a person is anxious about himself or herself because a person's existence involves them projecting themselves upon one possibility or another; in Heideggarian terms we might say that anxiety plunges a person into anxiety about themself in the face of themself.

As we have seen, we should also be careful not to confuse the feeling of anxiety with the feeling of fear. Fear has a specific object that it is focused upon, for example a gun or an animal, and we might say that the object of our fear could be a particular choice or choices. However, the feeling of anxiety is not to do with particular choices, rather it is to do with having to choose at all. In this context, the 'actualities' of the choice don't matter, what is at issue is choosing itself and it is the fact that I have to choose, that I have to actualise one possibility over another, that causes my anxiety. Indeed the distinctive oppressiveness of anxiety lies in its not being elicited by anything specific, so that human beings cannot respond to it in a specific way, e.g. by running away. It is in this way that anxiety, rather than revealing part of the world as being for instance threatening, reveals the groundlessness of the world and human beings' being-in-the-world; as Heidegger says: "That in the face of which one has anxiety is being-in-the-world as such".[361]

As Dreyfus points out,[362] this doesn't mean that the world becomes an unstructured mass as it does for Roquentin in Sartre's 'Nausea', rather the world falls away from an anxious human being and they are faced with questions of its and their meaning. In

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[360] L. Wittgenstein *PI*, p. 174.
[361] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 230.
[362] H. Dreyfus *Being-In-The-World*, p. 179.

other words, anxiety forces me to realise that not only does the world matter to me, but that I also matter to myself. The way that I care about the world and myself is personal to me.

This seems to be born out by human experience as all of us have felt at some time that whatever we in fact choose to do doesn't really matter, whether I do this or that, it won't matter in the long run. The fact that a person's existence is an issue for them, that what they do has meaning to them at least, means that sometimes they can question the meaning of their existence per se. This can happen whilst engaged in even the most trivial of activities. For instance, I might be busy weeding in my garden, suddenly my activities seem meaningless. I know that I am weeding in order to maintain the garden, that I maintain the garden for pleasure and food, and that these form part of my normal life; but this life as a whole seems pointless. I wonder 'What's the meaning of this?' 'What am I doing here?', and so on. This feeling of anxiety might itself seem meaningless, but it is not so in the sense that it is trivial, rather in the sense that it involves a deep crisis of meaning.

<center>X</center>

This crisis is revelatory in two ways. Firstly, it makes human beings feel unsettled, alienated and homeless. This way of being is one that is unique to human beings and is not shared by non-human animals. But when they feel homeless, human beings do not revert to present-at-hand entities way of being 'in' a place merely by being located at a particular point. Neither do they stop being in the world altogether; the meanings and functions that are so familiar in everyday dwelling do not disappear, in fact by becoming a problem they strike human beings with unusual force. By putting the familiar in an unfamiliar light, anxiety provides human beings with the opportunity to come to view their lives as their own and to dwell in the world lucidly and resolutely. It also points out that for human beings the world is a tissue of meanings that are fragile, contingent and subject to reinterpretation. No matter how secure human beings' faith may seem, or how comfortable they may be with their lives, their faith and comfort are always open to revision. This appears to be Heidegger's point when he talks about 'homelessness' (*unheimlich*, literally 'not at home') and says that "*The 'not-at-home' must be conceived as the more primordial phenomenon*".[363]

It seems odd to think that human beings are 'homeless' prior to being at home, but we must remember that in human beings' initial thrownness they are 'homeless' because at this stage they have no conception of the history and society that they have been born into. However one acquires a sense of the traditions and culture of which one is part, and as Hodge points out:

> Without a sense of location in history there can be no coming to terms with a sense of uncanny homelessness.[364]

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[363] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 234.
[364] J. Hodge *Heidegger and Ethics*, p. 132.

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In these terms then, we can characterise human beings' relation to the world by way of the following chain. Firstly (primordially), human beings are 'homeless' but as they come to recognise their relation to the 'form of life' of which they are part, they become 'at home'. However, this 'at home' is unstable and permanently open to revision and reinterpretation due to a facet of the Being of human beings', i.e. anxiety. In questioning their 'home' though human beings can reclaim it and make it their own. This is due to human beings also being persons and able to 'personalise' the world and thus come to 'own' it. This relationship of being both at and not-at home sets human beings apart from other animals; by virtue of being both human being and person I belong to the world in a much deeper way that any non-human animal because I am both *heimlich* and *unheimlich*.

Secondly, the crisis of meaning reveals not only that the world matters to me, but that it matters for a reason, i.e. because it is involved in my attempt to enact a choice, or choices, that I have made. In other words the 'crisis' is personal; it is my crisis. But at the same time I could not undergo such a crisis unless it was possible for me to be concerned about the world to begin with; if I were not part of a community which already had attitudes and opinions about the world. Lastly, it's only possible for the world to matter to me because I am already 'in' it, i.e. because I have been thrown into the world as a human being. this shows that even though we may be able to separate 'human being' and 'person' conceptually, as an actual entity one goes hand in hand with the other. In Heideggarian terms, this essential unity of Being of human beings and persons is 'care' and he describes it thus:

> The formally existential totality of Dasein's ontological structural whole must therefore be grasped in the following structure: the Being of Dasein means ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in(-the-world) as Being-alongside(-entities-encountered-within-the-world). This Being fills in the signification of the term 'care'.[365]

Heidegger's proliferation of hyphens here indicates that these provisionally separable elements of Dasein's, and by implication human beings' and persons', Being are ultimately parts of a whole. Furthermore, it is not that human beings choose to take a point of view on the world or choose to adopt an attitude to it, rather it is that they have to. It is a necessary fact of the Being of human beings that they make the world personal and in so doing manifest their personhood. It is one of the great benefits of the broadly naturalistic approach that it allows us to accommodate and understand these facts of nature.

XI

At the centre of this crisis of meaning is the following question: "Who am I?" Each human being is anxious because they are faced with the task of 'creating' who they are' i.e. of making themself into the person that they choose to be. In other words my

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[365] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 237.

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actions make me the person that I am, or to use Heidegger's phrase, "One is what one does".[366]

In this sense then we can say that a person is 'self-creating', but we should be careful not to misinterpret this. As human beings each of us creates the person that we are, but this creation does not occur from 'thin air' or in isolation. To understand this more clearly we can think of it in terms of an analogy with a carpenter making a chair. In order to 'create' his chair, the carpenter must have the materials, the wood, nails and glue. As well as this he must also have the right tools, a hammer and a saw, and he must have the training in order to know what to do with his raw materials and how to make them into a chair with his tools. Likewise as human beings each of us 'creates' the person that we are against the background of the public world. In this sense the 'materials' are an embodied human being, the 'tools' are the unique qualities that human beings possess in relation to other non-human animals; that their Being is an issue for them, that they are faced with the necessity of choosing one possibility over another and that their existence is a source of anxiety for them. The 'training' comes about via their thrownness, they are dependent upon a public system of significances that no single human being produced, which limit and condition each person to a greater or lesser extent into being the sort of person that they are. Each person has to define themself as a person in terms of the public world and at the same time accept the fact that in order to make sense of themself, they must already be a part of the public world with its attendant meanings, practices and attitudes. In other words I can only be a person within the human 'form of life', it makes my personhood possible; the social world in which I find myself profoundly determines the kind of person I can be. I cannot, for example, be a priest in a world without churches, or indeed a 'yuppie' in a world without cell-phones.

In this sense then, a person is a process, a pattern of action spread out in the world between birth and death. The kind of person that each of us is depends upon the kind of pattern it is. More exactly it depends upon the character that each of us gives to the 'happening' which is our life. There is no pre-given nature of which a person's existence is to be regarded as the mere unfolding; rather a person is what, in their actions, they make of themself. This seems to be the thrust of Heidegger's comment that "Our essence lies in existence".[367] It is important to remember though that there are strong limits upon the possibilities for a person's 'self-creation'; persons do not possess absolute Sartrean freedom. This notion of limited personal self-creation suggests the analogy of writing a book. As an author builds the character of the hero into their story by leading them through a series of actions and reactions, so in Nietzschean terminology a person 'becomes himself or herself' through living their life in whatever way they do. One limitation of the book analogy is that the book that is a person's life is something that they do not begin. It is more like being asked to continue and complete a book

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[366] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 239. In this sense Heidegger is in the same camp as Wittgenstein, Ryle and Schopenhauer.

[367] Ibid. p.42.

begun by another. In Heideggarian terms, a person always finds themself 'already in' a world.

Like a character in the middle of a book, a person always has a past history of involvements and commitments and is engaged with the present situation that they find themself in, moreover they are engaged with a view to moving into a particular kind of future. If we are to think of a person as part of a story then we can see that each person is 'already in' the story - thanks to their human thrownness - they are in the 'midst' of the story, i.e., it doesn't start with their appearance, and finally each person is in a sense 'ahead' of the story because they are looking towards its conclusion. For a person to be connected to the present then is for them to also be connected to the future; in other words to be in the midst of action requires that one is also 'ahead of' oneself, in acting as I do now I have something further in mind. For a person to act requires 'projection', i.e. in being in action a person always 'presses forward into possibilities', it is these possibilities that Heidegger refers to as the 'for-the-sake-of-which's (*Worumwillen*) of the actions that persons perform.

For-the-sake-of-whichs are what make persons actions ultimately intelligible. For example, a man hammers a nail in order to attach two pieces of wood together, the goal of which is to make a toy. But what finally explains the action is the fact that the man is a father and producing toys for their children is what, inter alia, fathers do. So for-the-sake-of-whichs are not goals of action, rather they are rather social roles, partial identities, which determine for a person a given range of goals. Importantly though, they do not determine a specific goal, a person may choose to radically reinterpret the role of being, for example, a father. As Dreyfus points out,[368] a chimpanzee using a stick to dislodge a banana has a goal but, given our usual assumptions about the social lives of chimpanzees, does not act in accordance with any for-the-sake-of-which. To put it differently, the chimpanzee is not a person since a person is a being whose actions find their final intelligibility by reference to the identity of the person.

However, it's not clear from this exactly what persons' for-the-sake-of-whichs have to do with their future. We can clarify this with a further example. Suppose we discover someone acting in the way typical of lawyers. Slowly though, by means of observation and through a variety of clues, we discover she is actually not a lawyer but rather an actor rehearsing the role of a lawyer for a forthcoming film. The point is that what happens in the future can discredit the claim that a person is currently projecting a given for-the-sake-of-which. For a person to act in a certain way now is for them to commit themself to a certain future, or at least to foreclose on certain options for the future. Projection propels a person 'ahead of' himself or herself into the future. It does not necessarily propel them all the way into the future, does not necessarily place them at the end of their future, i.e. their death, since they may be quite undecided about their long - or even medium-term future. Nonetheless, it places a person a certain distance in the future.

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[368] H. Dreyfus, *Being-In-The-World*, p. 62.

The fact that persons have a future dimension also allows us to understand phrases like "He's not the person he used to be" or "She's not the person that I used to know". Because a person can change, because they can 'create' themself anew, there is always the possibility of a person undergoing radical change' either by way of them choosing to change or because of a set of circumstances that they suffer. So the sort of person that one is, is never set in stone; we might say that personhood can be characterised as a state of 'becoming', my personhood is available for review and change in a way that my being a human being never is. My being a human being is 'non-revisable' because it is a central element of the background against which I may or may not choose the type of person that I am.

<div align="center">XII</div>

We must not forget that a person's present engagements within the world are dependent upon their thrownness as human beings in at least two ways. First, whether or not a given engagement is a live option for a person is determined by the culture in which, as they grow into personhood, i.e. 'become' a person, they find themself. A person never chooses, but finds themself 'already in a world', a culturally determined world. The limits of this world determine a 'leeway' - *Spielraum* as Heidegger calls it[369] - which restricts the range of for-the-sake-of-whichs they can project for themself. For instance, I cannot project myself as a royal fool because the institutions which sustain the role no longer exist; nor can I project myself as a 'latin lover', for though the role exists it does not exist in that culture of which I as a person am part.

A person's past, their cultural 'baggage', thus limits both their future and their present by determining a restricted range of 'existence possibilities' in terms of which they can project themself. The sort of person that I am, and that I can be, is thus culture bound. For Heidegger, the sort of person that I am is determined by my human thrownness in another way, it determines what it is appropriate or valuable for a person to do. Persons, he contends, are born into a sense of virtue, of an appropriate or proper way to be. That is, among the possibilities of self-definition specific to a particular cultural tradition some are raised to exemplary status. Typically these possibilities are personified by exemplary, charismatic figures who in the legends, anecdotes, myths and artworks of the culture are raised to 'heroic' status.[370] Although Heidegger does not mention it we might also consider the normative force possessed by anti-heroic figures, e.g. Stalin. By thinking of the present in light of these past figures a person is able to tell, in general terms, what is at stake in the current situation and what might be the appropriate thing to do. This 'personification' of cultural values is important because it allows persons in general to identify specific values, traditions and attitudes that form the culture as a whole.

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[369] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 185.
[370] In this regard Heidegger, as he acknowledges in section 76 of *Being and Time*, takes over from Nietzsche's *On the Uses and Abuses of History*.

Heidegger's crucial point here is that to be a person is to have inherited a specific human based value-tradition. Unlike, for instance, Nietzsche who often seems to picture a person as having the capacity to 'revalue', 'create' or 'posit' their own 'new' values,[371] fundamental values are not for Heidegger something a person can choose. Human being's fundamental commitments as to what is worth doing constitute a cultural 'heritage'[372] into which each person is simply thrown. The fundamental sense of what a person does in a given situation is determined, at least in part, not by choice but by thrownness, i.e., by a person also being human. In this way we can see that ontologically we may speak of 'person' on its own, but at the same time it is inextricably linked to being human; or to put it differently, being human is a necessary part or being a person, an existential part of a person's constitution. As well as this, being a person does have a moral dimension, but so does being a human being and to understand any moral action we have to view it with reference to both of these considerations. Of course these are precisely the sorts of features of being human and being a person that conventional forms of naturalism and non-naturalism cannot capture due to their marginalisation of cultural and social factors regarding being a human being and a person. Again the fact that these factors can be captured within broad naturalism is an important point in its favour.

XIII

The fact that a person is also a human being can lead to the diminishing of personhood, indeed to its abnegation. Because a person exists in a social and cultural milieu that is not of their choosing means that it's often difficult for a person to make their voice heard above the crowd. It also means that it can often also be dangerous and difficult to be a dissenter from the mood and beliefs of one's society. Thus there is a great temptation to become an anonymous, safe part of the crowd, to conform mindlessly to the conventional norms of the social group and fail to affirm one's autonomous individuality and personhood. As Heidegger puts it:

> We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the 'great mass' as *they* shrink back; we find shocking what *they* find shocking.[373]

There is a strong temptation then for each person to subsume their personhood to the general undifferentiated will of humanity as a whole; instead of the world being mine it becomes impersonal by being swallowed by the anonymous human world.

In this way then we can see that as well as providing the background against which one becomes a person, the thrownness that is an integral part of being a human being is a constant threat to personhood. Rather than face difficult decisions and the ever present

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[371] For instance, the child in "Three Metamorphoses" (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 54-6) is presented as a kind of evaluative *tabula rasa*.

[372] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 383-6.

[373] Ibid. p. 164.

struggle of asserting one's personhood, there is the lure of the 'easy way out', i.e. of 'falling' into the easy and comforting world of anonymous, impersonal humanity. A person need not necessarily choose to fall into the safety and anonymity of their humanity; rather it is often the case that a person simply surrenders or yields to the 'average intelligibility' of society as a whole. In this way 'falling' is part of the 'structure' of being a person, due to the fact that a person is necessarily 'always already' thrown as a human being. The fact that a person is always already fallen has the effect of what Heidegger calls (following Kierkegaard) of 'leveling', whereby such leveling is an aspect of society that Heidegger (again following Kierkegaard) calls 'publicness'.[374] As Dreyfus points out this

> Opens up a standard world in which all distinctions between the unique and the general, the superior and the average, the important and the trivial have been leveled.[375]

As was noted above, society and culture in this sense of 'leveling' offers its values, indeed its norms in general, as guidelines which seem to follow from the very fact of a person's humanness and its for-the-sake-of-whichs seem to offer an identity to each person. Falling in with society and culture, with the 'public', leads a person to fall away from himself or herself. Since norms are shared practices, the kind of life that a person lives and what they do at any given time will be just what anyone would do in that sort of situation. However, why should a person 'fall for' this sort of leveling? As we have already noted the problem lies at the very root of being a person, in Heideggarian terms in their undifferentiated, i.e. human, mode, persons have always already fallen in with publicness. In other words:

> The self ... is primarily and usually inauthentic, the they-self. Being-in-the-world is always fallen.[376]

Talk of fallenness has a religious ring to it, and Heidegger's appropriation of it as a term owes a great deal to the religious existentialist writings of Kierkegaard and bearing this in mind we might be tempted to see inauthenticity as analogous to 'original sin'. Every person is fallen and so every person lives life as characterised by inauthenticity (original sin). However, this would be mistaken. According to the religious, specifically Catholic, point of view, original sin is part of a person from birth to death and is something that they have to accept and learn to live with. It's true that inauthenticity is always 'there' for a person, but it can be overcome. The original misunderstanding arises from seeing inauthenticity in a purely normative light, in English to describe something as 'inauthentic' suggests that it is a poor imitation of something better, a cheap copy or replica. However, if we return to the original German that Heidegger writes in we can see that *Eigentlich* (Authenticity) has the same root as *Eigen* (To Own) and is closely connected to *Eigenschaft* (Property). When taken in this light we can see

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[374] Ibid. p. 165.
[375] H. Dreyfus *Being-in-the-World*, p. 235.
[376] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 225.

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that inauthenticity seems to refer to a person's surrendering or giving up of the ownership of their person. In other words by being inauthentic one becomes a faceless, anonymous part of the crowd, one remains a human being but as a person one has no identity. In a sense then one has no identity at all because as we saw earlier we identify persons and not human beings.

There seems to be little doubt that Heidegger sees this 'surrender' as a bad thing, but this cannot be taken as providing the force of what he means by inauthenticity. Rather it is a bad thing because it signifies the failure of a human being to exploit the full potential of their Being; in not 'actualising' their personhood a human being is guilty of not treating their Being as an issue for them. But how is a person to overcome their fallenness, their inauthenticity, and ensure that they remain a person? The answer lies in the fact that being a person is a creative act, that one becomes a person and so can be authentic; in other words the source of personal authenticity lies in a person's living 'for' the future.

XIV

When a person is inauthentic, they are obsessed by the present, they are completely 'absorbed' - in the sense of 'fallen' into - the present. Such a person's sole criterion for assessing and determining thought, feeling and action is current public opinion and such a person in turn becomes a mindless and dedicated conformist. Heidegger goes on to suggest that because fashion is fickle, a conformist person finds themself 'driven about' by the flux of opinion, 'dispersed', lacking in 'constancy' and 'irresolute'.[377] We should recognise that there may well be some strong regularities in an inauthentic person's life, e.g. their job. However, Heidegger points out that within this outward framework there is likely to be such a flux of feeling, opinion and commitment as to preclude the possibility of discovering a person with any constancy of personality or character as being the inhabitant of that framework.

That human beings may come to understand themselves as being entirely subsumed under an essentially anonymous public identity is probably a result of the primary socialisation that each human being has to undergo in discovering that, in many ways, they are simply 'another other'. This is the phenomenon that Heidegger calls *Das Man*, which is often translated as 'the they', but it is illuminating to note that it comes from the impersonal 'one', the German *Man* and the French *on*. It is this voice that is heard in the utterances characteristic of this anonymous way of being and it forms part of a mode of human life in which an acknowledgment of the personal character of beings is systematically avoided. Such tendencies might seem most natural at a level of social development at which the idea of an individual has not emerged with any real distinctness. In Heideggarian terms this would mean a mode of human life in which an acknowledgment of the personal character of being human is regularly simply missed, perhaps because it has not developed to a point that would make this impossible. This might bring to mind the kind of society that is often labeled 'primitive', but there is no

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[377] Ibid. p. 441-2.

reason to think that Heidegger had such 'primitive' societies primarily in mind, and as Olafson points out:

It would be a serious mistake ... to suppose that the avoidances he describes are confined to an early stage in some postulated schedule of social development.[378]

Even in an advanced Western society that thinks of itself as being pronouncedly individualistic, a version of *Das Man* is maintained. This occurs when the kind of anonymity and interchangeability that characterise life in a mass society is extended to contexts in which it is not only out of place but markedly detrimental.

There has been a strong tendency in the contemporary world to violate the distinction between the personal and the public. Sometimes this has been done for its shock effect out of exhibitionistic motives, but more often it has occurred in contexts like that of advertising, where the very evident intention is to associate some product with themes from the consumer's personal and domestic life. When people lend themselves to this kind of exploitation of their personal lives, these lives really cease to be personal and are instead assimilated to a status of public clichés. This is one aspect of what Habermas has called "the colonisation of the life-world" by interests that centre on money and power.[379] It is in such ways as these that *Das Man* seems to pervade wide sectors of modern life.

Heidegger's ideas here are not entirely unproblematic though, i.e. his assertion that public opinion is necessarily fickle seems to suffer from an overly narrow focus on modern, media dominated society.[380] It is an idea that doesn't fit, for example, traditional peasant societies or the Roman Empire, in which public opinion changed slowly or not at all. Since the authenticity/inauthenticity polarity is supposed to be valid for all societies at all times, to accommodate the possibility above, Heidegger needs to explain the irresolute-resolute contrast in counterfactual terms. In other words he needs to say that were public opinion to change, an inauthentic person's opinion would change too. For an authentic person this would not necessarily be the case. An authentic person's views might change line with public opinion, but then again they might not. What is important is that an authentic person decides for themself, from their own perspective, and not from the perspective of the crowd. This changes the force of the contrast between inauthentic and authentic persons from one between flux and rigidity to one in terms of power and control. An inauthentic person is controlled by, or in the power of, contemporary public opinion, an authentic person is not. In this way, authenticity also implies flexibility; an authentic person is capable of change in the face of rigidity in public opinion. More generally it again emphasises that 'authenticity' is about control whereby an authentic person owns their own life and can make their own considered choices and decisions, whereas an inauthentic one cedes ownership of their person to the general crowd.

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[378] F. Olafson *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics*, p. 36.

[379] J. Habermas *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Volume 2.

[380] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 164.

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Within any society, as persons each of us commit ourselves to certain social roles, e.g. lawyer, philosopher, gardener etc. and in doing so each person commits themself to a certain kind of future and forecloses on certain options for the future. With regard to authenticity and inauthenticity, i.e. being or not being a person, what is important is the attitude that is adopted to the future that one chooses. In order to 'own' one's life, to be authentic, one has to able to position oneself at the end of one's life and grasp it as a totality, in Heideggarian terms one must 'anticipate' one's death.

We have to be careful not to misinterpret this anticipation; it is not the foolhardy courting of death, such as that undertaken by Foucault in his final days, nor does it consist in melancholy 'brooding' over the brevity of human existence, as Heidegger says:

> We do not have in view an 'actualizing' of death, neither can we mean 'dwelling upon the end in its possibility'.[381]

Sartre, in his story of men about to face execution, 'The Wall', appears to suggest, contra Heidegger, that the vivid realisation of the reality of death renders life worthless; however, this seems to be a prime example of the confusion of 'anticipation' with brooding. Heidegger's fundamental notion is that for a person to live their life authentically is for them to live in the light of a full recognition of their ontological predicament. An authentic person lives in the light of their ontological structure; an inauthentic person evades it. As far as death is concerned, Heidegger identifies three ontological features that it exhibits: it is inevitable, it is personal and it is a permanent possibility. Melancholic brooding, according to Heidegger, fails to properly acknowledge this vital third feature. By this he seems to mean that in brooding death looms so large that it becomes, not an ever present possibility, but rather a certainty in the near future.

But death as a certainty in the almost-arrived future is the situation represented in Sartre's story. Thus Sartre reproduces the 'being-towards-death' of the brooder. Of course if death presents itself as an almost-arrived certainty then life does become meaningless, since no time remains to complete meaningful projects. It becomes a mere waiting-to-die. But, in fact, Sartre's situation is highly exceptional. Death, most of the time, is an omnipresent possibility rather than a certainty located at any point in, or period of, future time. It is the fact that death is a mere possibility that gives sense to a person's undertakings of projects that are directed towards the future. Sartre's mistake is thus to represent what 'facing up to death' means in a highly abnormal situation as what it means in all normal situations.

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[381] Ibid. p. 305.

Anticipation then is neither the courting of death nor Keatsian melancholy; rather it is living with a sense of finitude or closure. But what is it for a person to live in the light of finitude? Firstly, for a person to live with a full realisation of finitude is for them to be 'liberated' from petty and meaningless distractions which may well distract one from what one has decided to do, it is to be released from the ephemera of life. As Heidegger puts it one is liberated

> In such a way that for the first time one can authentically understand and choose among the factical possibilities lying ahead of ... [death].[382]

When a person genuinely grasps their finitude, they realise that not all life options are realisable and this compels them to sort 'essential' from 'accidental' possibilities and it makes it a matter of urgency to live out the former and only the former. Anticipation thus presents a person with the grand 'script' to their life so that they know what belongs to it and what does not. It seems then that when Dr. Johnson remarked that there is nothing like the prospect of hanging to concentrate the mind, he was more on the track of anticipation than Sartre was.

Crucially, Heidegger claims that anticipation of death 'individualises' Dasein.[383] He describes Dasein as being composed of a 'they-self' and an 'I-self'; as possessing both an impulse to the affirmation of individuality and an impulse to conformism. The latter impulse is motivated by the quest for a 'tranquillised' existence, to evade the acknowledgment of one's own death. We might say that one recognises one's communal, human existence and comes to think of oneself only in this way because this 'they-self' does not die. When one, for whatever reason, confronts the inevitability of one's death, one realises that "All being-with-others will fail us when [death] ... is the issue."[384] In other words one realises that human life goes on but my life as a person comes to an end; death 'individualises' one, one recognises that one is a distinct and unique person.

In 'Being and Nothingness', Sartre objects that death cannot individualise, since to recognise the existence of such a phenomenon as my death I have already to conceive of myself as an individual.[385] According to Sartre then, Heidegger's position is implicitly circular, since he holds that it is knowledge of your death that first gives you knowledge of your individuality. But this is a misunderstanding. Heidegger does not offer anticipation as a source of knowledge of one's individuality. Rather, it merely reminds Dasein that, though it often acts as a mere part of a communal entity, it already realises that it is an individual. The fundamental characteristic of inauthentic Dasein is not ignorance but rather evasion.

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[382] Ibid. p. 308.
[383] Ibid.
[384] Ibid. p. 309.
[385] J-P. Sartre *Being and Nothingness*, p. 531-3.

We can now see that a person's 'focus' and 'autonomy' add up to their 'resoluteness'. When a person is focused they are in possession of an always revisable script of their life relative to which they are able to perceive the fluctuating fashions of current public opinion as just that. Being in possession of a definite course to navigate provides a person with an alternative to going whichever way the wind blows. 'Autonomy' reveals to each person that to live authentically, i.e. to be in possession of their life, they have to choose the existence possibilities that constitute their life; whereas on the other hand 'focus' tells a person what to choose. The two characteristics of being a person, each individually necessary, together constitute personal resoluteness.

It is important to notice that resoluteness, being of character, is a purely formal concept. Being focused and autonomous are characteristics compatible with any and every life content. What counts here is not what a person does, but how they do it. Once again this emphasises that 'person' is not first and foremost an ethically motivated concept. Heidegger puts this by saying that authentic existence possibilities are "not to be gathered from death",[386] which raises the question as to where a person is to gather them from. Heidegger's answer is that a person derives their authentic existence possibilities from an authentic relation to the 'past' of temporality. For instance, he says that in anticipation Dasein grasps its "Birth and death and their 'between' [in a] steadiness which has been stretched along".[387] Not only that, but also that in grasping its birth Dasein also grasps that 'heritage' which is *"caught up into its existence"*.[388] However, what does all this mean with regard to persons?

At the heart of what Heidegger is saying seems to be the notion of perspective. We should remember that an inauthentic person 'projects' into the future but not all the way to the end and they 'forget' their past. However, anticipation liberates a person from this narrow focus; in grasping their life as a totality a person grasps, in particular, their past. We might say then that in casting himself or herself forward, in imagination, to the end, at the same time a person casts themself back to the beginning. Analogously speaking it's like exchanging a wide-angle for a telephoto lens. In anticipation a person ascends to an all-embracing perspective.[389] Heidegger makes this point by sometimes writing *Entschlossenheit* (resoluteness) as *Ent-schlossenheit* (un-closedness).[390] The force of this etymological pun, as he later explains in the 'Introduction to Metaphysics', is to indicate that though resoluteness is essentially a matter of willing, the "essence of willing" lies "not in a storing up of energy for action" but in un-closedness, in "the opening, the coming-out-of-cover of human being".[391] An inauthentic person is thus closed off, at least in part, from their human heritage whereas an authentic person is fully open to it.

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[386] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 434.

[387] Ibid. p. 442-3.

[388] Ibid. p. 443.

[389] We can think of this along the same lines as Schopenhauer's 'eternal perspective' or Nietzsche's 'artistic distance'.

[390] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 346.

[391] M. Heidegger *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 21.

For a person to be opened up to their past is for them to be opened up to the heritage and value tradition which is constitutive of their Being as a person due to their Being as a human being. An authentic person is thus not carried away by a rage for the 'modern' but is rather opened up to the historical richness of their initial human thrownness, i.e. they are opened up to themself. In this way a person achieves 'authentic historicality', a rootedness in the history of their community. However, such a person also has their own perspective on this history, they are endowed with a critical distance, especially from current social norms, due to their personal perspective.

We can also see that an inauthentic person, one who has not gained a perspective on their humanness, has no other basis for making their choices than "What is feasible, urgent, or indispensable in daily business";[392] on that is, "The coventionalities of the 'they'",[393] the for-the-sake-of-whichs sanctioned by current public opinion. However, an authentic person, one who has gained a perspective and a 'distance' from their being as a human being via a recognition of their mortality, can in a kind of 'double movement' throw themself forward to the end and thereby throw themself back into the past. We might say that such a person achieves a rootedness in their traditions and culture, a kind of weight which contrasts with the insubstantiality, the 'lightness of being' of an inauthentic person which allows them to be blown around by the winds and vagaries of opinion.

XVI

A major problem for a person that has not achieved a perspective on their humanness is that they experience the world as it is now only as "general situation" and "Loses [themself] in those 'opportunities' which are closest to [them]".[394] A 'fully realised' person on the other hand, experiences the present as "Situation".[395] This is a moment of life-defining commitment or choice. For instance, we might imagine the case of a defence lawyer working late at night on the details of a case, trying to discover an alibi for his client. He becomes increasingly uneasy and begins to feel that his client may well be guilty; the lawyer's conscience begins to bother him. If he continues to defend his client, is he doing something wrong? Is he breaking the law? Is he breaking the code of his profession? What is the morally right thing to do here, and if the lawyer doesn't do it, will he be guilty of doing something wrong? We would normally assume that the call of conscience is a response to some particular violation of what is right, but according to Heidegger conscience can speak out at any moment,[396] because it is an essential feature of being a person.

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[392] M. Heidegger *Being and Time*, p. 386.
[393] Ibid. p. 444.
[394] Ibid. p. 346.
[395] This is closely related to Jasper's notion of the 'limit-situation' (*Grenzsituation*); see 'Being and Time' p. 400 & 348 fn. XV.
[396] Ibid. p. 332.

In one sense a person is guilty, they are 'indebted' because each person has a past that must serve as a background for their existence, but which they cannot control. This background is provided by a person's thrownness as a human being and is not something that is chosen. What each person chooses to do must be based in some way upon their past; both their past that is 'given' - their humanness - and the past decisions that they have made. As we have already said even though each person creates the person that they are, this creation is not total and will be informed to some degree by their inherited human background; no person can create themself anew and claim complete control over their existence.

However, a person must also accept that they are 'responsible'. This is because each person against the background of their past makes certain choices instead of other possible choices. A person is mortal and cannot do everything, they have to choose a certain approach to the world that excludes other approaches. We can now see that conscience asks a person to recognise that they are both indebted and responsible. Facing up to this call of conscience, to one's 'guilt' is another way that persons become resolute.

Returning to the notion of the 'Situation' we can now see that an inauthentic person due to their lack of perspective sees only short-term opportunities to realise the kinds of goals sanctioned by 'today's' society. As Dreyfus points out

> They do what is proper and respectable, what typically makes sense, and thus only respond to the standard situation.[397]

On the other hand, a resolute person, given their comprehensive perspective, sees the present in relation to the longer term traditions and culture of their community. A person of character can thus see beyond the fads and fashions of current opinion and is not drawn along with the crowd's desires, but rather can draw upon the longer term history of their community to decide what should or should not be done. Such a person will therefore not blindly repeat the previous choices and actions of their community, but will instead be constantly reinterpreting the traditions and past of the community in light of the present. The Situation is the way a fully developed person of character faces and lives in the present by seizing their human thrownness and interpreting it in terms of an explicit choice. Each person can be absorbed in their daily routine and understand their life merely in terms of what 'must' or 'should' be done. But their conscience reminds them that it is each person's responsibility to make something of themself on the basis of who they already are. They may choose to remain as they are, or to do something radically different, the important thing is that they choose. By facing up to such choices a person gains a clearer understanding of who they are, what is important to them and what they need to do. Once again we can see that a person who is most fully expressing their personhood is never a 'finished' article, they are always in a state of 'becoming', of creating themself anew in the light of each new experience and against a background of their history.

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[397] H. Dreyfus *Being-in-the-World*, p. 320.

In this chapter then we have seen that being human and being a person are intimately connected, in fact they are inseparable. Being human grounds personhood in four ways. Firstly, human beings are unique among animals in that they are aware of their future. This means that rather than just having immediate goals due to their 'natures', for example the satisfaction of hunger, human beings engage in, often complicated, longer term projects which require the satisfaction of many short term goals along the way but which aim towards a specific 'for-the-sake-of which'. These long term projects help us to define the person that they are attributed to. Secondly, the fact that persons and human beings are co-extensional means that persons are also embodied entities that belong to a world; with this world providing the background against which a person's actions are to be understood. This firm grounding of personhood in human embodiment overcomes the problems of dualistic theories, such as those of Descartes and Locke, that cannot adequately explain how a person is related to the world around them or how their actions can affect that world.

Thirdly, being human also makes a person's actions comprehensible because it provides a background against which they make sense. The fact that a human being is thrown into the world means that the person that is 'created' via the choices that they make is not created out of thin air. Rather each person comes into being against a background of their human heritage, the attitudes, cultural mores and values of the society in which they develop. It is important to remember that this heritage need not be determining of the sort of person that one is. One may choose to reject it and adopt other values etc., but without any heritage at all a person would have no background or horizon and thus no way of making any choices whatsoever. Finally, this human heritage also provides a limit on what a person may or may not do. A person may decide that as far as they are concerned there is nothing wrong with murder, but if this is prohibited in the culture and society to which they belong then they must face the judgment of their society upon their actions. This 'limiting' may also be rather less obvious. If certain actions are frowned upon within a culture then a person's choices with regard to these actions may well be diminished. Again, this limiting should not be seen as determining the sort of person that one is and can be; after all the limits can be overcome, especially once they have been recognised. But what they do show is that a person never has unconditional 'Sartrean freedom', a person's freedom of action and choice is always limited and conditioned by their past.

Of course this conditioning, as well as providing the background against which a person develops, is also a danger. It is all too easy to do as one has been conditioned to do, to not question one's past and to follow the crowd. There are undoubted attractions in the tranquillity of anonymity. However, in doing this one is negating and denying one's personhood. By giving up the responsibility of choice, one at the same time gives up on one's personhood. Each person is indebted to their history and can never fully escape the way that their past has shaped them as a person - even if a person denounces their past they are recognising its importance by denouncing it - but each person is also

responsible for the choices that they make, for the future that they choose. In this we can see that there was at least some truth in Locke's assertion that we should hold the person responsible. However, this personal responsibility is grounded in a person's 'debt' to their humanness and not on their memory of their actions.

In conclusion then we can see that even though 'human being' and 'person' are co-extensional and conceptually closely related, they do not mean the same and are not reducible to each other. We have also seen that 'person' is not an entirely moral concept, even though it does have a moral component 'responsibility', but this goes hand in hand with the moral component that is possessed in virtue of being human, 'indebtedness'. As well as this it is the capacity of human beings to exhibit personhood that makes them unique among all animals, this uniqueness does not rely upon any sort of misplaced 'classical' humanism but rather upon certain qualities that humans possess simply in virtue of their being human.

Conclusion

We have now reached the stage where we can say quite conclusively that there's more to being human than meets the eye – but only if that eye is an exclusively scientific one. What I have attempted to do throughout this thesis is to describe the experience of being a human being, what it is like to be human. In doing this the errors of reductive naturalism and of non-naturalism as explanatory frameworks have become apparent simply because they cannot capture the experience of being a human being. Whilst there are truths in both accounts, neither grasps the whole story, as both are too restrictive and too exclusive.

Reductive or scientific naturalism failed because it could not capture important psychological factors of being human. The reason for this is that it privileges, both methodologically and ontologically, scientific modes of explanation. These prove to be too rigid to encompass features of human beings' experience. Non-naturalism, on the other hand, failed because it proves impossible to reconcile the features of being human, which are described in non-natural terms with the natural world. McDowell attempts a sort of 'reconciliation' of these two positions (in his book 'Mind and World') and while this has much to recommend it, it ultimately fails because it doesn't do justice to the uniqueness of being human nor to the animal character of human beings.

There is also a further problem in all three of the above accounts – namely that of disengagement. This is the view that sees human beings as first and foremost disengaged, dispassionate and uninvolved observers of the world who only become involved after a prior act of ratiocination. One of the aims throughout this thesis has been to overcome this idea and to see human beings as primarily situated, as an active part of the world from the outset. To this end we needed to 'broaden' out the naturalistic project to include features of the world, and human beings, that are not describable in scientific terminology. For instance, there are certain 'facts of nature', as Wittgenstein points out, which do not permit of a scientific explanation – the fact that human beings react as they do when in pain for example. Science can tell us important things about what it is for a human being to be in pain, but it cannot give us a complete description. We have to accept, for instance, that human beings react ('primitively') as they do when in pain and that the way they do so lies beyond justification.

What we also have to accept is that, in Wittgenstinian terms, there is a certain human 'form of life' which is once again inexplicable in terms of science alone. This form of life is closely tied to the world and cannot be understood as divorced from that. It is also connected to other animal forms of life, closely to some – such as that of the chimpanzee – and more distantly to others – such as the common housefly. We need to appreciate the bonds between human beings and the world and between human beings and other animals; science, especially in the form of evolutionary theory is a powerful tool in this respect. However, at the same time we need to retain sight of the distinctive

features of human beings, such as their sociality. Despite the best efforts of theories like evolutionary psychology and sociobiology features like human sociality remain stubbornly beyond the reach of reductively naturalistic modes of explanation. This is because such theories cannot do justice to the complexity and richness of human beings' thoughts, emotions, behaviour and so on. In order to arrive at a more complete understanding of being human, of the human form of life, we need a broad naturalism; one that is encompassing and inclusive rather than narrow and exclusive like traditional forms of naturalism.

There was another feature common to both traditional naturalism and non-naturalism that we had to escape from in order to arrive at a clearer understanding of human beings relation to the world and in a wider sense to the experience of being human. This is the idea that the human body is no more than an object, just like other objects in the world. On this view the body is best understood via anatomical investigation and can in theory, at least, be understood completely in scientific terms. Of course non-naturalists, like Descartes, 'add on' an immaterial mind to this and it is this mind that makes human beings special. Reductive naturalists retain half this thesis – that the body is an object and can be described scientifically, while what makes human beings special are their brains, but for reductive naturalists these are also, at least in theory, explicable scientifically.

However, in everyday life human beings' bodies are anything but objects to them, rather humans 'live through' their bodies. The size, the shape and the general make up of the human body bring certain facets of the world to the fore, characteristics of the world such as what affords walking on are correlative of the human body. As we saw in chapter 3 via a consideration of Merleau-Ponty's work on the lived body, the fact that human beings are embodied as they are, is not a contingent fact about them (as Descartes would have us believe) rather it is essential. To put it another way, an essential fact of being human is to have a human body – we might say that it is a 'fact of nature'. The great strength of the broadly naturalistic picture is that it allows us to see the body in this way. For instance it embraces evolutionary theory's importance, with its emphasis on the continuity between human and non-human animals and the effect the world has had on human development. However, broad naturalism also allows us to describe and find a place for the body's cultural capacities; a mechanistic description does not allow us to understand human beings' bodies as cultural entities i.e. as entities shaped by culture.

We have also seen that human beings are part of a social world and that we can only appreciate what it is to be human if we recognise that human beings are essentially social, communal and cultural beings. Each human being is born into a pre-existing human world, a world that has been shaped and moulded by other human beings. Thus in the same way that human beings' bodies can be seen as cultural bodies, so the world can be seen as a cultural world. Also, human beings are situated in a social world, which they share with other entities that are like them, and between them there is communication. Each human being is part of a human world and when we understand

that world clearly it becomes apparent that each human being belongs there with others. Questions and doubts can arise about this shared world only if one 'withdraws' from it, but implicit in any such withdrawal is the recognition of the world from which one has withdrawn. It is this idea of a pre-existing social world that is missing from conventional naturalistic and non-naturalistic theories that prioritise human disengagement.

As well as this, we saw how in his work on 'others', Merleau-Ponty develops the compelling idea that human beings are essentially social; i.e. to be a human being is to be a social being where human beings inhabit a shared human world as well as a purely biological world. Human beings are essentially social beings because they necessarily communicate their thoughts and feelings to each other by means of signs of different sorts. Some of these signs, such as basic facial expressions and gestures, display a fairly obvious connection with human beings' biological constitution but there are also cultural signs. Indeed all such signs have a cultural and social aspect and are never purely biological, in much the same way as the human body is never purely biological. This means that such facts of nature can never be fully explained by reductively naturalistic theories. However, non-naturalistic theories cannot give us a clear picture of such signs either, as they fail to account for them precisely because of their physical aspect.

So to be human is to be a part of humanity. We cannot make sense of being human if we consider a human being in isolation from other human beings. Being human is necessarily to be part of a shared human world and each human being can only understand their experience against this background of human communality. We might say that human beings are necessarily social animals.

However, this still leaves the question of human beings relation to the rest of the animal world. The crucial idea that needs emphasising in this respect is that of the continuity between human beings and other non-human animals. Too often in the past theories surrounding human beings have turned, either explicitly or implicitly, to unwarranted forms of humanism. We saw in Chapter 5 that this stems not so much from a mistaken view of human beings, but rather from mistaken views on animals. The 'classic' example of this is Descartes idea that animals are automata, purely mechanistic beings explicable in wholly naturalistic terms. Onto this he adds the humanism of the mind and soul, something which only human beings posses. Of course, as we have seen, much reductive naturalism takes this idea of a mechanistic explanatory framework for animals and tries to fit human beings into it and in doing so is guilty of throwing out the baby with the bath water. This gets rid of the unjustifiable humanism of non-naturalism but retains its skewed views of animals per se.

The purely scientific view of animals, for instance the idea that the attribution of psychological states to the behaviour of many animals is just a 'folk' way of talking and is not a response to the facts, was the view that we had to overcome. Having seen that this is possible, we were then no longer forced to conceive all non-human animal

behaviour as reducible to the complex workings of anatomical apparatus. Freed from this common narrow conception of 'animality', it was no longer problematic to reject humanist assumptions whereby human life is massively separate from non-human animal life. We were also able to reject conceptions of human behaviour that reduced it to the complex workings of anatomical apparatus; but this no longer forced us to conceive human beings' most distinctive form of behaviour, their use of language, as separating human beings from their place in the animal world. More generally we were able to avoid the need of turning to a non-naturalistic mind to explain much human behaviour. Instead, we saw that human life can be acknowledged as being itself a manifestation of animal nature, certainly a distinctive one, but not one that is absolutely different.

Finally we have seen in the last Chapter how being a person is something that necessarily develops quite naturally from certain characteristics of being human. Also that it is only from the earlier understanding of what it is to be a human being that we arrived at that we can arrive at an understanding of what it is to be a person. Moreover, we saw that conceptually being human and being a person are inextricably linked and that to fully understand either concept, one must understand the other as well. One question remains however: even though we have shown that non-naturalistic and reductively naturalistic theories fail to give coherent accounts of being human, can they do so in the case of being a person? The obvious answer to this is no, since the understanding of one concept requires the understanding of the other. Since we cannot understand being human in non-naturalistic or reductively naturalistic terms then neither can we understand being a person in such terms. However, it is worth looking briefly at such attempts to describe being a person in order to be certain of this.

II

As we have already seen a typically reductive naturalist line on human beings is that they are nothing more than animals; for instance, philosophers impressed with a certain interpretation of Darwin hold that if evolutionary biology is correct, then human beings (like all organisms) are merely "survival machines".[398] However, this overly reductive naturalist view does not capture, or do justice to, the experience of being a human being. To say this though is not to deny that human beings are animals, rather it is to say that explanations in terms of animality alone do not give us the whole story. We can see this if we consider what Steven Pinker – an evolutionary psychologist – has to say; he affirms that:

A Darwinian would say that ultimately organisms have only two [goals]: to survive and to reproduce.[399]

However, he contradicts himself on this as he also attributes to human beings values that do not derive from survival and reproduction, for instance "if the genes don't get

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[398] R. Dawkins *The Selfish Gene*, p. 1.
[399] S. Pinker *How the Mind Works*, p. 541.

propagated, it's because we are smarter than they are".[400] This cannot be right if human beings are nothing but animals, whose only goals ultimately are survival and reproduction because such entities would be in no position to reject nature's built-in goals, except by malfunction – certainly not by being smarter than their genes. Pinker also points out that he is "voluntarily childless" and comments "I am happy to be that way, and if my genes don't like it, they can go jump in the lake".[401] If we stand by the assumption that human beings are nothing but animals it seems paradoxical at the very least to try and reconcile these extrabiological values with the assumption that survival and reproduction are the only goals of human beings.

As well as this, although it's not a distinction made by Pinker, I think we can see that his decision to be voluntarily childless is a personal one; in other words the decision to remain childless is one we would attribute to the person rather than the human being. This points to the fact that human beings' personhood is at least one of the things that makes them distinctive from the rest of the animal kingdom. However, at the same time it is worth emphasising again that being a person arises out of certain essential features of being human and that we have already demonstrated the continuity between human beings and other animals. This means that there is also continuity between being a person and being an animal. The fact that a person like Pinker can make the world personal, make it his world, is surely a distinctive feature of being a person. Certainly there are others involved in his decision not to have children, but there is no getting away from the fact that to be "voluntarily childless" is a very personal decision – a decision that could logically only be made by a person.

If we accept that a person is nothing but an animal, then either the sort of goals that a person might die for, for example furthering the cause of democracy, should be shown to promote survival and reproduction or a person who pursues such goals should be deemed to be malfunctioning. The latter option is not one I think we would want to accept as it would make many of the traits that we take to be most important about human beings and persons nothing more than biological malfunctions. As for the former, it has a chequered philosophical history to say the least with its shortcomings being exemplified in the problems faced by sociobiology. Anyway as we have already seen we can construct an explanatory framework that can encompass goals such as the pursuit of happiness and virtue. This is precisely the broadly naturalistic framework that was outlined at the end of Chapter 5 and pointed us in the direction of an account of being a person.

The fact that human beings, at least to some extent, are self-conscious about their goals and able to decide which ones to pursue and how to pursue them is part of being a person. Human beings are not limited to goals derived from those of survival and reproduction and the decisions that they make and the goals that they choose play an important role in making each human being into the person that they are. In other words what is important here is that a person's goals are his or her goals and are grasped as

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[400] Ibid. p. 44.
[401] Ibid. p. 52.

such; whilst sociobiology, for instance, can only account for empirically observed goals as behavioural end-states.

III

Traditional reductive naturalist theories of being human, and by association being a person, fail to do justice to the experience of being a person not least because they do not take being a person seriously. We can see this if we consider such a contemporary theory – the animalist view. Possibly the most recent contemporary proponent of this view is Eric T. Olsen,[402] who takes 'us' to be fundamentally animals, whose persistence conditions are determined by continuation of biological functions like metabolism. As he says:

> So I started out as an unthinking embryo, and if things go badly I may end up as a human vegetable – as long as my biological life continues.[403]

Clearly this has nothing to do with 'us' being persons. It is, however, difficult to say exactly what Olsen takes persons to be, as he tends to speak of them in a rather cavalier fashion, but there is one thing he is clear on:

> Perhaps we cannot properly call that vegetating animal a *person* since it has none of those psychological features that distinguish people from non-people (rationality, the capacity for self-consciousness, or what have you). If so, that simply shows that you can continue to exist without being a person, just as you could continue to exist without being a philosopher, or a student or a fancier of fast cars.[404]

Thus, on at least one version of the animalist view, we are essentially animals and only accidentally persons. If we consider what follows from this we can see that if we are essentially animals, we could not survive the replacement of our organic parts with non-organic parts. It is metaphysically impossible, not just physically impossible, that we survive the extinction of the organisms that we are. This is not to say that we could survive as some sort of disembodied entities, rather that the bodies need not be organic. As science and robotics advance there seems increasingly little problem in accepting this as a viable possibility. On the other hand, since on the animalist view we are only accidentally persons, our being persons is simply a contingent property borne by an essentially non-personal entity. In other words on the animalist view being a person is irrelevant to the kind of individual one is. This again seems counter intuitive. The fact that we are persons is an ontologically important fact about us. Persons bring something unique to the world; they are entities that can ponder their own future, which can

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[402] Especially in E. T. Olsen, *The Human Animal: Personal Identity Without Psychology*. Other contemporary advocates include Peter van Inwagen in *Material Beings* and P. F. Snowden in "Persons, Animals and Ourselves" in *The Person and the Human Mind* (ed. C. Gill), pp. 83-107.
[403] E. T. Olsen, "Was I Ever A Foetus?" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 57 (1997)*, p. 106.
[404] E. T. Olsen *The Human Animal*, p. 17.

imagine themselves in different circumstances – a person can ask the question "What am I?"

If we accept traditional naturalist theories we have to accept the marginalising of persons and of what they bring to the world. For such theories to hold on to what persons bring to the world it seems that they have to resort to some form of humanism, which leads to a tension with the strict naturalist principles underlying the theories. According to such principles, everything must be able to be described in a reductively naturalistic way, usually via the rules, theories and hypotheses of science. But how can something like altruism, as a virtue, be described in such terms? Of course sociobiologists do have inductive explanations of altruism, for example in terms of kin altruism which perpetuates our genes, but not of the normative significance that we attach to it which is independent of such results. The fact that one person might sacrifice themself so that others might survive is a personal decision. But if we say that the actions of persons bring nothing to the world then we have to say that altruism is unimportant, that when a person does 'a far better thing' it makes no difference to the world. We might form this into the more general point that personhood involves ethical characterisations[405] and that reductive naturalistic theories cannot satisfactorily accommodate such a feature.

This seems an excessively high price, especially when we don't have to pay it. By accepting broad naturalism as I have characterised it we can see and accept the importance of persons by seeing how being a person develops quite naturally from being a human being. Thus in seeing the continuity of persons within the natural order we are able to accord their actions with the importance that we surely would wish to. By accepting broad naturalism we are able to credit both persons and their actions with the ontological importance that they both merit and warrant.

IV

But what about the other 'traditional' view - non-naturalism - that we have looked at? We might say that, unlike reductive naturalists, non-naturalists take persons seriously, but that in doing so they commit precisely the error outlined previously: they make persons special by divorcing them from the natural world. According to the non-naturalist a person is essentially an immaterial mind. As we saw in chapter 1 this was Descartes' way of escaping from the limitations of his own scientific method when it came to understanding the experience of being human. For Descartes, what makes me 'special', what makes me the person that I am, is my immaterial mind.

It is important to see that in 'The Meditations', Descartes is asking an essentially first-person question. His concern was to discover what *he* was; he did not ask "What is Descartes?" or "What is a human being?". So there is no denying that Descartes treats persons as being very important, or at least one of them anyway, i.e. himself. In fact if

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[405] See chapter 6, section XVI for another approach showing the ethical character of personhood.

we examine Descartes' Meditations more seriously, we might argue, justifiably I believe, that he isn't actually able to take persons seriously at all.

This is precisely because he starts with the personal - himself - rather than seeing that the personal world depends upon the shared world of human beings. This means that even though Descartes treats persons seriously, he sells them short by starting with them adrift, lacking any sort of anchor to the world. Speaking metaphorically we might say that in 'reconstructing' the world, Descartes draws a map but because he has started with himself he has no way of knowing where he is on the map. Thus the map is useless.

The only answer Descartes felt that he could give to the question "What is Descartes?" led to his non-naturalistic dualist ontology; although from his sometimes lacklustre defence of it, it seems that he wasn't entirely happy with it. In fact we might go so far as to argue that Cartesian Dualism is a consequence of Descartes' naturalism. Margaret Wilson has written that:

> A *reason* for his dualism may be found in Descartes commitment to mechanistic explanation in physics, together with the perfectly creditable belief that human intelligence could never be accounted on the available mechanistic models.[406]

I cannot stress too highly that my argument from chapter 1 onwards has been that rather than adding the non-natural onto his naturalism, Descartes should have broadened his initial naturalism.

Descartes takes persons, as possessors of minds, seriously but cannot fit them into his initial mechanistic view of the world. This is because his initial mechanistic naturalism is too inflexible and cannot encompass an understanding of human beings' experience of both themselves and the wider world. Since he is unwilling to modify this naturalism, Descartes is forced to add a second substance - *res cogitans* - to his initial characterisation of the world - *res extensa* – to try and account for the realities of human beings' experience of themselves and the world in general. In doing this he sells persons short and fails to give a satisfactory account of persons.

V

Having briefly noted the failure of both reductive naturalism and non-naturalism to give us a coherent and workable account of persons, we can, on a more positive note, point to the sort of understanding of persons that is available to us using broad naturalism. We can do this via the following question: what is a fireman? We could take an individual fireman into the laboratory and examine him very closely, but of course we wouldn't thereby find out what it is to be a fireman. To understand that we have to first understand property and its importance to human endeavours, its tendency to burn

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[406] M. Wilson *Descartes*, pp. 183-184.

down, and then the specific social structures whereby certain people are given the special task of dealing with fires. A more fine grained understanding would come from seeing what specific rules and conventions firemen must abide by, such as the need to remain at the fire-station while on duty, to answer emergency calls and so forth, right down to codes of dress and etiquette. It is this large and complex institutional and normative structure that both makes it possible for any person to be a fireman, and constitutes certain persons as firemen. Thus a person might go through the motions that are physically identical to those of a fireman, such as holding a hose to a fire, but unless that person is embedded appropriately in myriad other ways in the social structure, those actions will not count as those of a fireman.

So, to be a fireman is to play a social role; to a first approximation, any person that played such a role fully would be a fireman. What then is it to be a person? The suggestion isn't that to be a person is just to enact the role of a person, since there is no single coherent structure of norms and practices corresponding to being a person. Rather person is, as Ryle would have put it, a polymorphous concept, a little like that of a dilettante. There are no specific things that a person must do to be a dilettante; rather a person has to do a wide variety of things in a characteristically superficial manner. Similarly, to be a person is to enact a wide variety of roles, each of which constitutes an individual as a more specific social kind. In my own case to be a person is to simultaneously play the roles of PhD student, husband, Leeds United fan, Guinness lover and so on. I am also at least expected to enact a number of other roles which are themselves polymorphous and must be played concurrently with all the others: friend, law abiding citizen, gentleman and so on.

Bearing this in mind we are now in a position to return to a question we left open at the end of chapter 6, section VI; namely whether or not an elf, 'Legolas', can be considered to be a person. We asked in what ways, if any, an elf could resemble one of us, i.e. an entity that is both a human being and a person. I think it requires little effort to imagine an elf enacting many if not all of the same roles as a human person; for instance there seems to be no problem imagining a Guinness loving elf. However, we must also remember that biologically speaking an elf may have similarities to a human being, but one would also presume that there are significant differences. For instance, we imagined Legolas having silver blood and the bottom line has to be that whatever way we look at it, Legolas is not a human being. However, at a more broadly physical level there would seem to be significant similarities; for instance, he has a human-like body, even if it is smaller and more 'delicate' than that of a mature human being. Crucially he also has a human-like face, capable of many of the myriad of expressions that human faces are and he has a mouth through which he speaks and indeed 'curses' when he stubs his toe.

What is important here is that Legolas's moods surrounding the stubbing of his toe cannot be identified independently of his situation; although we have to see situation in a long term way in this case, where as well as the present, the past and the future have a role to play. Legolas's initial anger at stubbing his toe would be a mood that human

beings can easily appreciate – we would no doubt feel the same, after all it hurts! But his lingering bad mood even after the pain has faded, his sullen mood and continued irascibility might be harder to understand – after all he only stubbed his toe. However, what we may not appreciate is that in the elfin world any display of clumsiness, of not being light on one's feet, is a serious black mark on one's character. What to a human being is nothing more than a simple accident is to an elf a terrible faux pas and would mean a serious loss of face amongst other elves. This is why Legolas's mood remains one of dejection and bad temper whilst that of his human companions is jocular and carefree.

Because Legolas is not a 'complete enigma, to us – maybe he speaks English or we have learnt to speak 'Elvish' – we can ask him why he is still so angry over such an apparently trivial matter. Of course then we can come to understand that for an elf it is far from trivial because he judges the incident from the point of view of his own society, culture, customs, practices and so on. It is in this way that we can now come to attach the same meaning to the original toe stubbing and his subsequent behaviour that Legolas does, indeed that we can see it from his point of view. The opposite is true whereby Legolas can now see it from 'our' point of view and he may decide to go against the culture he was born into and dismiss his earlier clumsiness and join in with everyone else's good spirits. Whatever he chooses, Legolas's decision will be a personal one, exactly the sort of decision we would associate with any person, i.e. whether to follow the crowd, be it the elfin one or the human one, or whether to follow some other path of his own.

The fact that we can draw a convincing case for taking Legolas to be a person shows that we have to take the possibility of persons that are not human beings seriously. What we have seen is that the conditions for personhood can be satisfied by a non-human entity, but that such an entity would have to share certain characteristics with human beings; such as being embodied and part of a complex socio-cultural group. This may seem to be an overly anthropocentric line, that we are using the case of human persons as a paradigm; however, I think this is not only forgivable but also necessary. The only persons that we know of are human beings and they are persons by virtue of certain essential characteristics of being human, these characteristics are not shared by any non-human animals; as complex and intelligent as they are, chimpanzees and dolphins are not persons.

However, I think that we are saved from slipping into any sort of unwarranted and unwanted humanism by the fact that the human characteristics which we have pointed to: their sociality, the nature of their embodiment and not least the complexity of their form of life, could be realised by other entities, such as an elf or even a robot. Also of course our concept of what it is to be a person is not set in stone. As with all concepts it is open to revision and change over time and it may be that if other entities are encountered or made that fulfil the human characteristics that lead to personhood, then the concept may well change.

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In conclusion then, we have seen how it is possible to give a coherent and workable account of being a human being, but only if we avoid getting drawn into the traditional naturalist/non-naturalist dichotomy. What we have to do instead is recognise that human beings are part of the natural world and that they are continuous with other animals. As well as this we also need to see that along with other animals they require a broader explanatory framework than science alone if we are to start to understand how they are and not just what they are. We have to start with the 'facts of nature' as they are and allow these to inform our explanatory framework, rather than trying to force such facts into an unsuitable and overly restrictive framework.

What we have also seen is that we do not need to revert to insupportable humanistic theories to try and capture what is special about being human; instead we can do this quite 'naturally' if we accept the broadly naturalistic approach which has been outlined above. In doing this we can accept the enormous benefit to our understanding of the world and ourselves that science has to offer whilst at the same time recognising that it isn't the only explanatory framework available. Science when correctly applied is a powerful and invaluable method of explanation; when misapplied it is dangerous and misleading. Of course this is one of the difficulties that has faced us throughout, judging exactly when scientific methodology is both pertinent and useful. However, it seems that we can never forget that the background to our understanding is the everyday and that a rounded accurate description of this, of how things are, is invaluable. Recognising the importance of everyday description also means that we can allow for the 'truths' of non-naturalism, not least of course the view that science alone cannot give us a complete understanding of being human.

There is no denying that the broadly naturalistic framework is in some ways unsatisfactory, the accounts that we can give by working with it are not the sort of concrete, definitive ones that science has taught us to expect. But that may in fact be no bad thing. This is because what it is to be human is not something that is set in stone, rather it is something that changes over time. This is even truer in the case of being a person: for instance, would we have seriously considered the idea of a non-human person two hundred years ago.

The broadly naturalistic framework's greatest benefit is that it allows us to situate human beings and persons 'in' the world. It shows them to be continuous with the rest of the natural order whilst at the same time providing space to recognise human beings and persons as uniquely complicated and fascinating entities. When seen in this way human persons are indeed 'noble in reason' and 'infinite in faculties', in action they can be like 'angels' whilst still being the 'paragon of animals' and, at their finest, 'gods' and the 'beauty of the world'. All told human beings, 'this quintessence of dust', are indeed 'quite a piece of work'.

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