Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences **2:** 239–254, 2003.

Introspection and phenomenological method

AMIE L. THOMASSON
Department of Philosophy, University of Miami, P.O. Box 248054, Coral Gables, FL 33124-4670, USA (E-mail: athomasson@mail.as.miami.edu)

Abstract. It is argued that the work of Husserl offers a model for self-knowledge that avoids the disadvantages of standard introspectionist accounts and of a Sellarsian view of the relation between our perceptual judgements and derived judgements about "appearances." Self-knowledge is based on externally directed knowledge of the world that is then subjected to a cognitive transformation analogous to the move from a statement to the activity of stating. Appearance talk is (contra Sellars) not an epistemically non-committal form of speech, but talk to which we are fully committed. However, it is a commitment to a certain kind of claim about our experiences, viewed as cognitive phenomena, after a process of transformation. Such reductive and hypostatizing transformations can exhibit the intentional structure of consciousness. Phenomenology thus gives a form of knowledge about our mental states that is first personal but not introspective knowledge in any philosophically problematic sense. The account offered is also, in key respects, dissimilar to Sellars's "outer directed" view of the origin of self-knowledge.

Introduction

We certainly seem to have distinctive first-person knowledge of our own conscious mental states. It seems that we can know what we are thinking, feeling, or desiring even when no external observer would have grounds for knowing this or even would have reason to believe the *contrary* – for we can knowingly lie about and mislead others about our own thoughts, feelings, or experiences (Siewert 1998, pp. 31–36). The standard way to account for this apparent first-person knowledge (which I will call "introspectionist," following the literal meaning of "introspection" as inwardly turned observation) has been to posit a special faculty enabling us to observe our inner states, much as perception consists in observation of external states of the world (Armstrong 1997, p. 724; Rosenthal 1997, p. 752 n59). But such introspectionist accounts of self-knowledge have recently come under attack for a variety of reasons, e.g., that such higher-order pseudo-perceptual states would lack any distinctive qualia of their own (Dretske 1997, pp. 784–785), and indeed seem to lack *any* characteristics that could distinguish them from our mere (conceptual) judgments about our first-order experiences (Siewert 1998, pp. 187–216).[1]

These problems with introspectionist accounts of self-knowledge are often thought to present formidable problems for phenomenology. For it is often thought that phenomenological knowledge must be based on an internal inspection of our mental states, and so phenomenology must fall with introspectionism, so conceived (Dennett 1987, pp. 154, 157–158). Clearly there must be some first-person way of acquiring knowledge about experience if phenomenology, or any study like it, is to be possible at all. For phenomenology is supposed to provide the basis for a first-person study of the mind, and thus requires some first-person way of acquiring knowledge about mental state types, their contents, and so on. But does phenomenology really rely on "using some sort of introspection" (Dennett 1987, p. 154)? And is there no other way of explaining the source of our apparent first-person knowledge?

I will argue that the answer to both questions is "no." Despite the common association of phenomenology with this kind of view, Husserl explicitly rejected introspectionist views of self-knowledge, and developed the method of phenomenological reduction as the route to a very different understanding of the possibility and source of knowledge of our own conscious states (1913/1962, §79). In the first two sections, I will argue that, far from relying on a kind of inner observation, Husserl's phenomenological method involves treating self-knowledge as in some sense based on *outer* observation of the world, rather than a direct *inner* observation of one's own experiences – an approach that bears much more resemblance to accounts of self-knowledge developed by Wilfred Sellars, Fred Dretske and Sydney Shoemaker than to introspectionism. In the final two sections I attempt to further explicate Husserl's phenomenological method in contemporary terms, to show how it may provide a workable alternative view of the source of first-person knowledge.

Outer observation views

In the contemporary tradition, the idea that our apparent knowledge of our own mental states is based not in a special inner observation *of* our mental states, but in awareness at least apparently directed *outwards*, towards the world, was popularized by Sellars (1956/2000), although it has more recently appeared in different forms in the work of Dretske (1995)[2] and Shoemaker (1996).

Sellars attempts to turn on its head the traditional empiricist idea that knowledge of the world is based on knowledge of our sense data, by urging that instead all sense-data talk, and indeed all talk about *appearances,* is parasitic on world-talk: "the concept of *looking green*, the ability to recognize that

something *looks green* presupposes the concept of *being green*" (1956/2000, p. 43). On this view, we learn to employ "looks" talk when we notice the fallibility of our "is" talk, particularly in certain circumstances, e.g., as Sellars' mythical tie salesman Jones learns to shift from "that tie is green" to "that tie looks green" when he discovers the fallibility of his color judgments in odd interior lighting. So employing "looks" talk is a way of withholding the commitment about the world that comes with "is" talk, while retaining the same propositional content (1956/2000, p. 50).

But even if we begin from the observation that "looks" talk arises from "is" talk about the world, when we decide to withhold our commitment about how the world *really* is, a critical question remains. Once we have arrived at "looks" talk by means of this route, should our talk about how things look or appear to us be understood as:

1. Still talking about the world, but doing so non-committally, without making any claims, or:
2. Shifting to make (committing) claims about our experiences rather than the world?

Robert Brandom reads Sellars as holding the former view, that appearance sentences should not be understood as *reporting* any facts or making any claims at all (2000, pp. 139–143).[3] The whole point of appearance talk, on this view, is to *withhold* one's endorsement of claims about the external world, and so when Jones says "that tie appears green to me," he should not be understood as making any kind of report, but rather "evincing a disposition" to say that it *is* green (not even reporting that he has such a disposition) (2000, p. 139) "in saying that something *looks* green, one is not endorsing a claim, but *withholding* endorsement from one" (2000, p. 142).

Several problems arise, however, for the view that appearance talk does not make any claims, not even about one's own experience (or dispositions), but merely withholds endorsements from claims about the world. One problem Brandom mentions himself (attributing it to Joe Camp) is that certain uses of "looks" talk, as in "that looks blurry to me," involve terms such as "blurry" that apply only to representations, not the world, and so can't plausibly be held to be merely describing the world non-committally (rather than describing appearances committally) (2000, pp. 143–144 n11). Some other story will have to be told about how "looks" talk functions in these cases.

A more general problem is that we can make statements about how things appear to *other* people, (that chair looks green to John), and here we clearly are not merely evincing some disposition of *ours*.[4] Such statements are pretty

clearly descriptions, which may be right or wrong. We may be reporting on a disposition of his, but then we end up with a strangely disjunctive analysis of appearance statements: Those in the first person are not making any reports at all, but those in the third person are making reports about someone else's disposition. And if we have such a disjunctive analysis, then it seems (implausibly) that, while I can make claims about how things appear to John, John cannot correct me, for his apparent counter-statement "no, it doesn't look green to me, it looks blue to me" is making no claim at all.

Perhaps the most telling problem for the no-commitment interpretation of all appearance talk is that we can *lie* about how things appear to us: Not wanting glasses, a child can lie and say the letters appear sharp to her when they appear blurry; an *unscrupulous* tie salesman can lie and say a certain tie looks blue to him (and thus should match perfectly) when it looks green to him; a person going deaf but desiring to keep that secret can say the television sounds loud and clear to him when he can barely make it out. Of course Brandom's Sellars could say that such individuals are being insincere by "faking" their evincing of a disposition (as one might by saying "ouch" when nothing hurt), but mere insincerity is not enough to capture the normal idea that these are *lies*, since a lie must be an insincere *and false* claim made with the intention to deceive others. If any appearance statement could, in principle, be a lie, such statements must be making *claims* about *something,* although it is clear that such statements are not making, but rather avoiding making, claims about the world.

While the "no commitment" view of looks talk endorsed by Brandom's Sellars may have resources to respond to each of these problems individually, the very facts that it needs to offer a disjunctive analysis of talk about things looking blurry versus looking green, and of talk about appearances from the first and third person perspectives, combined with the need to refigure apparent data about the possibility of lying, suggest that taking looks talk as non-committal has serious costs – costs that, perhaps, only seem worth paying to those with other motivations for avoiding all talk of "inner states." We may be able to offer a more uniform theory that better fits the pre-theoretic data by simply allowing that, while appearance talk is derived from world talk, appearance statements involve a shift from talking about the world to make (committing) claims about something else – our own experiences. This is the option Husserl pursues.

Phenomenological reduction

The idea that knowledge of one's own mental states is based in outer-awareness of the world while withholding commitment regarding its real existence

and nature receives its fullest development in the work of Edmund Husserl; indeed this is the central idea of the method of phenomenological reduction – the method he regarded as his greatest discovery (Moran 2000, p. 12). In fact, the resemblance between Sellars' and Husserl's views is not likely to be pure coincidence. Sellars was introduced to Husserl's work by the latter's student, Marvin Farber, whose "combination of utter respect for the structure of Husserl's thought with the equally firm conviction that this structure could be given a naturalistic interpretation was undoubtedly a key influence on my own subsequent philosophical strategy" (Sellars 1975, p. 283), and Sellars elsewhere explicitly mentions Husserl's method of bracketing (1963/1991, p. 5).

Much as it was his loss of confidence in his own color judgments that brought Jones of Sellars' myth to shift from talk about ties to talk about how things *look* or *appear* to him, Husserl argues that to shift to consider *phenomena*, our ways of consciously and intentionally representing the world, rather than simply considering the world, we must bracket the assumption that our judgments are true, our experiences veridical:

> When objects are intuited, thought of, theoretically pondered on, and thereby given to us as actualities in certain ontic modalities, we must direct our theoretical interest away from such objects, not posit them as realities as they appear or hold in the intentions of our acts. . . We must keep out the falsifying intrusion of all assertions based on the naïve acceptance and assessment of objects, whose existence has been posited in the acts now receiving phenomenological treatment. (1913/2000, pp. 255–256)

Despite the compelling similarities, however, there are two significant differences between Sellars' observation that "looks" talk arises from "is" talk (when commitment regarding the world is withheld) and Husserl's phenomenological method. First, while Jones makes the move to looks talk when he has some positive reason for doubting his world-oriented judgments (such as odd lighting), for Husserl, the phenomenological reduction (as he repeatedly emphasizes) is not based in any reason for *doubting* one's world-oriented experience, and in fact should not be considered a form of *doubt* at all. If it were a matter of something like Cartesian doubt, then the phenomenological reduction would inevitably *change* the character (or force) of the original act to be studied, e.g., by altering the experience of *conviction that* P, to an experience of *doubting that* P, and thus alter the very phenomenon we sought to describe. While we might still be able to examine the content (that P), this would make it impossible in principle for such a method to provide insight into the force (or what Husserl calls "thetic character") of mental states, since that would be transformed by the study itself.

Instead of doubt, phenomenological reduction is based in the method of "bracketing" (Einklammerung), which:

> . . .is not a transformation of the thesis into its antithesis, of positive into negative; it is also not a transformation into presumption, suggestion, indecision, doubt (in one or another sense of the word); such shifting indeed is not at our free pleasure. *Rather it is something quite unique. We do not abandon the thesis we have adopted, we make no change in our conviction,* which remains in itself what it is so long as we do not introduce new motives of judgment, which we precisely refrain from doing. And yet the thesis undergoes a modification – whilst remaining in itself what it is, *we set it as it were "out of action," we "disconnect it," "bracket it."* It still remains there like the bracketed in the bracket, like the disconnected outside the connexional system… (1913/1962, pp. 97–98)

The use of the typographical term "bracketing" is far from accidental, for it is rather like putting a linguistic assertion, command, question, etc. in quotation marks, to be studied as a piece of language rather than believed, followed, answered – but which leaves its force as well as its content intact to be studied, once it is placed in quotation marks. Thus by placing a sentence in quotation marks, its force is not transformed from an assertion to a question, but rather it (force and content) is placed before us as an object of linguistic study, rather than remaining part of our living interaction with the world where assertions call for belief or disbelief, commands for following or ignoring, questions for answering. So similarly, the idea of bracketing in phenomenology is to preserve both force and content of the original experience (whether it is one involving conviction, doubt, etc.), but to use the brackets to disconnect it from our ordinary world-directed concern so that it can be studied as a *phenomenon*, a way of experiencing the world, rather than being put to use in our engagement with the world: "The thesis is experience as lived (*Erlebnis*), *but we make 'no use' of it*" (1913/1962, p. 98).

The second difference from Sellars is that, for Jones, looks talk arises in quite limited spheres – on those occasions where there is some room for doubting one's original experience. For Husserl, however, the phenomenological epoché takes a much broader scope – we are to bracket all at once the whole "natural" view that there is a mind-external natural world of spatio-temporal, physical, biological, and cultural entities experienced by us:

> We put out of action the general thesis which belongs to the essence of the natural standpoint, we place in brackets whatever it includes respecting the nature of Being: this entire natural world therefore which is continually 'there for us', 'present to our hand', and will ever remain there, is a 'fact-world' of which we continue to be conscious, even though it pleases us to put it in brackets. (1913/1962, pp. 99–100)

Since the bracketing is wholesale in scope, it can help us grasp not just "individual" mental states (which in fact are never entirely separate from each other), but such broader features as the field of consciousness as a whole, the unity of consciousness, the implicit background in conscious experiences, time-consciousness, etc.

The most crucial difference between Husserl and the Sellars *of Brandom's interpretation* (seemingly different from the historical Sellars), however, is that for Husserl the withholding of world-regarding commitment is not the end of the story, but rather is supposed to provide the means for acquiring a whole new branch of knowledge: knowledge about experience and its ways of representing (or intending) the world. The goal of the phenomenological reduction is "*the winning of a new region of Being*. . . the Being to be thus shown up is neither more nor less than that which we refer to on essential grounds as 'pure experiences', 'pure consciousness'" (1913/1962, p. 101). It is consciousness, or conscious experience, that remains "left-over" after the bracketing of phenomenological reduction, and so it is that reduction that enables us to turn our attention from our customary interest in the world represented to gain knowledge about consciousness itself and the ways in which it represents an external world to us: ". . .*Consciousness itself has a being of its own which in its absolute uniqueness of nature remains unaffected by the phenomenological disconnexion*. It therefore remains over as a '*phenomenological residuum*', as a region of Being which is in principle unique, and can become in fact the field of a new science – the science of Phenomenology" (1913/1962, p. 102).

Ultimately, it is not knowledge of my or anyone's *individual* conscious experiences that Husserl hopes to acquire through phenomenology, but rather of the *essences* of *types* of conscious experience and their interrelations. Thus Husserl follows the first stage of world-bracketing with a second stage of phenomenological reduction: Bracketing also the question of the real existence of my (or anyone's) individual experiences *qua* real psychological occurrences to focus instead on the relevant *essences* involved.[5] In the remainder of this paper, however, I will focus just on the first stage of reduction, as this is most immediately relevant to answering our central question of what the source could be for our apparent first-person knowledge of our own experiences.

According to Husserl, the method of bracketing is supposed to reduce our mental acts to their intentional content and intentional mode or force – that is the sense in which the method involves a "reduction" – and may potentially provide knowledge of any first order conscious state by "modifying" it in reflection (1913/1962, pp. 106–107, 201). The modifications effected by

bracketing are clearly *not* a matter of acquiring additional empirical information via further experiences such as inwardly-directed observations:

> We must, however, be quite clear on this point that *there is no question here of a relation between a psychological event – called experience (Erlebnis) – and some other real existent (Dasein) – called Object* – or of a *psychological connexion* obtaining between the one and the other *in objective reality.* On the contrary, we are concerned with experiences in their essential purity, with *pure essences,* and with that which is *involved in* the essence *'a priori' in unconditioned necessity.* . . In the very essence of an experience lies determined not only *that*, but also *whereof* it is a consciousness, and in what determinate or indeterminate sense it is this. (1913/1962, p. 108).

Instead, the modifications are based in *a priori* "essential laws" (1913/1962, p. 201) regarding the *essences* of the kinds of experience involved, which enable us to move from intending (or "meaning") a certain object or state of affairs (e.g., the blooming pear tree) to intending (or "meaning") the experience that enabled us to intend it (1913/1962, pp. 240–241).

These laws seem to be what Husserl would call "logical" laws describing the essential connections among the concepts involved – and revealing them is closely allied to what would later (e.g., by Ryle) be called "conceptual analysis." (Husserl understands logic not merely in terms of a system of formal syntactic operations, but also as encompassing relations among concepts or meaning types.) More particularly, the relevant "a priori laws" seem to involve cognitive transitions (licensed by the very concepts or natures of the experience types involved) from awareness of represented objects to knowledge of the representation, which parallel the shift one can make from the "content" of a statement to the "stating activity:"

> It is an *essential insight*. . . that, from the objectively given, as such, a reflective glance can be transferred to the object-giving consciousness and its subject; from the perceived, the corporeally 'there' to the perceiving act; from the remembered, as it 'hovers' before us as such, as 'having been', to the remembering; from the statement as it comes from the given content to the stating activity, and so forth. . . It is evident that essentially. . .it is only though reflexions of this kind that such a thing as consciousness or conscious content. . .can become known. (1913/1962, pp. 209–210).

In the section that follows I attempt to draw out a story in contemporary terms to elucidate how such transformations might work. While the terms of discussion are not Husserl's own, the exposition is intended as a way of showing how such a method of phenomenology may provide a source for at least a great deal of apparent introspective knowledge without averting to any pseudo-perceptual observations of experience. The logical transitions will be

easiest to see if we separate them out into two steps (not explicitly distinguished by Husserl), and if we begin not directly with the transition from e.g., the perceived to the perceiving act, but rather from the case Husserl himself acknowledges as parallel: the transition from a statement to stating activity.

Cognitive transformations

Suppose someone states "Bonnie is on the train." Normally, in our "lived" experience, such a claim directs our attention to the state of affairs represented, involving Bonnie and the train, and we are unconcerned with the meaning or force of the claim itself. It can, however, happen, e.g., in cases where some doubt arises about the trustworthiness of the reporter, that we shift our attention, and retreat to note only that Bob stated that Bonnie is on the train.

Cognitive transformations that take us from the original *use* of a *basic* sentence ("Bonnie is on the train") to a *transformed* sentence expressly *about* what is asserted, questioned, commanded, etc. ("It was stated that Bonnie is on the train"), I will call "reductive" transformations, since they involve reducing the claims made in the original use of the sentence to claims merely about its representational content and mode. This kind of transformation is widely used in discussions of works of fiction, of the content of failed theories, of testimony, etc. in which transformations are made from the relevant pretense of asserting things about people (in the fiction case), or attempts to assert truths about the world (in the case of theory or testimony), to discuss what is true *according to* the story, theory, or witness. We can then talk about what was stated *according to* the witness while being entirely non-committal on whether the witness was speaking the truth.

There is an intimate relationship between the basic and transformed sentence – namely that the appropriate *use* of the original world-oriented sentence is logically sufficient to guarantee the *truth* of the latter sentence. According to the rules of use of the concept *stated*, Bob's assertion "Bonnie is on the train" provides logically sufficient conditions for it to be true that "It was stated that Bonnie is on the train" (though not for "Bonnie is on the train" to be true). Such transformations have two aspects: The content (Bonnie is on the train) is transformed into a proposition (that Bonnie is on the train), and the force (stated) is extracted from the *way* in which the proposition is presented in the basic sentence (in this case assertion). A different, say, questioning expression of the same propositional content in the basic sentence "Bonnie is on the train?" would license transformation (ultimately) to "it was asked whether Bonnie is on the train."

Reductive transformations may be subjected in turn to hypostatizing transformations, so that we can move in the first instance from "Bonnie is on the train" to "it was stated that Bonnie is on the train" to nominalize "stated" and get "the statement that Bonnie is on the train was made."[6] While the basic sentence mentioned only Bonnie and a train, at this stage we clearly have introduced a singular term for a kind of thing not mentioned in the original sentence (a statement), where that singular term is apparently guaranteed to refer, given the original use of the basic sentence. These transformations are licensed by the logical relations among the concepts involved: Part of possessing the concept of 'statement' is being able to make the hypostatizing move from "x stated that P" to "the statement that P was made," and to recognize that move as irreproachable when made by others.

As Husserl remarked, the shift one can make from the "content" of a statement to the "stating activity" parallels the cognitive shift from consideration of objects known to the representing consciousness. Knowledge of our own experiences, their contents, and representational modes is achieved by transforming our original world-oriented experience by means of reductive and hypostatizing cognitive transformations paralleling those from statements to stating activity.[7] The first stage involves a reductive transformation from experiences that present the world as being a certain way, to judgments about how things seem to me, i.e., from being visually presented with a red apple, to making the judgment "it appears as if there is a red apple." As in the linguistic case, these transformations are licensed by the logical connections between the use or performance of the original conscious act and the conditions of satisfaction for applying a term such as "appears," which are guaranteed to be fulfilled given the original apple-oriented experience. Understanding such relations, and being able to make the move from visual presentation of a state of affairs that P to claiming "it appears that P" is at least in part constitutive of competent possession of the concept "appears."

But *pace* Brandom's Sellars, the derivation of "appears" talk from "is" talk (or *appearance* judgments from *is* judgments) does not mean that we should take such statements as merely revoking commitments about the world without making any new claims. There are implicit claims already in the reductively transformed sentences about the way things appear to us – commitments that may be made explicit by engaging in a separate hypostatizing transformation from talk (or judgment) about how things appear to be, to talk (or judgment) explicitly about appearances. Thus, from "it appears as if there is a red apple" we can get "there is an appearance as-if of a red apple" or "there is a red-apple-appearance." By this route, we acquire a singular term for a new kind of entity – in this case an appearance – not mentioned in the original experience

(which was only about an apple). And again in this case, the singular term so derived is guaranteed to refer to the newly named kind of entity (an appearance), whether or not the original experience was veridical.[8] Part of possessing the concept of *appearance* is knowing that one may legitimately make the hypostatizing inference from "it appears that P" to "there is an appearance as-if P." These later hypostatizing transformations are what enable us to speak (or think) of appearances, experiences, etc. as the subjects of our sentences, and thus to acquire knowledge about our own experiences and their content based on what were originally thoughts, experiences, etc. directed outwards towards the world.

One might object, however, that these sorts of cognitive transformation may be trivially made, e.g., to move us from the judgment "the stock market will rise" to "it appears that the stock market will rise" to "there is an appearance of the stock market rising," although intuitively there is nothing like a full-blooded (sensuous) *appearance* of anything here. But if the transformations to appearance-talk can be made where there seems to be no robust appearance whatsoever, this might seem to threaten the idea that, in other cases, such cognitive transformations are not merely trivial but in fact lead us to knowledge of a realm of appearances (etc.).

It is important to note, however, that for Husserl, phenomenology is not concerned not with knowledge of *mere* sensuous appearances or qualia, but rather with acquiring knowledge of consciousness as *intentional*, of our various ways of representing (meaning, intending, or constituting) the world – which need not be sensory or quasi-sensory (1913/1962, pp. 226–230). In that sense, then there is a way in which (and mode and force with which) the stock market is presented to me as prone to rise, and that and other "empty apprehensions or comprehensions" may be known by means of "reflective modifications" just as the apple-appearance may be (1913/1962, p. 203). In neither case should the cognitive transformations be considered trivial; in both they should be considered to provide us with knowledge of genuine representing structures of consciousness. The question remains whether the account of self-knowledge on offer can *distinguish* properly *sensuous* appearances (as Husserl would put it, those with a hyletic element) from sensuously "empty" appearances, or enable us to acquire knowledge of the specifically *sensory* character of experience. This question would have to be solved by other routes that cannot be pursued here.[9]

Thus far I have dealt directly only with the case of how we can each know how things *appear* to us, but ultimately we would like a unified account of how one can also acquire first-person knowledge of one's own beliefs, intentions, desires, etc. Although space constraints prevent a complete discussion

here, it is clear how at least some of these can be handled in ways parallel to our handling of appearances above. Thus, e.g., the thought "today is Wednesday" (apparently speaking about the day) may be transformed reductively to "I believe today is Wednesday," from which a hypostatizing transformation can yield apparent knowledge that "I have the belief that today is Wednesday." The self-command "pick up the car at four" (with content concerning the car) may be transformed reductively (in this case, bracketing whether or not the car really will be picked up at four) to "I intend to pick up the car at four" and hypostatized to provide apparent knowledge that "I have the intention of picking up the car at four." Learning to make such transformations competently is arguably part of acquiring the relevant concepts of appearance, belief, intention, etc., just as learning to make the parallel linguistic transitions is part of acquiring the concepts of statement, question, command, etc. Thus this view of self-knowledge seems to have resources to overcome the difficulty commonly raised for outer-observation accounts – that, even if they can provide a story about how we can know the *content* of our experiences, they inevitably leave out the mode or force of those experiences.

Together, these reductive and hypostatizing cognitive transformations can help explain how it was that Husserl thought the phenomenological method of bracketing could enable us to acquire knowledge of a "new region of Being" – that of consciousness and its ways of representing the world (including appearances, thoughts, etc.) – based not in higher-order inner observations, but rather in first-order world-oriented experience, the practice of bracketing, and cognitive transitions based on "essential laws" governing the concepts involved.[10] In the case of reductive transformations, it is laws connecting the *performance* of a certain conscious act (or *use* of a certain expression) with the concepts of experiences or speech acts of different types. In the case of hypostatizing transformations, it is laws connecting the concepts associated with verbs like "appears," "states," and "thinks," with their nominalized forms referring to appearances, statements, and thoughts. These transitions together enable us to move wholesale from world-oriented experience to discussion of the "separate realm" of entities (experiences) that are the subject of phenomenology.

An initial assessment

The cognitive transformation account can clearly explain the data with which we began: e.g., that we can often know what we are thinking even when no external observer has grounds for knowing this, and that we can sometimes

lie convincingly about our own experiences. While speech acts such as statements are *public* representations, so that anyone is licensed to make the relevant shift from x's stating, "Bonnie is on the train" to speak of "x's statement that Bonnie is on the train;" the original world-oriented experiences from which self-knowledge claims are transformed are not public in this way, and so it is only the individual having the experience who is in a position to make the transformation from the original world-oriented thought or perception to draw direct conceptual conclusions about the nature of her experience. Others can acquire more or less probable inferential knowledge based on observations of behavior and environment, but in cases where this is insufficient to draw conclusions they may remain completely in ignorance about the mental states that the subject can know by means of these simple conceptual transformations.

This also explains how lies about one's own experience are possible, and how we have the potential for fooling outside observers. Since one must begin these transformations from one's own experience, a lie is simply a case in which one willingly casts aside the normal transformation rules and makes claims about one's own experience (that the television sounds loud and clear to me) not based on transformations from the way the world is presented (the television being presented as noisy) but based, say, on a desire to hide one's hearing impairment. Others lacking the original experience cannot detect the lie by noting the falsified transformation; they can at best infer a falsehood by noting inconsistencies between the subject's verbal reports and behavior.

This account can also explain the *apparent* incorrigibility of first-person reports, without claiming that all judgments about one's own experience are infallible or that all statements about appearances are guaranteed to be true. The transformed sentences about experiences, such as "I have an appearance as-of a red apple" – as long as they are appropriately derived from the original experiences – may be true whether or not the original world-oriented perception (presenting a red apple) was veridical, and so are protected from certain kinds of error to which the original experiences were subject.[11] Judgments about one's own experience not derived via such transformations but by means of other routes, such as speculation, the desire to preserve good feelings about oneself, or inferences made externally by observing one's own behavior (as a blindsighter might observe that she reaches to the right and thereby judge that it must "appear" to her that the ball is on the right) of course are not covered by this account. Nor does it entail that all mental states are known to their possessors. For the transformations we have been discussing are only available from an original *conscious* presentation of the world as being a certain way; if a blindsighter lacks conscious experience of an object in front of her,

she has nothing which she can conceptually transform into the relevant description of appearances.

Though much work remains to be done, a cognitive-transformation view of self-knowledge along the lines of that defended by Husserl may provide a promising way of accounting for first-person knowledge that can avoid the pitfalls of introspectionist views and perhaps even overcome problems of certain other outer-observation views. Whatever the ultimate fate of that view, I hope that I have at least made progress in forestalling some common misunderstandings of the methods of phenomenology, distancing it appropriately from views that consider the source of introspective knowledge to lie in a kind of pseudo-perceptual observation of one's own mental states, and suggesting how a different account of first-person knowledge may be able to be developed based on the methods and practice of phenomenology.[12]

Notes

1. See also the criticisms in Shoemaker (1996, pp. 25–49, 201–242).
2. For critical discussion of Dretske's 'displaced perception' view of introspection, see Aydede (2002) and Bach (1997).
3. In fact, contrary to Brandom's interpretation, it does not seem that Sellars himself would deny that looks reports do involve commitment to certain claims, though the relevant claims, naturally, would be claims about one's own experience, not the world. See (1956/2000, pp. 49, 64). Ultimately, Sellars clearly accepts that there are thoughts, impressions, and other 'inner episodes' (properly conceived), and even that we can make non-inferential reports on our own, though terms for these are introduced as theoretic (not observational) terms (1956/2000, pp. 102–117).
4. This point was suggested to me by Charles Siewert.
5. The account of phenomenological method given here follows that in the second edition of the *Logical Investigations* and *Ideas*. Husserl's exposition of the method varies, and other stages of the reduction are described in later Husserlian texts.
6. The discussion here parallels in certain respects Stephen Schiffer's (1990, 1994, 1996) work on pleonastic transformations yielding terms for events, states, fictional characters, etc. But it is important to distance this account from the common belief that pleonastic accounts provide an ontologically cheap account of their entities, as merely 'language created'. In (2001) I argue that the general move from noting that a certain term is pleonastically derivable to treating its referent as being language-created or having an ontologically reduced status is not successful.
7. Although these distinctions of course had not been made during Husserl's time, it seems that such transformations could only provide knowledge of the narrow (not wide) content of experience – thus the discussion above is implicitly limited to narrow content. This, however, is no crippling limitation, since in any case we could only plausibly expect to have a distinctive first-person access to the narrow content of our thoughts.

8. This thus entails (contrary 'disjunctive' accounts) that there is something 'in common' between a veridical experience and a hallucination, at least in the minimal sense that such transformations license us to refer to the relevant appearance independently of whether the original experience was veridical. It remains, however, an open question whether it is desirable or even possible for the appearance to which we then acquire reference to be used to as the basis for an account of knowledge or perception.
9. The relevant difference for Husserl is whether or not the experience involves hyletic data, (1913/1962, 226), but it's not clear how one acquires knowledge of whether or what hyletic data an experience involves. An account of phenomenal concepts such as that developed by Chalmers (2002) might be of assistance: It might be that only sensory or quasi-sensory first-order experiences permit transformations to yield (atomic) self-knowledge claims involving direct phenomenal concepts, though all conscious experiences permit transformations to yield some apparent self-knowledge and may be described as 'appearances' in an explicitly broader sense.
10. I similarly acquire knowledge that it is I who am having the belief, not via observing my self, but rather via what Husserl considers "logical" (conceptual) entailments between the very idea of experiences, and the very idea of a pure Ego (myself qua bearer of these experiences, not myself qua actual human being in the world) (1913/1962, p. 214). This seems to be the sense in which phenomenological knowledge of ourselves and our experiences is transcendental rather than empirical knowledge, as Husserl emphasizes in later work such as the *Crisis*. For a compelling contemporary account of knowledge of ourselves and our experiences as transcendental, see Rowlands (this volume).
11. This seems to be behind Descartes' observations (1641/1993, p. 23) that, in trying to acquire knowledge of an external object such as a piece of wax, I in fact acquire much more secure knowledge about my own mind.
12. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at The University of Kent conference "Consciousness in Historical Perspective" (Canterbury, England, May 2002), and at the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute on Consciousness and Intentionality (Santa Cruz, California, July 2002). My thanks to all those who participated in the discussions, with special thanks for further detailed comments and/or suggestions to David Chalmers, Sean Kelly, Charles Siewert, David Smith, and Alan Thomas.

References

Armstrong, D. M. 1997. What is consciousness? In: N. Block, O. Flanagan, and G. Güzeldere (eds). *The Nature of Consciousness: Philosophical Debates*, pp. 55–67. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Aydede, M. 2002. Is introspection inferential? In: B. Gertler (ed), *Privileged Access: Accounts of Self-Knowledge*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing (Epistemology and Mind Series).

Bach, K. 1997. Engineering the mind: review of *Naturalizing the Mind*, by Fred Dretske. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 57 (2): 459–468.

Brandom, R. 2000. Study guide to *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* in Sellars, W. 1956/2000.

Block, N., Flanagan, O., and Güzeldere, G. (eds). 1997. *The Nature of Consciousness: Philosophical Debates*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Chalmers, D. 2002. The content and epistemology of phenomenal belief, *http://www.u.arizona.edu/~chalmers/papers/belief.html*.

Dennett, D. 1987. *The Intentional Stance*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Descartes, R. 1641/1993. *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Donald A. Cress. Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett.

Dretske, F. 1995. *Naturalizing the Mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Dretske, F. 1997. Conscious experience. In: N. Block, O. Flanagan, and G. Güzeldere (eds). *The Nature of Consciousness: Philosophical Debates*, pp. 773–788. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Husserl, E. 1913/2000. *Logical Investigations* (2nd edition; 2 volumes), trans. J. N. Findlay. New York: Humanity Books.

Husserl, E. 1913/1962. *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson. New York: Collier.

Moran, D. 2000. *Introduction to Phenomenology*. London: Routledge.

Rosenthal, David M. 1997. A theory of consciousness. In: N. Block, O. Flanagan, and G. Güzeldere (eds). *The Nature of Consciousness: Philosophical Debates*, pp. 729–753. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Rowlands, M. 2003. Consciousness: the transcendentalist manifesto. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 2 (3): 205–221.

Schiffer, S. 1990. Physicalism. *Philosophical Perspectives* 4, 153–185.

Schiffer, S. 1994. A Paradox of Meaning. *Noûs* 28 (3): 279–324.

Schiffer, S. 1996. Language-created language-independent entities. *Philosophical Topics* 24 (1): 149–167.

Sellars, W. 1956/2000. *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sellars, W. 1963/1991. *Science, Perception and Reality*. Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview.

Sellars, W. 1975. Autobiographical reflections. In: Hector Neri Castaneda (ed), *Action, Knowledge and Reality: Critical Studies in Honor of Wilfrid Sellars*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.

Shoemaker, S. 1996. *The First-person Perspective and Other Essays.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Siewert, C. 1998. *The Significance of Consciousness.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Thomasson, A. L. 2001. Ontological minimalism. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 38 (4): 319–331.