Routledge Studies in Contemporary Philosophy

PERCEPTION AND THE INHUMAN GAZE

PERSPECTIVES FROM PHILOSOPHY, PHENOMENOLOGY, AND THE SCIENCES

Edited by
Anya Daly, Fred Cummins, James Jardine,
and Dermot Moran

Perception and the Inhuman Gaze

"This volume brings together diverse areas of philosophical and interdisciplinary research around the richly ambiguous theme of 'the inhuman gaze,' which raises fruitful questions concerning the status of the transcendental subject in phenomenology, the nature of embodiment and perception, our understanding of psychopathology, the meaning of objectivity, and our ethical relationships to others like and unlike ourselves. It is a timely and exciting volume of essays with both a compelling focus and an impressive scope."

– Laura McMahon, Eastern Michigan University, USA

The diverse essays in this volume speak to the relevance of phenomenological and psychological questioning regarding perceptions of *the human*. This designation, *human*, can be used beyond the mere identification of a species to underwrite exclusion, denigration, dehumanization, and demonization, and to set up a pervasive opposition in *Othering* all deemed inhuman, nonhuman, or posthuman. As alerted to by Merleau-Ponty, one crucial key for a deeper understanding of these issues is consideration of the nature and scope of perception. Perception defines the world of the perceiver, and perceptual capacities are constituted in engagement with the world – there is co-determination. Moreover, the distinct phenomenology of perception in the spectatorial mode in contrast to the reciprocal mode, deepens the intersubjective and ethical dimensions of such investigations.

Questions motivating the essays include: Can objectification and an *inhuman gaze* serve positive ends? If so, under what constraints and conditions? How is an *inhuman gaze* achieved and at what cost? How might the emerging insights of the role of perception into our interdependencies and essential sociality from various domains challenge not only theoretical frameworks, but also the practices and institutions of science, medicine, psychiatry and justice? What can we learn from atypical social cognition, psychopathology and animal cognition? Could distortions within the gazer's emotional responsiveness and habituated aspects of social interaction play a role in the emergence of an *inhuman gaze*?

Perception and the Inhuman Gaze will be of interest to scholars and advanced students working in phenomenology, philosophy of mind, philosophy of psychology, philosophy of psychiatry, and social cognition.

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https://theinhumangaze.com/

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Introduction

> [In the gaze] . . . the other person transforms me into an object and denies me, I transform him into an object and deny him, it is asserted. In fact, the other's gaze transforms me into an object and mine him, *only* if both of us withdraw into the core of our *thinking nature*, if we both make ourselves into an *inhuman gaze*, if each of us feels his actions to be not taken up and understood, but observed as if they were an insect's.
>
> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*[1]

Merleau-Ponty here responds to the pessimistic and reductive Sartrean account of *the Gaze*, highlighting that this objectifying gaze only becomes possible by withdrawing into our thinking nature.[2] The capacity to detach and compartmentalize our manner of engagement with others, becoming empathically unavailable, closing down affective responsiveness, can serve positive ends as with certain occupations such as bomb disposal and surgery. Outside circumstances such as these, however, empathic unavailability may facilitate violence, negligence, and ethical failure. It remains contentious, nonetheless, whether empathic responsiveness is ontologically basic and whether it is essential for ethics. What is clear is that primary empathy drives psycho-social development and serves as an affective and ethical touchstone for the more cognitive modes of intersubjective engagement and for metadiscursive practices, ensuring that subjects are able to sustain positive connections with others and the shared world.

Merleau-Ponty's *inhuman gaze* both 'animalizes' the 'object' of the gaze but paradoxically requires a 'rational' retreat, effectively 'de-animalizing' the gazing subject. This paradox is but one of the angles of investigation in this current collection of essays. Gazes, vision, seeing, being seen, visibility, and invisibility are the focus of analysis and debate across the spectrum of the disciplines represented here, revealing conceptual as well as psycho-social points of tension, conflict and, as stated, even paradox.

The diversity of sub-themes encountered in these chapters all revolve around a questioning in regard to perceptions of 'the human' and 'the

inhuman'. This designation 'human' can be used beyond the mere identification of a species to underwrite exclusion, denigration, dehumanization, and demonization of what is then designated inhuman or nonhuman and also to set up a more pervasive and founding opposition in 'Othering' all that could be deemed inhuman, nonhuman, posthuman, and beyond the human. As alerted to by Merleau-Ponty, one important key for a deeper understanding of these issues is consideration of the nature and scope of perception and its role in understanding others. The fact that perception defines and determines the world of the perceiver, and also that individuals can report entirely different perceptions of the same phenomena and entirely different perceptions of other human beings, warrants closer investigation. The distinct phenomenology of perception in the spectatorial mode as contrasted with the reciprocal mode, moreover, complicates and deepens the intersubjective and ethical dimensions of such investigations.

Questions motivating and focusing each essay include but are not limited to the following: can objectification and an *inhuman gaze* serve positive ends? If so, under what constraints and conditions? How is an *inhuman gaze* achieved and at what cost? How might the emerging insights of the role of perception into our interdependencies and essential sociality from various domains challenge not only theoretical frameworks but also the practices and institutions of science, medicine, psychiatry, and justice? What can we learn from atypical social cognition, psychopathology, and animal cognition? What can aesthetics reveal about inhuman gazes and perceiving otherwise? Could distortions within the gazer's emotional responsiveness, or in other habituated aspects of social interaction, play a role in enabling the emergence of an inhuman gaze?

These inquiries into what it means to be 'human' and conversely 'nonhuman', 'post-human,' or 'inhuman' are relevant to a number of domains from the hard sciences (evolutionary theory, biology, neuroscience, and artificial intelligence) to the human sciences (sociology, psychology, psychiatry, and anthropology). And all these domains are enriched and given wider significance through engagement with the humanities and specifically with philosophy. Philosophy furnishes not only theoretical frameworks and alternative pathways of interpretation of the data and findings, but also it is able to situate issues within a metaphysical context. Any research programme that aspires to contribute to our understanding of the human or the inhuman must be willing to work within a radically interdisciplinary framework, as many academic institutions are now recognizing. Such projects inspire questioning and challenges from outside the usual assumptions and conceptual frameworks. The medical humanities, for example, a relatively new research domain appearing in the research statements of many progressive universities, fruitfully exploits this multidisciplinary approach. The essays in this edited collection thus seek to advance these multidisciplinary exchanges by grappling with the

themes from each of the disciplinary perspectives but at the same time keeping a clear awareness of alternative perspectives and frameworks, which while not necessarily determinate in the given essay, nonetheless remain a positive and broadly encompassing background presence.

The problem posed by the *Inhuman Gaze* as first depicted in Sartre's famous example and commented on by Merleau-Ponty has commanded the attention of some of the best thinkers across the philosophical traditions. It is hoped that this present collection of essays will make a significant contribution to these debates and extend the dialogue not only to a broader disciplinary audience but also to the wider public. These essays articulate and address many of the major questions inspired by 'the gaze' and the nature of perception, setting the issues in disciplinary, historical, ethical, and cultural contexts and interrogating the various lines of argument and investigation from both theoretical and empirical perspectives.

Part I: The Gaze in Classical Phenomenology: Perspectives on Objectification

In Part I, comprising five chapters, the writers approach the topic through close analyses of the treatment of objectification within the traditional sources of phenomenology, thereby furnishing crucial historical and theoretical context for what follows in the later chapters. The first contributor, Dermot Moran, in his chapter, Defending the Objective Gaze as a Self-transcending Capacity of Human Subjects, brings his extensive scholarship to bear on the historical and philosophical issues raised by Merleau-Ponty's quotation. Importantly, he acknowledges the destructive potentiality of objectification, but nonetheless argues the case for its sometimes-positive contributions. Drawing on Husserl, Moran proposes that adopting a 'detached, non-participant spectator' stance underwrites the theoretical attitude which is essential to both the sciences and philosophy. This capacity to break away from the mythical and natural attitudes, Moran traces back to ancient Greek philosophy. He notes that since Galileo, however, this version of objectivity has been a one-sided objectivity, which has contributed to confusions regarding objectivity in the modern context, such as, most conspicuously, in empirical psychology which has adopted a false 'detached observer' position, still in fact caught up in the natural attitude. For Husserl, there has been a confusion between the 'detached theoretical stance' and the 'detached stance of the transcendental spectator'. Moran clarifies the differences and dependencies between notions of objectification in general (with regard to both world and others) and the claims to objectivity. He elucidates Husserl's aims to establish a new science of subjectivity, not as an absolute subjectivity, such as in constructivist accounts which sacrifice objectivity and the world, but one which adopts a kind of agnosticism, neither absolute faith in the how the world is given to us, nor dogmatic skepticism, by

means of a specific act of willing. What is needed is an objectivity that is correlated to subjectivity without being entirely determined by it; and this is the crux of the problem. Is this even possible? And this is the central point of Heidegger's critique of Husserl's account – it is not possible; a 'theoretical attitude', as described by Husserl, is unachievable because we are always caught up in moods. Merleau-Ponty's contribution to this question, defending Husserl, is to suggest a third way by differentiating between the 'theoretical attitude' and the 'transcendental stance'. Nonetheless, as Moran alerts us, Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of Husserl's *Ideas II* may be taking Husserl further than he wished to go, and whether he succeeds in this defence is still open to debate.

In the second chapter, Two Orders of Bodily Objectification: The Look and the Touch, Sara Heinämaa directly addresses the Sartrean account of the look or gaze (*le regard*) and contrasts it with an alternative conception of bodily objectification deriving from the phenomenological philosophies of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. As Heinämaa emphasizes, Sartre's discussion of the look has proven remarkably fruitful to the extent that it has been harnessed by a number of contemporary authors seeking to explicate, for instance, experiences of racial and gendered objectification, the structure of self-conscious emotions, and the origins of norms and normativity. Moreover, it remains a seminal account of a specific kind of impersonal objectification, one that uproots the world of the subject gazed at and discloses an aspect of their embodied being that is otherwise inaccessible – namely, that aspect of the self that becomes thematic in the experience of shame. Nevertheless, Heinämaa argues, a significant weakness of Sartre's account lies in his blindness to (and outright rejection of) a mode of bodily self-objectification that precedes and makes possible the encounter with the gazing other, and for a compelling account of this form of bodily self-givenness we can turn to Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. Particularly in their investigations of the structure of 'double sensation', Husserl and Merleau-Ponty show that our living bodies are given to us as intertwinings of subjectivity and materiality. Accordingly, whereas the fundamental form of bodily experience involved with touch is carefully examined by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, Sartre's account fails to appreciate this form of embodiment and its philosophical significance, led astray by an image of the body projected by an anonymous and inhuman look. Moreover, for Heinämaa, this comparison highlights that bodily objectification is discussed in two different registers in contemporary phenomenology. The Sartrean and Husserlian accounts, she argues, differ in three crucial ways: first, with regard to the type of 'object' that is at issue; second, in that they ascribe different axiological dimensions to the state of being bodily objectified; and third, with respect to the conditions under which bodily objectification takes place.

The third chapter from Timothy Mooney, On Eliminativism's Transient Gaze, brings the accounts of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty into critical

engagement with proponents of eliminative materialism, exposing the latter accounts as bankrupt endeavours which cannot do justice to either lived perception or the lifeworld. For eliminative materialism, folk psychological beliefs about the perceiver and the world are so illusory that they cannot amount to anything substantial enough to require reduction to the physical. And once we learn to explain everything through the latter, we can learn to perceive the world as scientific theory bids us think about it. Drawing on Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, Mooney argues that eliminativism is a hybrid theory relying on empiricism and intellectualism, and it does not count as a philosophy of perception. Episodes of scientific inspection and detached observation cannot get behind lived perception or the lifeworld and can only count as transient gazes. They do not embrace our gearing into the world, and they cannot endure.

The fourth chapter in this section, Not Wholly Human: Reading Maurice Merleau-Ponty with Jacques Lacan, Dorothée Legrand takes up the consideration of language in general and specifically that as humans we are 'speaking bodies'. She does so from a perspective informed by both philosophy and psychoanalysis, in considering both responsivity and responsibility. Legrand juxtaposes the thought of Merleau-Ponty and Lacan highlighting the tension between what she characterizes as Merleau-Ponty's generality of 'flesh' and Lacan's interrogation of the singularizing potential of language which serves both to differentiate subject from object and subjects from each other. As she writes: 'inhumanity remains irreducible; yet, language is a knife that cuts our bodies out of the inhuman flesh'.

The final chapter in this section, Disclosure and the Gendered Gaze in Simone de Beauvoir's Ethics, from Christinia Landry offers a rehabilitated assessment of Beauvoir's book *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1976), against Beauvoir's own later denunciation of her book as being overly theoretical. The key question that motivates Landry's analyses is whether it is possible to will the freedom of others as Beauvoir enjoins in her book when one's own moral freedom is curtailed by sociohistorical ideologies, structures, and practices. Through a careful analysis of Beauvoir's ethics, conjoined with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the visible, Landry affirms that a viable, embodied, existentialist ethics is indeed possible.

Part II: Vision, Perception, and Gazes

The historical disputes with regard to the nature and status of perception are currently being revived and reinvigorated with new light being shed on various issues and puzzles from the disciplines of psychology and neuroscience. We can trace the disputes back to Plato and his rejection of perception as a reliable epistemic instrument in contrast to reason. Descartes in his meditations pursued a parallel line rejecting perception in his quest for epistemic certainty, and today we have a similar rationalist prejudice

driving the debates concerning the cognitive penetrability of perception and implicit bias. These debates point to more basic underlying questions. What is the relationship between cognition and perception? How can the status of scientific claims be assured if perception is inherently unreliable and perspectival? What kind of creatures are we? Are we computers comprised of software and 'wetware'? Are we mere machines of prediction? What is the difference in perceiving objects as opposed to other subjects? What is the status of our relationship to others who we encounter in our perceptual field? Can perception be accounted for adequately in objectivist terms, or must we acknowledge the inherent relationality built into the structures and processes of perception? These questions and many more are the backdrop to the more specific focus of the papers presented in this section which interrogate vision, perception and gazes in both the phenomenal domain and the intersubjective domain.

Shaun Gallagher opens this section with his chapter, Inside the Gaze, which begins by describing a study which lead to the discovery of a phenomenon known now as 'anonymous vision'. Drawing on the research of Zahn, Talazko, and Ebert (2008), Gallagher recounts the study of a young man named DP, whose visual experience after deep-sea diving followed by a long flight was significantly altered. His vision was no longer integrated but involved a two-step process; the identification of the object with a subsequent apprehension that he was the one doing the seeing. This case offers challenges to the *Immunity to Error by Misidentification* thesis (Wittgenstein 1958; Shoemaker 1968) and demonstrates selective loss of self-ownership in visual experience. 'Someone is seeing the object, but is it I?' What is particularly interesting for Gallagher's account is that this anomalous vision related to objects only and not to people. Although our visual perceptions of objects and of other people are more than just visual – enactively involving motor, affective, and evaluative processes – our visual perception of the other person who is gazing back at us is more complex. Gallagher reviews two approaches to this complexity, drawing on Sartre and Levinas, and shows how they both remain relatively abstract. He argues that visual perception of the other's gaze is always situated and involves complex interactive behavioral and response patterns that arise out of an active engagement which is always more than a simple recognition. He cites empirical studies to show that such social perception is not a matter of me seeing the other's gaze or face *simpliciter*, but of seeing that the other sees me. The other's gaze is not something that can be subsumed into a strictly visual representation of eye direction, for example. It has an affective impact on my own system that sets me up for further response. Drawing on concepts that acknowledge the involvement of embodied and worldly contexts, it is clear that there is something immanent in the gaze – something that elicits an elementary responsivity that characterizes our intercorporeal encounters.

The second chapter of this section, Perception and Its Objects, by Maurita Harney focuses on the affective and relational dimensions of seeing and being seen as opposed to the 'spectatorial' stance of Cartesianism. Harney challenges the traditional accounts of the intentionality of perception, drawing on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological account of embodied intentionality and also on his later work centred on the notion of nature as 'flesh'. Importantly, Harney highlights the fact that Merleau-Ponty's embodied intentionality is a naturalised intentionality, which links perception not with consciousness but with sensation and movement. Harney's broad scholarship in the domains of phenomenology, embodied cognition, and biosemiotics enables her to traverse the specificities of this contentious domain and to identify both the points of tension and also resolution. For this approach, she argues that the *Umwelt*, as described by ethologist Jakob von Uexkull, provides a relational ontology where the origins of normativity can be identified in the relations of reciprocities, affordances, and receptivities operative in nature and where there is a continuity between human and non-human animals. Such an account, Harney proposes, has significant consequences for both the philosophy of nature and the understanding of science.

Richard S. Lewis in his chapter, The Technological Gaze, tackles the increasingly important dimension of technology and its transformative role in perception which he proposes adds an 'inhuman' element to our own gaze. Lewis draws upon concepts from contemporary fields of inquiry that subscribe to an inter-relational ontology; specifically, critical posthumanism and postphenomenology. He leverages the concept of an embodied and pragmatic technological relation in order to better understand the enabling and constraining effects of this transformation. Importantly, Lewis argues that these technologies continue to covertly mediate our perception of the world even when we are not actively using them. By increasing our awareness, he suggests, we have an increased chance at regaining some of our agency and potentially making better-informed decisions concerning what and how we invite technologies into our lives.

In the final chapter of this section, Anya Daly pursues the exploration of the normative potentialities of perception in her essay, The Inhuman Gaze and Perceptual Gestalts: The Making and Unmaking of Others and Worlds. While on the one hand for Merleau-Ponty, 'the perception of the other founds morality'; on the other, Daly argues, it is the *rationalizing* of perception by stripping it of empathic responsiveness, becoming an *inhuman gaze*, that allows ethical failure. Through his ground-breaking analyses of embodied percipience, Merleau-Ponty offers a powerful critique of *the view from nowhere*, the objectivist, disembodied, unsituated, purely rationalist view which underwrites all *inhuman gazes*. Complicating and deepening these analyses, Merleau-Ponty also draws on gestalt theory, elaborating particularly on the roles

of perspectivism, wholism, and figure-ground structures in the perception of things and of others. It is Merleau-Ponty's engagement with gestalt theory that informs the key claims of this essay, supported by diverse accounts and analyses of the underlying psychological dimensions and consequences of torture. Specifically, Daly argues that while we can theoretically decompose perception in terms of gestalt structures to better understand the mechanisms of perceptual experience in general, we can also understand how it is possible to achieve an *inhuman gaze* through a rationalizing deconstructive process of perception; rather than 'making' others and worlds, these are 'unmade' for potentially violent and unethical ends.

Part III: Psychiatry, Psychopathology, and Inhuman Gazes

The history of psychiatry is replete with accounts of ill-thought theories being inflicted on patients; and philosophy has been rendered vulnerable to accusations of obfuscation and irrelevance to the 'real world' with some of the extremes of armchair philosophy and far-fetched thought experiments. Bringing these two disciplines more explicitly and rigorously into engagement with each other is proving fruitful in beginning to address these deficiencies. Because of this rapprochement, the beneficial exchanges and mutual constraints between philosophy of mind and psychiatry is gaining recognition and driving rethinking in each discipline.

The crisis of legitimacy in psychiatry incited by revelations of inhumane treatment, misdiagnoses, corruption, stigmatization, and conflict of interest has necessitated not only a reappraisal of the metaphysical assumptions underpinning psychiatric theory and practice but also the status of the 'psychiatric object', as described. Clearly, the psychiatric context is one in which the *inhuman gaze* takes on a particularly urgent nature. As Andrew Scull has noted:

> the lunatic, the madman, the psychotic, the schizophrenic, call them what you will, suffer a sort of social and moral death. Their wishes and will, their very status as moral actors, as agents capable of expressing valid preferences, and exercising autonomous choice are deeply suspect in light of their presumed pathology, as the often dark history of their treatment under confinement abundantly shows.
>
> (Scull 2006: 52)

Nonetheless, it is crucial to keep in mind that some of the most trenchant criticisms of psychiatric theory and practice come from within the discipline itself as psychiatrists struggle to adapt to the constraints of various contingencies and systems so as to best serve the interests of those under their care.

The first chapter in this section, Values and Values-based Practice in Psychopathology: Combining Analytic and Phenomenological Approaches, from psychiatrists Bill (KWM) Fulford and Giovanni Stanghellini, explores through two case histories the potential contributions of phenomenology to values-based practice in the context of psychopathology. The first case history, 'Simon's story' (about delusion), illustrates the importance of the ordinary language analytic philosophy that underpins current models of values-based practice in diagnostic assessment. The second case history, 'Anna's story' (about anorexia), shows how phenomenology adds to the essentially cognitive resources of analytic values-based practice a depth dimension of conative and affective understanding. This is important, as Anna's story illustrates the relevance of a phenomenologically enriched values-based practice particularly for treatment. In particular, we focus on how phenomenology (namely, the Sartrean phenomenology of the body) provides resources for understanding how Anna's 'anorexic' values emerge from the psychopathological core of her lifeworld. This is where the issue of *the gaze* becomes relevant, as we analyze her lifeworld in terms of Sartre's 'body for others', a concept based on the way a person feels in her body when she is looked at by another. Taken together, therefore, these two case histories point to the need in psychopathology for a combined analytic-plus-phenomenological model of values-based practice. The rich range of phenomenological sources available for further development of this combined model is indicated.

Psychiatrist Matthew R. Broome's chapter, The Inhuman and Human Gaze in Psychiatry, Psychopathology, and Schizophrenia offers an insightful historical overview and analysis of objectification in the context of psychiatry; on the one hand, someone with schizophrenia may feel themselves perceived by an *Inhuman Gaze*, but on the other hand, the complex subjective experiences of mental disorder may be conceptualised as an object for clinical and scientific scrutiny. In the first section, Broome outlines current understandings of psychopathology and how, as an approach, it is crucial to the practice of psychiatry, both clinically and as a research endeavour. In the second section, he discusses the wholly objective somatic focus in psychiatry via Jaspers' critique of the 'first biological psychiatry' of the 19th century and his attempt to reorient psychopathology as a science by drawing on pluralistic methods including biological and hermeneutic approaches. In the third section, he engages with French thinkers (Bergson, Minkwoski, Merleau-Ponty) and how their ways of conceptualising mental life and experience may go beyond Jaspers and allow us to have a psychopathology and a psychiatry that can think coherently about dynamic, indeterminate, and fluctuating mental states. As Broome proposes, psychiatry again finds itself in a period when hard sciences such as neuroscience, pharmacology, and genetics are hugely important; yet, as with the early 20th century, the clinical benefits of decades of neuroscientific research are as yet to lead to improvements

in patient care and clinical outcomes. Broome thus suggests that phenomenological psychopathology may be a means to maintain a focus on the person and to offer a *human*, alongside an *inhuman*, *gaze*.

Anna Bortolan's chapter, Overcoming the Gaze: Psychopathology, Affect, and Narrative, offers an exploration of the notion of 'the gaze' and its relation to psychopathological experience from a phenomenological perspective focusing particularly on the dimensions of the *sense of possibility* (Ratcliffe 2012, 2015), affectivity, and narrative self-understanding. Bortolan proposes that Sartre's concept of *the gaze* can provide a powerful metaphor for the characterisation of the alterations of experience which mark certain forms of psychiatric illness. Drawing on the work of Matthew Ratcliffe (2008, 2015), Bortolan proposes that these alterations are exemplified in particular by disruptions of the sufferers' sense of what it is possible for one to experience and achieve. She then investigates how these disruptions can be modulated through the engagement with certain forms of narrative self-understanding, so as to potentially engender changes which can lead to an expansion of one's 'possibility space'.

Clinical psychiatrist, Philippe Wuyts' chapter, From Excess to Exhaustion: The Rise of Burnout in a Post-modern Achievement Society, explores the increasing prevalence of burnout in modern society relying on the philosophical tradition of phenomenology as a methodological starting point. After a brief introduction to the core philosophical concepts relevant to his discussion, Wuyts proposes that typical characteristics of today's work environments and work practices clash with important intrinsic features of the nature of human consciousness, intruding upon the meaning-making activities that sustain us and leading in extreme cases to burnout. Often attributed merely to stress, and Wuyts reminds us that some stress is often a good thing, he however proposes that burnout arises from a cascade of exhaustion, depersonalisation, and a lack of personal accomplishment. As a result, the world of work becomes increasingly dehumanizing, erasing 'the soul' of professional activity and leaving the employee exasperated, lost, and cynical. Next, he explores factors beyond the professional sphere that contribute in significant ways to the development of burnout. He argues that burnout should not be considered inevitable as the mere endpoint of an individual's career in crisis, but rather that burnout has become a concerning widespread sociological phenomenon that can only be explained by a broader interpretation of the loss of meaning in modern existence. Levinas points out that every human being's existence is defined in 'the face of the other', and Wuyts identifies the root of burnout in the loss of this mutuality, where the achieving subject competes now with itself, shorn of the sustaining relation to the other.

The final chapter in this section, from John Protevi, brings us to yet another signature manifestation of early twenty-first century distressed

existence with his compelling essay – Phenomenology of Blackout Rages: The Inhibition of Episodic Memory in Extreme Berserker Episodes. Protevi presents an exploration of the perceptual-motor effects and possible episodic memory inhibition in extreme cases of the 'berserker rage', informed by empirical research. He initially locates berserker rages in a taxonomy of aggressive behavior and defines it as an out-of-control reactive aggression triggered by blocked flight in a high-danger situation. Protevi offers a brief summary of the military implications of berserker rage and suggests how this phenomenon might be mapped out neurologically. The 'Human Self-Domestication Hypothesis' currently being worked out at the intersection of anthropology and biological psychology provides important theoretical context. Discussion of the most extreme manifestations, the so-called 'blackout rages' in which episodic memory is inhibited or attenuated, comprises the second part of the chapter. Here, Protevi seeks to establish its phenomenological implications; what exactly are we to say about an 'experience' of which we have only a partial ability to reconstruct, and even then, of which the use of 'flipping a switch' or 'automatic pilot' are prevalent terms?

Part IV: Beyond the Human: Divine, Post-human, and Animal Gazes

The Inhuman Gaze can be taken as a stimulus, a goad, to enjoin us to consider the relation between seeing and being seen when one or both poles of that relationship are not assumed to be human. As Rosi Braidotti reminds us, *inhumane* and *inhuman* are not equivalent terms. In the three contributions assembled here, we meet the non-human, the in-human, and the post-human; and yet in each case we must consider not a gulf that separates but the challenge to see ourselves as continuous with and, in some sense, co-constituted by that inhuman other.

Sean Kelly in his chapter, Wondering at the Inhuman Gaze, considers what it means to be looked upon not by another person but by God. This theme is explored through two elaborate examples. In the first, we are teleported back to the renaissance to a Benedictine community at Tergensee in the Bavarian Alps and the writings of Nicholas de Cusa. Kelly invites us to consider the mystical experience of being gazed upon by God as constructed from the work of Nicholas of Cusa, cardinal, theologian, and philosopher of fifteenth-century Germany. Cusa, accused of 'mystical heresy', encouraged monks under his tutelage, such as those at Tergensee, to become aware at all times of being seen by God, an experience which he associated with a profound joy and sense of wonder. Kelly writes: 'In his divine infinity, as the coincidence of opposites, Cusa's God is the essence of what is inhuman. And yet to gaze upon him, and to be gazed upon by him, is the highest form of human being'. In order to instill this pervasive mood of joy and wonder, Cusa would

have his monks act out a series of exercises that made use of the gaze of a portrait that seemed to follow the viewer as he moved about the room. To be viewed by God in this mood is to become aware of one's dependence upon him/her/it, which may be a route to the experience of love, but may also, as Kierkegaard describes this divine omnivoyance, induce a sense of risk and even terror. Kelly's second elaboration of the theme of omnivoyance begins with Nietzsche's disquiet and dislike of this all-seeing God. God's ever-present gaze, for Nietzsche, is in bad taste, even indecent. To tease out this non-devotional experience of omnivoyance, Kelly discusses a short story by Kafka that presents a debased image of God, an alienated figure, Odradek, whose viewpoint seems to serve no purpose beyond persisting. The story is poetic and defies summary; it is juxtaposed in this chapter with the contrasting mood of wonder evoked by Cusa, and as Kelly enjoins, it is in the recognition that either disquiet or wonder are real possibilities for us and that the contingency at the base of these moods depends on our sensitivity towards the practices capable of evoking them.

The chapter, What Counts as Human/Inhuman Right Now?, from Rosi Braidotti, explores the multiplication of meanings and understandings of the human in contemporary academic and public discussions. She begins by situating these debates within the post-human turn defined as the convergence between post-humanism and post-anthropocentrism. The former critiques the universalist ideal of Man as the measure of all things, while the latter critiques species hierarchy. She then moves on to explore the post-human turn within a vital neo-materialist framework that envisions all living matter, including the human, as part of a dynamic continuum. This invites us to see the capacity for thinking as a distributed activity, related to both organic entities – like a healthy and sustainable environment – and to inorganic ones – technology, digital, and telecommunication networks. Thinking is the stuff of the world and not the prerogative of humans alone. Braidotti concludes by exploring post-human knowledge production in the new post-humanities, which she approaches as a critical and affirmative regeneration of the field, and not as symptoms of a crisis. What are the parameters that define post-human subjects of knowledge? To what extent do new contemporary developments, such as environmental and digital humanities, introduce new visions of the human? What is post-human ethical accountability in post-human scholarship today?

Dylan Trigg's chapter, Beyond Human and Animal: Metamorphosis in Merleau-Ponty, looks at the theme of animality as it figures across the evolutions of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *oeuvre*. Merleau-Ponty gave consideration to the animal and its relation to the human throughout his career. Trigg traces a path from the early framing of animality as categorically distinct from the mode of being of the human to later attempts to develop a language appropriate to the intertwining, the *Ineinander*,

of the animal and the human. Merleau-Ponty's later development of an ontology of the flesh provides a means of teasing out the co-constitutive relation between the two, such that humanity and animality appear as variants on a theme within a common world – not identical, but constitutively entangled. This approach resists the more usual contrast drawn in which the animal is constructed as radically other or as quasi-human, both of which, as Trigg alerts, 'instrumentalise the animal for the sake of developing an epistemic or ethical value critical to human identity, and for this reason renders the animal a surface upon which our own gaze is reflected back' (Trigg 2020). Trigg concludes that the idea of animality is irreducible to both animal and human but is instead marked out as the anonymity of (inhuman) life itself.

Part V: Sociality and the Boundaries of the Human

In the final section of the book we encounter perspectives that explore a number of dynamics involved with the constitution of human sociality, as well as various social processes that serve to marginalize or dehumanize specific individuals or groups. The explorations begin by considering how this intricate collective dance is brought into being in our patterns of vocal and visual interaction (Cummins) and how the production of the default human leads to the double exclusion of non-normative bodies (Mitchell). This disjunctive normalizing is becoming ever more conspicuous in the mutual entanglement of bodies and technology that allow many of us to live in an illusion of relative autonomy that is invisibly scaffolded by technologies and practices that have become normative. But this production of the human has the effect of making all the more visible those accommodations and variations required when non-normative bodies act, leading to reduction, objectification, and the elimination in advance of any genuine ethical encounter between equal subjects. For the disabled person, the *inhuman gaze* might be construed as providing a way to better recognise those processes through which both humanness and disability acquire their mutually defining form and thus provide a route to transformation of both categories.

The opening chapter of this section, Voice and Gaze Considered Together in 'Languaging', invites us to consider language, not as commonly understood, with its symbol manipulation and syntactic structures, but *languaging*, broadly considered as the whole-body activity that facilitates mutual coordination in face-to-face situations. As a reaction against an overly intellectual, rationalist view of language as a form of symbolic message passing, with syntax and lexis at its disembodied core, some recent work has begun to flesh out the notion of *languaging*, which points to many forms of embodied social interaction that give rise to the temporally extended coordination required to ground shared ideologies and shared worlds. Following Tomasello et al. (2007), the visibility of

gaze direction is mooted as a driver in the evolution of languaging, and past studies have examined in intricate detail how conversational interactions are constituted, in part, by a careful choreography of the eyes. Extending this work, Cummins in this chapter, considers the neglected area of joint speech or *chorusing*, where a body of people utter identical words in unison, as in rituals, prayer, protest, or on the football terraces. Under these conditions, it seems the obligatory link between voice and eyes is broken, as the unity of expression no longer demands sensitive visual negotiation between individuals. Developing this train of thought further, Cummins examines a related contrast which arises in comparing unison speech with the activity of jointly watching a film. In the former, the voices are synchronised, and the eyes are free. In the latter case, gaze is roughly synchronised across many individuals, while the voices are silent. Thus, as Cummins notes, we can identify three points that differ in their relation to the construction of a shared world: unison voices (eyes free) in which we enact a common subjectivity; the dancing eyes and voices of dialogue – a dyadic interplay; and the linked eyes and silent voices as we consume a shared narrative representation.

In the second chapter to the section, Disability and the Inhuman, Jonathan Paul Mitchell asks us to consider how the category of 'the human' is often called upon without concern for how that category is established in the first place and how it is sustained. Correlatively, to call something 'inhuman' invites consideration of what that term means. It might denote something that falls short of, or violates, the properly human. Alternately, it could indicate something outside the human category. In each case, some notion of human is already presumed. Mitchell offers an insightful analysis of such presuppositions and the exclusions these entail: in particular, he elaborates on how certain ways of being become associated with the inhuman, how these associations are involved in the constitution of what is understood as properly human, and the deleterious effects for those associated with the inhuman. He addresses these concerns in three stages. First, he sketches how common understandings of disability might be thought of as 'dehumanising'. Next, he outlines why responses to dehumanisation that appeal to the category of the human, or to humanity, are inapt. Disability is commonly understood in terms of dependency or diminished autonomy. This not only places disabled people in an ambiguous position with respect to the human, but also contributes to the very notion that 'normal' humans, at least in principle, are autonomous. Thus, while formally within this category, disabled people also fail, in these terms, to meet one of its central membership criteria – autonomy. Finally, Mitchell offers an insightful discussion of the relationship between bodies and technology to outline some alternative and positive aspects of an *inhuman gaze*. He suggests that all bodily activity is more or less technologically enabled, but that the distribution of these technological resources generally benefits typical bodies

and overlooks atypical bodies. These arrangements contribute to the purported autonomy of the normal human. Noting this contingency of the human (and that it has an inhuman, technological, dimension) loosens its metaphysical grip. This makes possible inhuman futures that are more hospitable to bodies that cannot or will not meet human criteria.

The final two chapters in this section make up the final part of the volume and all take up themes that, while significant, are underrepresented in contemporary discussions of social understanding and interaction. Like Mitchell's chapter, moreover, these two contributions serve to effectively challenge any suspicion that phenomenological and cognitive-scientific approaches to sociality are insensitive to, or even inherently unable to grapple with, the broader historical and political horizons of social experience and engagement. The chapter from James Jardine explores the constitutive role played by affect in the formation of corrosive interpersonal attitudes and marginalising social relations. Through employing phenomenological analysis of social experience, Jardine seeks to illuminate the cultural and political significance of affect as it intertwines with perception. Mark James' chapter considers the inhuman gaze as a form of social dissonance and asks what it reveals about the otherwise invisible sense-making frames that normally structure meaningful social encounters. James' approach engages the time-honoured insight that the implicit normative structure of human activity becomes most explicit in situations of breakdown and employs this strategy to explicate the undertheorized normativity of embodied interaction.

In the third chapter of this section, Social Invisibility and Emotional Blindness, James Jardine aims to clarify the affective dimension of certain interactions that lead to a sense of 'social invisibility' amongst social minorities, drawing upon and developing themes from Honneth, Fanon, and Husserl. Jardine first locates and analyzes the specific phenomenon by way of Honneth's treatment of social invisibility as evident in behaviour that, while in some sense evidently responsive to an immediate interpersonal context, nevertheless expresses an attitude of nonrecognition towards certain persons immediately present. Drawing upon Fanon, amongst other authors who have considered racializing modes of affective perception, it is then argued that Honneth's analysis underestimates the role of certain (dehumanizing) emotional responses in conveying to persons their 'invisibility'. Jardine then argues that Husserl's phenomenological analyses of the emotions can be drawn upon to further clarify the role played by affect in enabling an 'invisibilising gaze' to emerge. On the one hand, Husserl offers a phenomenological elucidation and clarification of the manner in which emotional experience contributes an evaluative component to our perceptual experience of others. On the other hand, Jardine proposes that the misrecognition involved with social invisibility can be better understood by developing Husserl's conception of a certain kind of 'blindness' that can afflict emotional life. Accordingly,

Jardine argues that a socially invisibiling gaze can emerge when the visual regard is accompanied by affective construals that are led astray by the misfunctioning of emotive habits and that Husserl's work might be able to shed light on how such habits operate, as well as on the possibility of their emergence and transformation.

Mark James' chapter, What Are You Looking At? Dissonance as a Window on the Autonomy of Participatory Sense-making Frames, suggests that our everyday social interactions are organised according to participatory sense-making frames, which James understands as autonomously organised habitual structures that shape our being together at multiple timescales. While such structures remain mostly transparent to us, such that we have the experience of being well situated, James argues that this transparent background is disclosed when incompatible frames come into conflict, leading to experiences of what James calls 'social dissonance'. He proposes that the *inhuman gaze* is one example of social dissonance and that understanding it as such can reveal certain aspects of our 'human' being-in-the-world-together that it both compromises and brings into relief. James' analysis highlights a number of background structures and processes implicit within unproblematic and dissonant social interactions alike at the same time as it delineates an approach to cognitive science that is sufficiently sensitive to the role of habit in the constitution of human sociality.

Concluding Comments

All contributions in this volume have tackled key questions across diverse disciplines and philosophical perspectives motivated by the theme *the inhuman gaze*, highlighting the fact that we are inextricably interpenetrated and co-constituted by the gaze of others. The themes of *the human* and *the gaze* lead inexorably to considerations of the boundaries of the human, of the other, and to broader consideration of socialities of various sorts. By pursuing the links between the (in-, post-, non-) human and gaze, we find ourselves confronted with issues that reach to the core of our shared existence and our shared world.

More than ever, this question of what it is to be 'human' demands urgent attention, not only in light of the increasing influence of dehumanizing and exclusionary ideologies, but also as we enter the age of the Anthropocene, in which anthropogenic climate change, environmental destruction, degradation, and exploitation is causing the extinction of many species and which has the very real potential to cause our own extinction. While much important work has focused on proposing solutions to these pressing political and environmental crises, the current volume sheds light on a number of underlying questions that still remain neglected: questions concerning the nature of human subjectivity and the role of objectification

in defining 'the subject'; how we are to understand the psychology of the gaze and perception, and the breakdown and corruption of these in various situations; and what the affective, habituated, and linguistic aspects of our sense of one another as human and sentient beings might consist in. Accordingly, this edited collection aims to clarify the phenomenological, psychological, and sociological character of perceiving others as human or inhuman, in tandem with its expression in various social phenomena. It is hoped that the multidimensionality of the themes, the intersections, the exchanges, and the points of tension will generate constructive insights, connections, reconfigurations, and future research directions.

Notes

1. [Dedans le regard] 'autrui me transforme en objet et me nie, je transforme autrui en objet et le nie, dit-on. En réalité le regard d'autrui ne me transforme en objet, et mon regard ne le transforme en objet, que si l'un et l'autre nous nous retirons dans le fond de notre nature pensante, si nous nous faisons l'un et l'autre regard inhumain, si chacun sent ses actions, non pas reprises et comprises, mais observées comme celles d'un insecte' (*Phénoménologie de la Perception* 1945: 414).
2. It has been suggested that perhaps Merleau-Ponty's target here is Descartes, not Sartre. In our considered view, taking into account the broader textual context and on consultation with Merleau-Ponty scholars of the highest caliber, it is clear that Sartre is the direct target and indirectly the Cartesianism which persists in Sartre's account.

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Part I

The Gaze in Classical Phenomenology

Perspectives on Objectification

1 Defending the Objective Gaze as a Self-transcending Capacity of Human Subjects

Dermot Moran

Phenomenology as a Transcendental Science of Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity

What marks out classical phenomenology (Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty) from other contemporary philosophical approaches, as well as from the methodology of the natural sciences, is its post-Kantian commitment to recognize and retain the ineliminable contribution of subjectivity to the constitution of objective knowledge of all forms. Phenomenology insists on the primacy of the first-person perspective and the critique of any narrow objectivism that ends up being what Maurice Merleau-Ponty calls '*la vue de nulle part*' (Merleau-Ponty 1945: 82), or what Thomas Nagel elsewhere calls the 'view from nowhere' (Nagel 1986). The human capacity to take a stance that transcends our situated, localized, subjective perspective is precisely what makes objective science possible. On the other hand, this very capacity risks occluding the underlying contribution of subjectivity that makes knowledge possible in the first instance and within which human beings necessarily dwell. Nagel summarizes the issue well:

> An objective standpoint is created by leaving a more subjective, individual, or even just human perspective behind; but there are things about the world and life and ourselves that cannot be adequately understood from a maximally objective standpoint, however much it may extend our understanding beyond the point from which we started. A great deal is essentially connected to a particular point of view, or type of point of view, and the attempt to give a complete account of the world in objective terms detached from these perspectives inevitably leads to false reductions or to outright denial that certain patently real phenomena exist at all.
>
> (Nagel 1986: 7)

What is left behind, as phenomenology rightly insists, is the irreducible, subjective manner of our experiencing itself, our subjective and

intersubjective experiences in the 'lifeworld' (*Lebenswelt*), which is not the same as the world as studied by the natural sciences.

There have been many critiques within the classical phenomenological tradition – perhaps most prominently in Jean-Paul Sartre's discussion of 'the look' (*le regard*) in his *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre 1995) – of various forms of objectification that arise from the subject-object structure of human intentional comportment and go on to deny or supress the subjective component. Indeed, on some accounts, every form of objectification has been readily characterized as inherently dominating, distorting, and even as repressive. Kierkgaard's 'truth is subjectivity' is the banner for such anti-objectivist approaches. However, classical phenomenology, especially in the works of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, has a much more nuanced approach to the capacity of first-person subjectivity to transcend itself through intentionality into gaining a 'detached, non-participant spectator' stance, which Husserl sees as essential to the 'theoretical attitude' (*die theoretische Einstellung*, Husserl 1954: 301, 308, 310, 331) that was, he claims in his 1935 *Vienna Lecture*, inaugurated by the ancient Greeks (Husserl 1954: 326). The subject inescapably occupies a first-person perspective but is also capable of taking a reflective stance of its own conscious life and hence is capable of occupying another stance which gives it self-consciousness of its own experiences and can qualify them with respect to others' experiences and indeed come to constitute an overall objective stance.

Phenomenology, in its mature Husserlian formulation, moreover, not only insists on subjectivity as ineliminable but goes much further in defending a *transcendental* science of *subjectivity*. It is even – as Husserl puts – an *absolute* science of transcendental subjectivity. As Husserl writes in the *Cartesian Meditations* § 13:

> A science whose peculiar nature is unprecedented comes into our field of vision: a science of concrete transcendental subjectivity, as given in actual and possible transcendental experience, a science that forms the contrast to sciences in the sense of, positive, 'Objective' sciences. Also among the Objective sciences there is indeed a science of subjectivity; but it is precisely the science of Objective subjectivity, the subjectivity of men and other animals, a subjectivity that is part of the world. Now, however, we are envisaging a science that is, so to speak, absolutely subjective, whose thematic object exists whether or not the world exists . . . at the beginning, this science can posit nothing but the ego and what is included in the ego himself, with a horizon of undetermined determinability.
>
> (Husserl 1950: 68–69, 1967: 30)

Here Husserl characterizes transcendental phenomenology as a science that is 'absolutely subjective', and he contrasts this absolute (i.e. fully

grounded) science with all *positive* sciences of subjectivity. Positive sciences of subjectivity, for Husserl, mean chiefly the then-emerging science of empirical psychology, and, presumably, all other human sciences, including the then nascent sciences of sociology and anthropology, but also economics, law, and political science. These 'positive' sciences of subjectivity all treat the human being *objectively* as a ready-made item in nature (as Husserl puts it). One can think of evolutionary studies that trace the origins of humanity from their hominid ancestors, focusing on such objective features as the evolution of a bipedal, upright stance. For Husserl, such positive sciences, while incredibly powerful, have an inevitable tendency to *naturalize* human existence, understanding it as an animality with specified forms of behaviour that can be studied in more or less the same manner as the observation of animals. For human beings to look at themselves 'objectively' as animals among other animals in a material, biological, and zoological world is straightforwardly to *objectify* the human, and it is also to obscure the nature and origin of this objectifying gaze itself. Even as empirical psychology practices a kind of detachment, it still approaches the human subject in a naturalistic way. While Husserl thinks all such objectification has a legitimate place in the procedures and methodology of the positive sciences, he also thinks this methodological approach is deficient and one-sided and needs to contextualized and clarified by a *transcendental science of subjectivity*. Husserl argues forcefully there is an urgent need to make the natural and human sciences more aware of the dependence on the subjective dimension. There is a need to recover *objectivity-correlated-to-subjectivity*. After all, *who is the one* looking at human behaviour from the objective standpoint? How is this objective standpoint conceivable? It has to come to self-knowledge of itself as a standpoint and hence as an achievement of subjectivity.

For Husserl, the natural and objective sciences, therefore, need a transcendental justification. Or, Husserl puts it, subjectivity (for which Husserl often uses the Cartesian shorthand of the 'ego' or the '*cogito*') is not a mere piece or 'tag-end of the world' (*Endchen der Welt*), as he puts it in his *Cartesian Meditations* (Husserl 1950: 63, 1967: 24). Subjectivity is, Husserl says, rather 'for' the world rather than just 'in' it. Husserl speaks of human beings as 'in the world' and 'for the world'. Constituting consciousness is both 'in itself' and 'for itself'. Indeed, 'the paradox of subjectivity' – explored in the *Amsterdam Lectures* (Husserl 1997), in the *Crisis* (Husserl 1970), and elsewhere – is that human beings are both *for* the world and *in* the world. For Husserl, human being is both 'a subject for the world' and 'an object in the world' (Husserl 1970: 178).[1] Subjectivity is, Husserl insists, more than what is manifested naturally in the world; it is also the *transcendental* source of all 'meaning and being' (*Sinn und Sein*) for Husserl. That means that the subject is not just an object or a substance but a meaning-source, a vital centre which not only

distributes all sense but also confers 'being' on its intentional objects in varying ways. Husserl lays out the problem clearly in the *Crisis* § 53:

> Universal intersubjectivity, into which all objectivity, everything that exists at all, is resolved, can obviously be nothing other than humankind; and the latter is undeniably a component part of the world. How can a component part of the world, its human subjectivity, constitute the whole world, namely, constitute it as its intentional formation, one which has always already become what it is and continues to develop, formed by the universal interconnection of intentionally accomplishing subjectivity, while the latter, the subjects accomplishing in cooperation, are themselves only a partial formation within the total accomplishment?
>
> (Husserl 1970: 179)

Husserl maintains, then, that phenomenology is a transcendental science that must trace every objective entity and event, that is, every sense-formation, back to the transcendental ego (at least according to the 'Cartesian way'), that is, to transcendental subjectivity, or, more generally, to *transcendental intersubjectivity*. Everything is constituted by the transcendental ego. Husserl writes in *Cartesian Meditations*:

> In the absolute and original ego of the reduction the world is constituted, as a world that is constituted as transcendentally intersubjective in every transcendental Ego.
>
> (Husserl 1950: 239, 1967: 64, *§ 29 (addition)*)

For Husserl, then, transcendental subjectivity, working within the network of transcendental intersubjectivity (and the interconnection between these two calls for a further clarification of intentional constitution), is a *source* of our consciousness of the objective world and its contents, so transcendental subjectivity cannot be simply another extant part of the world.

Transcendental Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity (The 'We-Community')

Husserl proclaims in his *Crisis of the Human Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* § 50 (Husserl 1970) that transcendental subjectivity can only be thought within an overall context of intersubjectivity. This passage may very well be the inspiration for Merleau-Ponty's claim that 'The Cogito must find me in a situation, and it is on this condition alone that transcendental subjectivity will, as Husserl says, be an intersubjectivity' (Merleau-Ponty 2012: lxxvi). Husserl writes:

> [S]ubjectivity is what it is – an ego functioning constitutively – only within intersubjectivity. From the 'ego' perspective this means that