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„Self-feeling"

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Mag. Mag. Gerhard Kreuch

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Introduction

"Gnōthi seautón – Know thyself!" is a long-standing imperative in philosophy. In this tradition, there has been a vivid debate on problems of self-consciousness and self-knowledge[1] in the last years. What is self-consciousness? How do we know ourselves? This book attempts to contribute to these issues by approaching them from an unusual angle. It suggests to understand self-consciousness as an affective[2] phenomenon, namely as self-feeling.

The account of self-feeling developed in this book contributes to current debates in the following ways: First, it overcomes some of the problems in contemporary philosophy of self-consciousness. Reflective (or higher-order) theories (e.g. Gennaro 2012; Rosenthal 1986, 2005) struggle with infinite regress and vicious circularity. Their opponents, pre-reflective (or same-order) theories (e.g. Frank 2012; Zahavi 1999, 2005, 2014) present rather formal, empty notions of self-consciousness. They remain short on what self-consciousness actually is. Thus, they suffer from what could be called the "ex negativo" challenge. Furthermore, many accounts restrict themselves to a non-egological approach (e.g. Kriegel 2009) and thereby miss to explain the unity of the phenomenon. In contrast, the account of self-feeling presented here does not run into infinite regresses and vicious circularity. It includes an explanation about what it is and offers positive, phenomenal content. Moreover, self-feeling is the holistic, affective disclosure of our individual existence and thus compatible with the experienced unity of the phenomenon.

Second, the account of self-feeling developed here allows to build a bridge between the basic level of self-consciousness and higher levels of more substantial thoughts

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[1] As of today, there is no clear and common distinction between the terms self-consciousness and self-knowledge in the literature. Compare Peacocke's observation: "Anyone who peruses writings on self-consciousness, [...] is likely to be bewildered by the variety of phenomena included under that heading." (Peacocke 2014, p. 188). Given this ambiguity, this book will start with a rather broad use of the term self-consciousness and develop its own, more precise terminology later.

[2] The term "affective" is here used as general umbrella term to include many kinds of affectivity such as emotions, feelings, etc. These notions will be distinguished more clearly in the course of the book.

about ourselves. Many current theories of self-consciousness focus on how simple, single mental states become self-conscious, such as your awareness that you see an apple in front of you. Although this surely has its philosophical merits, it has been labelled as "trivial" and "boring" (Cassam 2014, p. 10; Schwitzgebel 2012, p. 191). It seems that the original Delphic imperative had more in mind than that. Current theories of self-consciousness remain relatively silent on how their considerations relate to more substantial questions like those about one's character, one's values, one's abilities, one's aptitudes, one's emotions, or knowledge about what makes one happy (Cassam 2014, p. 29). In contrast, the account of self-feeling developed here offers enough material content to make its relation to these substantial issues more clear. In part four of this book it will be shown that self-feeling plays an important role in self-interpretation.

Third, the account of self-feeling presented here captures an aspect of human affectivity that has not been in the focus of philosophical research so far. Most of us know what to answer to the question "How are you?". We have an immediate experience of how things are going for us and of what life is like for us. These fundamental "feelings of being" have been explored philosophically in recent years and this led to the development of a theory of "existential feelings" (Ratcliffe 2005, 2008; Slaby 2008a, 2012a; Slaby et al. 2013; Slaby and Stephan 2008; Stephan 2012). Existential feelings fundamentally shape the way we are in this world and they are part of experience at the same time. However, little work has been spent so far on the question about what this fundamental affectivity tells us about ourselves. The account of self-feeling developed in this book explicitly focusses on that question. Therefore, it brings a phenomenon into perspective that has been largely neglected and complements the recently developed theory of existential feelings.

This book develops its account of self-feeling by drawing from various sources that come from rather unconnected fields in philosophy. Thus, its method might be labelled as "bridge building". This has two aspects: First, it connects philosophy of

self-consciousness with philosophy of human affectivity. These two fields have proceeded quite independently from each other so far. However, both are vivid debates with interesting developments, especially in the last years. In philosophy of self-consciousness it has become more clear that reflective (or higher-order) theories have serious shortcomings (Frank 2012, 2015; Kriegel 2009; Peacocke 2014; Zahavi 1999, 2005, 2014). Yet, a convincing, alternative proposal with genuine, positive characteristics is still missing. Philosophy of human affectivity has found more interest in fundamental phenomena that encompass our whole being in this world (Colombetti 2014; Coriando 2002; Damasio 1994, 1999, 2003, 2010; Fuchs 2012; Ratcliffe 2005, 2008; Waldenfels 2000, 2007). Still, there is not much work on how fundamental affectivity relates to self-consciousness (Slaby 2012a; Slaby and Bernhardt 2015; Slaby and Stephan 2008, 2011; Slaby and Wüschner 2014; Stephan 2012; Stephan et al. 2014). This book builds a bridge between these two fields. It develops an argument for why self-consciousness should be understood as part of our fundamental affectivity.

Second, the arguments in this book cannot exclusively be attributed to one philosophical "school". For instance, the so-called Heidelberg School of self-consciousness (Cramer 1974; Frank 2002a, 2012, 2015; Henrich 1966, 1970, 2007; Pothast 1971, 1987) is a crucial reference in the discussion of self-consciousness in this book. They draw on a broad range of resources including the Greek Stoa, German Idealism, Phenomenology and Analytic Philosophy. Somewhat contrastingly, the discussion of human affectivity in this book mainly relies on Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings (Ratcliffe 2005, 2008) which is mostly inspired by Phenomenology. It might be that this book is close to what one would call a phenomenological investigation. However, it would be false to say that it is exclusively phenomenological. It substantially includes discussions of analytic philosophers such as Rosenthal, Kriegel, Cassam, Peacocke, and others. At the same time, it only rarely draws on classical authors of phenomenology such as Husserl or Merleau-Ponty. In a word, this book wants to be interesting and relevant for more than one philosophical school only.

This rather broad approach has its limitations, too. Bringing together two large and unconnected debates hopefully yields stimulating insights. Yet, it necessarily prohibits a detailed and comprehensive analysis of every aspect of the problem. This book develops an account of self-feeling that is supposed to contribute to both philosophy of self-consciousness and philosophy of human affectivity. At the same time, it leaves many questions open, both concerning self-consciousness and human affectivity. For example, it cannot give substantial answers to the problems of temporality, embodiment, nature of the „self", and intersubjectivity. Surely, all these issues are serious and interesting fields of philosophical research. It would be a great project for further research to explore how self-feeling relates to them. However, one has to proceed step by step. This book has the aim to first develop and establish the concept of self-feeling and argue for its value for current debates. Its broader applicability remains subject to further inquiries. Second, the fact that this book brings together different philosophical "schools" has its shortcomings, too. In general, most philosophers would agree that there is much to gain by taking inspiration from many different areas in philosophy. However, this broader approach impedes a detailed and exhaustive examination of all the specifics of one particular "school". While much of the argument laid out here builds on phenomenological sources, many of them are only discussed superficially, such as Henry (1963), Waldenfels (2000, 2007), Schmitz (1964-1980), and others. Likewise, while some analytic authors are discussed in more detail, many of the relevant contributions to analytic philosophy of self-consciousness are elaborated in parts only (just to name some influential works: Bar-On 2004; Bilgrami 2006; Carruthers 2011b; Castañeda 1966; Chisholm 1981; Evans 1982; Fernández 2013; Gallois 1996; Lewis 1979; Moran 2001; Perry 1979; Shoemaker 1968, 1996).

In sum, I hope that this book adds value to contemporary philosophical research, despite its limitations. It builds bridges between different philosophical debates and "schools" that yield new perspectives on the respective phenomena. This makes available fresh, interesting solutions to current, significant problems.

This book has four parts. Based on the work of the Heidelberg School, the first part introduces to contemporary philosophy of self-consciousness and discusses some of its most pressing challenges. It shows that reflective (or higher-order) theories, current pre-reflective theories, and current non-egological theories have serious shortcomings. Some texts by Henrich, Frank, and Pothast include pointers to suggest that affectivity plays an important role in self-consciousness. The second part follows these pointers and takes a closer look at human affectivity, especially Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings. It is the most comprehensive attempt today to make sense of fundamental aspects of human affectivity. Part three of this book presents an account of self-feeling that is based on the findings from parts one and two. Self-feeling is a pre-reflective, pre-propositional, bodily feeling that shapes our space of possibilities. It is the affective disclosure of individual existence. This account contributes both to the problems of philosophy of self-consciousness and it is a relevant complement to the theory of existential feelings. Part four investigates what self-feeling can contribute to higher levels of more substantial thoughts about oneself. It introduces the notion of self-interpretation and explores how self-feeling relates to it.

1. Self-consciousness

The main goal of this first part of the book is to present some important challenges in contemporary philosophy of self-consciousness. These challenges will motivate a deeper look into philosophy of human affectivity in part two and a proposal for a solution in part three.

There are many attempts in the literature trying to address these challenges in self-consciousness, each with their advantages and disadvantages.[3] Given the sheer amount of contributions, this book will not be able to provide detailed reviews on each of them. Instead, it will suggest a broad framework to categorize contemporary theories of self-consciousness based on the distinctions egological/non-egological and reflective/pre-reflective. Its own line of argument will be based on this categorization.

This part one is structured in three chapters. First, it gives a rough overview about philosophy of self-consciousness. Second, it presents important challenges in contemporary philosophy of self-consciousness. Third, it highlights some pointers in the Heidelberg School that encourage a closer look into human affectivity in order to address these problems.

1.1. A brief overview of philosophy of self-consciousness

Self-consciousness has been a widely discussed issue since the early days of modern philosophy, e.g. in René Descartes' "cogito" or the "absolute subject" in German

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[3] There are many relevant, recent publications in this regard, see for instance: Rosenthal's higher-order account (Rosenthal 1986, 2005), Kriegel's self-representational account (Kriegel 2009), Moran's self-constitutional account (Moran 2001), Dretske's and Evans' transparency account (Dretske 1994; Dretske 1999; Evans 1982), or Bar-On's expressivist account (Bar-On 2004). See also Rödl (2007) and Bilgrami (2006) for relevant contributions to the debate.

Idealism. In the 19th century several influential criticisms appeared against a strong account of self-consciousness, e.g. Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, Friedrich Nietzsche or Sigmund Freud.[4] In the 20th century these criticisms gained even more momentum and led to the proclamation of the "death of the subject" in post-structuralist thinking (e.g. Michel Foucault or Jacques Derrida). Today, empirical neuroscience has presented notable threats to traditional theories of self-consciousness, too (e.g. Metzinger 2003, 2009, 2011). Additionally, traditional East-Asian philosophy advocating a "no-self alternative" is increasingly discussed in contemporary philosophy of mind (Albahari 2006; Siderits 2011).

However, as philosophical problems of self-consciousness remain puzzling, several analytic philosophers reconsidered the issue, beginning in the second half of the 20th century. Hector-Neri Castañeda (1966) and Sidney Shoemaker (1968) are usually seen as pioneers in this regard.[5] The debate was first revitalized focussing on the role of the first person pronoun "I" (Chisholm 1981; Evans 1982; Lewis 1979; Perry 1979). Today the literature has become overly broad with many interesting proposals on the table (just to name some influential works: Bar-On 2004; Bermudez 1998; Bilgrami 2006; Carruthers 2011b; Cassam 2014; Fernández 2013; Frank 2012; Gallois 1996; Kriegel 2009; Moran 2001; Peacocke 2014; Rödl 2007; Rosenthal 1986, 2005; Shoemaker 1996; Zahavi 2005). This overwhelming amount of literature can be interpreted as evidence that there are still many open questions. We seem to be at a stage in theory development where many aspects of the phenomenon are disputed and where there is little common ground or common terminology. There is no grand theory of self-consciousness yet that could be critically assessed. Instead, there are many approaches to and perspectives on the phenomenon, proposed by many different authors. Each has its distinctive advantages and disadvantages. It is impossible to do justice to each of them in one

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[4] Some of these thinkers may be influenced by Lichtenberg's famous objection to Descartes (Lichtenberg 2000 [1764], p. 190). He denied the existence of an "I" in favour of the immediacy of experiences just being there. Consequently he may be seen as ancestor of non-egological theories of self-consciousness, which are prominent today (see below in chapter 1.1.1.).
[5] Even before that, Peter Geach (1957/58) published a short essay exploring similar intuitions.

book. Given this situation, this book must restrict itself and focus on those aspects that are relevant for its own contribution to the debate.

1.1.1. Two basic distinctions and an attempt to categorize

Egological vs. non-egological theories of self-consciousness

Aron Gurwitsch (1941) introduced a distinction between egological and non-egological theories of self-consciousness. It deals with the question about what does the term "self" in self-consciousness refer to. Who or what is the bearer of self-consciousness? To which entity do we apply the property "self-conscious"? The egological approach (sometimes also referred to as "creature self-consciousness"[6]) understands self-consciousness as consciousness of a distinct entity that is the underlying subject of mental states, a "core ego". The term "self" here refers to an „ego" that is conscious and has self-consciousness. It is an individual that is self-consciousness about itself. Historically, René Descartes, John Locke, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte have been interpreted as defenders of this view (Frank 1991b, 2012, 2015). They understood the subject as entity that could be conscious of itself, as a distinct individual.

In contrast, non-egological approaches (sometimes also referred to as "state self-consciousness"[7]) understand self-consciousness as a property of mental states. The term "self" here does not refer to an underlying subject but to consciousness itself. It is not "me" who is conscious of "myself". Instead, mental states may have the property to be self-conscious. This can imply that they are themselves self-intimating or that there are some mental states that represent other mental states and make them self-conscious. David Hume, Franz Brentano, Jean-Paul Sartre and Bertrand Russell have been interpreted as traditional examples for this approach (Frank 1991b, 1994, 2012, 2015). David Hume is famous for the following observation:

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[6] See e.g. Rosenthal (1986) and Kriegel (2009).
[7] Ibid.

"For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception." (Hume 1967 [1739], p. 252)

In the non-egological approach there is no "self" to be conscious of, no subject as bearer of mental states. Here, self-consciousness is about mental states (e.g. perceptions) being themselves self-conscious. In line with widespread criticisms of a strong notion of the subject in the 20th century, non-egological theories seem to be more common in current debates (Frank 1994).

Higher-order models vs. same-order models of self-consciousness

A second important distinction deals with the question of how self-consciousness is actually established. What is the mechanism through which self-consciousness is constituted? Higher-order models (traditionally referred to as "reflective"[8]) see self-consciousness as reflective process where a higher instance makes a lower instance conscious.[9] Take, for example, a specific belief P (e.g. "Robert Musil was Austrian"). In the higher-order model, this belief P would remain unconscious as long as there is no higher-order mental state that makes it self-conscious. So the mental state P is self-conscious if and only if there is a higher-order mental state reflecting it. René Descartes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, John Locke and Immanuel Kant have been interpreted as traditional examples of this model (Frank 1991b, 2012, 2015). David Rosenthal[10] (1986, 1993b, 1997, 2004, 2005), Peter Carruthers (1996, 2000, 2005, 2011b), Rocco Gennaro (1996, 2008, 2012), Robert van Gulick (2001, 2004, 2006) and William Lycan (1987, 1996, 2004) are contemporary defenders of different versions of higher-order monitoring theories.[11] Additionally, Antonio Damasio

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[8] The terms "higher-order" and "reflective" will be used synonymously throughout this book.

[9] A related distinction is made in the more general debate over consciousness. "Transitive" consciousness is consciousness of something (e.g. being conscious of the dog), while "intransitive" consciousness is not referring to anything else (e.g. after the accident Julie was unconscious, but now she is conscious again) (Kriegel 2009, pp. 23-32; Rosenthal 1986).

[10] Rosenthal built his own higher-order thought approach by refining Armstrong's traditional higher-order perception account (Armstrong 1968, 1978, 1984). Lycan (1987, 1996, 2004) is a current defender of a perception-like higher-order approach.

[11] Note that these versions vary in their specific nuances and have been labelled for instance "higher-order perception", "actualist higher-order thought" or "dispositionalist higher-order thought" (see

(1994, 1999, 2003, 2010) applies a higher-order model to explain his empirical findings in neuroscience. His notions of „protoself", „core consciousness", and „extended consciousness" constitute a multi-layer model in which higher layers monitor or represent lower layers (Damasio 1999, chapters 3&7).[12]

Please note that there are two historically prominent understandings of the term "reflective" that should not be mixed in the context of this book. First, the term reflection can be used in the sense of representing something. For instance, my image in the mirror reflects (i.e. represents) my actual body. In a historical analysis, Frank (2007) attributes this view to Leibniz, Locke, and Descartes in the context of their accounts of self-consciousness. Second, the term reflection can be used to describe the process of reasoning and building concepts. For example, one can reflect (i.e. reason) about a certain problem and perhaps reach a conceptual conclusion. Frank (2007) sees Kant and Wolff predominantly using the term reflection in this sense. This book will stick with the first meaning when talking about reflective theories of self-consciousness. The term "reflective" here refers to the fact that self-consciousness is established through a higher-order reflection (or representation). At this point, the role of reasoning or deliberation is less relevant. Part four of this book will go into more detail on this second meaning.

Those who are dissatisfied by reflective accounts have proposed alternatives that are usually labelled same-order (or "pre-reflective"[13]) models of self-consciousness. They argue that the bearer of self-consciousness is itself self-conscious, without the need for an additional level.[14] For example, if we apply a non-egological approach, mental states would themselves be self-conscious, without intervention of a higher-order monitoring device. Johann Gottlieb Fichte has been interpreted (Henrich

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Carruthers 2011a, for an overview). These slight variations within higher-order theories are not overly relevant in the context of this book.

[12] For this reason this book does not include a detailed review on Damasio's theory of self-consciousness. The critique on higher-order monitoring theories put forward here applies for him as well. Compare Lenzen (2004) for a substantial review of Damasio's work.

[13] The terms "same-order" and "pre-reflective" will be used synonymously throughout this book.

[14] Note that in classic Indian philosophy there was a similar controversy between other-illumination (paraprakāśa) and self-illumination (svaprakāśa) theories (MacKenzie 2007, 2008).

1966) as the first who recognized fundamental flaws in reflective models and searched for a better solution. Franz Brentano and Edmund Husserl are also often named as early proponents of the same-order view (Zahavi 1999, 2005). Jean-Paul Sartre was the first who explicitly used the term "pre-reflective self-consciousness" (Sartre 1997 [1936/37]). Contemporary proponents of this view are Sidney Shoemaker (1968, 1984, 1996), the phenomenologists Dan Zahavi (1999, 2005, 2014) and Shaun Gallagher (2005, 2010, 2011), and the Heidelberg School, especially Dieter Henrich (1966, 1970) and Manfred Frank (1986, 1991a, 2012, 2015).[15] Uriah Kriegel and Kenneth Williford (Kriegel 2009; Kriegel and Williford 2006) draw heavily on Brentano's work and label their account „self-representationalism" or „same-order monitoring theory", but it is questionable if they succeed in this self-ascription. It can be argued that it is better described as a special version of higher-order theories (see Carruthers 2011a, and chapter 1.2.4. in this book).

An attempt to categorize

Based on the two distinctions introduced above, we are now able to divide theories of self-consciousness into four broad categories. They are illustrated in the following matrix:

	Reflective theories	Pre-reflective theories
Egological theories	Reflective egological	Pre-reflective egological
Non-egological theories	Reflective non-egological	Pre-reflective non-egological

Table 1: Framework of theories of self-consciousness

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[15] You might also regard some work on phenomenal consciousness like Burge (1997, 2007), Block (1995, 2007, 2011a), Byrne (2004), and Levine (2001, 2006) as support for same-order theories. However, this cannot be explored in greater detail in this book, since it would lead us too far away from the core question.

As can be seen, there are reflective egological theories, reflective non-egological theories, pre-reflective egological theories, and pre-reflective non-egological theories. This table has two aspects: First, it presents a general framework to categorize theories of self-consciousness. The four quadrants should be understood as ideal types stemming from a conceptual analysis. Second, specific theories may be placed inside the frameworks. For example, you might characterize Descartes as reflective egological, Rosenthal as reflective non-egological, Zahavi as pre-reflective egological, and Kriegel as pre-reflective non-egological. These specific accounts should be understood as tokens that need not necessarily instantiate the type to 100 percent. Every theory must take a position inside this matrix, but there is no necessity that it fully fits in one of the four ideal quadrants. Importantly, the fact that empirical tokens do not fit exactly into conceptual frameworks does not falsify the frameworks altogether. It just asks for careful behavior in dealing with specific accounts put inside the framework.

Let me give some examples for the complexities of placing individual theories. First, one could rightly argue that Rosenthal published some thoughts about the egological dimensions of his theory and the unity of „self" (Rosenthal 2005, chapter 13). This might make his theory egological. However, the core of his theory (e.g. Rosenthal 1986) still builds on mental states made self-conscious by other mental states and thus it can be appropriately described as non-egological. Second, one could correctly point to the fact that Zahavi explicitly denies the distinction egological – non-egological for his account (Zahavi 2005, p. 146). Instead, he positions his pre-reflective approach beyond the distinction of egological and non-egological, leaving the classical notion of a „self" or "core ego" behind.[16] Nonetheless, he does not restrict himself to self-consciousness of mental states but explicitly tries to give an account of how we understand ourselves as individuals (Zahavi 2005, chapter 5; 2014, esp. part 3). Thus, he can legitimately be put in the upper right panel of the presented framework. Third, Kriegel (2009) attempts to present a pre-reflective (or same-order) theory but it remains questionable if he

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[16] We will see in chapter 3.3. that the account of self-feeling developed here follows a similar path.

ultimately succeeds (see Carruthers 2011a, and chapter 1.2.4. in this book). Thus, there are reasonable arguments to see his account as reflective instead of pre-reflective. Still, by self-ascription he belongs to the pre-reflective, non-egological theories. In addition to that, it might be that knowledgeable Descartes scholars are able to present arguments why he would rather fit in another quadrant in the table than the reflective egological one.

Despite all these possible inaccuracies in labelling specific theories the proposed framework claims value on a more general level. It allows to analyse types of approaches to self-consciousness without losing track in too detailed analyses of individual accounts. There are general features of theories (like higher-order or non-egological) that make them subject to certain criticisms that will be developed in chapter 1.2. of this book. Thus, this framework is by no means meant to serve as comprehensive tool for all the work on self-consciousness. Rather, it shall serve as guiding framework for this book and illustrate the unique position and contribution of its own proposal.

1.1.2. Two widely accepted properties of self-consciousness

In the decades of revitalized discussion on self-consciousness some common ground has been established. Two of these widely accepted features of self-consciousness will be presented in this section. They will help to better understand the more detailed discussion of current challenges in the field in chapter 1.2..

Immunity to error through misidentification
Following Shoemaker's (1968) important observation it has become clear that self-consciousness is not in the need to identify its "object", it is immune to error through misidentification. Let me elaborate this further by introducing an important distinction that traces back to Immanuel Kant and was made popular by Ludwig Wittgenstein (1958 [1933/35], pp. 66f.): "use as subject" vs. "use as object". In everyday cases of consciousness you have thoughts like "I think that p", for example

"I think that my neighbour is a nice person". Here the object of the sentence is "p" or "my neighbour is a nice person". Correspondingly, "I" is the subject, the one who has this proposition. There are at least two ways in which this proposition can turn out to be false. Your predication could be wrong, because your neighbour may indeed not be a nice person. The second possible error is misidentification. You could falsely take someone else to be your neighbour. Perhaps it is the mailman you see and greet every morning in the staircase and mistakenly think he is your neighbour. Similar errors are possible with non-personal objects. If you think "This city, Vienna, has 2 million inhabitants" you may err in the predication concerning the number of inhabitants. You also may err in the identification of Vienna as the city you are referring to.

Things become more difficult when the object dealt with refers to the speaker, too. Take for example the proposition "I think that I weigh 70 kg". Here, the first "I" is used as subject. You are the one having this thought. Interestingly, the object of the proposition ("I have 70 kg") refers back to you, too. The second "I" is used as object. You refer to yourself as an object in the proposition. Your body is taken as an object with specific properties such as weight, just like any object in the material world. As a result, propositions like these are in many aspects equivalent to propositions concerning the material world. To illustrate the "use as object", imagine a surgeon operating the bodies of his patients. She does not make a substantial epistemic difference between the leg or the heart of her patient and the scalpel or the operating table. Both are treated as objects in the world. Similarly, when you cut your nails you take your fingers as objects in the material world. In these cases where your body is the object of the proposition, you can both err in predication and identification. Imagine, for example, you sitting in a bus together with many other people. Suddenly there is an accident, the bus overturns and many persons are hurt. The bus is upside down and all the injured people lie in shambles. Many are injured and cry with pain. You may have the impression "My leg is bleeding", while you are lying among the others. In this (admittedly extreme, but still possible) case you could be wrong in the predication of your leg. Perhaps it is the blood of

someone else running over you and your leg is in fact not bleeding. Interestingly, as Shoemaker (1968, pp. 556f.), inspired by Wittgenstein (1958 [1933/35]), pointed out, you can also err in the identification of your leg. It is possible that you take someone else's bleeding leg as yours (at least for a moment). You may feel pain in your leg and mistakenly attribute the pain to a leg just in front of your eyes. In reality your leg is hidden under the bodies of other injured people in the broken bus. A similar (and less radical) case could be made with you seeing parts of yourself in the mirror. If you just see a hand in the mirror it is possible that you falsely take it as yours while instead it is someone else's.

However, things are even more complicated in cases of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness has your own mental states or even yourself as "object" (see non-egological vs. egological theories above). When you cut your nails you may treat your fingers as objects in the material world. But you cannot avoid taking them also as *your* fingers which are exposed to pain. If you do not cut them carefully you will experience pain. When you cut your finger and feel pain the distinction between the "use as subject" and the "use as object" becomes fuzzy. Imagine you thinking "I feel pain". On the one hand there is the object of the proposition "I feel pain in my finger", the pain that is being felt. On the other hand there is the subject having that proposition, you are consciously feeling the pain. Pain in this case is more than just an epistemic object similar to a table or your leg (Kripke 2011).[17] In a sense, pain is closer to you. "I feel pain" is substantially different from "I think that p". The "I" in "I feel pain" is both the feeling subject and the felt object. It seems impossible that you feel pain but in fact there is no pain.[18] Feeling pain is necessary and sufficient for the existence of pain. As Saul Kripke (2011) pointed out, these mental states are immediately self-intimating, there is no separate epistemic process needed to acquire consciousness of them. So there are at least some mental states that are immune to error through misprediction. You cannot err in the predication

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[17] Please note that there is a complicated and controversial discussion on the phenomenon of pain which cannot be addressed in further detail here (for an overview see Aydede 2013). Pain shall here just be understood as an illustration of the complexities of subjective experience.
[18] Granted, in extraordinary cases like phantom pain there is no actual damaged tissue that would cause the pain. Yet, even in phantom pain there is pain because it is being felt.

of pain to yourself. However, there are other mental states where predication could go wrong. Take for example the belief "I marry my fiancée because I truly love her". It is possible that in reality you marry her because she is rich and beautiful. You unconsciously deceive yourself with the "love story" to stick to your own moral convictions. In this case the predication of your mental state is wrong. Your motivation for this marriage is not love but the fact that she is rich and beautiful.[19] These interesting difficulties will be discussed in more detail later. For the moment the focus lies on the possibility of error through misidentification.

Given all these points, it becomes clear that mispredication is a common epistemic threat to propositions, concerning the consciousness of worldly matters as well as of yourself. You can be wrong in the use as object, especially when it comes to propositions about your body. There are at least some cases where you can also commit an error through mispredication in cases of your own mental states.

Nevertheless, as Sidney Shoemaker (1968, p. 556) pointed out, there is no error through misidentification in self-consciousness, you can never be wrong in the use as subject. In all the cases above the propositions could be complemented with the prefix "I think that": I think that my neighbour is a nice person, I think that Vienna has 2 million inhabitants, I think that my leg is bleeding, I think that I feel pain, I think that I marry my fiancée because I truly love her. This first "I" in all the cases is used as subject. It refers to the one who has the propositions. No matter what proposition is made, there is no doubt for the speaker (or thinker) to whom this first "I" in "I think that" refers to.[20] It is impossible that I think "p" without being conscious of the fact that I am the one thinking "p". Thus, it is impossible that I misidentify the referent of "I think that p" when it is me who has this proposition.

You might say that Descartes' famous "Cogito" already reached this level of insight. Most fundamentally, he claimed that despite of all possible doubts one thing can

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[19] Some may challenge this example by claiming that wealth and beauty can be legitimate reasons for true love. It would take a thorough analysis of the concept of love to further clarify this issue, which cannot be done in this book.

[20] Some philosophers (e.g. Wittgenstein) deny that "I" refers at all. More on this below in this part of the book.

never be doubted, namely the fact that there is someone doubting (Descartes 1984 [1641], second meditation). Whenever I doubt anything, the one thing that is absolutely sure is the fact that it is me who doubts. In some parts of his work he seems to go one step further and endorse infallibility in a broader context. For instance, in his second meditation he writes:

> "For example, I am now seeing light, hearing a noise, feeling heat. But I am asleep, so all this is false. Yet I certainly seem to see, to hear, and to be warmed. This cannot be false." (Descartes 1984 [1641], CSM 2:19)

However, in his "Principles" he qualifies this:

> "There remains sensations, emotions and appetites. These may be clearly perceived provided we take great care in our judgments concerning them to include no more than what is strictly contained in our perception—no more than that of which we have inner awareness. But this is a very difficult rule to observe, at least with regard to sensations." (Descartes 1984 [1644], CSM 1:216)

It seems that for Descartes some basic mental events beyond the pure Cogito allow for direct, infallible awareness. We do not only know that we exist but also that we are seeing, hearing, and feeling. However, the translation of these basic sensations into judgements, that is predications, remains problematic and fallible. Thus, Descartes seems to agree that at least some predications about oneself can go wrong, yet the identification of the one who predicates, the use as subject, is immune to error.

"De se" consciousness

Another feature of self-consciousness that has become widely agreed is the necessity of "de se" consciousness in the case of self-consciousness. In parallel to Dieter Henrich's work (1966, 1970), Hector-Neri Castañeda (1966) pointed at the important distinction between "de re" knowledge and "de se" knowledge.[21] Henceforth, the claim has been elaborated by other philosophers like David Lewis

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[21] The locution "de se" was originally introduced by Lewis (1979), explicitly building on Castañeda's thoughts.

(1979), John Perry (1979), Roderick Chisholm (1981) and Manfred Frank (1991a, 2012, 2015).[22]

It is possible and has been shown in many thought experiments that a person can have correct knowledge about himself without knowing that it is himself that he has the knowledge about. Take, for example, a journalist named Marius, working as deputy chief editor for a newspaper X. He knows that his boss, the chief editor, is a fan of the Vienna Opera Ball and has bought tickets. Thus, Marius holds the belief "The chief editor of the newspaper X has tickets for the next Vienna Opera Ball". What Marius does not know is the fact that the owners of newspaper X just fired his boss and already announced Marius as new chief editor. To show their enthusiasm and trust they also bought him tickets for the next Vienna Opera Ball. As a consequence, Marius' belief is true for himself. Nevertheless, he is not conscious that he himself is now the chief editor and he himself has now tickets to the Vienna Opera Ball. So Marius has correct "de re" knowledge about himself but obviously you would not claim that his belief is a case of self-consciousness. Therefore, a stronger criterion is needed to constitute self-consciousness.

"De se" knowledge is knowledge where the person also knows that it is himself that he has knowledge about. Ernst Mach (2008 [1886], p. 34) gave an example that has been widely used to mark the difference. There was a time when he got on a bus and was stunned by the perception of another, shabby man entering the bus. He had the thought "What a shabby schoolmaster entering the bus!". A few moments later he realized that it was himself who he saw in a mirror when addressing the "shabby schoolmaster". So the proposition concerning the schoolmaster was correct "de re" knowledge. In fact there was a man entering the bus who assumingly looked like a shabby schoolmaster. However, Ernst Mach did not know that it was himself who looked like a shabby schoolmaster, so his thought could not be a case of self-consciousness. The moment later, when he realized that he had

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[22] Compare Cappelen and Dever's book (2013) for arguments why there is nothing special in "de se" attitudes.

actually looked in a mirror, was the moment when he acquired "de se" knowledge and self-consciousness accordingly.[23]

Given these examples, it becomes clear that "de se" is a necessary aspect of self-consciousness. We will see in our discussion of reflection theories in chapter 1.2.1. that they have some serious problems accounting for this aspect.

1.1.3. A word on terminology

As of today, there is no clear and common distinction between the terms self-consciousness, self-knowledge, and other notions like self-awareness in the literature. Compare Peacocke's recent remark:

> "Anyone who peruses writings on self-consciousness, […] is likely to be bewildered by the variety of phenomena included under that heading." (Peacocke 2014, p. 188)

For instance, in Peacocke's recent monograph (Peacocke 2014) he focusses on the term "self-consciousness" and understands it as pre-reflective, non-conceptual phenomenon that is more fundamental than the first person concept or the use of the word "I". Similarly, Zahavi (1999, 2005, 2014) keeps emphasizing that self-consciousness is more basic than reflective thoughts about ourselves. For Block, in contrast, self-consciousness is "the possession of the concept of the 'self' and the ability to use this concept in thinking about oneself." (Block 2007, p. 178). Similar to that, Rödl describes self-consciousness as "the nature of a subject that manifests itself in her thinking thoughts whose linguistic expression requires the use of the first person pronoun, 'I'." (Rödl 2007, p. vii). Musholt, too, understands self-consciousness as "the ability to think 'I'-thoughts" (Musholt 2015, p. xi). Cassam (2014) stays with the term "self-knowledge" to describe our capability to self-ascribe mental states but makes a distinction between trivial and substantial self-knowledge. Frank (2012, chapter 6; 2015, p. 17) uses the term self-knowledge

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[23] Note that Mach himself did not explicitly mention the difference between "de re" and "de se" knowledge. It can even be doubted if he was fully aware of the implications of his example. Instead, he claims in the passage surrounding the example that it is relative continuity of certain (de re) properties that make for the identity of an "I".

["Selbstwissen" in German] for the propositional yet pre-reflective ability to use the term "I" correctly and self-consciousness ["Selbstbewusstsein" in German] for its non-propositional counterpart. It can be seen that many different terminologies and many proposals to distinguish different aspects are present in the literature. One might even argue that the term consciousness is sometimes used to describe self-conscious mental states, such as in Kriegel's "self-representational theory of consciousness" (Kriegel 2009). We are confronted with a severe terminological ambiguity concerning the terms self-consciousness, self-knowledge, and perhaps even consciousness. It can be concluded that there is a common intuition that some kind of distinction should be made, even if there is no consensus about where exactly to draw the line.

Generally speaking, there might be a slight tendency to employ the term "self-knowledge" rather in the context of epistemology, dealing with propositions including the first person pronoun, and the term "self-consciousness" (or "consciousness") rather in the context of philosophy of mind, dealing with a more fundamental acquaintance with ourselves or our mental states. Given that this book is mostly concerned with the latter phenomenon, it will follow this broad tendency and focus on the term "self-consciousness" for the most part. Later in the book (chapter 4.1.), this terminological framework will be further elaborated. When fundamental self-consciousness, which is introduced as "self-feeling" here, will be related to higher levels of self-reflection, more terminological clarity is needed.

These introductory remarks should be enough to further proceed with the project of this book. Having sketched the scene of the contemporary philosophy of self-consciousness, it is now time to look closer at some problems in the field. The approach used in this book is inspired by the Heidelberg School of self-consciousness.

1.2. Challenges in current philosophy of self-consciousness – The Heidelberg School

This is the main chapter of part one of this book. It presents major challenges in the current widespread philosophy of self-consciousness based on the 2x2 matrix of current theories developed above (see table 1). In a word, reflective theories struggle with infinite regress and vicious circularity, no matter if they are egological or non-egological. Rosenthal's higher-order theory (Rosenthal 1986, 2005) serves as an example here. Furthermore, self-consciousness cannot simply be understood as propositional. Rödl's (2007) and Tugendhat's (1979) account are critically examined in this context. Current pre-reflective theories do not explain much about what self-consciousness actually is and thus suffer from what is here called the "ex negativo" challenge. Zahavi and Gallagher's account (Gallagher 2005; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008; Zahavi 1999, 2005, 2014) illustrates this issue. Non-egological theories, such as Kriegel's self-representationalism (Kriegel 2009) have problems to account for the unity of the phenomenon. Peacocke's (2014) recent proposal is discussed in this context, too.

The view on self-consciousness put forward in this book is significantly inspired by the Heidelberg School of self-consciousness (Dieter Henrich, Manfred Frank, Ulrich Pothast, and Konrad Cramer).[24] There are three reasons for why it makes sense to use their works and ideas as gateways into the specific problems to be addressed in this chapter.

First, the Heidelberg School was the earliest to present strong arguments against the mainstream of reflective (or higher-order) theories in the contemporary debate. They drew from a broad range of sources from the Greek Stoa, German Idealism, Phenomenology and Analytic Philosophy. Dieter Henrich initialised the project with

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[24] Konrad Cramer (1974) was an important protagonist in the early establishment and dissemination of the Heidelberg School. However, his texts are mainly concerned with detailed analyses and refutations of earlier theories of self-consciousness such as Husserl, the Neo-Kantians and Brentano. These historical discussions are of less importance for the project of this book.

two influential articles (1966; 1970)[25], Manfred Frank, Ulrich Pothast and Konrad Cramer (Cramer 1974; Frank 1969; Pothast 1971) quickly elaborated on his initial thoughts in the following years and formed a comprehensive philosophical position. Although the thoughts of the Heidelberg School were ground-breaking and essentially innovative, there was little response and discussion directly referring to them. Henrich was in contact with influential analytic philosophers (e.g. Sidney Shoemaker and Hector-Neri Castañeda) with a similar perspective. In fact, he was a visiting professor at Harvard and Columbia University for several years. Still, analytic philosophers were reluctant in direct quotations.[26] In the late 1990ies, Dan Zahavi (1999) developed a similar theory of pre-reflective self-consciousness, inspired by the Heidelberg School. In current debates on pre-reflective approaches to self-consciousness, Zahavi remains the main point of reference. This is a shortcoming in today's discussion. The Heidelberg School offers potentially fruitful insights that have not been captured by Zahavi's theory.

This leads to their second advantage. We will see in chapter 1.3. that the texts of the Heidelberg School include several pointers to the fact that problems of self-consciousness might be solved by looking closer to human affectivity. This has remained largely unnoticed in the debate. Yet, Dieter Henrich and especially Manfred Frank and Ulrich Pothast explicitly try to understand self-consciousness at least partly as an affective phenomenon. This makes the Heidelberg School the ideal starting point for the project of this book.

Given these two advantages in the context of this book, it makes sense to present their views as a starting point. In addition to their systematic value for this book, a

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[25] Compare e.g. Hart's assessment „It was the essay by Dieter Henrich on ‚Fichte's Original Insight' which inaugurated an era of research and debate on self-consciousness as well as the beginnings of the fruitful meditations by ‚the Heidelberg School' on Castañeda and other analytic philosophers" (Castañeda 1999, p. 25).

[26] Compare Musholt's recent book on self-consciousness as a notable exception (Musholt 2015). It contains some remarks to the Heidelberg School. Dieter Freundlieb's (2003) reconstructive book is one of the rare attempts to make Henrich's systematic work more visible in the English-speaking world. Conversely, Sebastian Rödl (2007), in his book on self-consciousness, develops an account astonishingly similar to Henrich's work almost without referring back to him. He mentions Henrich only once (p. 101, footnote 21) in a rather peripheral context.

more detailed presentation of their work may contribute to extend their general exposure in today's debates, especially among English speaking philosophers. Usually, the Heidelberg School is seen as a rather monolithic, theoretical block. It is supposed that Henrich's foundation was only elaborated by his students but that the claims remained more or less stable. In contrast to that, it will be shown that there are notable differences between the representatives of this School. Henrich's foundational work was significantly altered and developed further in later writings of Frank (1986, 1991a, 2002a, 2012, 2015) and Pothast (1988, 1998). For example, Frank challenged Henrich's claim that self-consciousness must be a thought (e.g. Frank 2002a, p. 92, pp. 144, chapter 12; Frank 2012, chapter 6) and pointed to a general shortcoming of non-egological theories regarding the question of unity (e.g. 2012, chapter 1). In fact, the term "Heidelberg School" was a polemical, external prescription introduced by Ernst Tugendhat (1979) to present his own critique. As time went by, the term has persisted to refer to their thinking, thereby obstructing the fact that there are significant differences and developments within this line of thought. Notwithstanding, this book will not abandon the term "Heidelberg School". It shall be used to refer to the basic, common convictions in their thinking, e.g. their refutation of reflective theories of self-consciousness. Since Manfred Frank uses the term as well, even in his most recent writings (Frank 2012, 2015), this seems fair to them.

1.2.1. Dieter Henrich: Self-consciousness is pre-reflective

Dieter Henrich is one of the last defenders of subjectivity in contemporary philosophy (Freundlieb 2003; Slaby and Bernhardt 2015). His fundamental arguments against reflective theories of self-consciousness have been introduced in a historical interpretation of Fichte's work on self-consciousness (Henrich 1966) and in a more systematic discussion of by then alternative theories of self-consciousness (Henrich 1970).

Fichte's original insight: Reflective theories of self-consciousness fail

In Henrich's view (1966), Fichte's work marks an epochal change in the philosophy of self-consciousness. Earlier philosophers of subjectivity like Descartes, Leibniz or Kant placed the subject at the core of their theories. For them the "I" was the highest principle of reason and last resort of certainty. Thus, they represented an important step forward into philosophy of modernity different from previous, scholastic approaches. However, Fichte confronted their theories with two major limitations, as Henrich showed: First, they set the subject as highest principle but failed to develop a theory of its inner structure. They were so enthusiastic about its justifying function in reason that they were not interested in exploring what the "I" in itself actually is. Second, they all had models of self-consciousness that today are called reflection (or higher-order monitoring) theories. These can be seriously contested, as will be shown shortly.

Reflective accounts of self-consciousness presuppose a duality. First, there is a perceiving (or reflecting) entity. Second, there is a perceived (or reflected) entity. Whenever self-consciousness occurs, it is understood as a relationship between the perceiving entity and the perceived entity, insofar as the former identifies itself with the latter. Henrich states:

> "One might call this the *reflection theory of self-consciousness*. The theory starts from the assumption that entities which have self-consciousness can execute acts of reflection which enable them to isolate their own states and activities thematically and to bring them to explicit consciousness." (Henrich 1971b, p. 10)

Reflection theories face two significant difficulties. First, there is the problem of infinite regress. An infinite regress occurs when an explanation of a phenomenon is deferred ad infinitum. Put more formally, in reflection models of self-consciousness there is a lower-level b1 that is made self-conscious by a higher-level b2 that has b1 as its object. Take first the case of non-egological reflective theories, where the bearer of self-consciousness is a mental state.[27] B1 could be the mental state

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[27] In this non-egological case the terminological difference between "self-consciousness" and "consciousness" seems to disappear. As stated above, the term "self" here refers to the mental state

"seeing an apple". Based on the assumption of the reflection theory b1 would be unconscious at first. B1 can only become self-conscious by means of another, higher-order mental state b2. B2 recognizes that "there is a mental state b1 "seeing an apple"" and this makes b1 self-conscious. However, b2 is not per se self-conscious. At first, it occurs as unconscious mental state. In order to make b2 self-conscious we need another, even higher-order mental state b3. The mental state b3 would then be "There is a mental state b2 "There is a mental state b1 "seeing an apple"""". Obviously this model leads to an infinite regress, because b3 is not per se self-conscious as well. One always needs an additional higher level mental state to capture the former, ad infinitum. Thus, the explanation why a mental state is self-conscious is deferred one level after the other, without reaching an endpoint. This makes for the problem of infinite regress in non-egological, reflective theories.

The same problem applies for egological, reflective accounts of self-consciousness, where the bearer of self-consciousness is an "Ego". It starts with an "Ego" having an intentional state[28] b1 "I see an apple". There is an experience b1 that is had by an "Ego" E1. In order for this "Ego" to be self-conscious it must not only be conscious of the apple but also of itself as the bearer of this experience. The egological, reflective account now argues that in order to make E1 self-conscious it needs a higher-order entity E2. E2 is some kind of higher-order "Ego" that reflects a lower-order "Ego" E1. As can be seen, this leads to an infinite regress, too. E2 would remain unconscious as long as there is no even higher-order "Ego" E3 to make it self-conscious, and ad infinitum. Thus, in the egological, reflective account the explanation why an "Ego" is self-conscious is deferred to an infinite row of higher-order entities. This makes for an infinite regress in this case, too.

Equally important is the second problem, the problem of vicious circularity. A vicious circle is a proof that presupposes what it wants to prove. When in an explanation one or more of the premises is repeated in the conclusion, one speaks

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that is (self-)conscious. Thus, it seems in the non-egological view any "conscious" mental state is "self-conscious" at the same time.

[28] We do not go into details about what an intentional state is but it can be assumed here that it entails a subject that is conscious of something.

of a vicious circle. Reflective theories of self-consciousness commit a vicious circle in two ways (Henrich 1966, 1970).

First, we saw above that reflective accounts assume that every mental state is unconscious at first. A mental state can only become self-conscious with the help of another (unconscious) mental state. We see that ex ante there are only unconscious mental states in the reflective account. The challenge is then about how should self-consciousness emerge out of a set of completely unconscious states? The only explanation seems to be that self-consciousness was implicitly already there. Otherwise it remains dark how the combination of two unconscious states should make for self-consciousness. Thinking of it, there are many unconscious states in the human mind, only some of them become self-conscious. The reflection theory has a hard time explaining which of the many unconscious states should become self-conscious if there is not self-consciousness implicitly already there. Ned Block puts this problem as follows:

> "Why should it be that when we put together an unconscious pain with an unconscious thought about it, you get conscious pain?" (Block 2011a, pp. 421f.)

This is the first way in which reflective theories are prone to vicious circularity.

Second, there is vicious circularity in virtue of the "de se" constraint. There is a substantial difference between consciousness of an external object (b1 "seeing an apple") and consciousness of consciousness, namely self-consciousness. The difference lies exactly in the identity condition. In self-consciousness the perceiving entity must be identical with the perceived entity and know about it, it needs to have the status of "de se" consciousness.[29] For non-egological reflective theories a self-conscious mental state has to know that it is itself it is self-conscious of in its self-consciousness. So the higher-order state b2 has to be conscious not only of the lower-order state b1 but also of the fact that b1 and b2 are identical. However, to be able to perform this identification self-consciousness must be already in place or

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[29] This has been pointed out by various philosophers in the past (Castañeda 1999; Chisholm 1981; Frank 1991a; Henrich 1971b, 1982a; Lewis 1979; Perry 1979; Shoemaker 1968)

b1 and b2 must be strictly the same state. Both options are impossible in the reflective account. For egological reflective theories, the "Ego" has to know that it is itself it is self-conscious of in self-consciousness. Self-consciousness can only occur if the perceiving subject identifies with the perceived subject. If the perceiving subject did not know that it is identical to the perceived subject, it would not be able to identify the two. Hence, self-consciousness is already presupposed in the egological reflection model. I would not recognize myself as myself had I not already known myself as myself. Again, we see a vicious circle. To sum up, the reflection theory not only leads to an infinite regress, it also presupposes what it claims to prove and is insofar subject to a vicious circle. Self-consciousness is already presupposed in reflective theories. Henrich summarizes this conclusion in the following way:

> "It is not difficult to see that the reflection theory is circular: if we assume that reflection is an activity performed by a subject - and this assumption is hard to avoid - it is clear that reflections presuppose an 'I' which is capable of initiating activity spontaneously, for the 'I' as a kind of quasi-act cannot become aware of its reflection only *after* the act. It must *perform* the reflection and be conscious of what it does at the same time as it does it [...] Consequently, in reflection a consciousness of the subject is *presupposed*; and regardless of whether this reflection is understood as an act of the 'I' or not, the reflection theory can at most explain explicit experience of self, but no self-consciousness as such." (Henrich 1971b, p. 11)

Note that these problems must not be understood as shortcomings of only some specific variants of reflection theories. As Henrich convincingly shows, all reflection theories are in principle faced with the problems of infinite regress and vicious circularity. He argues:

> "This peculiarity of self-consciousness cannot be explained with the help of any sort of reflexive relation on the 'I' to itself. Such an explanation must necessarily turn out to be circular - even disregarding all the special problems connected with the reflection theory. In order to arrive at an identification of itself, the *'I'* must already know under what conditions it can attribute that which it encounters, or that with which it becomes acquainted, to itself." (Henrich 1971b, p. 12)

Further:

> "*Either* the 'I' which relates to itself as subject is *already* conscious of itself; then the theory is circular as an explanation of consciousness, since it presupposes not only consciousness, but even self-consciousness. *Or* the 'I' as subject is *not* conscious of

itself and has no acquaintance with itself - in which case it cannot be understood how it could ever come to be in a position to predicate anything of itself, to recognize anything it encountered as itself, or even to, examine what it encountered with a view to determining whether or not it belonged to itself. (Henrich 1971b, p. 13)

Contemporary versions of the reflection model

Despite these fundamental objections, in contemporary philosophy of mind there is a strong tradition of reflection theories, subsumed under the term "higher-order theories" (Armstrong 1968, 1984; Carruthers 1996, 2000, 2005; Dennett 1991; Gennaro 1996, 2012; Lycan 1996; Rosenthal 1986, 1993b, 2005). Their internal differences set aside, they all claim that what makes a mental state self-conscious is a higher-order representation of a certain sort (be it a higher-order perception or thought). It can be demonstrated that Henrich's (or Fichte's) objections are still valid today by examining one of the most prominent of these approaches, namely David Rosenthal's "higher-order thought theory" (Rosenthal 1986, 1993a, 1993b, 1997, 2005).[30] Rosenthal develops his account in rejection of higher-order perception theories (Armstrong 1968, 1984; Lycan 1996), which follow the traditional inner sense model (e.g. John Locke). Rosenthal claims:

> "Since we don't sense or perceive our conscious states, it must be that we are conscious of those states by having thoughts about them. And, because these thoughts are about other mental states, we can call them *higher-order thoughts* (HOTs)."(Rosenthal 2005, p. 5)

> "We are conscious of something, on this model, when we have a thought about it. So a mental state will be conscious if it is accompanied by a thought about that states. The occurrence of such a higher-order thought (HOT) makes us conscious of the mental state; so the state we are conscious of is a conscious state. Similarly, when no such HOT occurs, we are unaware of being in the mental state in question, and the state is then not a conscious state. The core of the theory, then, is that a mental state is a conscious state when, and only when, it is accompanied by a suitable HOT." (Rosenthal 1997, p. 741)

> "On the present account, conscious mental states are mental states that cause the occurrence of higher-order thoughts that one is in those mental states." (Rosenthal 1986, p. 338)

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[30] Kriegel (2009, p. 3 footnote) sees Rosenthal's account as "most worked-out version of higher-order theory".

As can be seen, Rosenthal's account can be legitimately addressed as reflective.[31] He believes that higher-order thoughts are responsible for making a mental state conscious. Mental states are conscious insofar as they are accompanied by a higher-order thought. For example, the mental state b1 "seeing a tree" is made conscious by the higher-order thought b2 "there is a mental state b1 "seeing a tree"" and would remain unconscious without this thought. Note, that it is essential for higher-order monitoring theories that there are two separate states involved: the primary mental state and the secondary higher-order thought that makes the former conscious.

> "The higher-order states in virtue of which we are conscious of ourselves as being in various mental states are distinct from those first-order targets, and they describe those targets." (Rosenthal 2005, p. 15)

It is quite obvious that Rosenthal's theory falls into the trap of the reflection model.[32] There is a primary mental state b1 that is made conscious by virtue of a higher-order thought b2. This higher-order thought b2 would remain unconscious unless there is an additional higher-order thought b3 to make b2 conscious, and so ad infinitum. It seems that there are two options for Rosenthal. Either he accepts infinite regress and thereby the collapse of his account or he claims that the ultimate, highest-order thought remains per definition unconscious. In defence of the first option, Rosenthal (1986, p. 352) states that he does not want to give a conceptual analysis but rather a reductive explanation. Therefore, an infinite regress would be acceptable, he claims. Without going in detail into this methodological debate, an account that runs in such paradoxes seems rather unsatisfying. Regarding the second option, Rosenthal indeed claims that there are unconscious higher-order thoughts:

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[31] Note that Rosenthal speaks of making a state conscious instead of self-conscious. But this difference remains at the terminological level. In this book, non-egological theories of self-consciousness are understood to explore what makes mental states accessible for conscious experience. Rosenthal deals with the same problem, despite using a different name for the phenomenon.

[32] Objections of this kind are not exclusive to the Heidelberg School or this book. See e.g. the controversy with Block (Block 2011a, 2011c; Rosenthal 2011; Weisberg 2011), Zahavi (1999, 2005), Kriegel (2009), Williford (2006), or Rowlands (2001).

> "But higher-order thoughts are not automatically conscious, any more than other mental states are. They are conscious only when we have a yet higher-order thought that we have such a thought. […] It may seem slightly odd that each of these hierarchies of conscious mental states has a nonconscious thought at its top. But whatever air of paradox there seems to be here is dispelled by the commonsense truism that we cannot be conscious of everything at once." (Rosenthal 1986, p. 338)

As can be seen, Rosenthal concedes that he can only avoid an infinite regress by claiming ultimate, unconscious thoughts. Such an account leaves us unsatisfied. It does not sufficiently explain how self-consciousness works because it cannot even explain how a single mental state becomes ultimately conscious without referring to a unconscious "black box" on top. What is really explained in an account of consciousness when it is ultimately traced back to an unconscious higher-order thought? It feels we are thrown back to Kant's transcendental "Ich an sich" that cannot be explained at all.

Recently, there has been some empirical work in neuroscience that was interpreted to support higher-order theories (Lau and Rosenthal 2011a, 2011b). Roughly speaking, evidence seems to suggest a relation between a conscious visual experience and activity in the visual cortex and in the pre-frontal cortex. It is assumed that there is a higher-order representation in the pre-frontal cortex that makes the signals in the visual cortex conscious. This is then interpreted as support for higher-order theories. In principle, any effort to increase exchange of ideas and results between philosophy and the empirical sciences should be welcome. However, several objections can be raised against this particular claim. First, there is counterevidence suggesting that in fact there can be conscious (phenomenal) experience without involvement of the pre-frontal cortex (Block 2005, 2011b). Second, even if the evidence was convincing the regress problem would still remain. Take the information in the visual cortex as b1 "seeing an apple". Take the activity in the prefrontal cortex as b2 "there is a mental state b1 "seeing an apple"". How does b2, the activity in the prefrontal cortex, become conscious? Is there an activity in another region of the brain or in the prefrontal cortex? And how would this activity then become conscious? It can be seen, the mere application of the higher-

order account to assumed neural correlates is not enough to solve a significant conceptual problem. Third, the hard problem of consciousness remains, too (Chalmers 1996). Even if neuroscience presents evidence for activities in brain regions, there is no necessary link to phenomenally conscious states. How can we be sure that an activity in the prefrontal cortex is the actual correlate to higher-order monitoring thoughts? As things are now, this remains dark.[33]

Generally speaking, the source of the problems of reflection models lies in the presumption of a duality in self-consciousness. The moment we use concepts of "reflection" or "monitoring" in an account of self-consciousness we are trapped in the problems of infinite regress and vicious circularity. Therefore, and this is Fichte's and Henrich's ground-breaking conclusion, we need to employ a pre-reflective account of self-consciousness.

> "Thus the task is to describe consciousness, so that it is neither knowing self-reference nor identification with itself. But the description must be of such a nature as clearly to show that we are immediately acquainted with consciousness, so that no case of consciousness is possible in which doubts about its own existence occur." (Henrich 1971b, p. 19)

To avoid the problems of reflection models self-consciousness has to be thought of as pre-reflective phenomenon.

Self-consciousness is non-objectifying, non-identifying, and pre-reflective

The Heidelberg School is well-known for their "negative approach" to self-consciousness (see e.g. Tugendhat 1979; Zahavi 1999). Dieter Henrich and his students profoundly refute the reflection model. They show what self-consciousness is not. Building on Henrich, his student Manfred Frank suggests the following basic (negative) characteristics of self-consciousness (Frank 1986, 1991a, 2012).

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[33] Note, however, that this book remains neutral regarding the debate between physicalism and anti-physicalism. It seems not impossible that at some point science will present evidence that will profoundly transform our thinking about consciousness and may even make the hard problem obsolete.

Self-consciousness is non-objectifying and non-relational. As has been shown by Henrich, every approach that holds self-consciousness to be a relation between a subject and an object will fail. When there is one entity (subject) that takes another entity or itself as an object, how should the subject know that it is itself it is taking as an object? You either start an infinite regress or presuppose self-consciousness in the first place and commit a vicious circle. The moment we introduce a duality in the phenomenon we are faced with the problems of infinite regress and vicious circularity. The above-made refutation of the reflection model should have shown that sufficiently. Frank summarizes his conclusion as follows:

> „The conclusion that a non-circular theory of subjectivity had to draw […] would be that subjectivity is not at all a case of relation […] Thus, Dieter Henrich and some of his students proposed - in radical denial of the colloquially suggested interpretation as reflective relationship of elements - to interpret self-consciousness as completely non-relational." (Frank 2012, p. 49, translated by G.K.)[34]

Self-consciousness is non-identifying. Identification in this context means that something is identified as myself and that this phenomenon is considered as self-consciousness. Accordingly, identification here presupposes multiple entities, one being identified with another. Wherever there is identification there must be more than one phenomena to be identified with each other. Therefore, with identification comes duality and thus, if we consider identification to be a part of self-consciousness, we also and necessarily have to accept duality. This duality leads to the relation of an identifying with an identified entity and consequently to the problems of the reflection model. How should the identifying entity know that it is itself it is identifying with? "De se" consciousness cannot be the outcome of a process of identification. It must already be there. So with identification in self-

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[34] Most of Henrich's and Frank's writings have not been translated into English. Therefore, my own translations are provided in the text and the original German quotations in footnotes: „Der Schluss, den eine zirkelfreie Theorie von Subjektivität […] zu ziehen hätte, wäre aber, dass Subjektivität überhaupt kein Fall von Beziehung ist […] So haben Dieter Henrich und einige seiner Schüler vorgeschlagen, Selbstbewusstsein – in radikaler Ablehnung von seiner durch die Umgangssprache nahegelegten Selbstdeutung als eines reflexiven Verhältnisses zwischen Gliedern einer Relation – als vollkommen beziehungsfrei zu deuten."

consciousness we are bound to vicious circularity. Additionally, identification can go wrong. I can falsely identify "this car" with "my car". Conversely, in self-consciousness there is no error through misidentification. Thus, self-consciousness cannot be an identification, which has also been pointed out by Shoemaker (1968, p. 556).

Self-consciousness is pre-reflective. A theory that understands self-consciousness as objectifying, reflective, identifying relation leads to a vicious circle or an infinite regress. Therefore, self-consciousness must be understood as instantaneous and direct. Self-consciousness is a pre-reflective, non-relational, single-digit phenomenon. There is no duality, inner perception, representation, etc., involved. Every conscious state is in itself self-intimating. We do not need to make conscious states conscious in an additional act of reflection or representation. Frank:

> „We come to the conclusion: Self-consciousness must not only be understood as pre-reflective but also as completely irrelational." (Frank 2012, p. 397, translated by G.K.)[35]

Self-consciousness is irreducible "de se" consciousness. As has been shown, self-consciousness is "sui generis". It cannot be reduced to other forms of factual consciousness (like "de dicto" or "de re") because it includes consciousness of oneself as oneself. Whenever we have a conscious state, we immediately are aware of the fact that it is us having this conscious state. When reading a book, there is no point in asking "Is it me reading this book?". Our conscious states are straightaway present as our own conscious states. Zahavi (2005, p. 12) described this phenomenon as "first-personal givenness" of experience. In every conscious experience it is instantaneously clear that it is had by myself in a first-personal way.

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[35] "Wir kommen zu dem Schluss: Selbstbewusstsein muss nicht nur als präreflexiv, sondern überhaupt als irrelational gedacht werden."

With these fairly negative characteristics, Frank summarizes Henrich's fundamental claim about self-consciousness. Interestingly, some central ideas to pre-reflective self-consciousness can already be found in the philosophy of the ancient Stoa.

Ancient origins of pre-reflective self-consciousness in Stoic philosophy

The origin of the idea of pre-reflective self-consciousness can be found in Greek Stoa (Frank 2002a, pp. 28ff.; Henrich 1982c, chapters 3 and 4). Especially Chrysipp and Hierocles argued that we are aware of ourselves without reflection or other explicit mental activity (Lee 2002). The „self" is primarily not an object of inner observation or reflection. Instead, we are primarily and directly acquainted with ourselves. Hierocles argued in a famous example that even babies have a basic self-awareness insofar as they are conscious of the difference between themselves and the rest of the world. They prefer acts and things that support their life and avoid acts and things that threaten their life. At this age we can suppose that the baby is not engaged in reflective activities or higher-order thoughts to acquire self-consciousness. Instead, it seems more plausible that the baby is self-conscious without reflection.[36]

We can find the founding principles of pre-reflective self-consciousness also in the Stoic concept of "Oikeiosis" (Henrich 1982c; Lee 2002, chapter 4).[37] Self-consciousness is strongly interconnected with self-preservation. Only insofar as I am conscious of myself I can effectively act to preserve myself. If I were not aware of myself I would not know what or whom to preserve. Likewise, self-consciousness is only possible on the ground of self-preservation. Only if there is endurance and an ongoing process of my life, self-consciousness is a useful function. Self-consciousness constitutively needs continuity of my life and therefore self-

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[36] Note that modern developmental psychology has presented evidence that even the basic difference self - other can be disturbed in the early days of human life. Still, it seems convincing that babies develop the ability to make this distinction pre-reflectively before they learn such sophisticated mental activities as inner observation and reflection.

[37] Note that this interpretation of Stoic thoughts is not uncontroversial (see e.g. Bees 2004, for an alternative view). However, this book cannot engage in a detailed historical reconstruction of Stoic philosophy.

preservation. The concept of "Oikeiosis" integrates these two elements. We are pre-reflectively self-aware and engaged in self-preservation.

Interestingly enough, Hierocles sees body and soul strongly interconnected in self-consciousness. As Lee shows (2002, chapter 4), he makes strong claims on the nature of „self" that can easily be integrated in contemporary debates on embodied self-consciousness or self-feeling. Hierocles argues that the soul is also bodily, soul and body are in constant composition but never homogenized to a single entity. Additionally, there is an interplay between the two elements, e.g. the soul can experience the world through the body (e.g. in touching). Consequently, all experience of the world is also self-experience. Whenever we are conscious of something in the world we are also conscious of us making this experience. Pre-reflective self-consciousness is thus always co-present in conscious experience of the world.

As can be seen, we find some of the most central claims of the concept of pre-reflective self-consciousness already in the philosophy of the Stoa. Self-consciousness is primary, pre-reflective, and non-objectifying. We are aware of ourselves before the occurrence of any reflective thought and without inner perception of our mental states or ourselves as objects. Every conscious experience already bears its "first-personal character". We are immediately conscious that it is our own experience when we are having it.

Self-consciousness and self-reflection

On the one hand, it has been shown that reflective accounts of self-consciousness face serious problems and therefore an alternative is needed. On the other hand, taking our everyday life experience into account, we must acknowledge the fact that we actually *can* reflect upon ourselves. It is possible that I explicitly engage in self-monitoring and consciously reflect on myself or my mental states respectively. I can have thoughts about my mental states and for instance ask myself "Am I really

seeing an apple?" or "Do I want this apple?".[38] Thus, it would be implausible if a theory neglected this possibility.

This shows that higher-order monitoring theories need not be discarded altogether. It is only their function that has to be understood in a different way. We need an account for the fact that we are pre-reflectively self-conscious *and* an account to explain how we can think and reflect upon our mental states and ourselves. Many contemporary theories of self-consciousness fall short in this regard.

Higher-order theories cannot properly explain how unconscious mental states become self-conscious but they can be part of an explanation how self-conscious mental states become part of higher-order, reflective, propositional thinking about ourselves. We have pre-reflectively self-conscious mental states and then, dependent on these, we may have more elaborate, propositional thoughts on them.[39] Importantly, this dependence is directional. There is no higher-order thought without pre-reflective self-consciousness but there may be pre-reflective self-consciousness without higher-order thoughts. This idea is not all new. In his work on "self-blindness" Shoemaker (1996) argued that "use as object" (reflective thoughts about ourselves) is dependent on "use as subject" (or pre-reflective self-consciousness). A self-blind person is someone who can have various mental states but can become aware of their truth in a third person perspective only (Shoemaker 1996, pp. 30f.). Shoemaker argued that self-blindness is conceptually impossible for a rational being. We can only hold propositions about ourselves as objects given that we already are acquainted with ourselves as subjects. I have to be pre-reflectively aware that the subject I am referring to in thoughts about myself is myself. Any reflective thought about myself needs a point of reference, a mental state that it is reflecting on. Self-referring thoughts are only possible because we

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[38] And these examples are only the beginning. We can also explicitly reflect on our deeper beliefs, values, desires, etc. We can (and occasionally do) ask ourselves questions like "What do I want to do with my life?" or "What do I think about current problems of inequality in society?". More on this in part four of this book.
[39] Compare this to Block's similar proposal concluding his critique of higher-order theories (Block 2011a)

already are self-conscious. I can doubt my perceptions in reflection only because I am already conscious that they are my perceptions, because I am directly and pre-reflectively aware of them. Necessarily, I need to be pre-reflectively acquainted with this mental state, otherwise I could not refer to it as my own mental state in a process of self-reflection. For example, we can only refer to our bodies as *our* bodies if pre-reflective self-consciousness ("use as subject") is already in place. When I say "I weigh 70 kg" it is presupposed that I am conscious of the fact that this body I am referring to is mine. The "use as object" of the first person pronoun "I" only makes sense it I am already aware of myself as myself. Thus, "de se" consciousness is a necessary condition for any sensible description of my body. Peacocke's (2014) recent book on self-consciousness argues along similar lines. The primary phenomenon for him is a pre-reflective "primitive self-representation" (Peacocke 2014, chapter 2) that is the foundation for all higher-order capabilities such as the first person concept.[40]

As can be seen, it makes sense to establish a distinction between pre-reflective self-consciousness and higher-order reflective thoughts about oneself. This higher level of self-reflection will be explored in more detail in part four of this book. Henrich also points at this distinction:

> "The question, 'Who am I really?' is weighty enough and probably can never be answered completely, and certainly never with complete certainty. But this question presupposes that the question, 'Am I, I - this I, the I of which I am aware, me?' has already been answered, or rather that any answer except "Yes" is utterly absurd, and hence that the question itself is meaningless. The indicator 'I', assuming it to be used in its proper sense, cannot fail to refer." (Henrich 1971b, p. 12)

In conclusion, Dieter Henrich made a notable contribution to the philosophy of self-consciousness. Most importantly, he presented convincing arguments against reflective models of self-consciousness.

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[40] Bermudez (1998) argues along similar lines, too.

1.2.2. Manfred Frank: Is self-consciousness propositional?

Above we saw that there are at least two levels: Basic, pre-reflective self-consciousness and higher-order, reflective thoughts about ourselves. Henrich offers a suggestion how the two can be related. His answer to the problem is built on his claim that pre-reflective self-consciousness is essentially propositional. It is pre-reflective in the sense that it is not the outcome of an inner perception or inner monitoring. Instead, Henrich takes it to be a primordial thought. Self-consciousness for him is a thought that is direct, immediate and primary. This primordial thought is constitutive for the subject. The subject is subject only insofar as it has propositional thoughts about itself:

> "Thus the subject *is* really nothing without its thoughts, insofar as it knows something about itself in this propositional sense. One can even say that it is nothing without being in its thoughts." (Henrich 1999, pp. 63f.; translated by G.K.) [41]

> "So one is led to the conclusion that what makes us a subject is real in a specific thought that is continued through a lifetime – with necessity and without all that must be performed with effort in reasoning." (Henrich 2007, p. 33, translated by G.K.)[42]

Henrich's pre-reflective but propositional account of self-consciousness gives him the possibility to sketch the path from pre-reflective self-consciousness to reflective thoughts about ourselves. The very basic phenomenon in human subjectivity is the primordial thought of self-consciousness. The propositional thought "I exist" is primarily given, without reflection or inference. Based on this thought of self-consciousness other, reflective thoughts can occur. I can ask myself "What did I dream last night?" or "Do I prefer vanilla or chocolate ice cream?" The answers to such questions are part of the realm of reflection. They may be based on inner monitoring, they are propositional and they can be false in many possible ways.

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[41] „Und so *ist* das Subjekt, insoweit es in diesem propositionalen Sinn von sich etwas weiß, wirklich selbst gar nichts ohne seine Gedanken. Man darf sogar sagen, dass es nichts sei, ohne in seinen Gedanken zu sein."

[42] „So wird man also wieder zu der Folgerung geführt, dass das, was uns als Subjekt ausmacht, geradezu darin wirklich ist, dass ein bestimmter Gedanke unterhalten ist und sich durch ein Leben kontinuiert – mit Notwendigkeit und ohne all das, was als eine Anstrengung im Denken vollzogen werden muss."

However, this part of Henrich's account can be significantly challenged, as his student Manfred Frank showed.

Building on Henrich's groundwork, Manfred Frank is one of the strongest promoters of the Heidelberg School of self-consciousness. Although he was a student of Henrich in the 1960ies and 1970ies, Frank has been developing his own distinctive approach since the early days of his academic career. His approach differs in two important aspects from Henrich's work. First, Frank is clearly inspired by the period of early romantic philosophy. Beginning with his first published contribution to self-consciousness in 1969[43] (Frank 1969) until today, Frank brings early romantic ideas into the contemporary debate. Besides, he is also known as a distinctive expert for this historic period in general. This intimacy with early romantic philosophy becomes visible in many of his claims. For example, Frank sees self-consciousness not as propositional but as non-propositional. For him, it has many similarities to the romantic notion of "self-feeling".[44] Secondly, Frank's methodology differs from Henrich's. While Henrich focusses on developing his own concepts and arguing for them in an idealistic, often speculative manner, Frank heavily uses references and quotes both from historic and contemporary philosophers. Frank is developing his own argument by working in detail with other texts and thereby showing their contributions and shortcomings. In doing so, he clearly positions the Heidelberg School in the contemporary debate and avoids the risk that it might be seen as a merely historically oriented approach.

Frank's strong claim: self-consciousness is non-propositional

Frank's major move beyond Henrich is his claim that self-consciousness is not a thought but strictly non-propositional (Frank 1986, pp. 72ff.; Frank 2002a, p. 92, pp. 144, chapter 12; Frank 2012, chapter 6; Frank 2015, pp. 17ff.):

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[43] Which has originally been introduced as a seminar paper in 1967 (see Frank 2007, p. 11).
[44] Chapter 1.3.2. will elaborate on these points.

> "We must thus suppose a non-objectifying, non-propositional knowledge that is appropriately addressed with the denomination 'pre-reflective consciousness' ('pre-reflective knowledge' respectively)." (Frank 2012, p. 24, translated by G.K.)[45]

Propositions are normally expressed in thoughts of the form "A has the property b", e.g. "this book is green". They have some general features, for example: Propositions need more than one element, just saying "The book" is not enough to form a proposition. Propositions identify, they bring their elements in relation (The book on the one hand and its greenness on the other hand). Propositions can be false, I can err in my belief that "this book is green". The book could be red. Propositions are expressed in language, they occur for instance in speech acts, written sentences or thoughts.

Building on Shoemaker (1968) and Lewis (1979), Frank shows that self-consciousness misses all these general properties. First, self-consciousness does not need more than one element. On the contrary, self-consciousness can only be understood properly as non-relational. The moment we introduce a relation into self-consciousness we are trapped in infinite regress or vicious circularity. Second, self-consciousness is not an identification. Identification presupposes more than one element so that one can be identified with the other. This duality is impossible in self-consciousness, as we saw above. Third, self-consciousness cannot go wrong. Whenever I am self-conscious the fact that I am self-conscious is self-evident. It is undoubtedly true that the experience that I have is my own. It would be absurd to say someone thinks she is self-conscious but this is not true. Fourth, self-consciousness need not be verbally expressed. There is a form of self-consciousness that also small children or higher mammals have. For example it is possible to pass the mirror test[46] without being able to say (or think) a single word (Peacocke 2014, p. 192). As a result, Frank claims that self-consciousness should be understood as non-propositional. In his own words:

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[45] "Wir müssen also ein ungegenständliches, nichtpropositionales Wissen annehmen, das unter der Denomination 'präreflexives Bewusstsein' (bzw. ‚präreflexives Wissen') angemessen aufgehoben ist."

[46] Gordon Gallup's (Gallup 1970, 1979) famous mirror test tests the ability to recognize oneself in a mirror. For example the forehead of a test person is unconsciously marked with a black spot. Then it is observed if the test person recognizes the spot in the mirror as being on his own forehead.

> "All knowledge (of something) is propositional, except the one present in *self*-consciousness. Its object is not 'something', neither in the sense of a nominalised proposition 'that φ' nor as 'object' in the objective sense of perception." (Frank 2012, p. 190, translated by G.K.)[47]

One might even go one step further and claim that self-consciousness is non-conceptual. However, there is a large and complex debate on what concepts actually are which this book cannot do justice to.[48] Thus, no strong claims will be made here in this regard. Most of the protagonists seem to agree that concepts are meant to describe general aspects of a phenomenon and can be applied to single cases. As Castañeda (1999) has also shown, the use of "I" does not imply that the speaker marks himself as one single representative of the general concept of "I". Using the word "I" does not imply a mere representation of a general category but has its own, distinctive meaning. We do not have the concept "I" in our minds, just like the concepts of "work", "love", "family", and apply it to specific, proper cases, that is ourselves. Instead, the use of "I" is something distinct. Therefore, it seems hard to understand self-consciousness as conceptual.[49]

Self-consciousness and "self-knowledge" in Frank

In his most recent publications (Frank 2012, chapter 6; 2015, pp. 17f.), Frank presents his own distinction between non-propositional, non-egological self-consciousness and propositional, egological "self-knowledge"[50] ["Selbstwissen" in

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[47] "Alles Wissen (von etwas) ist propositional, außer demjenigen, das im *Selbst*bewusstsein vorliegt. Sein Gegenstand ist kein ‚etwas', weder im Sinne einer nominalisierten Proposition ‚dass φ' noch als ein ‚Gegenstand' im objektiven Sinne eines Wahrgenommen- und Vorgestelltseins."

[48] See Margolis and Laurence (2014) for a general overview. Within the debate on self-consciousness, compare e.g. Peacocke (2008, 2014), Hurley (1998), Rödl (2007), and Bermudez (1998) for their take on concepts.

[49] Frank's claim that self-consciousness cannot be properly understood as propositional has some allies in contemporary analytic philosophy. Peacocke (2014), Bermudez (1998), Musholt (2015), and Hurley (1998) explicitly endorse the view that an adequate explanation of self-consciousness must start below the level of propositions or conceptual content. This will be further elaborated in chapter 3.1.2..

[50] Note that in this usage of the term, Frank differs from this book's terminology. For him, "self-knowledge" refers to the fact that our experience is conscious for us, that it is us who have this experience. In contrast, self-knowledge in this book refers to our capacity to have propositional attitudes using the first person pronoun. This is why Frank's "self-knowledge" is kept with quotation marks.

German].[51] Importantly, there is no "I" in his non-propositional, pre-reflective self-consciousness. Rather, it refers to the fundamental self-luminosity of consciousness when there is just consciousness without any „ego" that "has" it. This can be exemplified with post-narcotic or "out-of-body" experiences. Frank also mentions dozing in your garden, looking at the clouds passing by (Frank 2015, p. 25). In these (rare) cases we may have conscious experiences that are self-intimating but we do not experience them as had by us as subjects. There is just an anonymous flow of self-intimating conscious experience, without any "ego". In contrast, "self-knowledge" for Frank is propositional and egological and refers to our possibility to have conscious experiences as our own. Notably, "self-knowledge" for Frank is pre-reflective, too. In "self-knowledge" we are conscious of something and we pre-reflectively know that it is us who have this experience. In these cases we are able to say "I am having this experience" whereas in self-consciousness we are not. In Frank's own words:

> "We will have to add that non-egological (anonymous) self-consciousness is *non-conceptual* consciousness whereas I-consciousness is *conceptual*. For a more easy orientation, let us call the first self-*consciousness* ('self-consciousness' [English in the original, G.K.] or 'self-awareness' [English in the original, G.K.]) and the second self-*understanding* (or self-*knowledge*, 'self-knowledge' [English in the original, G.K.])." (Frank 2015, p. 17, translated by G.K.)[52]

Importantly, for Frank these two aspects are strictly distinct in origin. They are both pre-reflective and immediate but one cannot be explained with the help of the other.

> "Self-acquaintance, which is essential for subjectivity, can refer to the mental state itself (anonymous, non-conceptual) or the bearer of it (the "I", conceptual). In the first case it has become usual to speak of self-consciousness (self-awareness, self-consciousness [English in the original, G.K.]), in the second case of self-concept or

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[51] In doing so, Frank seems to be inspired by Henrich's earlier proposal to describe the inner structure of self-consciousness in an article that for long remained unpublished (Henrich 2007 [1971]). Henrich proposes to distinguish consciousness ["Bewusstsein" in German], self ["Selbstsein" in German] and self-reference ["Selbstbezug" in German] as distinguishable components of an integrated phenomenon.

[52] „Wir werden hinzufügen müssen, dass nicht-egologisches (anonymes) Selbstbewusstsein ein *nicht-begriffliches* Bewusstsein ist, während Ich-Bewusstsein *begrifflich* ist. Nennen wir zur leichteren Orientierung das erste Selbst*bewusstsein* (‚self-consciousness' oder ‚self-awareness') und das zweite Selbst*erkenntnis* (oder Selbst*wissen*, ‚self-knowledge')."

> self-knowledge (self-knowledge [English in the original, G.K.]) [1st thesis, G.K.]. The varieties of subjectivity can, however, neither mutually explain each other (=2nd thesis) nor can be reduced to natural or objective processes in the world (=3rd thesis)." (Frank 2012, p. 353, translated by G.K.)[53]

For Frank it is not the case that non-propositional self-consciousness is the basis from which propositional "self-knowledge" can be acquired. Rather, they are completely separate instances of subjectivity that share some attributes, e.g. their pre-reflectivity or their self-intimation.

The problem of propositionality

Note that Frank manages to enrich many aspects of self-consciousness. However, there are still some unsolved problems.[54]

First, Frank's current account of self-consciousness seems rather confined. His basic non-propositional self-consciousness builds on no-self experiences where consciousness is self-luminous without an "I". Such experiences may be possible but are obviously rare, non-standard cases. Normally, all our experience is experienced as our own. This is what the phenomenologist Zahavi (2005, p. 16) labelled "mineness" or "first-personal givenness" of experience. Thus, even if there is something like Frank's non-propositional self-consciousness on a sub-personal level, it would be a very basic and thin concept. In addition, his account seems to be at odds with everyday phenomenology. It seems that for most of us the standard case would be what Frank calls "self-knowledge" instead of what he calls "self-consciousness". Normally, we are able to use the first person pronoun in regard to our experiences. It seems quite odd to use the term "self-consciousness" for very rare, non-standard conscious experiences where there is precisely no „self" involved.

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[53] "Die für die Subjektivität wesentliche Selbstvertrautheit kann das mentale Ereignis selbst (anonym, unbegrifflich) oder den Träger desselben (das "Ich", begrifflich) betreffen. Im ersten Falle ist es üblich geworden, von Selbstbewusstsein (self-awareness, self-consciousness), im zweiten von Selbsterkenntnis oder Selbstwissen (self-knowledge) zu sprechen [first thesis, G.K.]. Die Varietäten der Subjektivität sind jedoch weder auseinander wechselseitig verständlich zu machen (=2. These) noch auf naturale bzw. Prozesse der gegenständlichen Welt reduzierbar (=3. These)."

[54] In Frank's defense, it should be noticed that he repeatedly concedes that his own approach has not been fully worked out yet. Thus, some of the criticisms in this section may be addressed in Frank's future work.

Second, a strict non-propositional account of self-consciousness leads to troubles because it cannot relate to the propositional level. This is a problem that is also recognized by Frank (2002a, pp. 256ff.; 2012, pp. 353ff.) himself. For Frank, non-propositional self-consciousness is completely distinct from his propositional "self-knowledge" with no way to translate from one to the other. This is problematic because he then cannot explain how non-propositional self-consciousness should inform our higher levels of self-reflection. After all, humans are (at least for the most part) rational beings. Human rationality relies on propositional mental states. Some of them concern ourselves. Thus, we have propositional mental states that are self-related.[55] We have the capability to reflect upon ourselves. It is possible to acquire at least some propositional knowledge about ourselves. An adequate theory of self-consciousness should not ignore this fact. Therefore, it is an open question how this propositional level of self-reflection could be related to non-propositional self-consciousness. Manfred Frank seems to deny that this is even possible. Generally speaking, it seems unclear how non-propositional mental states could be a part of the rational structure of self-conscious deliberation. Thus, Frank's strictly non-propositional account of self-consciousness is unsatisfying because it cannot explain its relation to propositional "self-knowledge". Strictly non-propositional self-consciousness remains a thin and all too basic notion.

Notably, Dieter Henrich also explicitly mentions this explanatory gap of a non-propositional account (Henrich 1999, pp. 63f.), as opposed to his own proposal. Henrich himself strongly emphasizes the propositional status of self-consciousness, so he does not have a problem of this sort. However, Henrich does not solve the problem either. He seems to stick too much to traditional principles of German idealism when claiming that self-consciousness is essentially a thought. This is problematic because it is unclear how a thought can be pre-reflective and direct.[56] Every thought is about something and thus is intentional. Thoughts seem to presuppose per definition the duality of a thinking subject and a thought object.

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[55] These are called self-knowledge or self-interpretation in this book.

[56] Compare Larmore's similar critique, which argues that Henrich's refutation of reflective theories is striking but his own alternative remains enigmatic and obscure (Larmore 2012, pp. 81f.).

Moreover, it seems necessary that a thought exists as proposition and presupposes language. Every proposition has two places to fill, the subject and the object. As has been shown, it seems impossible to escape the trap of the reflection model with a straightforward propositional account of self-consciousness. So it is unclear how a propositional thought could be pre-reflective and direct in the way Henrich claims. If one wanted to rescue Henrich's account, one could argue that the meaning of Henrich's basic "thought" of self-consciousness significantly differs from the normal usage of the term. Henrich himself never explicitly did so, though it seems to be a possible line of argument. The term "thought" in Henrich's context could then be understood as non-propositional, non-relational and therefore pre-reflective. Notwithstanding, if Henrich had constructed his theory this way, he would have failed to communicate this alleged difference in the usage of the term "thought". He should have presented his understanding of "thought" and explained how pre-reflective thoughts of this kind are possible.[57]

Importantly, Frank's notion of "self-knowledge" does not add too much to this. It is presented as adding the first person pronoun to conscious experience. It describes our capability to think "I am having this experience" instead of having it anonymously only. Notably, in recent writings it is presented as propositional and pre-reflective (Frank 2012, chapter 6; Frank 2015, p. 17). However, given Frank's own arguments against Henrich, as discussed above, it remains unclear how these two can go together. We saw above, with Frank's help, that propositions entail a duality that leads to the problems of reflective theories, namely infinite regress and vicious circularity. If Frank's "self-knowledge" should be understood as a proposition, how could it avoid these troubles? Frank remains silent about these problems in his recent publications.

Moreover, it is unclear how much Frank's rather confined account can contribute to the problems of more elaborate self-interpretation that are of interest in the

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[57] A similar critique can be applied to Rödl's (2007) work on self-consciousness. Much in line with Henrich's basic ideas he claims that self-consciousness is essentially a spontaneous thought. More on that in below in this chapter.

context of this book. Self-interpretation is not only about the question if it is me who has a specific experience or not but about getting to know who we are, what our beliefs, values and desires are. Frank remains silent on the question how his notion of "self-knowledge" can contribute to that. It is unclear if our practice of self-reflection and self-interpretation is part of what he calls "self-knowledge" or a separate, third phenomenon. Note that Frank's early work (Frank 1986, 1991a, 1991b) tests the possibility to progress from non-propositional self-consciousness to reflective self-knowledge (Ameriks 1995, chapter 12). There, he tries to build an argument supported by his concept of individuality as radically singular performativity. In later writings, however, Frank explicitly states that self-consciousness and "self-knowledge" are separate aspects of subjectivity that cannot mutually explain each other (Frank 2012, p. 353; 2015, p. 26).

Note that this problem persists no matter if we understand Frank's notion of "self-knowledge" as including our capacity for self-interpretation or not. If Frank's "self-knowledge" does include our capacity for self-interpretation, there would be no explanation of how to progress from non-propositional self-consciousness to propositional "self-knowledge". If Frank's "self-knowledge" does not include our capacity for self-interpretation, it would be unclear how both his notions of self-consciousness and "self-knowledge" would relate to the third phenomenon of self-interpretation.

It can be seen that we face a dilemma here. On the one hand, a propositional account leads to the problems of higher-order monitoring theories. On the other hand, a strictly non-propositional account remains unsatisfying because it remains too thin and leaves out an important aspect or our self-relation. Thus, a middle way seems to be most promising. We will further explore this path later in chapter 3.1.2. of this book, after having explored what philosophy of affectivity has to contribute. Before that, let us have a look at two contributors important in the context of these problems, Ernst Tugendhat and Sebastian Rödl.

The Tugendhat controversy

Ernst Tugendhat is an important character in the story of the Heidelberg School. Not only he is one of their most important critics, he also seems to be the originator of the term "Heidelberg School" in the first place. In his lectures 1974/75 in Heidelberg (published in Tugendhat 1979), he presented his own view on self-consciousness in explicit rejection of the thoughts of Dieter Henrich, Konrad Cramer and Ulrich Pothast.[58] He was the first who called them "Heidelberg School" (Tugendhat 1979, p. 10) and claimed that their approach marks the dead end of a long history of failing theories of self-consciousness. As this part of the book attempts to show, in the years to come there were noteworthy developments within the so called "School". Nonetheless, the term "Heidelberg School" remained persistent to refer to their approach to self-consciousness. Tugendhat's harsh critique provoked several, lengthy responses (Frank 1986, pp. 70ff.; 2012, chapters 2&4; Henrich 1989; Pothast 1981) which will not be reconstructed in detail here. Instead, we will focus on some crucial points that are relevant in the context of this book.

Tugendhat's account of self-consciousness is essentially propositional and in a certain sense intersubjective. The first aspect directly connects with our considerations above. The second must remain open for the project of this book.[59] Being committed to speech-analytic philosophical methods, Tugendhat sees self-consciousness as having the structure "I know that I φ" (Tugendhat 1979, p. 50). Self-consciousness (just like any intentional consciousness) is a relation between me and a proposition. More precisely, it is a "knowing" relation between me and a proposition "I φ". The proposition "I φ" has two parts: "φ" is understood as a mental state to which I have privileged access, such as my experience of a tree or my pain.[60] Consciousness of φ essentially includes two things: First, it is a

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[58] Not including Manfred Frank, notably (Tugendhat 1979, p. 10).

[59] Note that there are considerations on intersubjectivity of self-consciousness in the Heidelberg School (Frank 2012, chapter 4; Henrich 2007, chapter 4; Pothast 1988, third part) as well as in Zahavi's account (2005, chapter 6; 2014, parts 2&3).

[60] Note that Tugendhat distinguishes these mental states from others that other people may understand better (Tugendhat 1979, pp. 27f.). He gives examples of being a coward or in love. These states can be recognized through our behaviour, therefore one does not have privileged access to them.

propositional state, meaning that it has the duality of something "a" being ascribed a property B, like "this tree is green" or "my leg is in pain". Second, this proposition is had by me, it is not just floating somewhere. φ is essentially connected with the fact that I φ, the mental state is mine. This structure reminds us of the abovementioned "first-personal givenness" or the "mineness" of experience. Based on that, for Tugendhat self-consciousness is in place when I have a knowing relationship to that proposition "I φ", that is when "I know that I φ", when I know that I am in the mental state φ.

Building on his account, Tugendhat criticises Henrich in two aspects:

> "The phenomenon described by Henrich seems to me impossible because it contradicts our understanding both of knowledge and of identity." (Tugendhat 1979, p. 57)

First, Tugendhat states that self-consciousness cannot be knowledge of oneself because knowledge is always propositional and therefore double-digit. It is conceptually impossible to say "I know myself" without having troubles of infinite regress or circularity. Different from that, in his own account self-consciousness is a relation between myself and a proposition. Therefore, Tugendhat claims to have avoided this problem. Second, he states that self-consciousness cannot be an identification, because identification presupposes a duality that is not in place in self-consciousness. Typical examples of identification are "Ernst Tugendhat is my name, so I identify myself with the name 'Ernst Tugendhat'". These statements can go wrong, it can be the case that I wrongly identify myself with Ernst Tugendhat (or Napoleon). Conversely, I need not identify myself in this sense when it comes to basic, immediate self-consciousness. The fact that I=I is a tautology and not an act of identification. When I am in pain, I immediately know it, without the need for any identification.

It seems that Tugendhat's first critique is valid in a certain, historical sense while the second point rests on a misunderstanding. Tugendhat, when formulating his arguments, did of course only have access to the writings published until then. Particularly, he did not have the opportunity to include Manfred Frank's thoughts

on the non-propositional status of self-consciousness (e.g. Frank 1986; Frank 1991a). As shown above, Henrich can indeed be challenged with questions regarding his underdetermined concept of "thought" in self-consciousness. Frank chose to explicitly downgrade the role of knowledge and propositional thought in his own account of self-consciousness. Indeed, self-consciousness cannot be understood as double-digit relationship such as in knowledge. In the second point, regarding identification, there does not seem any difference between the Heidelberg School and Tugendhat. Both claim that self-consciousness is a non-identifying phenomenon in the sense described above. See Henrich's own explicit statement as an example:

> "Thus the task is to describe consciousness, so that it is neither knowing self-reference nor identification with itself. But the description must be of such a nature as clearly to show that we are immediately acquainted with consciousness, so that no case of consciousness is possible in which doubts about its own existence occur."(Henrich 1971b, p. 24)

The remaining question is how Tugendhat's own account relates to the project of this book.

As we have seen, Tugendhat approaches the phenomenon of self-consciousness at a certain level, taking some aspects for granted. First, he claims that self-consciousness is a relation to a proposition and has the structure "I know that I φ". Second, he claims that there is nothing problematic in the fact that I=I, that this is merely a tautology. In contrast, the Heidelberg School (at least Frank and Pothast), shows that we need a more foundational level of self-consciousness that is not relational and not propositional. There is something more basic than propositional content in our minds that plays a foundational role to establish specific propositions. Additionally, they do not take the I=I for granted but analyse it explicitly. "De se"-consciousness, the fact that the first and the second "I" in Tugendhat's structure are the same, is not trivial. Taking Tugendhat seriously, it could even be argued that he favours some kind of higher-order monitoring theory, where there is a "knowing I" and an "I φ"-I. Note that Tugendhat explicitly denies "inner perception"-models of self-consciousness and tries to escape an infinite

regress through the supposition of possible "unconscious intentional relations" (Tugendhat 1979, p. 25). However, it is rather implausible how self-consciousness could be explained with an unconscious mental state as ultimate explanation. All in all, Tugendhat operates at a different, higher level than the Heidelberg School. His account is propositional and not concerned with the primary fact of "de se" consciousness. This rather preconditioned starting point makes it relatively easy for him to progress to more sophisticated phenomena like self-determination in the course of his book. Since we are here concerned with the very core of self-consciousness, Tugendhat's conception is of little help.

Rödl as contemporary defender of self-consciousness as a thought

Sebastian Rödl (2007) presented an account of self-consciousness that has many similarities to Henrich's approach. However, Rödl does not explicitly mention Henrich as a source inspiration.[61] For Rödl, like Henrich, self-consciousness is characterized as a thought. It is a thought that has special features. It refers to itself in a non-receptive but spontaneous way. This means that one is not affected by an object that turns out to be oneself. Rödl takes the "de se" constraint serious here. Rather, the thought that is self-consciousness spontaneously refers to itself as identical. In Rödl's own words:

> "Our principle claim will be that first person knowledge of action and belief is not *receptive*; one does not know an object first personally by being affected by it. Rather, the first person knowledge of acts and thought is *spontaneous*." (Rödl 2007, pp. viii f.)

The way of referring in the thought of self-consciousness bears on a special relation, namely that of identity. Thus, the thought of self-consciousness does not refer to itself by accident but because of its distinctive nature:

> "Self-consciousness is the nature of a subject that manifests itself in her thinking thoughts whose linguistic expression requires the use of the first person pronoun, 'I'." (Rödl 2007, p. vii)

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[61] He mentions that German idealism is an important background for his account but Henrich's name features only once (p. 101, footnote 21) in a rather peripheral context.

> "Self-consciousness is a relation a subject bears to herself by virtue of being a subject of thought." (Rödl 2007, p. 12)

Rödl repeatedly emphasizes that self-consciousness is a thought. Interestingly, he explicitly denies that self-consciousness could be a sensation. He argues that animals have sensations but not self-consciousness. They cannot have self-consciousness because they are unable to have thoughts of that kind.

> "But in fact we cannot proceed in this way. […] Reflection on the nature of sensation cannot reveal how it is that sensation is represented in first person thought, because sensation is present in animals that are not self-conscious. If, in animals with thought, sensation is represented first-personally, then this is because, first, the power of thought includes a power of first person knowledge and, secondly, sensation is caught up in thought in such a way as to be brought within the purview of this power. Therefore, the first thing we must consider in order to understand self-consciousness is thought, not sensation." (Rödl 2007, p. 11)

This argument seems circular. Consider Rödl's premises:

P1: Self-consciousness is a thought that has special properties of being non-receptive and spontaneous.

P2: Only thought can have these properties.

He goes on stating that:

P3: There are animals with sensations but no thought.

P4: These animals are not self-conscious. (This follows from P1,P2, P3)

P5: There are animals with sensations and thought that are self-conscious.

P6: These animals are self-conscious by virtue of their thoughts. (This follows from P1, P2, P5)

Then he concludes:

C1: Self-consciousness is a thought and not a sensation.

As can be seen, C1 is already presupposed in P1 and P2. Thus nothing is explained by making claims about animals. His argument only works by virtue of the two

unexplained premises. He presupposes beforehand that self-consciousness can only be a thought. Naturally, it follows that animals without thought cannot be self-conscious. But is does not explain why self-consciousness must be a thought in the first place. In a word, Rödl only claims self-consciousness to be a thought and not a sensation but does not prove it.

In addition to that, an account of self-consciousness that treats it as a thought suffers from the problem of propositionally that we discussed above. There are small children and animals that presumably do not have propositional thoughts. Nonetheless, they can perform tasks that require self-consciousness, such as the mirror test[62]. Thus, self-consciousness seems to be possible without thought. There are two potential answers that Rödl's account can give. First, he could deny that what they show in the mirror test is actually self-consciousness. Since self-consciousness is a thought and they cannot have thoughts it follows that they cannot have self-consciousness. However, then Rödl needed to explain how these creatures are capable of passing the mirror test. Additionally, he needed to explain how self-consciousness emerges later in the life of children after it has not been there beforehand. Especially this second part seems difficult. How should someone acquire self-consciousness of the spontaneous kind Rödl has in mind during one's childhood? How should I learn that these experiences that are in my mind are mine without knowing that beforehand? This points back to the "de se" problem discussed above. Second, Rödl could claim that every child or animal in fact has the thought of self-consciousness.[63] This would imply that the kind of thought that is self-consciousness is much different from what we ordinary take to be a thought. Thoughts normally have a propositional structure. They entail a dual-digit relationship were something is identified with something else. They are expressed in speech acts. We saw above that this leads us straight to the problems of reflective theories. In addition, neither small children nor animals seem to have the

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[62] Gordon Gallup's (1970, 1979) famous mirror test tests the ability to recognize oneself in a mirror. For example the forehead of a test person is unconsciously marked with a black spot. Then it is observed if the test person recognizes the spot in the mirror as being on his own forehead.

[63] Personal conversation and his treatment of the animal example as quoted above suggest that he would not take this route.

abilities to have thoughts of this kind. Thus, it would be somehow odd to claim that they can have thoughts as we normally understand them. Therefore, Rödl's special kind of thought that is self-consciousness would neglect many of the properties thoughts normally have. It would be a "thought" that is not propositional, that is not expressed in language, and that occurs also in small children and animals. This is not very different from what pre-reflective, pre-propositional theories suggest. However, it suffers from unnecessary terminological peculiarity.

Given these difficulties, it is questionable if it makes sense to claim self-consciousness to be a thought. While Rödl seems to be headed in the right direction, his strong emphasis on the term "thought" creates severe problems. Moreover, it seems that Rödl assigns a profoundly different role to self-consciousness in his theory. For him, it is not something to be explained (i.e. an explanandum) but something to explain (i.e. an explanans). This might make sense in the context of his project. The project of this book, however, is precisely to gain deeper understanding of the phenomenon of self-consciousness. Thus Rödl's proposal remains unsatisfying in this context.

1.2.3. The "ex negativo" challenge in pre-reflective accounts

In today's received literature there are two major protagonists explicitly defending a pre-reflective account of self-consciousness: the Heidelberg School and the phenomenologists Dan Zahavi and Shaun Gallagher.[64]

Beginning in the late 1990ies, Dan Zahavi and Shaun Gallagher (Gallagher 2005, 2010, 2011, 2013; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008, 2015; Zahavi 1999, 2005, 2014) developed a phenomenological approach to self-consciousness. They heavily draw on classical phenomenological philosophers such as Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Henry, but come to fairly similar conclusions as the Heidelberg

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[64] This is not to say that there are not others expressing sympathies with the idea of pre-reflective self-consciousness or pointing in that direction. Compare Bermudez (1998), Flanagan (1992), or Goldman (1970) for sympathetic examples.

School of self-consciousness. Their notion of "experiential self" is described as pre-reflective, non-objectifying, primary and immune to error through misidentification (Zahavi 2005, chapter 5). Every experience I have is experienced "minely", meaning that it irreducibly has a "first-personal givenness", it is decisively experienced by and for me. All your experiences are experienced as your own. There is no question about whose experience it is when you have an experience. It is immediately obvious to you that when you have an experience it is your own. Zahavi calls this the "mineness" of experience (Zahavi 2005, p. 124). Although not explicitly mentioned, the "experiential self" can be understood as not propositional, too. Different from that, there is the notion of "narrative self"[65], which accounts for our capability to reflect upon ourselves and develop the "story of our lives" (Zahavi 2005, pp. 104f.). It is the sphere of self-interpretation and self-reflection and can never reach full adequacy. The "narrative self" depends and is built upon the basic and primary sphere of "experiential self".

Prima facie, there seems to be little difference in the basic claims of the Heidelberg School and the phenomenological approach. In fact, Zahavi concedes their exceptional contribution to the contemporary debate: The Heidelberg School is "arguably the most important contemporary theory of self-awareness" (Zahavi 1999, p. XV). Moreover, he states that

> "The most thorough examination and refutation of the reflection theory of self-awareness can be found in the writings of a group of German philosophers comprised by Henrich, Frank, Pothast and Cramer, and recently named the *Heidelberg School* since they originate from Henrich's seminars in Heidelberg and from his early study '*Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht*'" (Zahavi 1999, p. 17).

However, Zahavi (1999, pp. 38ff.) identifies three specific areas that have not been examined enough by the Heidelberg School, namely temporality, embodiedness and intersubjectivity of self-consciousness.[66] Consequently, Zahavi focuses on these

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[65] This notion was introduced and developed e.g. by Ricoeur (1985, 1990), MacIntyre (1985), Schechtman (1996, 2011), Flanagan (1992) and Goldie (2012). See Strawson (2004) for a critique.

[66] Note that Zahavi is strongly relying on Husserl while the Heidelberg School is rather critical concerning Husserl's theory of self-consciousness. Thus, parts of their disagreement could also be traced back by exploring their diverging interpretation of Husserl's work.

features in the development of his own theory. The Heidelberg School indeed does not say too much about these issues[67] and a phenomenological clarification of these issues might be useful.

Be that as it may, both Zahavi/Gallagher and the Heidelberg School share a common, crucial problem: the "ex negativo" challenge. Both develop their notion of pre-reflective self-consciousness via negativo, by refuting reflective accounts.[68] They tell us in great precision and detail what self-consciousness is not but give little positive explanation of what self-consciousness actually is. Granted, Zahavi presents a notion of "narrative self" and recently introduced a third, intermediate "interpersonal self" (Zahavi 2014, part 3). These additional notions are valuable contributions. However, they do little to further explain the core of the phenomenon. They are rather add-ons or higher levels of subjectivity than explanations of pre-reflective self-consciousness. Zahavi's "experiential self" remains a formal notion to account for the "first-personal givenness" of experience. It is the invariant fact that all our experiences are experienced as my own. But there is no further explanation about what this "mineness" amounts to.[69] What does it mean that it is me, an individual human being, having this experience? Zahavi remains silent on the "material content" of pre-reflective self-consciousness. This material emptiness in Zahavi leads to a difficulty to bridge the gap between pre-reflective self-consciousness and the higher levels of "interpersonal" and "narrative

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[67] Note, though, that there are some thoughts about temporality of self-consciousness, especially in Frank (1972, 1990; 2012, chapter 3). See also examples for considerations about intersubjectivity in the Heidelberg School (Frank 2012, chapter 4; 2015, pp. 95ff.; Henrich 2007).

[68] Henrich explicitly describes his method as "ex negativo", primarily aimed at avoiding problems of reflective theories (Henrich 1970, p. 280).

[69] Note that Ratcliffe is currently working on a book that shares this criticism (Ratcliffe forthcoming-a). He proposes to include a sense of what kind of intentional state we are in into Zahavi's basic "mineness" and calls this sense "modal structure of intentionality". In every experienced intentional state, he suggests, it is immediately clear not only that it is you having it but also what kind of intentional state it is, e.g. a perception, memory, or imagination. This sense is heavily dependent on interpersonal relationships, he further argues. It is too early today to provide a substantial discussion of this proposal to overcome the "ex negativo" challenge, since the book is still work in progress. Yet, while such an account may be plausible and useful to address certain problems in psychopathology, it seems questionable whether the "modal structure of intentionality" really needs to be understood as a necessary part of the basic, formal structure of the "experiential self". Zahavi himself rejects this proposal (Zahavi forthcoming).

self".[70] When my most fundamental self-consciousness consists in nothing more than a formal "mineness" of experience, where should I get the material to build a "narrative self", that is to tell a story about my life? The empty notion of "experiential self" cannot contribute much content to higher levels of self-interpretation.[71]

This makes the "ex negativo" challenge so crucial. It implies two problems. First, empty and formal accounts of pre-reflective self-consciousness struggle in actually explaining the phenomenon because they do not mention positive features of it. Second, an empty and formal account of self-consciousness has problems to inform higher levels of self-reflection. A satisfying account of self-consciousness needs to provide the possibility to relate it to our more elaborate capabilities to think reflectively about ourselves. Not only do we not learn much about the positive characteristics of self-consciousness in these pre-reflective accounts, we also fail to bridge the gap to more elaborate, higher-order levels of self-interpretation.

Notably, the Heidelberg School is not better off in this regard. Both Henrich's self-consciousness as a thought and Frank's notions of self-consciousness or "self-knowledge" fail to provide positive, material content that could be the ground for self-interpretation. They are rather formal pointers to the basic self-luminosity of consciousness. Frank admits: "However, we must also humbly declare that the basic element of our theory, familiarity [that is pre-reflective self-consciousness, "Selbstvertrautheit" in German, G.K.], cannot be further analyzed" (Frank 2002b, p. 400). Therefore, Henrich and Frank fall prey to the "ex negativo" challenge. They build their account mostly by means of negative definitions and do not provide enough positive material content, be it egological ("self-knowledge") or not ("self-consciousness").[72]

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[70] Compare Rousse's (2009) similar critique on Zahavi.

[71] Granted, the fact that Zahavi presents his account of "experiential self" so formal makes him compatible with many other philosophical positions that would be hesitant if it was fleshed out in a more embodied, affective way.

[72] Compare also Musholt's critical remarks on pre-reflective theories in her recent book (Musholt 2015, pp. 5ff.).

As can be seen, reflective theories fail no matter if they are egological or non-egological. Looking closer at alternative pre-reflective theories from the Heidelberg School and Zahavi/Gallagher we saw that they suffer from the "ex negativo" challenge.[73] They focus on refuting what self-consciousness is not and give little account on what it is.

1.2.4. The problem of unity in non-egological accounts

There is yet another challenge to current philosophy of self-consciousness, namely the problem of unity for non-egological accounts. Since we already refuted reflective theories both for egological and for non-egological cases, we can focus on non-egological, pre-reflective accounts here. Kriegel's self-representationalism (Kriegel 2009) and Peacocke's "self-files" (Peacocke 2014) will be presented as examples for this problem.

Non-egological, pre-reflective theories basically argue for the self-intimation of mental states. Self-consciousness here refers to our mental states as self-intimating. This is much in line with what we learned from classic texts on self-consciousness (e.g. Castañeda 1966; Chisholm 1981; Frank 1991a; Henrich 1970; Lewis 1979; Perry 1979; Shoemaker 1968). The "first-personal givenness" of our experience is a primary, irreducible phenomenon. Thus, non-egological, pre-reflective theories succeed in avoiding the traps of reflective theories. However, they struggle in clarifying the experienced unity and continuity of „self" (Frank 1986, 1991b, 2007). Our phenomenal experience is not just a bunch of separate, self-intimating mental states. Instead, we make unified experiences that consist of many different aspects. When you experience a train approaching the train station, you see something, you hear something, maybe you also feel something. All these different sensations are

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[73] It must be emphasized that neither the Heidelberg School nor Zahavi/Gallagher can be labeled as classic egological theories. Especially Zahavi decisively claims that his "experiential self" is not about a "core ego" (Zahavi 2005, chapter 5). Yet, he also claims that is not the anonymous self-representation of mental states. It seems that he tries to go beyond the egological/non-egological distinction and wants "experiential self" to account for a "first-personal givenness", but that first person not being a "core ego".

unified in the experience of the train. They are experienced as a whole. Moreover, you experience yourself as a unified person. You are not a bunch of single, self-intimating mental states but a concrete individual. A non-egological account of self-consciousness fails to capture this aspect, sometimes called "synchronic unity of self" (Zahavi 2014, p. 44). Additionally, there is a second shortcoming of non-egological, pre-reflective approaches. As persons we perceive ourselves as continuous during our lifetime.[74] You see yourself as more or less the same individual you were when you were a child. This experienced phenomenon of personal identity or "diachronic unity" (Zahavi 2014, pp. 63ff.) is very resilient, even against vast physical and mental changes. Our bodies or parts of it can be harmed, transplanted, sick etc., and still we will see ourselves as continuous individuals. We can change many (if not all) of our mental states like beliefs, desires, values, etc. and still we perceive ourselves as continuous individuals. Of course, this does not imply that it is impossible to lose the impression of ourselves as remaining the same individuals during our lifetime. Still, extreme cases of self-loss would be exceptions and not the norm. Since non-egological, pre-reflective theories reduce their account of self-consciousness to separate, self-intimating mental states, they fail to adequately explain the phenomenon of personal identity. Given all this, it is doubtable if non-egological, pre-reflective theories succeed in capturing the whole phenomenon of self-consciousness.

Immanuel Kant presented in his "Critique of Pure Reason" (Kant 1974 [1781/87]) two properties of self-consciousness that are interesting in this context (Frank 1991b, pp. 416ff.). First, there is the "analytic unity of apperception", which refers to the fact that all our mental states can be accompanied with "I think that". No matter what mental state we have, it is always possible to make it explicit that it is our own mental state. When seeing a tree it is possible to add "I think that I am seeing this tree" or "It is me who is seeing this tree" or "The experience 'seeing the tree' is had by me, it is mine". Without going into a detailed interpretation of Kant's

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[74] This "personal identity" problem is a huge field of philosophical discussion. Compare e.g. Parfit (1971) as example for a position emphasizing psychological continuity and Olson (1997) for its opponent emphasizing physical continuity. For an introductory overview, see Olson (2016).

work, it seems that thereby he points at the non-egological character of self-consciousness. Every conscious experience is immediately present to us as our own experience, therefore it can be accompanied with "I think that". We leave alone the question if this possible usage of the phrase "I think" already requires egological or propositional self-consciousness.[75] Kant also presents a second property of self-consciousness, the "synthetic unity of apperception". It refers to our capacity to connect different mental states. According to Kant, we are confronted with a multiplicity of impressions in perception. To make sense out of this multiplicity it is necessary to connect the different impressions and put them in a systematic order. The "synthetic unity of apperception" warrants our ability to actively manage our impressions and form higher-order judgements. It is a faculty that integrates multiple, single impressions to a coherent, reasonable perception. As has been shown, non-egological, pre-reflective theories provide some explanation for the "analytic unity of apperception". However, they have problems in clarifying the "synthetic unity of apperception". They fail to account for our ability to form combined judgements, as well as to experience ourselves as integrated individuals, both in the synchronic and diachronic perspectives.

Note that Frank (1986; 2012, chapter 1; 2015) presents the problem of unity for non-egological theories well but fails to offer a satisfying solution himself. His complete separation of self-consciousness and "self-knowledge" seems to lead to a problem of unity. Frank does not provide a detailed argument on why non-propositional self-consciousness and propositional "self-knowledge" need to be understood in strict separation. As we have seen above, any theory of self-consciousness should attempt to explain the unity of the „self", namely in its synchronic and diachronic form. It seems plausible that a holistic theory can more likely achieve this than an account that presupposes two distinct instances of self-relatedness (self-consciousness and "self-knowledge" in Frank's view) that are not

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[75] Frank (2007, pp. 183-193) engages in a more detailed discussion of Kant's theory of self-consciousness and claims that Kant falls short in explaining the non-propositional self-intimation of experience. The phenomenon of self-consciousness does not seem to fit nicely into the Kantian dualism of "Anschauung" and "Verstand". We cannot go into further detail with this complicated historical discussion here.

related to each other. In his earlier writings synchronic unity seems to be adequately explained by the notion of a „self" as performative activity (Ameriks 1995, chapter 12; Frank 1986, 1991a, 1991b). His current account of two separated functions does not provide an immediate explanation how the two can lead to a synchronically unified experience of "self". Moreover, Frank's recent account does not fully explain diachronic unity.[76]

Kriegel's self-representationalism as an example for the non-egological approach

Self-representationalism is one of the most prominent explanations of (self-) consciousness in contemporary philosophy of mind. Its major claims were outlined in detail in Uriah Kriegel's book (2009). Kenneth Williford (2006), Charles Siewert (1998) and Terry Horgan (Horgan and Tienson 2002; Horgan et al. 2006) are sometimes seen as representatives as well. Although there are some differences between the proponents, Kriegel's theory can serve as an example to briefly sketch their line of argumentation and assess its philosophical value in the context of this book.

Kriegel (2009, p. 1) starts with the basic assumption that every conscious experience is of phenomenal character. There is a "what it is like"[77] to have a conscious experience. This phenomenal character is understood to be composed of two components, the qualitative character and the subjective character. The qualitative character stands for the content of the experience, for example the bluishness of the sky as experienced. It is what distinguishes one conscious experience from the other and depends on specific features of the experienced object in the world. The subjective character stands for the fact that it is me who has the experience, it makes for the "for-me-ness" of the experience. Since every conscious state must be conscious for me, or experienced by me, the subjective character distinguishes a conscious experience from having no conscious experience

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[76] Note, though, that Frank has worked on temporality of self-consciousness (esp. in Frank 1972, 1990; 2012, chapter 3).
[77] This locution, in today's usage, was first introduced by Farrell (1950) and made popular by Nagel (1974).

at all. Thus, the qualitative character makes the experience what it is and the subjective character makes the experience conscious in the first place. The focus in Kriegel's theory lies on the subjective character, which is more relevant in the context of this book, too.

Kriegel's approach is non-egological, meaning that he sees self-consciousness as a property of mental states and not the subject as a whole (Kriegel 2009, pp. 28f.). Moreover, he argues that all egological[78] explanations depend on the foundation of non-egological explanations. Consequently, the subjective character of consciousness is explained on the level of mental states.

In the last decades of analytic philosophy of mind, the subjective character of consciousness was predominantly approached by higher-order theories, such as Rosenthal (1986, 1993a, 1993b, 1997, 2002, 2004, 2005), Armstrong (1968, 1978, 1984), Lycan (1987, 1996, 2004), Carruthers (1996, 2000, 2005, 2011b), Gennaro (1996, 2008, 2012), and Van Gulick (2001, 2004, 2006). Kriegel develops his own account in explicit rejection of these theories. His own account is centred around his notion of self-representation, building on Brentano and Aristoteles. In order to escape the shortcomings of higher-order theories he argues that conscious states represent themselves rather than being represented by another mental state. So every conscious mental state represents itself and this is what constitutes its subjective character, its "for-me-ness". In Kriegel's own words:

> "Thus, whatever else a conscious state may represent, it always also represents itself, and it is in virtue of representing itself that it *is* a conscious state. This is self-representationalism." (Kriegel 2009, pp. 13f.)

> "It is simply to point out that, if a subject is aware of her conscious state in virtue of the state representing itself, then there truly is no numeric distinction between the awareness and that of which one is aware: the representing state and the represented state, and hence the awareness and that of which one is aware, are one and the same." (Kriegel 2009, p. 146)

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[78] He uses the term "creature self-consciousness" and thereby builds on a terminology introduced by Rosenthal (1986). It can already be found in Tugendhat (1979).

Moreover, there are three additional conditions for the subjective character of consciousness: The self-representation has to be non-derivative, specific and essential (Kriegel 2009, pp. 157ff.). First, self-representation must not be dependent on interpretation, such as in symbols (e.g. c a t) representing specific objects (the actual cat experience). Instead, the representation must be direct and non-derivative. Second, the representation must not represent itself as part of a general set of possible referents (such as in "all sentences in this book are English sentences (including this one)"). Instead, it must be specifically representing itself and nothing else. Third, it has to be "essential" in the sense that it represents itself as oneself. It has to be "de se"-representation to account for the subjective character.

There are two major issues in Kriegel's account (Frank 2012, chapter 6; Levine 2010). First, there is the problem of unity. As can be seen, Kriegel's account operates at the level of mental states. He tries to offer an explanation about how mental states are self-representing and thus self-conscious. However, he remains silent on how the unity of self-consciousness could be explained. Granted, he claims that higher levels of self-consciousness are dependent on the fundamental feature of self-representation in mental states. Yet, he does not offer much to explain how this relation would work.

Second, there are problems in Kriegel's use of the notion of "representation", which is central to his account. There are two ways to interpret his approach. One way, and the most common way among his critics (e.g. Frank 2012, chapter 6; Levine 2010), is to take his notion of "representation" serious.[79] Representation per definition (at least in its normal usage in the context of philosophy of self-consciousness) presupposes a duality of representing and represented.[80] The "operation" of representation only makes sense if there is a representing part and a represented part. Therefore, representation leads straightaway in the troubles of

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[79] Kriegel himself encourages this interpretation by emphasizing repeatedly the prospect of a possible naturalistic reduction that comes with a representational account.

[80] I refer only to the term representation in the context of self-consciousness here. It might well be that in other contexts self-representation is less of a problem. For instance, there could be a self-representing sentence of the form: "This sentence represents itself".

the reflection model. Peter Carruthers in his Stanford Encyclopaedia article subsumes self-representationalism straightaway under higher-order monitoring theories:

> "Kriegel himself coins the term 'same-order monitoring theory'. But this is potentially misleading. The theories in question are higher-order, not same-order." (Carruthers 2011a, section 6).

Nonetheless, we have to note that Kriegel emphasizes the fact that in his own use of the term representation the two parts are numerically the same. He argues not to fall in the trap of the reflection model (such as higher-order theories do) by employing a numerically one-digit self-representation. However, it is questionable if this solves the problem. The self-representing mental state does not only need to represent itself as such but also to represent itself as representing. It has to capture itself as a whole, not only partly. And its self-representing feature is of course part of itself. Only if self-representation is representation as representation, that is if self-representation is as such represented, one can speak of "de se" consciousness or "essential" self-representation. Note that Kriegel states that "essentiality" is one of the three necessary features of self-representation (Kriegel 2009, pp. 157ff.). Some representatives of the Heidelberg School (Cramer 1974, p. 581; Frank 1991b, pp. 546ff. and 654ff.; Pothast 1971, pp. 50ff.) as well as Zahavi (1999, pp. 27ff.) examined this problem as "intensive" regress and exemplified it in their critique of Brentano's failing theory[81] of self-consciousness.[82] Take a mental state with the content b1. It is representing itself with its self-representing feature b2. B2 now has to represent the content b1 and the self-representing feature b2 itself. Otherwise it would not capture the whole phenomenon. To represent b2 another self-representing feature b3 is needed and ad infinitum. Note that there is a difference between the "classic" extensive regress and the here-mentioned intensive regress. Traditional higher-order theories take a numerically different state to represent the original state b1. Consequently, there need to be either an infinite number of

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[81] Kriegel explicitly mentions Brentano as one of his ancestors (Kriegel 2009, p. 14).
[82] Also Williford (2006, p. 138) seems to acknowledge this problem. However, he argues that we have to accept the circularity of self-consciousness and cannot go further in our explanation (in analogy to self-containing sets). This seems rather unsatisfying.

additional states to ensure the representation or stop with an unconscious, ultimate representing mental state. Both options are unsatisfying. In contrast, the intensive regress does not involve additional mental states, as it takes place in only one assumingly self-representing mental state. However, the self-representing mental state has to represent itself as representing, meaning that it has to represent the whole unity of the mental state including the feature of self-representation. This leads to an infinite chain of self-representing features and thus into an intensive regress. Given these points, Kriegel fails to escape the problems of higher-order theories. Employing the notion of representation leads to a duality within the conscious state and therefore fails to meet the criterion of "de se" consciousness.

Even though Kriegel has been criticised along the above-mentioned lines (see e.g. Frank 2012, chapter 6; Levine 2010), a more benevolent reading seems possible.[83] We could interpret Kriegel's notion of representation using only the attributes Kriegel himself explicitly applies. He claims that "representing and represented are one and the same" (Kriegel 2009, p. 146), and that self-representation is non-derivative, specific and essential (Kriegel 2009, pp. 157ff.). If we grant him that his term representation does not involve any duality and is thus used in a completely different way than it usually is, his account becomes more acceptable. Self-representation would then mean that any conscious state is immediately present to me (non-derivative), and it is present to me as itself, as self-intimating (essential or "de se"). Self-representation would then be understood as non-relational and non-objectifying and therefore would meet the criteria of an adequate account of self-consciousness. Such an interpretation of Kriegel's account comes very close to what Zahavi is proposing in his phenomenological account, only with a different and rather unusual terminology in Kriegel's case. Kriegel and Zahavi recently published a joint paper (Zahavi and Kriegel 2015) in which they present an integrated account of "for-me-ness". This points to an alignment of the two and thus in favour of the more benevolent reading of Kriegel's theory. However, it becomes difficult to grant Kriegel this benevolent reading when we take Kriegel's own critique on Zahavi's

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[83] Zahavi (2014, pp. 18f. footnote) makes a similar point.

approach into account (Kriegel 2009, pp. 101ff.). Kriegel, quite dismissively, calls Zahavi's theory an "intrinsic glow"[84] account that holds self-consciousness to be unstructured, inexplicable, non-objectifying and sui generis. He argues that this is "straightforwardly implausible" (Kriegel 2009, p. 104) because any awareness is awareness of something, it needs to be relational.

> "It is natural to hold that, in virtue of a conscious experience's subjective character, the subject is *aware of* her experience. It would be quite odd indeed to maintain that an experience is *for* the subject even though the subject is completely unaware of it. Since this awareness is awareness-*of*, it involves an of-ness relation to the experience. To that extent, it cannot be an intrinsic glow, since it is not intrinsic at all, at least not in the sense of being non-relational or of being unstructured. Instead, it involves essentially the subject bearing an epistemic relation to her experience." (Kriegel 2009, p. 104)

Kriegel calls this argument the "argument from awareness-making" and states that it is the "main reason for rejecting an intrinsic-glow account of subjective character" (Kriegel 2009, p. 105). Moreover, he confesses that "I cannot really wrap my mind around the notion of non-objectifying awareness" (Kriegel 2009, p. 106).

Given all this, it becomes rather implausible that Kriegel's use of the term representation indeed is non-relational and non-objectifying. Instead, it seems that Kriegel is somehow stuck in the middle between higher-order theories and truly non-relational accounts (e.g. Zahavi or Frank). All in all, Kriegel contributes a lot to a sound refutation of higher-order theories but for some reason he stops too early and does not go far enough to finally escape the dualism of representational accounts. Additionally, as his account is explicitly non-egological, he faces all the above-mentioned shortcomings of these theories as well, for instance the explanation of the unity of "self".

Peacocke's self-files

Interestingly, in his recent book Peacocke (2014) seems to struggle with a similar problem. Much in line with Kriegel, his basic notion of "primitive self-representation" accounts for the immediate awareness of our own experiences as

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[84] Thereby drawing on a rather unfriendly metaphor used by Dennett (1991).

our own. It is primitive in the sense that no conceptual competence is required and it is the most basic level of self-consciousness.[85] Notably, at this level, the bearers of self-consciousness are mental states, so he starts with a non-egological understanding of self-consciousness. Since Peacocke attempts to reach an egological understanding in the later parts of the book, he is in need to establish some kind of unity among the individual self-represented mental states. In order to establish this unity, he introduces the notion of "self-files" (2014, pp. 14ff.). Similar to object-files[86] that collect all relevant experiences regarding a specific object (and thereby establishing its unity), there are self-files that do the same for experiences regarding the "self". All self-representing experiences come together in a self-file that is meant to account for the unity of these experiences. The self-file is constantly updated with the latest self-representing mental states. Notably, it resides on a sub-personal level, distinct from a conceptual self-file that collects reflective thoughts about oneself.

Even if mental object files may make sense in some regard, several points remain unclear in Peacocke's self-files. Most importantly, how exactly are self-files established and become self-conscious themselves? Our conscious experience is full of individual mental states that are self-representing. But, as Hume famously put it "I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception." (Hume 1967 [1739], p. 252). We do not experience a "self" within us. Granted, Peacocke argues that his self-files are on a sub-personal level, which means that they are not part of experience. Yet, how should they establish a unity of „self" if they are not conscious themselves? As a matter of fact, we experience ourselves as more or less unified individuals. So an explanation of unity cannot point at a sub-personal phenomenon only. Unified (egological) self-consciousness must be experienced as such. It cannot be built from a bunch of particular self-representing mental states, even if they are collected in some kind of

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[85] Peacocke's account offers much more details and distinctions than can be detailed here. This section focusses on his incomplete approach to unity, and remains relatively superficial on the various nuances of his account.

[86] Object-files seem to have some support in the literature, compare Recanati (2012) for a recent and thorough overview.

file. Notably, it seems that Peacocke is to some extent aware of that problem. When it comes to explaining why and how the self-file is itself self-conscious (knows itself as identical to itself) he states:

> "These questions must come to an end at some point if they are ever to be answered by the system. It is a sensitivity without further representation that makes this possible." (Peacocke 2014, p. 19)

What can be interpreted from this remark is that Peacocke seems to concede that there is a separate kind of "sensitivity" (or self-intimation) needed for the egological level. We cannot explain the unity of „self" just by looking at the non-egological level of mental states. Unfortunately, Peacocke does not explain in full detail how this "sensitivity" should be appropriately understood. Please note that Peacocke's account has much to offer and is a valuable contribution to the debate, especially concerning his emphasis on the non-conceptual, foundational level of self-consciousness. However, he also serves as an example for the inadequacy of non-egological approaches. If we want unity, we must build it in right from the start. For the reasons mentioned above it seems hard if not impossible to introduce unity later in a previously non-egological account.

Taking stock

As can be seen, the problem of unity in non-egological accounts is another problem in current theories of self-consciousness.[87]

Should we conclude that egological theories are the better way to go? Prima facie, it may seem that egological theories are better off. They are building on a "core self", an "ego" that one is conscious of in self-consciousness. Therefore, one might think that they can overcome the difficulties of synchronic and diachronic unity. Unfortunately, we saw above that traditional egological approaches are faced with other serious problems. They might account well for the problems of non-egological approaches, but they all fall in the trap of the reflection model. Traditional

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[87] Please note that there is an increasingly large discussion on the problem of unity in contemporary philosophy of mind (compare e.g. Bayne 2010; Brook and Raymont forthcoming; Dainton 2000; Tye 2003; Zahavi 2014, part 1). This book cannot provide much more detail in this complicated matter.

egological theories presuppose a "core self" as referent of self-consciousness. Thus, they operate with a relational, double-digit model that includes a "core self" on the one hand and self-consciousness on the other hand. Chapter 1.2.1. presented arguments that this leads to the severe problems of reflective theories. Consequently, neither non-egological nor egological accounts seem to provide problem-free solutions.

We now return to the 2x2 matrix introduced at the beginning of this book. It shows four major theoretical options in philosophy of self-consciousness. After the analysis in this chapter it can be seen that every alternative faces at least one significant problem.

	Reflective theories	Pre-reflective theories
Egological theories	Problems: infinite regress, vicious circularity	Problem: "ex negativo"
Non-egological theories	Problems: infinite regress, vicious circularity, unity	Problems: unity, "ex negativo"

Table 2: Problems in theories of self-consciousness

Should we conclude that a satisfying theory of self-consciousness is impossible?[88] No, it would be premature to surrender at this point. Instead, we need to proceed with our enquiries to find better options to address the problems. The remainder of this book will explore a possible path to improve the current situation.

All things considered, we need a theory of self-consciousness that can escape the problems of self-consciousness that have been elaborated above. This book attempts to make a step in this direction. It seems that the upper right quadrant of

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[88] Williford seems so suggest something along this line by indicating that self-consciousness might be of such a kind that it is circular and an instance of "*real*, *concrete* nonwellfoundedness" (Williford 2006, p. 113).

the matrix is best suited to do so. Looking at the alternatives, it seems clear that we cannot employ a reflective account to explain self-consciousness and a purely non-egological theory would leave important questions open. Importantly, it has been shown that an adequate theory cannot operate with a classical "core ego" as reference, so traditional egological theories cannot satisfy either. Therefore, let us put our hopes into pre-reflective theories and explore how to re-interpret their being egological in a way that overcomes the abovementioned problems. There might be an interpretation of self-consciousness being egological that allows for progress in this complicated matter.

1.3. The affective turn

This chapter is the beginning of a very unusual turn in the context of philosophy of self-consciousness. The remainder of this book will explore what affectivity can contribute to the challenges of self-consciousness as presented above. In part three it will be argued that self-consciousness can be understood as a fundamental kind of human affectivity, namely as self-feeling. Before this can be done, two steps need to be made. First, the Heidelberg School offers various pointers to suggest that affectivity plays an important role in self-consciousness. These are to be presented in this chapter. Second, part two of this book will introduce the reader in more detail into contemporary philosophy of human affectivity.

This points at a crucial difference between the Heidelberg School of self-consciousness and Zahavi and Gallagher's phenomenological approach. While Zahavi has little to say about fundamental affectivity in self-consciousness, the Heidelberg School repeatedly points to its importance in this context. Granted, Zahavi examines the role of specific emotional experiences such as shame and their role in interpersonal encounter in recent texts (Zahavi 2012a, 2014). Yet, he does not explore the role of existential affectivity in self-consciousness. Gallagher recently offered a "pattern theory of self" (Gallagher 2013) in which affectivity plays

a role. However, so far he offered only a meta-theory containing affectivity as one potential element. Little is said about the specifics of this element and the role of existential affectivity in self-consciousness. In contrast to that, Manfred Frank (2002a), Ulrich Pothast (1988, 1998), and partly also Dieter Henrich (1982b, chapter 1; 1982c, chapter 5; 1999, chapter 6) occupy themselves in exploring the deepest realms of our affectivity and its implications for self-consciousness.

1.3.1. Henrich's take on affectivity

In the decades after the initiation of his theory of self-consciousness Henrich developed a broader concept of subjectivity that explicitly includes human affectivity. He did not present a comprehensive theory in this field but there are some ideas in his work that point to the fundamental significance of existential affectivity.

Henrich's conceptual reflections on a theory of self-consciousness were always dedicated to contribute to concrete, existential questions in human life. Unlike many German idealists (and some contemporary analytic philosophers) he is convinced that philosophy is never allowed to lose touch with its roots in fundamental, existential questions about our personal life as such. His practical philosophy is not in focus in this book. However, some of his theoretical developments on human affectivity have important implications for the notion of self-feeling. They are briefly presented in the following section.

"Happiness" and "Misery"

Throughout Henrich's work one can frequently find affirmations for an essential role of affective phenomena in human life. Our general life perspective determines if the world as such appears meaningful or meaningless, if our life as such is worth living or just arbitrary coincidence. This perspective is permeated with a corresponding mood:

"One recognizes the vainness of all life in ultimate clarity, or one understands that there is something about all life, by suddenly grasping the affirmation of one's own life. Both happens in a mood that fits to the disclosing perspective, but without arousal, rather in the coolness of a freeze or of a clarity of an indicated, supported and open future." (Henrich 2007, p. 72, translated by G.K.)[89]

Henrich clarifies his approach to the role of affectivity in human life with the help of the distinction between his notions of "happiness" and "„misery"" (Henrich 1982b, chapter 1; 1982c, chapter 5). According to him, there are three dimensions of experience. First, there is experience of specific things or events in the world. In this dimension experience as such remains stable, only the intentional content changes. Second, there is the possibility of changing the mode of experience. When we are dreaming, drunk or in specific moods our experience as a whole changes and we perceive the world through different eyes. In these two dimensions there is infinite variability in possible experiences. Both there are unlimited possible experiences through the unlimited number of possible things and events in our world and there are unlimited possible experiences through the unlimited number of possible alterations of modes of experience. Furthermore, in these two dimensions real co-presence is impossible. We can neither experience two different things nor can we experience two modes of experience at the same time. It is impossible to simultaneously perceive light and darkness in the world. Likewise it is impossible to experience the world as being drunk and non-drunk at the same time. Therefore it is impossible in the first two dimensions to experience totality as such. The third dimension of experience is different in this regard. It involves contrasting experiences that are in themselves correlated. Whenever one experience is present, it essentially incorporates the negation of the correlated experience. Because they are correlated negations, experience of totality becomes approachable. The examples of „happiness" and „misery" are meant to illustrate this third dimension. Both are not only moods, but modes of disclosure of the world and oneself. What

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[89] "Man erfasst in letzter Deutlichkeit die Vergeblichkeit alles Lebens, oder man begreift, dass es mit allem Leben etwas auf sich hat, indem man sich plötzlich der Affirmation des eigenen Lebens gewiss wird. Beides geschieht in einer dem Blick, der sich eröffnet, gemäßen Stimmungslage, aber ohne Erregung, sondern in der Kühle entweder eines Erstarrens oder einer Klarheit des Vorausgewiesen- und Getragenseins in eine offene Zukunft."

makes both „misery" and „happiness" different from mere moods is their internal correlation, their essential interrelatedness with interpreting ideas and their strict bi-polarity.

First, „misery" and „happiness" are internally correlated because we know that the opposite exists when we are in either state of mind. However, at the same time we deny the opposite because it seems completely impossible in this moment. "Misery" correlates with „happiness" because they are mutually negating each other. It is not just a simple, arbitrary mood, instead it is a state of mind that includes the explicit denial of its opposite. When we are in „misery" (as an example for the third dimension), the whole world appears meaningless and the possibility of „happiness" is explicitly denied. In „misery" we know that there is „happiness", but we absolutely cannot see the possibility to become happy again. It seems out of reach, locked out forever.

Secondly, both „misery" and „happiness" are essentially connected with respective ideas. In contrast to mere moods, „misery" and „happiness" do not just alter our experience, they also encompass specific interpretations of the world and our life as a whole. These interpretations are not reached by inference or reflection. They accompany „misery" and „happiness" immediately, directly and with outstanding clarity. While moods obviously shape our perspective of the world and ourselves in the sense of the second dimension, in mere mood there is no explicit affirmation of the experience as such. In mere mood we are not aware that we are in a specific mode of experience. In contrast, the third dimension offers this explicit affirmation. "Misery" does not refer to concrete danger or suffering, instead it marks a specific way of seeing and interpreting the world as a whole.

Henrich describes as follows:

> „'Happiness' is the experience of accomplished, successful life, in which all there is appears as 'in order' and embedded in a great endorsement. Someone who is in 'misery' cannot and does not want to find anything that gives him support or that means anything to him. Thus, for him all there is, including himself, is comprised

with a certainty of groundlessness and indifference." (Henrich 1982b, p. 18, translated by G.K.)[90]

Accordingly, in „misery" the whole world appears as random and meaningless stream of events where our life has no significance at all. „Happiness", in contrast, means to interpret the world as meaningful and in absence from the possibility of „misery". Our life is significant because the ultimate harmony with the world as such and its eternal meaning is possible. „Happiness" does not refer to specific happy life events such as the completion of an important task or strong feelings of enjoyment. These perspectives of the world and ourselves as such overrule normal beliefs and convictions because they are rooted in a deeper source of subjectivity. They motivate us to dig deeper in our understanding of the world and life as such. Thus, they also lead us to genuine philosophical questions. Henrich even claims that these ideas have influenced the most important philosophical controversies in history. Philosophical theories are rooted in fundamental life perspectives and are therefore essentially influenced by phenomena like „happiness" and „misery".[91]

A third difference of „misery" and „happiness" to mere moods is their strict bi-polarity. Both states of mind are either fully present or completely absent. It is not possible that we are a little bit in the state of „happiness". Whenever one is in „happiness", one is completely absorbed in this state of mind, accompanied with respective ideas and denial of the opposite. In contrast, moods can easily be subject to modification. Imagine you wake up in the morning and have a feeling of inconvenience. You have breakfast and read something bad in the newspaper, therefore your mood becomes even worse. On your way to work a friend calls you and wishes you all the best for your presentation today, and so your mood becomes a little bit better again. All these modifications are impossible with „misery" and „happiness". The main reason that Henrich gives is their interconnectedness with

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[90] "'Glück' ist die Erfahrung des vollendeten, gelungenen Lebens, dem alles, was überhaupt ist, als 'in Ordnung' und in einer großen Zustimmung einbegriffen erscheint. In ‚Not' ist der, der nichts mehr finden kann und will, das ihm einen Halt oder auch nur irgend etwas bedeutet, so daß sich für ihn über jegliches, ihn selbst inbegriffen, die alles durchherrschende Gewißheit von Grundlosigkeit und Gleichgültigkeit ausbreitet."

[91] We know a similar claim from William James, as has been reiterated by Matthew Ratcliffe (2005, 2008).

specific ideas. "Happiness" always comes with a specific perspective on the world as a whole and my life in it. This perspective encompasses specific ideas and beliefs about the overall structure which cannot be hold "a little bit". A belief cannot be hold "just a little bit", I cannot "partly" belief that a square has four sides. Either I hold the belief or not. You cannot be a little bit pregnant. Consequently, as the states of „misery" and „happiness" are strictly interconnected with respective ideas they also cannot be changed gradually. They are bi-polar phenomena.

Whereas in the first two dimensions of experience totality is out of reach, in this third dimension it becomes approachable in two ways, according to Henrich. First, in „misery" and „happiness" we experience the world and ourselves as a whole. So both states of mind are all-encompassing life perspectives and insofar oriented at totality. It is not just my situation or my job or my family that becomes meaningless and random in „misery". Instead, the world as a whole including my life seems meaningless and random in this state of mind. Second, both „misery" and „happiness" essentially incorporate their correlation and contrasting ideas. Although we cannot experience „misery" and „happiness" simultaneously, in each experience the opposite is present "via negationis". So real co-presence is impossible also in this third dimension. We cannot be in „misery" and „happiness" at the same time. However, throughout our life we experience different episodes of „misery" and „happiness". In every episode the opposite is present "via negationis". Based on Hölderlin's notion of "eccentric course" Henrich believes that in the course of our lives we can experience totality (see also Henrich 1971a, chapter 1). It cannot be articulated in a stringent theory because this would presuppose the possibility of co-presence. Still, in art and literature the process of life as such can be articulated and the third dimension of experience, as exemplified in „misery" and „happiness", can help to approach totality in this dialectic sense.

"Gratefulness"

Another example for existential implications of Henrich's theory is the concept of „gratefulness" (Henrich 1999, chapter 6). For him there are two forms of „gratefulness". First, we are grateful for concrete things and events, given or made

possible by other people. This is the everyday form of social gratefulness, it is constituted by more or less stable relationships of mutual exchange. The second form differs significantly. There are moments of spontaneous gratefulness for life as such. We can be grateful that a beloved person exists, independent of specific good deeds she conducted to our favour. We can be grateful for our own life that is empowered to act and do good in this world. We can be grateful for the survival of a dangerous situation, even if our rescue was not caused by a specific person. All these examples are not necessarily based on mutual exchange, they do not have a specific person as their point of reference and they are not even necessarily occurring in relation to a specific, welcome event. Instead, this second form of gratefulness refers to a general perspective towards the world and life as such. It is a fundamental feeling that encompasses our relationship to the world as a whole.

> "There is such an experience of gratefulness that is spontaneous and without any possible calculation, and that refers to a success that could not have been reached by any beneficence. It could be understood as a fundamental mood in relation to the world and to one's own life." (Henrich 1999, p. 153, translated by G.K.)[92]

However, for Henrich the understanding of „gratefulness" as a feeling is not sufficient. It is mutually correlated with thinking. Thinking and „gratefulness" must be understood as equally primordial and interdependent. „Gratefulness" presupposes a certain distance to the world. This distance is reached by the act of thinking. When we are completely immersed in the world and our everyday life, the second form of fundamental "gratefulness" cannot arise. Only when we put ourselves in distance to the world and ourselves we can praise our situation as a whole and realise that it cannot be taken for granted. Correspondingly, thinking in that way is only possible because we are already in touch with the world in „gratefulness". In „gratefulness" the world captures us and deeply touches us. Without this deep movement of „gratefulness" we could not reach respective, all-

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[92] "Es gibt eine solche Erfahrung von Dankbarkeit, die spontan und diesseits jeder möglichen Berechnung aufkommt und die einem Gelingen gilt, das von keiner Wohltat hatte eingeräumt werden können. Sie hat als eine Grundstimmung im Verhältnis zur Welt und zum eigenen Leben verstanden werden können."

encompassing thoughts. As a consequence, thinking presupposes „gratefulness" and vice versa.

Different from „misery" and „happiness", in „gratefulness" modification seems possible. Henrich introduces two types of „gratefulness" that gradually differ from each other (Henrich 1999, pp. 172ff.). In "communal gratefulness" we are grateful in the sphere of everyday, social life. For example we can feel „gratefulness" for another beloved person or for the successful completion of an important task. "Communal gratefulness" is felt in a more distant state of mind than everyday „gratefulness" because it is not embedded in a mutual exchange relationship and it is not directed at specific actions of people. There is some abstraction at place when we are not grateful for the delicious cake our mother baked for us but for her existence as such. Still, "communal gratefulness" is part of our daily social life. "Contemplative gratefulness" is the second type. It is felt in full distance to the world and one is grateful for the world as a whole. In this type of „gratefulness" one is overwhelmed by the beauty and meaningfulness of the totality of the world. Although Henrich does not explicitly mention the connection, it seems that "contemplative gratefulness" comes close to „happiness", as described above.

As can be seen, „gratefulness" is an existential perspective on the world. Just like „misery" and „happiness" it is tightly interconnected with thought and can therefore not be described as mere feeling. Nonetheless it warrants the strong involvement with our world that is not just a matter of rational thinking but also a matter of feeling.

In conclusion, Henrich's remarks on „misery", „happiness", and „gratefulness" remain somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand they show that there are existential life perspectives permeating all our experience. There is not just one, objective, crystal-clear way of being in and seeing the world. Instead, life is colourful and always shaped by specific general life orientations. These are substantially related with our affectivity. So far Henrich's work seems perfectly compatible with the theory of existential feelings, which will be presented in part two of this book. On

the other hand, Henrich seems to overload these basically relevant ideas with speculative, idealistic principles concerning the experience of totality. His descriptions of „happiness" and „misery" remain rich and useful as long as they concern basic life perspectives but they become hard to follow when they are claimed to be means to experiencing totality. It is unclear what exactly their alleged bi-polar, internal correlation means. While it is plausible that „happiness" and „misery" shape our fundamental life orientations the phenomenal character of dialectic interrelatedness that Henrich proposes remains hard to understand. Nonetheless, these ideas show that Henrich was one of the predecessors of today's theories of fundamental affectivity. In our discussion of existential feelings in part two these aspects of human affectivity will be elaborated in more detail.

1.3.2. Frank's self-feeling

Besides his systematic work on self-consciousness Frank presented a critical and detailed reconstruction[93] of the historical notion of "self-feeling" (Frank 2002a). He shows that self-feeling has surprisingly many similarities to his own account of pre-reflective self-consciousness. Particularly, he uses this historical notion to argue for the non-propositional character of self-consciousness, which marks a significant deviance from Henrich's original account (see chapter 1.2.2. in this book). Note that Frank is not entirely clear about the exact conceptual relationship between pre-reflective self-consciousness and self-feeling. In his recent books (Frank 2012, chapter 6; 2015) he distinguishes pre-reflective self-consciousness from his own understanding of "self-knowledge" but the term self-feeling is not explicitly categorized. In a talk at the University of Vienna on December 3rd, 2014 he suggested that self-feeling should primarily be understood as historical notion, being a prototype of current pre-reflective theories of self-consciousness. He deliberately does not use it in his more systematically oriented texts.

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[93] It is a reconstruction because the term "self-feeling" was very common in the days of early romanticism (Frank 2002a; Slaby 2012a) but is almost completely forgotten today.

For Frank, self-feeling refers to the non-objectifying, instantaneous self-luminosity of consciousness. The term "feeling" (or "sentiment") ["Gefühl" in German] in the late 18th century had two major meanings (Frank 2002a, pp. 11ff.). First, it referred to the sense of touch, to the fact that we can feel things in the world. Second, it referred to an evaluative sense of pleasure and pain. In "feeling" we evaluate the world in terms of pleasure and pain. Frank focusses on the first meaning. The term "self-feeling" had two major meanings in those days, too (Frank 2002a, pp. 26ff.). First, it referred to a sense of our own value, today often called self-esteem or self-respect.[94] Second, it referred to an inner sense or self-awareness, which was popular in the empirical psychology of those days. Again, Frank neglects the evaluative aspect and focusses on the second connotation. As can be seen, Frank sees self-feeling as a feeling of our own existence, as a pre-reflective self-luminosity of our consciousness. Note that this must not be understood as a dual and quasi-reflective relationship between a "perceiving" feeling and a "perceived" existence, which will be shown shortly. Particularly, the notion of self-feeling emphasizes the non-propositional status of self-consciousness in Frank's view.

In accordance with early romanticism (e.g. Novalis, Jacobi, Schleiermacher and others) and Sartre, Frank applies an important ontological presumption: the priority of existence over essence. This focus on existence was stressed by the early romantics in critical rejection of opposing claims in German Idealism (Frank 2007). We need not go into details of this metaphysical debate here, but it is important that Frank fully endorses Kant's famous refutation of the ontological argument[95]. Existence is not a predicate that can be applied to an otherwise self-sustaining entity, especially not the concept of God. Existence in itself is independent of perception and thought. Moreover, we cannot approach existence by means of thinking. We can imagine something and develop respective notions, e.g. the notion of a unicorn. In mythology and literature we have collected many properties that a unicorn has, we can tell about its essence. However, no matter how precisely our

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[94] See Vendrell Ferran (2008, § 6.3.) for a phenomenological analysis of this dimension.
[95] Which was first introduced by Anselm of Canterbury in his *Proslogion.*

notion of a unicorn is developed, we cannot tell anything concerning its existence. Instead, we perceive existence with our senses, we feel it. In early romanticism, "feeling" or "sentiment" ["Gefühl" in German] was the term for our faculty to detect existence. This also applies for ourselves. We cannot be conscious of our own existence without "feeling" it. Therefore, self-consciousness is not only a matter of thoughts, it is a feeling of our own existence. In self-feeling we feel ourselves as existent, we have a feeling of being. This feeling of existence could not be reached by mere thinking. Every thought is propositional and objectifying and faces the problems of the reflection model of self-consciousness, as we saw above.

In Frank's own words:

> "Self-feeling provides the philosophical subject thus (first) a non-objectifying and pre-reflective feeling of itself, of its pure, factual subjectivity. It provides but also (second and in one turn) a consciousness of being (that is consciousness of its own existence and existence as such)." (Frank 2002a, p. 255, translated by G.K.)[96]

Importantly, self-feeling is not only concerned with the body (Frank 2007, chapter 9). It is instantaneously integrating our bodily and mental existence and is thus not a mere proprioception. Proprioception is the body's awareness of itself. It has the body as its object. Notably, we need to be self-conscious on a mental level to ascribe a proprioception to our own body. Without pre-reflective self-consciousness we would not be aware of the fact that a particular proprioception was our own (and about our own body, respectively). If it was only the body that was felt in self-feeling (as proprioception), it would be problematic to reach the mental level in a second step. The feeling or awareness of proprioception is in itself a conscious mental state and thereby self-intimating. Hence, we do not have just a proprioception of our body but always a conscious, self-intimating mental state at the same time. Therefore, Frank's account of self-feeling includes both our feeling of existence as well as the self-intimation of our mental states. We feel that we really exist and we feel that we exist as self-conscious beings, as subjects.

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[96] "Das Selbstgefühl liefert dem philosophischen Subjekt also (erstens) ein ungegenständliches und der Reflexion zuvorkommendes Gefühl von sich, von seiner rein zuständlichen Subjektivität. Es liefert ihm aber (zweitens und in eins damit) ein Bewusstsein des Seins (im Sinne des Bewusstseins seiner eigenen und der Existenz überhaupt)."

Frank summarizes his argument with an interpretation of Novalis, supported by Sartre's work (Frank 2002a, chapter 11 and 12). First, there is being, as ontologically primary basis. Then, consciousness is understood as secondary phenomenon, making its "picture" of being. Consciousness is engaged in the mapping of being, it "represents" being and is therefore derivative. It remains in the sphere of "appearance" and is in itself no "being" in the strict sense. Sartre (2012 [1943]) called its status "néant" (engl. "nothingness"). Hence, it can never reach full adequacy in its representation of being. In naïve self-consciousness (similar to many idealistic theories) this relation of primary and secondary phenomena is falsely inverted. Consciousness is then seen to be primary, while in reality being is ontologically primary. This is because consciousness is the epistemological starting point for our reflections on being. Consciousness is the epistemological reason that we are aware of ourselves. However, with the help of self-feeling this false intuition can be reversed again, Novalis called this operation "ordo inversus" (Frank and Kurz 1977). In self-feeling we are directly aware of ourselves as existing subjects. It is not only a conscious state, not only an appearance, but a feeling of being directly in touch with existence as such. In self-feeling we are aware of the fact that it is being that is ontologically primary. Therefore, self-feeling can be the starting point for philosophical reflection and the reversal of the first, false impression. With the help of self-feeling we can come to the conclusion that being is the ontological foundation and consciousness is secondary as epistemic sphere of appearance.

As shown above, self-feeling is a primary, direct and non-propositional awareness of our own existence. It is not only mental self-awareness but qua bodily feeling directly in touch with our being. Given that, it becomes clear that Frank overcomes a major difficulty in Henrich's account. He does not follow Henrich's assertion that self-consciousness is essentially a thought and avoids respective problems of the reflection model. Instead, he claims that self-consciousness is non-propositional and thereby able to directly and pre-reflectively disclose existence and subjectivity. Frank sees supporting evidence for this in the historical notion of self-feeling.

We saw above that Frank's claim for the non-propositional status of self-consciousness is too strong. However, this does not render his whole take on the affective character of self-consciousness wrong. There seems to be something right in understanding self-consciousness as affective phenomenon. This will be explored further in the remainder of this book.

Importantly, Frank's conception of self-feeling has some shortcomings that may to some extent explain the reason for his other problems. Frank uses the term "feeling" but focusses only on a few aspects of the phenomenology of "feeling". Consequently, he fails to take important additional characteristics into account. He understands feeling as sensual, touching relationship with existence. The only function of this feeling is the awareness of our mere being, of the fact that we are in existence. Thus, Frank's self-feeling (and his account of self-consciousness, accordingly) is restricted to the experience of pure, factual existence. He explicitly mentions possible broader meanings of "feeling" (e.g. evaluative components) but focusses on the sensual experience only (Frank 2002a, p. 25).[97] Feeling, for him, is an "organ" that functions as detector of existence, and nothing more. In a later writing (Frank 2007, pp. 440f.) Frank equates "feeling" with the "qualia"-aspect of consciousness. Some philosophers of mind (Horgan and Tienson 2002; Pitt 2004; Siewert 1998; Soldati 2005), occasionally called "phenomenal intentionalists", claim that every mental state (be it intentional or not) has a distinctive quale, a "what it is like" to have that state. Frank's restricted account of feeling leads to an understanding of self-feeling as mere "quale" of self-consciousness. In short, self-feeling is reduced to a "what it is like" to be self-conscious or, more precisely, to exist as a subject. Accordingly, his concept lacks what could be called "material content". Self-feeling is a rather empty state of being aware of one's own pure existence but does not provide any "flesh" for further reflection. Frank's self-consciousness does not tell us anything about our individuality, about the specific

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[97] In a recent talk at the University of Vienna (Frank 2014), however, Frank indicated that there might be a connection between non-propositional self-consciousness and Sartre's notion of "Nausea" (Sartre 1964 [1938]). Nausea could be understood as primary, non-propositional feeling of our bare and groundless existence.

way we are in this world and therefore provides no proper ground for self-reflection. This shortcoming may also come from the fact that Frank broadly refrains from using the term self-feeling for more than historical evidence for his account of self-consciousness. In his understanding, the literature of self-feeling in early romantics provided many fruitful insights for a theory of pre-reflective self-consciousness. These insights should be used in contemporary debates. However, he does not take the notion of feeling serious enough. By not allowing the notions of feeling or self-feeling to play a significant, systematic role in his theory of self-consciousness, he misses the opportunity to include the rich insights of the philosophy of affectivity into his work.

As we will see in the second part of this book, contemporary philosophy of affectivity has acquired a broad understanding of different characteristics of human feelings and emotions. Phenomenal quale and bodily involvement are certainly important aspects, but clearly not the whole story. The remainder of this book attempts to show that with an extended understanding of human affectivity some of Frank's problems can be solved. Especially the evaluative character of feeling could provide some material content and thus be the key to bridge the gap between pre-reflective self-consciousness and reflective thoughts about ourselves. An innovative and non-conformist protagonist of the Heidelberg School, Ulrich Pothast, presents a theory following this direction.

1.3.3. Pothast's "sense" and "inner ground"

With his dissertation (published as Pothast 1971), Ulrich Pothast was one of the early promoters of the Heidelberg School of self-consciousness. As a student of Dieter Henrich he helped to formulate the groundwork of their theory of self-consciousness. Since the major arguments of the Heidelberg School have already been presented it would be redundant to reconstruct his first writing in detail. Nonetheless, already in this book one can find some seeds of his later work, which extends the original Heidelberg School significantly.

While the early Pothast was quite aligned with Henrich's conception, in his later work (Pothast 1987, 1988, 1998) he presented a rather independent theory focussing on the practical implications of the Heidelberg School of self-consciousness. He developed a self-sufficient system of concepts to show that the affective dimension of human life is central and primary in all endeavours of theoretical as well as practical reason. This makes his work relevant for the project of this book. Ulrich Pothast builds on the major above-mentioned arguments against reflective and propositional accounts of self-consciousness and develops his own positive account around the core concept of "sense" ["Spüren" in German]. In the perspective of this book we can understand his work as further evolving Manfred Frank's account of self-feeling. Different from Frank, Pothast takes the affective dimension of being in the world ("sense" in his terminology) as starting point and discusses specific implications for theoretical and practical reason. Therefore, we can see this chapter as next step in our exploration of the relation between self-consciousness and fundamental affectivity.

Sense

Pothast's theory is centrally built around his concept of "sense" that is used different from ordinary language (Pothast 1988, chapter 1; 1998, chapter 2). He uses the term very broadly for perceptions, feelings, and experiences in general. Pothast explains: „I use the term [sense, G.K.] for the common, elementary property of all mental occurrences and states that a person can be acquainted with" (Pothast 1998, p. 81, translated by G.K.)[98]. For him, sensing is our primary way of being in the world. He introduces the concept with the help of the following illustration: Imagine a state where you would constantly perceive the same. There would be no differences, all your perception would remain indifferent and unchanging. In history of philosophy it was argued (e.g. Fichte and Spinoza) that such a state would be equivalent with a state of no perception at all. If you constantly perceive indifferent sameness there would be no difference to

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[98] „Ich gebrauche das Wort [Spüren, G.K.] für die gemeinsame, elementare Eigenschaft aller psychischen Vorgänge und Zustände, die einer Person zu ihrer Bekanntschaft kommen können."

perceiving nothing at all. Perception is necessarily constituted by differences. As a contrast, imagine a state where you continuously sense the same, without any differences. Pothast argues that this indifferent sensing would not be the same as sensing nothing at all. In his understanding of sensing there is a specific quale, a feeling of what it is like that makes this state different from no sensing at all. Thus, there is a specific way of our being in the world that is different from pure perception. We are never only perceiving the world in a pure epistemic manner. It is always permeated with a specific quale, a feeling or sense.[99] Pothast concludes that our way of being in the world is primarily a sensing way, and his concept of sense integrates perceiving aspects and affective, feeling aspects.

Sense is a primary property of all mental life, we share it with higher mammals. It does not need language or higher cognitive abilities. We are primordially "in contact" with the world with the help of sense. For Pothast it is essential that sense occurs before any subject-object difference. There is no subject that senses an object. Conversely, sensing is a phenomenon that is just there and brings something to presence. It is an experience of mental life as such and does not rely on an experiencing "ego". Accordingly, it does not necessarily represent an object. Sensing can be just there without any relation to an external or even bodily object. There are two major categories of sense: First, there is "confrontation". Sense can serve as representation of specific objects in the world or specific happenings in our own body. In these cases sensing is objectifying and the foundation for explicit perception. Second, there is sensing that is not directed at objects. Pothast introduces the neologism "inner ground" ["Innengrund" in German] for these phenomena. "Inner ground" senses are feelings like enthusiasm, depression or uneasiness (Pothast 1988, p. 56). They constitute a specific way of being in the world, without being directed at specific objects.

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[99] There are contemporary analytic philosophers, sometimes called "phenomenal intentionalists" (Horgan and Tienson 2002; Pitt 2004; Siewert 1998; Soldati 2005), who argue quite similarly that all mental states essentially have phenomenal character. Every mental states has a "what it is like" to have it.

Not all sensing is necessarily conscious at all times. Since sense is the primordial dimension of our being in the world, there is much being sensed but not recognized consciously. We can only focus on some specific aspects of reality at one point in time. But our attention can shift from one aspect to another. Sensing encompasses all the aspects of reality that we can possibly direct our attention at. This means it is possible to have an experience and not explicitly recognize all aspects of it. One can shift attention to different aspects of the situation and rely on formerly unnoticed aspects of one's sensing.

Sense is essentially bodily (Pothast 1988, p. 49). Only bodily beings are in the world in a sensing way. Pothast does not explore the relation between sense and organic substrates in detail but he presupposes that there are distinct counterparts. Since sense is understood as primordial property of all mental life, it relies on organic foundations that we share with other higher animals. Human sensing is not entirely different from a dog's sensing or a monkey's sensing. It is our primary way of being in the world. Note that this does not imply that sense is eliminatively reducible to neurobiological substrates. Even if it was possible to show the exact correspondence between specific senses and for instance specific brain activities, the phenomenal experience of sensing would not be touched. Even if someone would show me the exact brain image of my pain in the finger, this image would not sufficiently explain the sensing of pain as mental experience (see also Kripke 2011). For this reason, Pothast does not engage in the question of how sense is interrelated in detail with organic substrates and concludes that sense must by all means be understood as irreducible.

Unity of sense

It is important to note that sensing cannot be understood as separate, single occurrences. Sensing is always embedded in a unity of sense, in an interrelated context of sensing (Pothast 1988, chapter 2). Every specific sense gathers its meaning from this embeddedness in the wider context. It is not the case that we first gather a multitude of separate senses and then form a synthetic unity. In contrast, we are always in a state of unity that serves as the background for any

specific sense. This background allocates specific senses and shapes their respective meaning. With this concept Pothast tries to solve the problem of unity. Unity is not built or created by an integrating, active "ego", like Kant proposed with his concept of "synthetic unity of apperception". Instead, our primordial way of being in the world is already constituted as unity of sense. We are never confronted with a multitude of different, single mental events that need to be integrated to a unity. On the contrary, from the very beginning of our lives we are in a unity of sense. We experience the world and ourselves in a holistic way. Only higher cognitive processes, which build on this primary level of sense, can then isolate specific aspects of the world and focus on specific objects. As a result, the theoretical question of unity is derivative and has already presupposed a primordial unity of sense in our living experience.

Our attention can focus on specific events within the unity of sense. Pothast heavily emphasises that this focus of attention must not be understood as inner observation (e.g. Pothast 1988, p. 49). It is not possible to perceive inner states like objects in the world. Arguments against inner observation or reflection models of consciousness have been discussed above in chapter 1.2.1.. Although we cannot observe ourselves in this way, it is possible to focus on specific aspects of our sensing. This shift of attention occurs on one level, there is no "higher-order monitoring" involved. At one moment in time specific aspects of the unity of sense are more present than others. At the next moment things can change. So the unity of sense is a dynamic dimension.

While our attention can focus on every specific aspect of our sensing, it is not possible to focus on this structure itself. We cannot sense sensing as such an neither can we sense the inner structure of the unity of sense. Here we are again confronted with the problems of circularity in the theory of self-consciousness. Sense is just there, and self-consciousness is just there. Neither sense can sense itself as such nor self-consciousness can be self-conscious of itself as such. These reflective moves are impossible because they lead to an infinite regress or vicious

circle, as has been shown above. Pothast's solution follows the foundation of the Heidelberg School. Sense is self-intimating, it need not sense itself. As has been said, sense is primordial to the subject-object difference. In self-intimating sensing there is no such thing as "something" to be sensed. Instead, sense is from the very beginning self-intimating, it is just there. However, this does not mean that we can acquire detailed knowledge about it, as will be shown shortly.

Sense and Language

For Pothast, there is a fundamental hiatus between sense and "language" (Pothast 1998, chapter 2). Language, used different from ordinary language, here includes all kinds of propositional cognition like speech, thought, etc.. They are two distinct functions in our mental life. While sense is primordial, language is secondary and derivative. Our first experience of the world is a sensing, non-propositional one. As little babies, before we are able to speak or think, we already sense in a specific way. We can distinguish our mother from other entities in the world, we feel well or not well - all these experiences are possible without language. Later in life we learn how to express our sensing in words and acquire the capability of language. However, language can never fully represent the primordial sphere of sense. For example, language is restrained by specific grammar. It is made to describe subject-object relationships. This makes it difficult to talk or think about non-relational, non-objectifying phenomena, such as sense or self-consciousness.

This fundamental hiatus does not imply that sense and language are not interrelated. In fact, the two dimensions are often inseparable in real life. In reminiscence to Kant Pothast claims: "Language without sense is empty, sense without language is blind" (Pothast 1998, p. 88, translated by G.K.).[100] Regarding the first part, a proposition needs inner agreement to be a belief. Without entering the debate on Moore's paradox in detail, it seems quite intuitive that "P is true but I do not believe P" is an absurd argument. Whenever we believe something we also

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[100] Interestingly, Nelson Goodman (1984, p. 8) used a fairly similar phrase „feeling without understanding is blind, and understanding without feeling is empty", to emphasize the tight relationship of feeling and understanding.

"feel" a certain amount of agreement. Pothast calls this phenomenon "sensing support" ["spürende Stützung" in German] (Pothast 1998, chapter 3). A proposition can be logically and even epistemically true and nonetheless not credible for the subject. There is an important difference between a true proposition and a credible proposition. This difference is a matter of sensing, a matter of „sensing support". It can only be decided by asking the subject and is not a matter of epistemology or logic. It is the question "Do you find this credible? Do you agree?". As a consequence, Pothast can argue that language is empty without sense. Every proposition needs „sensing support". Correspondingly, sense remains blind without language. Sense is the primordial, bodily dimension of our being. It is dynamic and holistic as unity of sense. Therefore it needs language to be specified and comprehensible. Without language our sensing could not be part of our cognitive life, e.g. our deliberation. By articulating our sense we try to grasp specific aspects of it and make them explicit. Only as explicit articulations our sensing can be part of our deliberative processes. Thus, sense remains blind without the specifying force of language. As a result, we need both, sense and language, to live a life as human beings.

"Inner ground"

For the project of this book the most relevant aspect of Pothast's theory is the concept of "inner ground" (Pothast 1988, chapter 4; 1998, pp. 108ff.). Pothast defines:

> "I subsume those aspects of my sensing life as ‚inner ground' that do not stand *for something else* and have thus e.g. an epistemic role, but that are *just there* without a function as vehicle or representation" (Pothast 1998, p. 108, translated by G.K.)[101]

As has been stated above, the „inner ground" is the sphere of sensing that is not related to objects. Therefore it is difficult to speak about it, our language is insufficient to capture its peculiarities. Nonetheless, the „inner ground" provides a major source of orientation for our personal lives. It shapes all our experience, it

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[101] "Als 'Innengrund' fasse ich diejenigen Züge meines Spürenslebens zusammen, die nicht *für anderes* stehen und darin z.B. eine epistemische Rolle haben, sondern schlicht *da sind* ohne Vehikel- oder Vertretungsfunktion."

"colours" the world in a specific way. Life feels different whether you are happily playing with your children or carrying out the garbage on a rainy day in misery. These moods are not directed at specific objects (like the fear of the dog in front of me) but are general ways of being in the world. They are essentially sensed.

Moreover, the „inner ground" provides orientation in complex decisions (Pothast 1988, chapters 8-12; Pothast 1998, chapters 3-6). When there are many conflicting goals and different means to reach them, there can be a sense of what is most important, of what we really want.[102] Sensing can provide weighting of conflicting aspects in decision making and help to find a proper configuration of preferences. Pothast's concept of „inner ground" sensing aims to be the solution for a longstanding, often unrecognized problem in practical reason – the question of ultimate goals. On the one hand, theories practical reason normally have sufficient explanations of how to infer from higher-order goals to lower-order goals and deduce optimal means to reach them. On the other hand, they struggle to answer the question how the higher goals are constituted. In orthodox decision theories and respective empirical studies these ultimate goals are often just presupposed (Steele and Stefánsson 2015). There is relatively little research being done on how we know what our last goals in life are. Pothast proposes that the „inner ground" provides us with fundamental senses that lead us to a better understanding of our last goals. There are several important benefits in searching our „inner ground" for answers about ourselves. First, by articulating our „inner ground" senses we learn about what is really important in our lives. We gain explicit consciousness about our inner wishes, intentions, priorities, etc.. Second, by making the inner driving forces explicit we gain more freedom. Unarticulated „inner ground" senses tend to steer us unconsciously and uncontrolled. When we articulate our „inner ground" senses we make them graspable and this partly liberates us from being unconsciously steered. Moreover, gaining knowledge about our „inner ground" senses forms a

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[102] Psychological research as acquired broad evidence that there are „shortcuts" to rational deliberation in complex decision making (compare the "two systems debate", e.g. Gigerenzer 2007; Kahneman 2011). In contrast to Pothast's approach, there is little emphasis on affective components in this debate.

unity of our personhood over time. It helps to form a consistent narrative of our personal lives.

The „inner ground" is the core of our individuality (Pothast 1988, chapter 10). What makes us the persons we are is nothing else than our „inner ground" senses, our felt desires, goals, etc.. Note that these are not understood as fixed entity of a "true ego". On the contrary, human life is a constant process of self-creation, relying on „inner ground" senses. We are continuously on the way shaping our characters through repeated actions and practices. This shaping process is guided and supported by our „inner ground" senses.

However, Pothast concedes some essential problems in searching our „inner ground" (Pothast 1988, chapter 10; Pothast 1998, chapter 4). First, there are epistemological problems. Sensing is a dynamic faculty, it is constantly moving and therefore difficult to catch. It occurs in the unity of sense as holistic happening. So it hard to point to a specific aspect of it. Even if we succeed to single out one specific aspect we miss out several other aspects in the unity of sense. As shown above, our attention can focus at some aspects at one time only while the unity of sense forms a deeply interconnected whole. Hence, when we focus on some aspects we always risk to miss out other important aspects. Together with the already mentioned shortcoming of language as such and the hiatus between sense and language it becomes clear that any articulation of the „inner ground" must remain incomplete and uncertain. Second, there is an ontological problem. The „inner ground" is not infallible in itself. It is possible that our everyday life and pressing, short-term incidences distort our „inner ground" senses. When we are searching our „inner ground" for answers it is always possible that our senses are influenced by short-term occurrences and temporary emotions. Notably, Pothast introduced this important second aspect only in 1998 (Pothast 1998, pp. 186ff. and pp. 199ff.), in his initial presentation of the theory (Pothast 1988) the „inner ground" was much more constructed as infallible. Compare the following quote:

"The more access I get to sensing my inner ground, the more I appropriate myself, gain a vital encounter with what I unconfrontedly, unbiasedly, in a certain sense 'truly' am." (Pothast 1988, p. 99, translated by G.K.)[103]

Pothast makes some proposals to minimize these difficulties and yield most of our „inner ground" (Pothast 1988, chapter 10; Pothast 1998, chapters 4&5). First, every attempt to articulate an „inner ground" sense can itself be tested with our sense. We saw above that any proposition needs „sensing support" to be credible and a belief. This also applies for propositions concerning the „inner ground". We can try a specific articulation of our „inner ground" senses and see if it has „sensing support", if it "feels right". Obviously this confirmation will be circular, because sense is used to make sense credible. However, it does not need to be understood as a vicious circle but more as a hermeneutic circle, according to Pothast. Sense is the fundamental starting point of our existence. We make first attempts to translate these feelings into words and can never be sure that we succeed. These first attempts are then subject to our sense and can find "felt" agreement or not. It is not the case that any sense could give ultimate justification to any articulation. Nonetheless, „sensing support" can make some articulations more credible than others. With this in mind, we can ascribe at least some reliability to „inner ground" senses. Second, we can test our „inner ground" senses for consistency. We can compare our current „inner ground" senses with our actions in the past, with other current mental states such as beliefs, desires, etc., or with higher-order goals. If a current „inner ground" sense is consistent with other long-term goals, our standing convictions about the world and ourselves, and with our actions in the past, it is likely that it reflects an adequate and stable attitude. We can also watch our „inner ground" senses over time and see if they remain stable over time to assess their adequacy. Third, we can talk to other people to compare our „inner ground" senses with their assessment. Sometimes other people can be an important corrective in

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[103] „Je mehr vom Spüren meines Innengrunds mir zugänglich wird, desto weiter eigne ich mich mir an, gewinne ich einen lebendigen Umgang mit dem, was ich unkonfrontiert, unabgefälscht, in gewissem Sinn ‚wahrhaftig' bin."

the evaluation of one's own sensing. Forth, one should establish a good practice of contemplation. It is helpful to find a situation where one is liberated from pressing everyday tasks and can contemplate over one's life without the need for immediate action. Building on Aristoteles' concept of shaping one's character through repeated practice, Pothast suggests that we can learn to articulate our „inner ground" senses more properly. By establishing a regular practice of contemplation we can improve our capability to search our „inner ground" and become more open to its signs. All these "tricks and tips" will not lead to an ultimate justification of inner sense articulation or a full understanding of oneself. The fundamental hiatus between sense and language will always persist and can only partly be overcome.

Conclusion: Pothast and self-feeling

Pothast makes an unquestionable contribution to understanding the material content of affective foundations of human life. He has the courage to explore dimensions of human life that are often left out in current debates. With his concept of sense he shows that our being in this world cannot be understood without taking affectivity into account. Moreover, he presents an attempt to bridge the primordial, non-propositional sphere of sense with the secondary, propositional sphere of language. This seems to help with one of the most challenging problems in Manfred Frank's account. Frank fails to explain how we can elevate from basic self-feeling to propositional thoughts about ourselves. If we take Pothast's concept of „inner ground" sense as candidate for a concept of self-feeling, he can bring us a step further. As we have seen, „inner ground" senses are much more than just a feeling of mere existence. While Frank's self-feeling is suffering material emptiness, Pothast's „inner ground" senses are full of content. Pothast's „inner ground" senses pave the way for individual self-interpretation, for attempts to articulate what life feels like for us. Although these articulations are fallible, they at least partly offer the possibility to acquire knowledge about ourselves that is supported by the fundamental dimension of affectivity.

Be that as it may, Pothast's theory has significant shortcomings. First, his concept of sense seems overly broad. He uses the term "sense" for perceptions, emotions,

feelings, moods, desires, and some phenomena that are not so present in current discussion, like „inner ground". For phenomena like emotions and feelings philosophy has made remarkable progress in the years after the publication of Pothast's theory. Thus, in light of today's debate Pothast's take on emotions seems somewhat outdated, which is obviously nothing to blame him for. He himself concedes that the concept of sense needs manifold further differentiation and that this project would be very difficult (Pothast 1998, pp. 33f.). However, he does not give precise enough definitions for the other aspects of sense that refer to newly introduced phenomena like „inner ground". For instance, he introduces the concept of „inner ground" as sphere of senses that are not directed at objects (Pothast 1988, chapter 4; Pothast 1998, pp. 108ff.). Yet, he uses the examples of the joy he experiences when seeing his child again or waiting for something (Pothast 1988, pp. 86ff.). These two are clearly intentional, object-oriented phenomena.[104] His joy has the child as its "object" and his waiting has the event he is waiting for as "object". Generally speaking, it is not clear how an affective state that is understood as strictly non-intentional at the same time can assess specific aspects of decisions such as goals, wishes, etc.. If one has a "bad feeling" concerning the acceptance of a job offer, it seems quite obvious that this feeling has an intentional object, namely the job offer. Note that it should not be implied here that Pothast's attempt to emphasise affective components in practical reason is per se wrong. It just needs more conceptual clarification. Further, Pothast implies that „inner ground" senses are binary, meaning that they confer agreement or disagreement to something but nothing beyond that (Pothast 1988, p. 116). Elsewhere he gives examples of „inner ground" senses such as depression, enthusiasm or anger (Pothast 1988, pp. 86ff.), which can hardly be understood as merely binary. Instead they display a rich and sophisticated phenomenology, which has not only been shown in recent analyses (Ratcliffe 2015a). As a result, his concept of sense remains too broad and thus vague.

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[104] Analysis of emotions in this way have become common in contemporary philosophy of emotion, which will be shown in more detail in part two of this book.

Secondly, Pothast pays little attention (only in Pothast 1998, pp. 100f.) to the recursive aspect of the relationship between sense and language. It is not just language that is influenced by our sensing. Correspondingly, it seems plausible to add that our senses are also shaped by language. This would make the relationship a true interrelation. In his initial writing (1988, chapter 4), Pothast presents the „inner ground" as close to an absolute, infallible entity for self-guidance. In itself it is always right, problems arise only from its limited translatability to language. In his later book (Pothast 1998), he qualifies the concept and adds the possibility of short-term distortions in the „inner ground". Still, it serves as last resort of self-evaluation. Pothast focusses on means to reduce distortions and translation problems. He does not emphasise enough the fact that we can shape our „inner ground" senses through the sphere of language. By talking about our feelings, as it happens for instance in psychotherapy, our character develops and our sensing is altered. We can develop our character though regular practice and this also changes our way of sensing.

The third shortcoming becomes particularly striking in the context of this book's objective. Pothast obviously relies on findings of the Heidelberg School of self-consciousness, also in his later work. For example, he repeatedly states that there is no inner perception (e.g. Pothast 1988, p. 49) and refers to his own dissertation (Pothast 1971), which was part of the founding writings of the Heidelberg School. However, Pothast ignores the problem of self-consciousness in his later writings. He claims that problems of self-consciousness are unsolvable and can therefore be neglected (Pothast 1988, pp. 128f.). Instead, he concentrates on other phenomena like „inner ground" senses and argues that these are more fundamental and therefore more relevant. He fails to trace his innovative later work back to his roots in the discussion on self-consciousness. In contrast to that, this book explicitly focuses on problems of self-consciousness and argues that solutions can be found in philosophy of fundamental affectivity. Pothast's "inner ground" will serve as significant inspiration for the account of self-feeling developed in the remainder of this book.

1.4. Conclusion

This first part of the book analysed the notion of self-consciousness and presented some major challenges in the current debate. Reflective theories of self-consciousness fail. The core of self-consciousness cannot be understood as a dual-digit, reflective relationship because this leads to infinite regress or vicious circularity. Likewise, it cannot be understood as propositional. Thus, a pre-reflective alternative is needed. However, current pre-reflective accounts suffer from two problems: First, they focus on what self-consciousness is not rather than what it is. This is what has been called the "ex negativo" challenge here. Additionally, non-egological, pre-reflective theories cannot explain the unity of the phenomenon.

Notably, it is not claimed that reflective theories should be abandoned altogether and only pre-reflective theories are what we need. On the contrary, a comprehensive approach must recognize that there are various levels in self-consciousness.[105] Part four of this book will go into more detail on this. For now, it makes sense to distinguish at least one additional level to the proposed fundamental level of pre-reflective self-consciousness. We normally have a reflective capacity, we can have thoughts about ourselves. We can ask ourselves questions like "Who am I?", "What do I really believe in?", or "What do I want to do with my life?". Thus, there seem to be at least two levels: the primary, pre-reflective level of self-consciousness, and the secondary, reflective level of self-reflection and self-interpretation. It might follow that reflective theories of self-consciousness are not per se wrong, but at best they explain the secondary level and fail to explain the primary phenomenon. We saw that Manfred Frank argued that this primary level must be understood as strictly non-propositional because only then it could escape the trap of the reflection models. However, self-consciousness defined as pre-reflective and non-propositional falls prey to the "ex negativo" challenge because it lacks material content. It remains a rather empty concept, saying little positive

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[105] Compare Bermudez (1998) for a similar view.

about the phenomenon. Crucially, it fails to explain how the two levels relate to each other. With a conceptually poor notion of pre-reflective, non-propositional self-consciousness we have difficulties to bridge the gap to reflective, propositional thoughts about ourselves. It remains unclear how actual statements like "I love my wife" or "I believe in democracy" are related to the fundamental level of pre-reflective self-consciousness.

This book follows the intuition that an analysis of human affectivity can make a significant contribution to this problem. Manfred Frank and even more Ulrich Pothast (also Dieter Henrich to some extent) made some initial steps in this direction. They gave us some important hints regarding the importance of affectivity in the understanding of self-consciousness and motivated further explorations in this direction. However, they did not reach the level of understanding that contemporary philosophy of affectivity has acquired. In the remainder of this book it will be shown that fundamental affectivity provides the grounds for an improved understanding of pre-reflective self-consciousness. Fundamental affectivity may turn out to be the very core of our existence, of our being in the world. An existential feeling of being ("self-feeling") may be the key to some of the most pressing problems in the philosophy of self-consciousness. Part two of this book will introduce the reader to contemporary philosophy of human affectivity and especially to the theory of existential feelings in order to further explore this intuition.

2. Affectivity

This second part of the book is dedicated to the philosophy of human affectivity. It will further evolve the idea that affectivity plays a fundamental role in the way we exist as subjective, human beings. The arguments carved out in this part of the book build the second pillar in the development of an account of self-feeling. Self-feeling will incorporate many of the features of existential feelings presented here. More specifically, in part three it will be argued that self-feeling and existential feeling are two aspects of our fundamental affectivity.

Some readers who are more familiar with the philosophy of fundamental human affectivity may find this part too lengthy. However, remember that this book attempts to bring together two fairly unconnected fields of discussion, namely philosophy of self-consciousness and philosophy of human affectivity. Given this breadth it has to be assumed that many readers coming from the field of self-consciousness will not be overly familiar with philosophy of human affectivity. Particularly, it is fair to assume that the theory of existential feelings has not yet become common ground of knowledge among philosophers. Therefore, it is legitimate to present and discuss these aspects in more detail in order to make sure everyone is on the same page. For a proper understanding of the account of self-feeling presented in this book it seems necessary to be familiar with existing theories of fundamental human affectivity, especially existential feelings.

This part has three chapters. It starts with a brief overview of human affectivity that is meant as general introduction into the field. Second, it discusses Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings. Third, we look at some complementary thoughts to Ratcliffe's theory that have been put forward by Stephan and Slaby. Most importantly, they provide some initial ideas how Ratcliffe's existential feelings might relate to self-consciousness.

2.1. A brief overview of philosophy of human affectivity

Before going into more detail about the theory of existential feelings, the general context of philosophy of human affectivity needs to be briefly considered. It has a long and rich history that helps to understand why the theory of existential feelings emerged the way it did.

Human affectivity was a topic of philosophy throughout its whole history. However, its perceived significance and role varied enormously. There is, for example, the classical view that human affectivity disturbs reason and is thus responsible for misjudgements and erroneous behaviour. The Greek Stoa is usually associated with this position.[106] Baruch de Spinoza, on the other hand, is famous for the fundamental and affirmative character he assigned affectivity in his philosophical system.

While traditional philosophical research was not overly fine-grained in conceptual differentiation of human affectivity[107], contemporary philosophy has developed a strong focus on a particular class of affective phenomena (Colombetti 2014, p. 1).[108] Today's so-called "philosophy of emotion" is predominantly concerned with short-term affective episodes that are directed at a specific object. Examples include being afraid of a dog or being angry with your mother. Philosophy of emotion has gained remarkable momentum in the last decades, which also led to an often fruitful dialogue between philosophy and other disciplines, such as psychology or neuroscience.[109] For terminological clarity the term "emotion" will be used in this book to refer to these short-term, object-directed phenomena.

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[106] See Graver (2009) for qualifying arguments to show that the Greek Stoa after all did have a concept of "good" affectivity ("eupatheiai").

[107] For a notable exception, see e.g. Max Scheler's (1921) detailed analysis of human affectivity.

[108] See Campbell for a similar diagnosis: „There are more feelings on heaven and earth than are discussed in most people's philosophies." (Campbell 1997, p. 153)

[109] Antonio Damasio (1994, 1999, 2003, 2010), Paul Griffith (1997, 2013), Giovanna Colombetti (2014), and Jesse Prinz (2004) are important examples of such a fruitful cooperation.

2.1.1. Characterizing emotions

Over the years, there were many attempts to classify common features of emotions (for an overview, see e.g. Demmerling and Landweer 2007; Deonna and Teroni 2012; Döring 2009; Goldie 2010; Hatzimoysis 2003; Scherer and Sander 2009). Although some common ground has been established, there is still much controversy in the field. There is no general consensus about which features should be regarded as most critical or constitutive. Given this situation, this section will broadly outline those features of emotion that many regard as at least somewhat relevant. Note that none of these features alone is appropriate to define emotion, as many of them are heavily debated and many of them can be challenged with counterexamples. Still, they serve as an introduction to get a preliminary "feel" of what we are talking about in this part of the book. Many of the aspects briefly introduced here will be further elaborated in later sections of this part of the book.

Unique qualitative "Feel". Each emotion has a specific "feel", a "what it is like" to have that experience. The feeling of a specific emotion is distinct from other emotional states as well as from non-emotional mental states. Thus, is makes a phenomenal difference whether you are angry with your husband for not taking the garbage out, are in fear of the spider crawling over the dinner table, or non-emotionally believe that Robert Musil was born in Austria.

Physiological arousal. When we have an emotion, usually there are changes in our body, that is we are aroused in a specific way. For example, in anger our heart rate accelerates and in disgust it decelerates (Levenson 1992). In addition, physiological arousal contributes to the credibility of an emotion. When someone tells you that he is incredibly excited and has no sign of physiological arousal you will think twice before you trust him. Note, however, that physical arousal need not necessarily be examined by other people. This feature of physical arousal, together with the unique qualitative feel feature, is particularly emphasized by "feeling" theories of emotion (Damasio 1994, 1999; James 1884, 1890; Lange 1887; Prinz 2004).

Physical Expressions. Emotions are typically associated with specific expressions of the body and the face. Our mimics, voice, gestures and movement styles may change in the course of an emotional episode. In fear of a spider we may open our eyes wider than usual, open our mouths, cry out loudly, and move our arms hysterically. Expressions of some emotions vary so little between cultures that anthropologists proposed to call them "basic emotions" (Ekman 1972, 1980).

Cognitive evaluation. One of the reasons for the increasing momentum in philosophy of emotions over the last decades was the so-called "cognitive turn". Philosophers like Anthony Kenny (1963) argued against then popular James-Lange feeling theories of emotion. Proponents of the cognitive turn claimed that an emotion cannot be understood without taking its cognitive content into account. An emotion like the fear of a spider is inextricably permeated with beliefs like "This spider is dangerous" and desires like "I do not want to be bitten by this spider". There has been a lot of debate whether emotions can be reduced to these cognitive states which will be discussed in more detail below.

Intentional object. Each emotion is directed at a specific object.[110] The fear is *of* the spider and the anger is *with* the husband. An emotion is not just an "inner" state of the person who has it but essentially directed at an object.[111] This implies that emotions are intentional phenomena. In addition, Kenny (1963) coined the term "formal object" to maintain that emotions can be characterized in terms of their relatedness to a specific feature of their objects.[112] It was further developed by William Lyons (1980) and Ronald de Sousa (1987). According to de Sousa every emotion has its specific formal object. A formal object is the second-order property

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[110] This does not necessarily mean that the object of an emotion has to be actually present at the moment of the emotion. As Taylor (1985, p. 48) shows, we can experience objectless fear, we can experience the dread that something harmful is going to happen. Still, this emotion of fear is directed as something, namely the nameless threat that is feared.

[111] In the case of self-directed emotions such as shame or pride we take ourselves as "objects" in this sense.

[112] Although the importance of the concept of a „formal object" is widely acknowledged there are still debates on the exact nature of the relationship between emotions and their formal objects. For example, it is unclear if the perception of a formal object is a causal prerequisite or an integral element of an emotion (Teroni 2007).

of an object that makes an emotion directed at it intelligible (De Sousa 1987, p. 122). For example, the emotion of fear is intelligible if the object of the fear is frightening. Being frightening is thus the formal object of fear. Notably, the second-order property that is the formal object supervenes on a first-order property of the object. In the instance of fear, the first-order property could be that the object is dangerous.[113]

Sudden Onset. Emotions often come suddenly and unexpected. They need very little time to respond to events in the environment. When you see the spider you immediately fear it (given that you are disposed this way). The emotion is just there in the moment you perceive the spider. Some findings in neuroscience (LeDoux 1996) suggest that emotions represent an evolutionarily primordial, "quick and dirty" processing system that shortcuts cognitive appraisals. Before you can consciously think about the spider and how it might be dangerous, you already are in the emotional state of fear.

Passivity. Emotions occur unbidden, they are events, not actions. Often we are faced with emotions that we cannot control, that are involuntary reactions to events in the environment. Notably, there are positions that stress the active, judgemental aspect of emotion (Sartre 1997 [1939]; Solomon 1973, 1976).[114] However, given the phenomenal appearance of emotions they are rather implausible. When we fear the spider or are angry with our husband we do not actively choose to be in such states. This is not to deny that voluntary emotion regulation is possible, but obviously it has its limits in terms of "production" or "reduction" of an emotional state.

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[113] Note that the idea of a formal object appears already in Heidegger's account of emotion, albeit in different terminology: "That before which we are afraid, the 'fearsome', is always something encountered within the world, either with the kind of being of something at hand or something objectively present or Mitda-sein. […] What is it that belongs to the fearsome as such which is encountered in fearing? What is feared has the character of being threatening." (Heidegger 2006 [1927], p. 140, translated by Joan Stambaugh)

[114] Slaby and Stephan (Slaby 2012a; Slaby et al. 2013; Slaby and Stephan 2012; Slaby and Wüschner 2014) recently proposed an approach building on Solomon's and Sartre's intuitions. Emotions in their view are part of the active, engaged side of human life rather than passive experiences or perceptions. This is discussed more extensively in chapter 2.3..

Action tendencies. Emotions motivate to act.[115] When we have an emotion, we are not in a detached, contemplative state but we are enticed to do something (Frijda 1986; Scherer 2005). In fear of the spider we are motivated e.g. to leave the room, to sweep it away, or to ask someone to help us with the uncomfortable situation. This motivation caused by emotion is more immediate and direct than motivation through other reasons. We immediately feel the pull to do something about the spider when we are afraid of it. This is in contrast to a non-emotional practical reasoning about something one might think one is obliged to do. For example, one might come to the conclusion that it would be better to stop eating meat due to environmental reasons. This does not instantly imply that you are actually motivated to stop eating meat. It is one thing to have the belief "I should stop eating meat" and another thing to be motivated to stop eating meat. As can be seen, emotions seem to be an important component of motivation, for instance if you find meat disgusting or feel guilty, this will help to be motivated to avoid eating it.

Hedonistic valence. Most emotions are good or bad. They do not only have a specific "what it is like", but they are instantaneously marked as good or bad (Helm 2001, 2002; Slaby 2008b). We intuitively know how a particular emotion makes our life better or worse, take for example joy, fear, anger, shame. The hedonistic valence of such emotions is an inextricable part of their experience. Of course there are emotions whose hedonistic valence is not so strictly determined. One might argue that emotions like nostalgia contains pleasure and pain at the same time. However, these are exceptions and for most emotions you will be able to say exactly if they are painful or pleasant, at least in the moment you experience them.

Brief duration. Normally, emotions are short-term phenomena. The fear of the spider lasts as long as the spider is present and your being angry with your husband will eventually recede. Of course there are persistent dispositions to react in a

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[115] Slaby and Stephan (see footnote above) proposed a more radical view. They seem to suggest that emotions not only motivate action but that they are themselves actions. For the project of this book this claim is too strong, as will be argued below in chapter 2.3..

specific way and there are other affective phenomena like moods that typically take a longer time. Yet, these phenomena are not typically referred to as emotions in current philosophical research.

As stated before, the abovementioned features are meant to foster a preliminary understanding of the phenomenon of human emotions. They are neither necessary nor sufficient criteria to determine if something is an emotion. In fact, many of the briefly mentioned features are subject of serious debates. For example, in the last decades, philosophy of emotion was particularly preoccupied with a controversy concerning the "feeling"-feature and the "cognitive" feature. This led to notable development in the field.

2.1.2. Feeling vs. cognitive theories of emotion

In the beginning of the 20th century, philosophy of emotion was dominated by so-called "feeling" theories of emotion. William James (1884, 1890) and Carl Lange (1887) developed surprisingly similar accounts in parallel that both put the feeling aspect in the centre of their understanding of emotion. Their account is often referred to as James-Lange theory of emotion. Contemporary defenders of such theories are Antonio Damasio (1994, 1999, 2003, 2010) and Jesse Prinz (2004). They claim that emotions are either perceptions or representations of physiological changes in the body. What defines an emotion is the underlying physiological change, the bodily feeling. Our body is disposed to react in a specific way to internal and external stimuli. These physiological reactions of the body cause an emotional experience.

Feeling theories of emotion face a number of objections. First, it is hard to understand and characterise the multitude of different emotions with the help of physiological changes only. This has been labelled "individuation problem" (Slaby 2008b, p. 130). It seems that emotions like anger, indignation, envy, jealousy or shame need a more subtle differentiation than a vague reference to their bodily

feeling. For example, Schachter and Singer (1962) showed in an often-cited empirical study that people react with quite different emotions to similar physiological changes.[116] Test persons were given injections to stimulate the sympathetic system and then exposed to different situations. People felt emotions of anger when exposed to a situation where an actor behaved angrily. Conversely, people felt emotions of euphoria when exposed to a situation where an actor behaved euphorically. So they "interpreted" the same physiological stimulus in different ways. This is an often mentioned counter-example for the claim that bodily feeling is the only explanans for emotions. A second objection argues that feeling theories fail to take intentionality of emotions into account. Typically, emotions are directed at objects in the world. Traditional accounts that take bodily feelings as non-intentional states cannot accommodate for this fact.

In rejection of traditional feeling theories philosophy of emotion performed a "cognitive turn" beginning with the works of and Errol Bedford (1957) and Anthony Kenny (1963). They stressed the importance of intentionality in emotions and their undeniable, cognitive features. An emotion is not just the reaction to a bodily feeling but a complex cognitive state involving object directedness, beliefs, and desires. When you are angry with your husband for not taking the garbage out, this is inextricably connected with your belief that he did not take the garbage out and with your wish that he should do so. For many years now, cognitive theories represented the mainstream in the philosophy of emotion. Robert Solomon (1973, 1976) was perhaps most prominent with his controversial claim that all emotions are judgements.[117] He argued that your anger at your husband is simply your judgement that he did something wrong. Feelings play no important or even defining role here. Feelings, Solomon stated, "no more constitute or define the emotion than an army of fleas constitutes a homeless dog" (Solomon 1976, p. 159). They are mere accessory parts with no constituting role for an emotion. Along this line, Nussbaum (2001) argued that emotions can be explained as pairs of belief and

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[116] Note that this experiment is itself subject to criticism (e.g. De Sousa 1987, p. 55).

[117] In his later works (e.g. Solomon 2003), however, he qualified this claim and conceded that he previously denied the role of the body too harshly.

desire. Your sadness for the death of your mother can basically be reduced to your belief that she is dead and your desire that she should live.[118]

In recent years, cognitive theories faced serious objections, too. First, it seems phenomenologically implausible to neglect the importance of feelings in emotions. It is quite intuitive that sadness or anger have their specific feel and that this is a necessary component of an emotion. Already James proposed a thought experiment where we should imagine an emotional state completely without bodily feeling – such a state would hardly be experienced as an emotion (James 1884).

Second, there is the phenomenon of recalcitrant emotions. We may fear flying although we know that it is not dangerous. You have the strong belief that flying is not more dangerous than driving, you want to enter the plane to fly home, and despite all that you are terribly afraid and cannot do it. No matter how much effort you make, you may fail to get rid of the emotion. This is a major problem for cognitivist theories for the following reason. They see emotions as judgments. According to Nussbaum (2001, p. 37), a judgment consists of two stages: First there is the appearance of an object, and second there is your judgmental reaction to it. You affirm it, you object it, or you ignore it. Consequently, in the case of recalcitrant emotions there are two conflicting judgements. First, you have the judgement inherent to the emotion of fear of flying. This judgement entails that flying is threatening. Second, you have the judgement that flying is not dangerous, based on various pieces of evidence. Normally, however, we suppose that people are for the most part consistent in their judgements and beliefs. Therefore, the cognitive account of emotions faces a dilemma. Nussbaum tries to escape by claiming that people are in fact inconsistent in their judgments. Although this may be true in some cases, the sheer broadness of recalcitrant emotions would totally erode our general view on human beings as rational if all of these cases would be explained by

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[118] Solomon and Nussbaum are generally seen as most prominent proponents of cognitivism in the philosophy of emotions. However, there are differences between them. For example, Nussbaum (2001, p. 43) argues for an objectivism of emotions (emotions are about items that are important for our well-being), while Solomon (Solomon 1976, p. 108), inspired by Sartre, sympathises with a rather subjectivist view (emotions are projections of value into the world).

inconsistent judgements. Moreover, cognitive theories need to employ some kind of explicit assent to the appearance of an emotion, otherwise it would lose its judgemental character. The conflicting judgements thus need to be understood as voluntary. This is even less plausible. How could we voluntarily choose to have a judgement that flying is dangerous and that flying is not dangerous at the same time?

One attempt to solve these problems are theories that claim an analogy between emotion and perception (De Sousa 1987; Deonna and Teroni 2012; Döring 2007, 2010, 2013; Goldie 2000; Helm 2001; Roberts 2003; Slaby 2008b; Tappolet 2000).[119] Generally speaking, these approaches claim emotions to be unitary phenomena that tell us something about the world. They only employ the first stage of Nussbaum's judgment model, the appearance of an object, but deny that there is a judgemental component inherent to the emotion. We perceive the dangerousness of the tiger through the emotion of fear, we perceive the baby as being lovable through the parental emotion of love. For them, emotions are distinct phenomena and involve cognitive and bodily aspects. Hence, perceptual theories can easily account for the phenomenal feeling character of an emotion. Emotions, just like perceptions, have a "what it is like" to be in that state. Additionally, they have lesser problems to explain recalcitrant emotions. There can be recalcitrant affective illusions (your fear something that you know is not threatening) just like there are recalcitrant perceptual illusions (e.g. the Müller-Lyer illusions: You see something that you know is not the case). Building on these principles there is a vivid discussion on the relation between emotion and evaluation, e.g. in emotions as perceptions of value (Deonna and Teroni 2012; Mulligan 1998, 2010; Stocker and Hegeman 1992; Tappolet 2000). Consequently, emotions are often claimed to have a mind-to-world direction of fit[120]. The classic example of a mind-to-world direction

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[119] Sometimes these accounts are labelled "weak cognitivists" (Döring 2009; Müller 2011; Slaby 2008b). Note that Slaby and Stephan (Slaby 2012a; Slaby et al. 2013; Slaby and Stephan 2012; Slaby and Wüschner 2014) recently criticised this view for neglecting the active and bodily character of emotions. Instead, they propose to view emotions as part of embodied, goal-directed agency. Helm (2015) expressed some critical thoughts on the analogy between perception and emotion, too.
[120] G.E.M. Anscombe (1957) is usually seen as originator of the directions of fit concept.

of fit is belief. A belief is supposed to depict the world as it is. For example, the belief that it is raining is correct if it corresponds to the fact that it is raining. Thus, a belief is satisfied if it (as a state of mind) fits the state of the world. If emotions are like perceptions, they tell us something about the world and thus have a mind-to-world direction of fit. An emotion is satisfied if it fits the state of the world.

In contrast to that, desire is the classic example for the opposite world-to-mind direction of fit. Generally speaking, a desire is a wish how the world should be like. For example, the desire that there should be no hunger in the world does not refer to an actual state of affairs but to a potential future state, namely to a world without hunger. Thus, a desire is satisfied if the state of the world fits the state of mind. Some philosophers argue that emotions have a world-to-mind direction of fit, too (De Sousa and Morton 2002; Helm 2001; Slaby 2008b; Slaby and Stephan 2008). For instance, Bennett Helm (2001, pp. 4ff.; 2002) argues that there is no point in debating whether emotions are either mind-to-world or world-to-mind. He calls this antagonism the "cognitive-conative divide" and suggests a more integrated view for emotions. According to him, they are ways of perceiving the world as it is and at the same time they desire specific, wished for states of the world. An emotion does not only present the object in a specific way (mind-to-world), it also evaluates that object and thereby discloses our own concerns and desires with respect to that object (world-to-mind). For instance, the emotion of fear presents the world in a particular way (e.g. that the tiger is dangerous) and at the same time it entails a desire of how the world should be like (e.g. that the tiger should not be there, or at least not be dangerous). Somewhat paradoxically, an emotion (such as fear) aims both to fit the actual state of affairs and to make the world fit to its inherent desire.

Another attempt to solve these problems are so-called hybrid or component theories of emotion (Ben-Ze'ev 2000; Lyons 1980). They see emotions as conglomerate of different components that interact in a specific way. Thereby, both the phenomenology of bodily feeling and cognitive components can be included. Contemporary psychological accounts seem to work along these lines, e.g. Klaus

Scherer's (2005) "component process model". Also Albert Newen and Alexandra Zinck's (Zinck and Newen 2007) "pattern theory of emotion" seem to fit into this category. However, component theories in general risk to be just a neat collection of elements without explaining their unity. In phenomenal experience of an emotion we are not confronted with a multitude of separate elements but with a singular, unitary phenomenon. It is hard to explain this experienced unity only by enumerating the involved components.

Following the considerations above, some kind of unitary, perception-analogous theory seems most appropriate to understand emotions.[121] For the project of this book, however, we need to dig deeper into human affectivity. Contemporary philosophy of emotion is predominantly concerned with short-term, object-oriented emotions like being afraid of the dog or being angry at your mother. Other dimensions of human affectivity, like moods, background feelings, and bodily sensations (e.g. hunger or fatigue) are often overlooked.[122] This book attempts to explore these overlooked aspects in more detail. To contribute to the problems of self-consciousness in a valuable way we have to consider one's existential situation in total. Theories of short-term, object-oriented emotions do not go far enough in this regard. Instead, an adequate account of self-feeling has to be based on a theory of fundamental human affectivity. This fundamental dimension will be in the focus in the remainder of this part of the book.

2.1.3. Fundamental affectivity

The most prominent contemporary account of fundamental affectivity is Matthew Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings which will be discussed in detail in the next

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[121] It should be acknowledged at this point that the actual difference between cognitive and feeling theories has eroded in the last years. Cognitive theories (such as Nussbaum) have included many feeling-characteristics into their account (and thereby overstretched the term "judgement") and contemporary versions of feeling theories emphasize the world-directed intentionality (and thereby concede a quasi-cognitive character) of emotions (Landweer 2004).

[122] Jan Slaby (2008b, chapters 5-7) applies a useful distinction between emotions, bodily sensations, and background feelings and moods.

section.[123] It builds on the most recent developments in philosophy of emotion and integrates feeling and cognitive dimensions. However, it should not be forgotten that there are some alternative attempts to capture fundamental affectivity. Without going in detail they should be briefly presented as a wider context to the project of this book.[124]

First, there is Antonio Damasio's (1994, 1999, 2003, 2010) remarkable pioneer work on affectivity. Coming from a neuroscientific perspective, he comprehensively shaped the way we today think about human affectivity. Based on empirical findings he was one of the first who argued that our cognitive system is in strong interdependence with our affective system. He showed that affective states permeate all mental activities, including those that were traditionally understood as purely rational, such as decision making.[125] He presented a theory of emotions that further developed and empirically supported William James' work. Somewhat diverging from traditional terminology, emotions for Damasio represent changes in the body, mostly caused by stimuli in the environment. The feeling of an emotion, then, is the awareness of that bodily change that constitutes what traditionally is called an "emotion", e.g. anger or fear. Thus, all emotions generate feelings (if you are awake). Not all feelings, however, are originated by an emotion. So-called background feelings do not originate in emotions. Background feelings, for Damasio, are "the feeling of life itself, the sense of being" (Damasio 1994, p. 150). They are the representation of the body as it is when not aroused by an emotion. Rather, they are feelings of "background emotions" (Damasio 1999, chapter 2) which are basic bodily states that are usually not caused by external influences (e.g. tiredness). Thus, background feelings are less dominant and are hardly experienced as extremely positive or negative. Examples include fatigue, wellness, sickness, or relaxation (Damasio 1999, chapter 9).

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[123] Compare e.g. Fingerhut/Marienberg's remark that „It has been to a large extent due to Ratcliffe's work (2005, 2008) that these topics [fundamental feelings of being alive, G.K.] have regained a broader interest and are treated in a larger context" (Fingerhut and Marienberg 2012, p. 9)

[124] In Colombetti's recent book she presents a nice summary of alternative accounts of "primordial affectivity" (Colombetti 2014, chapter 1).

[125] Compare his famous "somatic marker hypothesis" as introduced in Damasio (1994).

As can be seen, Damasio presented a theory of human affectivity that includes fundamental dimensions. This is a notable exception in the context of mainstream philosophy of emotion. However, he seems too much indebted to William James. He construes affectivity as bodily phenomenon and the experienced affective state ("feeling" in his terminology) predominantly as awareness of changes in the body. In contrast to that, contemporary philosophy of emotions provided good arguments for the cognitive, intentional, world-directed character of emotions (as discussed above). Therefore, the value of Damasio's account for current debates is somewhat limited.[126] Importantly, this does not at all belittle his remarkable contribution in earlier days of philosophy of emotion that provided many fruitful impulses also beyond his home turf of neurosciences.

In the affective sciences, there are other accounts of fundamental affectivity that are in many regards similar to Damasio's approach and thus face the same shortcoming.[127] For example, there is Russell's "core affect" (Russell 2003) , Stern's "vitality affects" (Stern 1985), and Fuchs' "feelings of being" (Fuchs 2012). Russell and Stern (and to a lesser extent, Fuchs[128]) understand fundamental affectivity as a basic feeling of how the organism is doing at a specific point in time. They focus on the bodily characteristics of the phenomenon and thus tend to underestimate the more cognitive role of fundamental affectivity in shaping our world experience.

Second, there are accounts in contemporary, continental phenomenology that discuss fundamental affectivity. Phenomenologists such as Michel Henry, Bernhard Waldenfels, Hermann Schmitz, or Paola-Ludovika Coriando made interesting suggestions for basic dimensions of human affectivity.[129] Differing in many other aspects, Michel Henry (1963)[130] and Bernhard Waldenfels (2000, 2007) both argue for a fundamental affectivity that is characterized by ontological passivity ("pathos"

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[126] Slaby's has a similar critique of Damasio (Slaby 2008b, pp. 168f.). See also Lenzen (2004) for a detailed, philosophical review of his work.

[127] See Colombetti (2014, chapter 1), for an overview.

[128] Notably, Fuchs comes from a neuroscientific background but integrates lots of phenomenological insights to his theory. So this criticism applies only partly to him.

[129] You may also add Jan Patočka (1998), as suggested by Colombetti (2014).

[130] See also Tengelyi (2007) for an explicit interpretation of Henry's work on selfhood and affectivity.

for Waldenfels). This fundamental affectivity is essentially about ourselves, it is the complement to world-directed intentionality. All our activity is grounded in the fundamental experience of passivity. Hermann Schmitz developed a massive "System of Philosophy" (Schmitz 1964-1980)[131] where affectivity plays a central role. Slogans like the "lived body as feeling body" ["Leib" in German] or "emotions as spatial atmospheres" can only be tentative witnesses to the richness of his work. Paola-Ludovika Coriando (2002) developed an account of fundamental moods ["Grundstimmungen" in German] that strongly builds on Heidegger's notion of "attunement"[132] ["Befindlichkeit" in German]. She understands fundamental moods as way of world-disclosure that transcends the distinction of world and "self".

As interesting as these contributions are, as strongly committed they are to the phenomenological tradition. They employ many implicit preconditions that cannot easily be adapted to broader debates in philosophy of mind. Additionally, they often use a quite idiosyncratic terminology. Given these issues, it is sometimes difficult to "translate" the work of continental phenomenologists to debates beyond phenomenology. As a consequence and despite their valuable work, they are sometimes regarded as a philosophical "sub-culture" with reduced impact on mainstream philosophy. However, Matthew Ratcliffe, Dan Zahavi and Shaun Gallagher are welcome exceptions to this rule. Their work is strongly inspired by the phenomenological tradition while not at the same time restricted to it. They employ a more "relaxed" terminology and are open to various philosophical traditions. Thus, they are able to make notable contributions to mainstream debates in philosophy of mind (e.g. Gallagher 2005; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008; Ratcliffe 2008;

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[131] Compare Schmitz et al. (2011) for a brief introduction in English.

[132] In this book Stambaugh's (Heidegger 1996 [1927]) more recent translation is preferred when it comes to Heidegger's passages concerning affectivity. The classical translation of Macquarrie and Robinson (Heidegger 1962 [1927]) translates "Befindlichkeit" as "state of mind", which has been criticized as misleading (e.g. Colombetti 2014, p. 11) because it suggests a private, psychological state, something Heidegger strongly rejected. The reflexive German verb "sich befinden" literally translates as "to find oneself" or "to be". It may feature in both the questions "Where are you? Wo befinden Sie sich?" and "How are you? Wie befinden sie sich?". Stambaugh's translation as "attunement" does not exactly capture this feature but it still seems to fit better for the purposes of this book, since it avoids the misleading suggestions of the classical translation. Ratcliffe (2005, 2008) is along the same line in this regard.

Zahavi 2005). With their help, the rich and valuable phenomenological perspective finds its way into mainstream philosophy. This book aims to contribute to pressing issues in contemporary philosophy of mind beyond phenomenology. For this reason, Ratcliffe's connective and liberal phenomenological theory of existential feelings suits well for the project of this book.

2.2. Matthew Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings

This chapter presents and discusses Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings as the most elaborate contemporary attempt to philosophically address fundamental human affectivity.[133] Part three of this book will argue that self-feeling and existential feeling are two aspects of our fundamental affectivity. Many features of existential feeling presented in this chapter will be applied to self-feeling in part three. Thus, it is crucial to acquire a sound understanding of Ratcliffe's account beforehand. This is what happens in this chapter.

2.2.1. A phenomenological introduction

Matthew Ratcliffe (2005, 2008) developed a theory[134] of existential feelings that is decisively focused on our fundamental, affective background and not on short-term, object oriented emotions. He heavily builds on the phenomenological tradition, especially on Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Particularly Heidegger's notion of "attunement" ["Befindlichkeit" in German]

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[133] As quoted above, compare e.g. Fingerhut/Marienberg's remark that „It has been to a large extent due to Ratcliffe's work (2005, 2008) that these topics [fundamental feelings of being alive, G.K.] have regained a broader interest and are treated in a larger context" (Fingerhut and Marienberg 2012, p. 9)

[134] Note that Ratcliffe himself refrains from labelling his work so far as a „theory" of existential feelings, due to its alleged incompleteness (Ratcliffe 2012a, p. 28).

(Heidegger 2006 [1927], § 29) can be seen as major inspiration[135] for his theory of existential feelings. Additionally, Ratcliffe uses William James' (1884, 1890) broad and often underestimated theory of feelings as point of reference.

Existential feelings constitute the affective background of all our experience. More often than not, they are not in the foreground of our attention. The experience of an existential feeling is not equal to the experience of an emotion of fear. This leads to a certain difficulty to describe this fundamental dimension of human affectivity. Ratcliffe emphasizes that existential feelings are present throughout all our lifetime, in one form or the other. However, they become most obvious in cases of extreme alteration, such as in psychiatric illness or major life changes. Therefore, one can illustrate the phenomenon of existential feelings by pointing at descriptions of such situations. Helpful cases can be found in psychiatry and in (autobiographical) literature.[136] Given these issues, it makes sense to begin with some introductory phenomenological sketches of what existential feelings can look like before we go into detail with the theoretical concepts.

Ratcliffe provides the following examples of what our existential affectivity may be like:

> "People sometimes talk of feeling alive, dead, distant, detached, dislodged, estranged, isolated, otherworldly, indifferent to everything, overwhelmed, suffocated, cut off, lost, disconnected, out of sorts, not oneself, out of touch with things, out of it, not quite with it, separate, in harmony with things, at peace with things or part of things. There are references to feelings of unreality, heightened existence, surreality, familiarity, unfamiliarity, strangeness, isolation, emptiness, belonging, being at home in the world, being at one with things, significance, insignificance, and the list goes on. People also sometimes report that 'things just

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[135] In his most recent texts (e.g. Ratcliffe 2015a), Ratcliffe emphasizes the fruitful role that Husserl's work plays for his theory. This marks a contrast to his initial writings (Ratcliffe 2005, 2008) on existential feelings, where Heidegger is obviously the major point of reference.

[136] There seems to be an increasing tendency, at least in philosophy of psychiatry, to rely on first person narratives that describe the phenomena of interest. Often a combination of autobiographical literature and genuine patient narratives (e.g. obtained by a questionnaire) is used to explore mental phenomena (Stephan et al. 2014). You might object that this leads to a methodological problem because it relies on mere metaphors. However, it is hard to find a better way of exploring fundamental phenomena like these. After all, it seems that it is one of the building blocks in phenomenology to rely on first-personal experience in philosophical research.

don't feel right', 'I'm not with it today', 'I just feel a bit removed from it all at the moment', 'I feel out of it' or 'it feels strange'." (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 68)

Ratcliffe (2015a, p. 37) also cites a famous passage from Shakespeare's Hamlet to show how deeply our felt life perspective can be changed:

> "I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory. This most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours." (Shakespeare 2006 [1603/04], Act 2, Scene 2)

As can be seen, the existential feeling that Hamlet describes is not only a matter of mood. It is a severely altered way of being in the world, his whole perspective on the world has changed. These changes in our relationship with the world cut even deeper in some cases of psychiatric illness, as described in the Sechehaye's "Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl":

> "Everything was exact, smooth, artificial, extremely tense; the chairs and tables seemed models placed here and there. Pupils and teachers were puppets revolving without cause, without objective. I recognized nothing, nobody. It was as though reality, attenuated, had slipped away from all these things and these people." (Sechehaye 1970, p. 26)

Similarly, consider the following quote of a depressive patient:

> "It is impossible to feel that things will ever be different (even though I know I have been depressed before and come out of it). This feeling means I don't care about anything. I feel like nothing is worth anything." (Ratcliffe 2015a, p. 71)[137]

In Ratcliffe's own words:

> "The world can sometimes appear unfamiliar, unreal, distant or close. It can be something that one feels apart from or at one with. One can feel in control of one's situation as a whole or overwhelmed by it. One can feel like a participant in the world or like a detached, estranged observer, staring at objects that do not feel quite 'there'. Such relationships structure all experiences. Whenever one has a specific experience of oneself, another person or an inanimate object being a

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[137] Ratcliffe and his colleagues recently conducted an empirical study as part of the AHRC- and DFG-funded project 'Emotional Experience in Depression: a Philosophical Study'. A questionnaire was posted on the website of the mental health charity SANE. 134 out of 147 respondents had a medical diagnosis of depression (Slaby et al. 2013, p. 43). Two thirds of them where acutely depressed at the time of responding (ibid.). They provided free text responses with no word limit.

certain way, the experience has, as a background, a more general sense of one's relationship with the world." (Ratcliffe 2005, p. 47)

As human beings, we are not detached, neutral observers, experiencing the world in an objective manner. Instead, we are situated in a world full of possibilities and concerns, a world that matters, that we care about. Our relationship with the world is thus always permeated with fundamental affectivity, with various modes of felt disclosure. Existential feelings mark the key tone that shapes our being in this world, and they can change in time. One of the benefits of Ratcliffe's account is its possibility to explain experiences where everything is exactly the same but completely different at the same time. From the standpoint of a (hypothetical) neutral observer, the "objective" situation of a depressed person may has not changed at all. Everything has basically remained the same. Still, in the experience of the depressed person, everything is completely different, e.g. deprived of sense and meaning. Based on this introductory, phenomenological sketch, existential feelings can be characterized more specifically.

2.2.2. Two basic characteristics

Existential feelings are background orientations that shape our space of possibilities and they are bodily feelings. These are the two essential characteristics of existential feelings. Ratcliffe states:

> "1. They [existential feelings, G.K.] are not directed at specific objects or situations but are background orientations through which experience as a whole is structured. 2. They are *feelings*, in the sense that they are bodily states of which we have at least some awareness." (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 2)

In virtue of these two features existential feelings form a phenomenologically distinctive group. Being bodily phenomena in the background, they pre-structure all our experience and thought. When Ratcliffe initially introduced his account of existential feeling (Ratcliffe 2005, 2008), the second characteristic, namely the bodily aspect, was in the foreground of his investigations. In later writings (Ratcliffe 2012a, 2015a), he puts more emphasis on the first characteristic, namely how our

existential background shapes our experienced space of possibilities. Generally speaking, one might say that the second characteristic, being a bodily feeling, describes what existential feelings are, and the first characteristic, being a background structure, describes the main "function" of existential feelings, their role in human experience (Ratcliffe 2012a). This is why the second characteristic, being a bodily feeling, will be introduced first. Notably, it is not implied that the two characteristics are separate components. Conversely, existential feeling is a unitary phenomenon. The two characteristics constitute analytically distinguishable aspects of one unitary phenomenon.

Bodily Feelings

Existential feelings are essentially bodily. Building on classical phenomenology (namely Husserl and Merleau-Ponty), Ratcliffe sees two aspects of the human body (Ratcliffe 2005; 2008, chapter 3-4): First, it can be described as the felt body, the body that can be the object of perception. This applies to other people's bodies as well as to our own. We can perceive another body as object (e.g. the surgeon performing a knee surgery) and we can perceive our own body as object (e.g. when we are cutting our nails or put on our make-up). Second, it can be described as the feeling body, the body that experiences and perceives. Thus, our body has also subjective character. Our body can not only be felt, it can also feel. This distinction reminds us of Wittgenstein's (1958 [1933/35], pp. 66f.) "use as object" vs. "use as subject" of the first person pronoun (as discussed above in chapter 1.1.2.). This time, however, we are not only concerned with a "purified" mental level but take the body into account, too.[138] We experience and perceive the world through our body, our senses work in and through our body. For example, when we run our

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[138] This distinction also reminds of the classical distinction between the lived body ["Leib" in German] and the physical body ["Körper" in German] in phenomenology. The latter refers to the body as physical, thing-like object (e.g. when you measure your waistline or cut your fingernails) while the former emphasizes the living, experiencing and feeling characteristic of one's body "from the inside" (e.g. when you notice an itch in your leg or when you touch an object in the world). This distinction was already noticed by Maine de Biran (1841) and Scheler (1921) and was significantly further emphasized and developed by Husserl (1991 [1930]) and Merleau-Ponty (1966 [1945]). See Colombetti (2014; Colombetti and Ratcliffe 2012), Legrand (Legrand and Ravn 2009), Slaby (2008a), Fuchs (2000), Shusterman (2008), Waldenfels (2000), or Schmitz (2007) for examples of contemporary interpretations.

hand over the surface of a table, the object of our experience is the table. At the same time, however, we have a bodily feeling, the way our hand feels in this movement is inextricably part of the experience of the table. The feeling of the hand is the medium through which the table is experienced.

These two aspects of the body are especially important when we reconsider traditional feeling theories of emotion. They have been criticized for not being able to account for intentionality. Feelings are often understood as mere physiological changes, as purely "internal" events in the body that have nothing to do with the outside world. However, if we take the phenomenology of the body seriously, we see that bodily feelings can be about something else, too. Bodily feelings can be intentional, a way of relating to the world.

Peter Goldie (2000, 2002) made a similar point with his notion of "feeling towards", as contrasted with "bodily feeling".[139] The former is an intentional state whose object is something in the world and not the body itself.

> "Feeling towards is unreflective emotional engagement with the world beyond the body; it is not a consciousness of oneself, either of one's bodily condition or of oneself *as* experiencing an emotion" (Goldie 2002, p. 241)

Feelings are not only about the body. They can also be directed at something in the world. "Feeling towards" is thus a particular way of relating to the world that cannot be reduced to cognitive states:

> "Feeling towards, I argue, is not a psychological phenomenon which can be understood as, or reduced to, any particular sort of attitude or attitudes, such as belief, or desire, or belief and desire; rather, what is peculiar to feeling towards is its special sort of content." (Goldie 2000, p. 6)

We do not only relate to the world in a cognitive manner, we also feel it. We have a feeling of the world around us, of our relationship with the world. It is not just a feeling of body states (like tiredness) but a bodily feeling of (or towards) the world around us. Goldie, however, emphasizes the distinction between feelings that have

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[139] Stocker (Stocker and Hegeman 1992) applies a similar distinction, in his terminology "psychic" and "bodily" feelings.

the body as their object ("bodily feeling" in his terminology) on the one hand and feelings that have something in the world as their object ("feeling towards" in his terminology) on the other hand.[140] This clear-cut distinction becomes questionable when we examine the phenomenon of touch more closely. In touch we see that most feelings are of the body and of something in the world at the same time.

Phenomenology of touch

The sense of touch is traditionally underrepresented in philosophy of mind. We tend to focus on visual experiences and build analogies from these. Still, there are some philosophers who emphasize the importance of other senses, like touch, and attempt to qualify the hegemony of vision in philosophical thought (e.g. Merleau-Ponty 1966 [1945]).[141] For these philosophers vision is understood as a comparatively detached, objectifying way of perception. In vision we are in a certain distance to the object and traditionally it is believed that vision is a "passive" experience.[142] In contrast, touch is closer to its object and the active aspect is much more obvious. We have to move e.g. our hands to and above the object, we are directly "in touch" with it and our experience is determined by the specific movements we make.

Most importantly, in touch the distinction between the feeling body and the felt body blurs (Ratcliffe 2008, chapter 3; 2012b). When you touch an object, you feel the object by means of your body. The body becomes a medium of your experience. Take the example of touching the sharp tip of a pencil with your finger. When you touch the pencil tip you feel the changes on your finger, your skin and tissue are a little compressed and deformed. This is the aspect of the felt body. At the same time and by means of that, you feel that the pencil tip is sharp. This is the aspect of the feeling body. Thus, touch is perception of the body and perception through the body at the same time. In touch, the feeling and the felt body coincide. This shows

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[140] In more recent writings (Goldie 2009) he seems to qualify this claim, conceding that many bodily feelings are also feeling towards.

[141] See also Martin (1992) and O'Shaughnessy (1989) on the sense of touch.

[142] Note that there are important opponents against this claim. For example, Noë (2004), Varela (Varela et al. 1991) and Gallagher (2005) emphasize the active role of the body in all perception (including vision).

that feelings are not directed only at the body or only at objects in the world, as Goldie proposed. Instead, feelings can be about the body and about something in the world at the same time. As a consequence, Ratcliffe suggests that the notion "bodily feeling" should refer to both aspects, the feeling of the body and the feeling through the body:

> "The term 'bodily feeling' therefore turns out to be equivocal, and this point is crucial to my account of existential feeling. In one sense, a bodily feeling is *a feeling that has the body as its object*. An another, it is *a feeling done by the body that has something other than the body as its object*." (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 88)

In a word, when we feel something, this is hardly ever a just a matter of changes in the body. Most of the time it is also about something in the world. This is also relevant regarding the controversy between feeling theories and cognitive theories in philosophy of emotion. One of the core counterarguments against traditional feeling theories was the claim that feelings are just about the body and thus cannot account for the intentionality of emotions. Once it is understood that feelings are not only about the body but also directed at the world, this criticism vanishes.[143]

To further illustrate this point, consider Merleau-Ponty's (1966 [1945], pp. 118f.) famous example of your two hands touching. When your right and your left hand touch the feeling and the felt aspect are both available. You can focus your attention on your right hand touching the left hand, or on your left hand be touched by the right hand. In the first case the feeling aspect is in the foreground, your feeling body (the right hand) feels your felt body (your left hand) as an object. In the second case the felt aspect is in the foreground, your left hand is the object that is perceived as felt body. Obviously you can also switch between the hands. Your left hand could be touching the right hand (feeling aspect) or your right hand could be touched by your left hand (felt aspect), respectively.

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[143] Ratcliffe explicitly does not engage in research on neurobiological correlates of his phenomenological claims. There are, however, some empirical findings to support his view. For example, Northoff (2012) argues that body and world oriented experiences are inseparable on a neurobiological level. Similarly, Gerrans and Scherer (2013) integrate pre-intentional feelings into their "Multicomponential Appraisal Theory of Emotion".

Interestingly, bodily feelings need not even be in direct contact with their objects. You can feel something albeit not directly touching it. For example, take a blind woman using a white cane. She does not touch the street and other potential obstacles with her body but only with her white cane. Still, she has a clear touching experience, she touches objects in the world with her tool. In a way, she has an "extended" feeling body, the white cane has become part of her feeling body. However, we need not go so far. Imagine yourself assembling furniture. You try to tighten a screw inside a chest of drawers without being able to see it. You can move your screwdriver over the surface of the furniture to get a feeling where the screw might be. You will get a feeling of the texture of the surface by moving your screwdriver over it. Finally, (hopefully) you will feel the screw and be able to tighten it. This shows that a touching experience is not dependent on direct body-object touching. There can be a medium or tool in between that constitutes an "extended" feeling body.

Furthermore, Ratcliffe shows that a bodily feeling need not be about an actually present object. We can feel absence, we can feel that something is not there.[144] Imagine a situation where there is a box with a small hole. You cannot see inside the box but the hole is large enough that you can put your hand through. Now someone tells you that there might be a poisonous snake inside, but she does not know for sure. Then, she forces you to put your hand inside. There is the possibility that the snake is there and bites you. Try to imagine the feeling you would be having while you are putting your hand through the hole. Your attention would strongly be focussed on the hand and the feeling of not-touching would be conspicuous (as long as the snake does not bite you). Although there is no actual touching, your experience of the absence of touch would outperform any other experience you might have had at that time. Similarly, imagine you being totally naked at home. You would feel the absence of your clothes. Most of the time you do not notice how

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[144] Compare Taylor's example of fear without an explicit object: "The empty slot where the object of fear should be is an essential phenomenological feature of this experience. […] But even in this unfocussed way, the sense I have is one of threat, or that something harmful is impending, that something terrible might happen. Without something of this range, it cannot be dread that we experience." (Taylor 1985, p. 48)

your clothes touch your body. Yet, in the case of their absence you have a specific feeling, something is missing, you feel "naked". In a word, bodily feelings are not just about specific, present objects, but can also be directed at something that is not there, something that is not present.

Existential feelings are bodily feelings

Building on these observations, Ratcliffe argues that existential feelings are bodily feelings in the abovementioned sense. We are in touch with the world through our existential feelings. Notably, existential feelings are not directed at specific objects. Instead, they shape our way of being in the world, our whole experience. Thus, they are about the world as a whole and our relationship with it.

To make this clearer, Ratcliffe and Colombetti (2012) introduce the distinction between noematic, noetic, and existential feelings. Noematic bodily feelings are feelings where the body is the object of experience. They can refer to the body as physical object (such as one's fingernails when cutting them), or to the body as lived body (such as the feeling of one's hands shaking nervously). Secondly, noetic bodily feelings have something in the world as their object. The bodily feeling serves as the medium of the experience, the body is that through which something else is experienced. The abovementioned phenomenon of touch serves as an example here. When you move your hand over a surface, the object of the experience is the surface, the feelings of your hand are the medium through which you experience this object. Thirdly, there are existential feelings. They are neither noematic nor noetic but a general background sense of reality. They constitute our way of experiencing the world as a whole. Existential feelings are not about specific objects, and neither are they a medium through which something else is experienced. Instead, they pre-structure all possible experiences, they determine to which kinds of noematic and noetic feelings one is open to.

At the same time, existential feelings share many features of object-oriented bodily feelings. Existential feelings are both about the world and ourselves in it, so they cover the feeling and the felt aspect at the same time. There is no clear subject-

object distinction in existential feeling. They are our feeling of being in the world, our feeling of the relationship between ourselves and the world we live in. They cover the whole phenomenon and not just one side. However, different aspects can be in the foreground under different circumstances:

> "I suggest that existential feelings are feelings in the body, which are experienced as one's relationship with the world as a whole. This relationship can be quite different, depending, in part, on which side of it is foregrounded. When one feels 'at home' in the world, 'absorbed' in it or 'at one with life', the body often drifts into the background. It is that *through* which things are experienced. But it can also enter the foreground in a number of ways. Consider the sudden realisation that one is being watched by another, an experiential transformation that is vividly conveyed by Sartre's various descriptions." (Ratcliffe 2005, p. 51)

Moreover, existential feelings are bodily felt, they are "in" the body in the sense that they are not mere cognitive dispositions. Imagine again the case of being naked at home. Being used to wear clothes, you feel their absence when you are naked. Your whole skin feels differently, you feel the slight movements of the air, the openness of space, and maybe your own vulnerability. The feeling of being naked brings to attention the fact that we are permanently "in touch" with the world as a whole. Our whole body is constantly exposed to the world and feels its relationship with the world. We can take this example one step further. Again imagine yourself be naked, but this time in public, e.g. in a train station. For most people this is not just a descriptive fact with "physical" consequences like feeling cold. In addition to that, feeling naked in such a situation has more complex implications. You might feel vulnerable or ashamed or stared at. You being naked in a train station contributes significantly to a specific feeling of being at this moment. This is not only a cognitive state but also a bodily feeling. As you can imagine, this feeling will intensively shape your experience and thought in this situation. You may experience the train station as terribly exposed space, other people as watching you with consternation, and yourself as thinking fast how to best get out of the situation. Note that in this case, there is no specific object your feeling is directed at. It is a

specific way of being in the world, a specific relationship between you and the world in this moment.

Note that existential feelings are all-encompassing feelings of one's being in the world in general. Thus, it would be fair to deny that "feeling naked at a train station" amounts to an existential feeling. Being more a situation-specific feeling one should better refer to it as "atmospheric feeling" (Anderson 2009; Slaby and Stephan 2008, 2011; Stephan 2012; Stephan et al. 2014) as outlined below in chapter 2.3.1.. Still, this example serves well to illustrate how bodily feelings shape our cognitive landscape. If we take a further step, we can imagine a patient who in general feels like the naked person at the train station. All her life feels terribly exposed to everyone else. She feels observed, noticed, and scrutinized. She feels vulnerable and anxious when near other people. Thus, she tries to avoid social contact whenever she can. Such a condition may be an even better example for how a bodily existential feeling shapes all our experience. It might amount to some form of a social anxiety disorder (DSM-5 2013, 300.23) or social phobia (ICD-10 1992, F40.1).[145]

Ratcliffe emphasizes that existential feelings do not involve only tactile feelings (Ratcliffe 2005, 2008; also more recently 2012a, 2015a). The phenomenon of touch is an important illustration to understand what is bodily about existential feelings but there is much more involved. For example, existential feelings include a sense of balance, of basic orientation in the world. Moreover, they are constituted by kinaesthetic feelings, proprioception, action dispositions and feelings of pain and pleasure.[146] Since Ratcliffe does not explain these elements in much detail, Shaun Gallagher's (Gallagher 2005; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008) distinction between body

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[145] The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) define the standards in diagnosis and classification of mental disorders worldwide.

[146] See Martin (1992) and O'Shaughnessy (1989) for arguments that body sense includes proprioception, kinesthesis and tactile experience. They do not, however, go as far as Ratcliffe in the appreciation of an experience that unifies both wordly and bodily aspects.

schema and body image can be helpful here.[147] The body schema is the pre-noetic sub-structure of experience. It has two aspects (Gallagher and Zahavi 2008, pp. 145f.): First, it is the "close-to-automatic system of processes that constantly regulates posture and movement to serve intentional action". Second, it is "our pre-reflective and non-objectifying body-awareness". The body schema enables simple tasks like stepping up a staircase. We intuitively are aware of the position of our legs and we are capable of making the right moves without thinking about it. Basic functions of perception and movement are performed by the body "alone", without much interference of consciousness. Thus, there are many sub-personal processes going on that ensure basic bodily self-awareness and pre-structure all conscious experience. In contrast, body image refers to explicit, intentional content that has our body as its object. It includes perceptual experience of, conceptual understanding of and emotional attitude toward one's own body. We can see our fingernails as too long (perceptual), we can believe that our body is handsome (conceptual), we can like our body (emotional). All these features are matters of the body image. They are dependent on the primary level of pre-noetic body schema.

Ratcliffe's take on the relationship between existential feelings and Gallagher's distinction changed over the years. While in 2005 (Ratcliffe 2005, pp. 52f.) he saw existential feelings on the level of body image, in more recent texts (Ratcliffe 2015a, chapter 2), he corrects himself and suggests a correspondence between existential feelings and body schema. Given the considerations above, it seems that Gallagher's body schema is on a slightly "deeper" level than existential feelings. It is constituted by sub-personal, quasi-automatic processes that guide and shape basic perceptual behaviour and motor activity. Therefore, it can hardly be part of experience at the same time. It seems to be an unconscious, bodily process, similar to digestion and heartbeat.[148] In contrast to that, existential feelings have two aspects at the same time. First, they pre-structure our experience and have thus a

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[147] Also compare Gallagher's paper on the role of bodily affect in enactive perception (Bower and Gallagher 2013), which has some slightly divergent intuitions from Ratcliffe's work.

[148] It remains a bit unclear in Gallagher how the body schema can be quasi-automatic, sub-personal and a form of conscious bodily awareness at the same time.

pre-noetic element. Second, as feelings are part of experience, they can be consciously felt. They are our feelings of being in the world. Note that the difference between Ratcliffe and Gallagher on this matter may be one of emphasis and terminology. Gallagher does not explicitly deny that body schema could be somehow phenomenologically observed. At the same time, existential feelings are often not immediately present to us as existential feelings. They also sometimes seem to demand a certain amount of explicit phenomenological "soul searching".

Be that as it may, for now it is important to acknowledge that existential feelings are essentially bodily. They are comprised by many kinds of bodily feelings, such as kinaesthetic feelings, proprioception and tactile experiences. They incorporate both feeling and felt aspects of the body and are thus feelings of our relationship with the world. More specifically, they shape our experienced space of possibility, which will be the main concern of the next section.

Spaces of possibility

While the characteristic of existential feelings being bodily feelings focusses on what they are, the second characteristic tells us more about what they do, about their functional role (Ratcliffe 2008, chapter 4; 2012a; 2015a, chapter 2). Essentially, existential feelings shape our space of possibility. They form our sense of what is possible or what possibilities there are. Thus, they are background orientations that structure all our experience and thought. They are pre-intentional in the sense that they are not themselves directed at specific objects in the world. Instead, they are the underlying tone that determines how specific intentional objects are experienced. Note that this difference is crucial. On the one hand there is intentional emotion that is directed at a specific object, like being afraid of a dog. The intentional object of the emotion of fear is a specific object, namely the dog. On the other hand, we have a pre-intentional existential feeling that is not directed at a specific object. Rather, it shapes the way we experience specific objects. It determines the kinds of ways in which specific objects can appear to us, it shapes our space of possibility. For example, a depressive patient experiences the whole world as hopeless and without meaning. Her existential feeling pre-intentionally

shapes the way specific objects appear to her. Let us look closer at this interesting characteristic.

Horizon

The phenomenological account of "horizon" is helpful to make this clearer.[149] When you experience an object you perceive more than actually appears in front of our senses. Take the experience of a cup as example. You perceive the cup and take it as a complete object. Yet, what you actually see is not the cup as complete object but only one side of it. You look at it from a certain perspective that makes one side of the cup accessible but not the other side at the same time. Note that no matter where you stand or from where you look at the cup, it is impossible to actually see the whole cup at once. Some aspect of the cup will always remain hidden from you. Also note that this is not restricted to the visual sense. In touching, for example, you can never touch the entire surface of the cup at once.[150] Thus, the physical stimulus will always be limited to the parts of the cup that you actually touch. However, even though you do not actually see or touch the object as a whole, you still have the experience of the entire object. You do not perceive "one side of the cup" but you experience the cup as a whole. This suggests that in experience there is more involved than mere physical stimulus. Instead, our experience essentially includes a space of possibilities. When we see one side of the cup we immediately add the possibility of how its background might look like. This seems to be a quasi-automatic process that is not a matter of conscious, deliberative or interpretative thinking. Rather, it is inextricably part of the way our perception works. "Horizon" is the term Husserl (and Merleau-Ponty) used to describe these interrelated possibilities that surround an object when perceived.

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[149] This term is typically associated with classical phenomenologists like Husserl (1966 [1918-1926], 1991 [1929], 1991 [1930]) and Merleau-Ponty (1966 [1945]). Note, however, that some proponents of enactive perception, such as Noë (2004) with his notion of "virtual perception", employ a similar concept. See Colombetti (2014) for a recent attempt to bring together enactivism and phenomenology.

[150] You might object that with sufficiently small objects (like a marble) touching the whole thing becomes possible. Even if this is true, the concept of horizon is not only restricted to the experience of the surface of an object but the whole space of possibilities. This will be further explained below.

Importantly, the concept of horizon is not restricted to visual backsides of objects. Instead, it has several other implications. Husserl's notion of "inner horizon" includes all further possible perceptions as well as potential activities with this object. When we see the cup, we experience it as a cup that has a certain surface, that may be hot or cold, that has a backside, etc. Additionally, when we see the cup, we experience the possibility to drink from it. The "outer horizon", in contrast, points to the interrelatedness of the object with other objects in the context. For example, when we see a cup, we experience the possibility that it contains some beverage, that it might fall off the table, etc. Note that the horizon of an object is not restricted to one sensory modality. When you see the cup you instantaneously experience the possibility of it being hot. Similarly, when you see a knife, you immediately experience its sharpness, its potential to cut your finger. Importantly, the horizon of an object is not static but a dynamic process. It develops in interaction and diachronic interplay with the object. For example, when you are in a conversation with your friend and the cup is empty, the possibility to refill it may become salient. The empty cup is experienced as "to be refilled". In contrast, when your conversational partner has left and the empty cup remains on the table, the possibility that may become salient is "to be put in the dishwasher". Husserl (1966 [1918-1926]) used the term "passive synthesis"[151] to emphasize that all these possibilities are not a matter of active interpretation but passively experienced. First and foremost, the horizon of an object is an inextricable part of the experience, it is co-experienced.

So far, we were only concerned with horizons of specific objects, like a cup or a knife. Based on Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, Ratcliffe suggests that in the background of all these object-specific horizons there is a "universal horizon" that shapes all experiences and thoughts:

> "In addition to incorporating specific possibilities, experience has a general horizontal structure, an all-encompassing shape. As stressed by both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, there is a kind of inarticulate background that delimits the possible

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[151] The concept of passive synthesis and its interpretation is subject to interesting debates in Husserl research (see e.g. Hart 2004).

> forms that any experience might take. […] It is, I suggest, the world as 'universal horizon' that existential feelings constitute." (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 133)

> "We encounter objects in the context of a pre-reflective background sense of belonging to the world and this belonging, this universal horizon, is a space of possibilities." (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 133)

The world as a whole has a horizon, too. It encompasses all possibilities of experience, thought and action. The world primarily appears to us as a space of possibilities, as a universal horizon. This background is constituted by existential feelings. In our respective existential feeling, the world as a whole appears in a specific way, yielding specific possibilities.

Take for example the case of depression. In depression, the whole world feels deprived of possibilities, nothing is worth pursuing anymore. The writer Tim Lott describes it as following in his autobiographical book:

> "I have absolutely no faith, in fact, in anything. In a muddy way, I see that depression manifests itself as a crisis of faith. Not religious faith, but the almost born instinct that things are fluid, that they unfold and change, that new kinds of moment are eventually possible, that the future will arrive. I am in a time-locked place, where the moment I am in will stretch on, agonizingly, for ever. There is no possibility of redemption or hope. It is a final giving up on everything. It is death." (Lott 1996, pp. 246f.)[152]

Similarly, a case can be made for more usual everyday situations. Imagine you had a very hard night with your baby crying for hours. You are tired and feel weak. On top of that you quarrel with your wife on something stupid during breakfast. This makes you feel even worse. Additionally, for weeks you have been suffering from the death of your uncle, with whom you had been close for decades. Note that all these aspects influence your current existential feeling. Then you go to work where you are about to give an important presentation for a committee that decides on financing your long-time planned project. Under normal circumstances you would feel a bit nervous but fairly confident about it. You know you are well prepared and have good arguments. Similar presentations have gone well in the past. This time, however, everything feels harder and less doable. On your way to work you get the

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[152] Cited from Ratcliffe (2015a, p. 71)

impression that the whole project does not make sense any more. You get the strong feeling that the committee will confront you with serious criticisms and you will not be able to provide adequate answers. You feel vulnerable and incompetent. Perhaps you also start worrying about your job as a whole. Are you doing the right thing in your life? Somehow, everything feels like it has gone wrong. With this example we see that existential feelings shape our experienced possibilities as a whole. They determine which possibilities become salient. Our experience of the world as such and our relationship with it is not something consistent and unchanging. In contrast, there are numerous ways of relating to and experiencing the world, which are constituted by existential feelings.

Kinds of possibilities

There are many ways in which our space of possibilities (or universal horizon) can change. By describing these types of alterations we can organize our understanding of existential feelings. However, Ratcliffe does not offer a complete taxonomy of existential feelings. Instead, he lists several dimensions in which our space of possibilities may change and notes that there is much further research to do in this matter (Ratcliffe 2012a; Ratcliffe 2015a, chapter 2). His categorization will be briefly reconstructed in what follows.

Relationship to agency. Possibilities can appear as a matter of our own agency or as things that happen to us. It makes a difference if we experience the world and our existence as something that we can shape by our own or something that is happening to us. In depression, for example, we experience our potential for agency as almost completely lost. We do not see anything as changeable through our own activities. Also in normal life, there are times when we experience our life as quite uncontrollable chain of events. Sometimes we feel "trapped in the hamster wheel". Conversely, there are times when we have a strong feeling for our potential to shape our own lives according to our own plans. The balance between these two angles can shift back and forth.

Significance. Specific possibilities can appear as significant or insignificant in various ways. Our activities can appear for instance as "effortless, easy, pleasurable, difficult, intimidating, daunting, painful, safe or dangerous" (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 214). Similarly, possible happenings can appear e.g. as "fascinating, mysterious, horrifying, irrelevant or meaningless" (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 214). Thus, the experienced significance of objects is not just a binary question of significance or no-significance. Instead, significance has itself numerous varieties that shape our experience.

Variability of significance. Existential feelings can widen or narrow the variability of experienced significance. There are instances where everything appears as meaningless and irrelevant, such as in depression. Likewise, in paranoia, everything is experienced as potential threat. In contrast, our normal life is characterized by a greater variability of significance, as shown above.

Interpersonal accessibility. The balance between activity and happening as well as the variability of significance can also be applied in the interpersonal context. Existential feelings and the space of possibilities must always be understood as shared in an intersubjective world. Possibilities can appear as affecting all of us, or just me, or some specific persons. Some events may be experienced as unchangeable through my own activity but as changeable for someone else. In paranoia, for example, other people appear as potential sources of threat and injury. One feels as vulnerable victim to their dangerous actions.

Perceptual modality. Existential feelings can shape our experiences in different perceptual modalities. They might affect one modality more than the other. Some changes in existential feeling may particularly alters our visual experience while other senses like touching remain fairly the same.

Determinacy of content. Possibilities may vary in their experienced determinacy. Our experience can be very specific and determinate, e.g. "There is a yellow tiger, about 3 metres tall, approaching to bite me in the neck right now". In contrast, an experienced possibility can be like "Something is going to hurt me, but it is not clear what it is and when it is going to happen". There are times when we see the world

crystal-clear and there are other times when the whole world becomes blurred, fuzzy and ambiguous.

Mode of anticipation. Possibilities can appear as certain, uncertain, and problematic or doubtful. For example, you take it as certain that a cup will be solid enough to be grabbed with your hand. Whenever these "certain" possibilities remain unfulfilled, you experience it as a surprise. In contrast to that, there are "uncertain" or "open" possibilities. These depend on yet undetermined circumstances. At the current moment, nothing speaks in favour of their fulfilment. For example, if you grabbed the cup too strongly, it would break. Similarly, the cup on the table could fall down if someone pushed it. Accordingly, if "uncertain" possibilities remain unfulfilled, you do not experience it as a surprise. Additionally, there is a third form of experienced possibly, the "problematic" or "doubtful" uncertainty. These are instances of doubt concerning the experience. The experience itself can be doubtful, we may not be sure if what we perceive is really the case. Ratcliffe gives a speaking example:

> "As I walk home during a dark night and see a person-like shape in the woods, the experience incorporates a feeling of uncertainty over what it is. Then, as I approach and the shape seems to change and fragment, there is doubt over whether anything is there at all. This differs from open uncertainty, as it involves a sense of conflict: 'it might be a person but it might not be'. In such cases, an entity may subsequently resolve itself as what was originally anticipated or, alternatively, as something in conflict with it. So there can be an experience of 'disappointment', an awareness of things as somehow other than previously anticipated." (Ratcliffe 2015a, p. 47)

In problematic uncertainty a part of reality becomes ambiguous. You are not sure what you are actually perceiving. There is a difference between the possibility that the cup might break when someone pushed it from the table and the possibility that there might not even be a cup.

Absence. Note that not all possibilities are experienced as actual possibilities. In addition, the absence of possibilities can become salient as such. Jean-Paul Sartre gave a popular example of a situation when he sat in a coffeehouse waiting for his friend Pierre (Sartre 2012 [1943], pp. 59ff.). While he is waiting, the whole situation is coloured in a specific way. Pierre's absence cancels many possible experiences

with him. These possibilities are emphatically experienced as absent. Sartre cannot talk to Pierre, he cannot drink coffee with him, he cannot look at his new suit, etc. Thus, Sartre checks every person entering the room if it could be Pierre. Every time the waiter approaches Sartre anticipates that the waiter might convey a message from Pierre. The whole coffeehouse is experienced in a specific way, it is experienced as not inhabiting Pierre and the related possibilities. There is a fundamental difference between the feeling of Pierre's absence as described and the proposition "Winston Churchill is absent from the coffeehouse". While the latter is a mere propositional statement, the former is a mode of experience.

In addition to these possible changes in the space of possibilities in the narrow sense, Ratcliffe mentions alternative ways of describing existential feelings (Ratcliffe 2008, pp. 212ff.).

Temporality. Existential feelings are temporal in structure. This has two aspects. First, they themselves may change over time. An existential feeling can change in minutes or be fairly consistent over a long period of time. They can last for many days and weeks, and even for a lifetime. In the latter case, they may shape dispositions in experience and thought so consistently that they even amount to what could be described as character trait or personality. In contrast, they can be very changeable and instable. For example, Ludwig Binswanger suggests that schizophrenic patients suffer from a constant transformation of their existential feelings (Binswanger 1975, pp. 251ff.).[153] Their feeling of being in this world is not stable but changes steadily. These changes do not correspond to specific life events. Instead, they change in a chaotic, unpredictable way. Thus, in the case of schizophrenic patients, change is integral to their existential feelings.[154] Secondly, existential feelings incorporate a sense of time and the possibility of change. For

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[153] Obviously, Binswanger does not explicitly talk about existential feelings as defined by Ratcliffe. However, being closely indebted to Heidegger's work, Binswanger's account seems in parts compatible with contemporary approaches. See e.g. current findings in psychiatry as presented by Sass (2004).

[154] You might add that this amounts to a further distinction between changing existential feelings and existential feelings that promote severe and constant changes of other mental states like emotions, such as in the case of schizophrenia.

example, depressive patients cease to see their lives as changeable. It becomes impossible for them to see the future as open and potentially different from today. Their sense of time has shrunk to a hopeless, empty "now" without the possibility of change.

Belonging and estrangement. There are various ways to feel how we belong to this world. The world can appear as familiar, homely place, a place where we belong and where things are in principle understandable. Conversely, the world can appear as hostile, unfamiliar environment, where everything is strange and difficult to understand. Notably, the world includes other people. When we have a feeling of belonging and homeliness in the world, this does not only include the mountains, the sea, etc. but essentially other people we share this world with.

Kinds and degrees of body conspicuousness. Existential feelings can imply different kinds and degrees of body conspicuousness. When we feel safe and at home with the world, our body as a whole might be in the background of our experience while we are immersed in our worldly activities. In contrast, when we feel vulnerable and unsafe, when the world is experienced as a hostile place (such as in paranoia), our body becomes conspicuous in a specific way. It feels vulnerable and endangered. Another kind of body conspicuousness is in place in depression. The body might feel insignificant, weak, unable to move, or even dead. These various kinds of body conspicuousness are not distinctive types but vary in degrees.

Different modes of concern. As already implicitly shown, existential feelings affect both the world and oneself. When one feels vulnerable and weak, the world appears frightening and dangerous, correspondingly. Similarly, when one feels strong and powerful the world appears as realm of activities, as place that can be shaped according to one's will. However, there can be different foci in our experience. Sometimes the worldly aspect can be in the foreground and sometimes the self-directed aspect can be dominant in experience. Jan Slaby and Achim Stephan (Slaby and Stephan 2008, 2011; Stephan 2012) developed this point further, as we will see below.

Depth of existential feelings

Ratcliffe suggests that existential feelings can be categorized by means of their impact on the experienced possibility space (Ratcliffe 2008, chapter 7; 2012a; 2015a, chapter 2&5):

> "All kinds of existential change can be described in terms of changes in the possibility space that shapes our experiences." (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 213)

Note that for Ratcliffe all configurations of a possibility space are equal in terms of depth. There are no differences in depth of existential feeling, they all encompass the whole feeling of one's being in the world. However, changes in existential feelings can be compared in terms of their depth. A change in existential feeling is deeper the more profoundly it affects the kinds of possibilities available to you. Ratcliffe proposes to contrast every change in existential feeling with a starting point that holds most possibilities intact:

> "We can construe such experiences in terms of a progressive departure from an existential feeling that accommodates the possibility of hope and practical significance, one that the person might previously have taken for granted as 'the world' and not even recognised as a contingent phenomenological achievement. The notion of depth is therefore contrastive in the following way: an existential feeling p is deep compared to q in virtue of its greater departure from starting point r." (Ratcliffe 2015a, p. 131)

As can be seen, Ratcliffe's starting point is characterized by a relative richness of possibilities and at the same time by a certain oblivion of the existential feeling. We become aware of existential feelings when they change and impair our space of possibilities. The more our possibility space is altered, that is the stronger the departure from the starting point is, the deeper is the change in our existential feeling.

Sources of variations in existential feeling

It has been shown above what existential feelings are and how they deeply influence all our experience and thought. This may raise the question on what

influences them in turn.[155] Ratcliffe gives the following brief sketch about possible sources of variation in existential feelings:

> "There are many potential sources of variation. How one generally 'finds oneself in the world' will be influenced to an extent by cultural, social and developmental factors. Furthermore, it is likely to shift as one ages (in ways that will vary from person to person), as well as in response to life events and significant changes in life circumstances." (Ratcliffe 2015a, p. 42, footnote)

These factors can be distinguished according to their main sphere of influence. First, there are variations in existential feelings between different persons. One could refer to these variations as "interpersonal". Second, there are variations in existential feelings within one person. Our feeling of being changes in the course of our lifetime. These could be referred to as "intrapersonal". Note that this distinction does not imply that there are factors exclusively influencing interpersonal and others that are exclusively influencing intrapersonal variations. Instead, these sources of variations are different in the focus of their influence.

First, let us consider interpersonal differences. They seem to emerge out of different cultural, social, and developmental factors.[156] It is generally accepted that cultures vary in certain dimensions, e.g. individualism-collectivism (Hofstede 2001) or (somewhat similar) independence-interdependence (Markus and Kitayama 1991, 2010). Following that line of thought one could argue that existential feelings in individualistic/independent cultures by trend differ from existential feelings in collectivistic/interdependent cultures. For example, Huebner et al. (2010) presented empirical evidence that people in Hong Kong are more inclined to ascribe phenomenal states to collectives than their counterparts in the United States of America. Thus, they seem to have a stronger "sense of us". Similarly, one is likely to

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[155] Note that the following passage focuses on how existential feelings vary themselves. This is different from the question how existential feelings shape the way we experience change or variation (e.g. how temporality is experienced in depression). It is also different from the question what kinds of change of experience are possible within a particular existential feeling (e.g. some existential feelings may include a vivid change in emotional experiences while others contribute to a more stable emotional life).

[156] In philosophy of emotion, Griffith and Scarantino (2009) proposed a situated approach to emotions and discussed several cultural influences on emotions under the label "diachronic scaffolding".

have a stronger sense of belonging and togetherness in collectivistic/interdependent cultures or a stronger feeling of individual creative power and freedom in individualistic/independent cultures (Markus and Kitayama 1991, 2010).

Second, our social environment may influence our existential feelings. It seems plausible that life feels different depending on the socio-economic milieu you are part of, for example. A wealthy protagonist of an upper class family will experience a different space of possibilities than a member of the poor precariat[157], hopping from one insecure part-time job to the next. The former may be concerned with the challenge how to preserve family wealth and status. Her existential feeling could be described as sense of belonging to an elite, with corresponding responsibilities and the threat to lose this status. In contrast, the latter may be concerned with the challenge to ensure subsistence of his family and stabilize his professional life. His existential feeling could be described as sense of a tough life, constantly struggling with basic life needs. He might feel suppressed and exploited by society. There may be a constant feeling of insecurity and unpredictability. Cutrona et al. (2005) showed that living in a high-poverty neighbourhood significantly increases the likelihood of a major depression. Also, there is empirical evidence that people's personalities differ depending on the state they live in (Rentfrow 2010). For example, people on the west coast of the USA tend to be more open to new experiences while people on the east coast tend to show higher neuroticism, which is usually associated with more negative emotions. This might imply that their existential feelings vary as well. Open persons on the west coast see the world as an exciting place, full of possibilities to learn. Their existential feeling opens up a world full of enticing possibilities. Neurotic persons, in contrast, often struggle with their life circumstances and experience many things as burdensome and irritating. Their existential feeling shapes their world in a way that makes it a complicated, negative place.

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[157] The term precariat is a sociological concept to describe a new and growing social class suffering from job insecurity and existential unpredictability. They are sometimes seen as successors of the classical proletariat (Standing 2011).

Third, existential feelings may vary according to developmental differences. Persons with a hard childhood and traumatizing experiences are likely to have different existential feelings than persons with rather "normal" biographies. Recent findings show that a person's attachment style depends to a large extent to their environment as a child, particularly their parent's sensitivity (Bokhorst et al. 2003). A person with an insecure attachment style has a different experience of relationships to other people than a person with a secure attachment style. The existential feeling of an insecure person makes an intimate relationship appear more risky and frightening. Likewise, it seems true that separation from one's family or abuse as a child increases the probability for psychosis (The Schizophrenia Commission 2012). It is intuitive that people with such traumas have a different feeling of being. The whole world, including other people, may persistently appear more dangerous and frightening when you had bad experiences in your childhood. Ratcliffe (2016b, forthcoming-a, forthcoming-b) argues in recent texts that the effect of traumatizing experiences can be so strong that even the structure of intentionality itself is altered. You might lose your ability to distinguish between different kinds of intentional states, such as perception and imagination, he argues.

So much about interpersonal differences in existential feelings. Secondly, there are variations in existential feelings throughout our lifetime, namely intrapersonal changes. Some of these changes may simply emerge out of getting older. Life feels different when we are young than it does when we are old. Shakespeare's famous "All the World's a Stage" monologue might serve as a good example:

> "[…] Then, a soldier / Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard / Jealous in honour, sudden, and quick in quarrel / Seeking the bubble reputation / Even in the cannon's mouth. […] Last scene of all / That ends this strange eventful history / Is second childishness and mere oblivion / Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." (Shakespeare 1967 [1623], Act 2, Scene 7)

The young "soldier" sees the world as place to earn honour and reputation, it is full of possibilities. There is much to learn and to build up. In contemporary times, the life stage of young adulthood is similarly full of possibilities. One strives to establish one's own family, to make a career, to build a house, etc.. In contrast, the old man

is compared to a child, with decreased possibilities and diminished experiences. In Shakespeare's picture, the old man has no taste any more, he experiences the world as flavourless. One looks back at one's life, with more or less grave gaps in memory. The future does not yield many possibilities any more. The ultimate possibility that remains is death. A similar story is told by Goethe, as the following quote shows:

> "Every stage of life corresponds to a certain philosophy. A child appears a realist; for it is as certain of the existence of pears and apples as it is of its own being. A young man, caught up in the storm of his inner passions, has to pay attention to himself, look and feel ahead; he is transformed into an idealist. A grown man, on the other hand, has every reason to be a skeptic; he is well advised to doubt whether the means he has chosen to achieve his purpose can really be right. Before action and in the course of action he has every reason to keep his mind flexible so that he will not have to grieve later on about a wrong choice. An old man, however, will always avow mysticism. He sees that so much seems to depend on chance: unreason succeeds, reason fails, fortune and misfortune unexpectedly come to the same thing in the end; this is how things are, how they were, and old age comes to rest in him who is, who was and ever will be." (Goethe 1998 [1833], no. 806)

Here one can clearly see how one's perspective on life changes over time. While the child naively takes the world to be just as it is, the young man is much more oriented towards his future projects. The older one gets, the more doubt arises and the world looks much less predictable. For the old man, finally, the world looks like ruled by chance.

Other intrapersonal changes in existential feeling are triggered by severe life events or life challenges. Life feels different when a close relative dies or you lose your job. Similarly, your feeling of being is likely to rise when you marry, or get a child, or make an important step in your career.

In addition to these rather general sources of variation it seems intuitive that moods, emotions, and thoughts are potential influencers on existential feelings, too. Below, their relationship to existential feeling will be examined in detail.

Tacking stock: Existential feelings are in the background and part of experience at the same time

One thing is crucial in the understanding of existential feelings: Their twofold basic characteristic implies that they are a pre-structuring background of all experience and a part of experience at the same time. Qua shaping the space of possibilities they are in the background of our experience. Qua being a bodily feeling they are part of our experience. Remember Ratcliffe's initial description of the two basic characteristics of existential feelings:

> "1. They are not directed at specific objects or situations but are background orientations through which experience as a whole is structured. 2. They are *feelings*, in the sense that they are bodily states of which we have at least some awareness." (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 2)

They are background orientations that are feelings at the same time. Thus, we can be aware of them. Existential feelings live in both worlds simultaneously. They pre-structure our experience and are part of it at the same time. Ratcliffe explicitly states:

> "I use the term 'background' to emphasise that existential feelings are presupposed by the possibility of intentional states, there in advance. However, this should not be taken to imply that they are always inconspicuous or tacit. An existential feeling can at the same time be an object of experience. Consider a feeling of extreme anxiety, where the whole world presents itself under the guise of threat and incorporates no sense of alternatives to that threat. The threat is the form of one's world, rather than something attached to one of its contents, but the feeling is at the same time conspicuous and disturbing. The fact that one's world takes this form can itself be something that is attended to and reflected upon, as can the bodily aspects of anxiety." (Ratcliffe 2012a, p. 41)

The existential feeling of anxiety pre-structures our experience in an all-encompassing way. At the same time, it is felt as a bodily feeling and is therefore also present in experience. As part of the experience it can be the object of explicit attention or reflection. We can ask ourselves how this experienced feeling of anxiety shapes our overall experience at that moment.

This twofold structure has analogies in standard, short-term, object-directed emotions. First, they are part of our experience, we experience for instance anger,

pride, and happiness. Second, these emotional episodes shape our overall experience. For example, when you are angry at your husband for not carrying the garbage out, this influences your whole experience at this moment. Perhaps this reminds you of some your husband's other bad traits, the whole family situation might appear worse, or other pressing tasks might seem more annoying than usual. An emotion is not just affecting the experience of one single object but colours experience more generally. It provides you with significance and meaning, it shapes what matters in a specific moment. This is quite similar to the pre-structuring background function of existential feelings.

The significance of this twofold structure cannot be underestimated in the context of this book. Existential feelings shape our experience and thought on a pre-reflective, pre-propositional level. At the same time they are feelings that are part of our experience. Thus, they can live in both worlds simultaneously. As we will see in the third part, this feature of existential feelings will pave the way to an integral account of pre-reflective self-consciousness and reflective self-interpretation. Self-feeling, as will be developed below, accounts both for the fundamental, pre-reflective "mineness" of experience and its relationship to derivative, reflective self-interpretation.

To summarize, existential feelings essentially shape our space of possibilities. They are not directed at specific objects but are felt background orientations that pre-structure all our experience and thought. They are a bodily feeling of what is possible. This possibility space has many different aspects, as has been shown. For the project of this book, one aspect is particularly important. Existential feelings concern the world and myself at the same time. The felt possibilities in the world correspond to felt abilities of myself. An existential feeling is thus not exclusively about the world or about myself. Instead, it is about my relationship with the world, it is a feeling of my being in this world.

2.2.3. Examples from clinical practice

Existential feelings are a fundamental dimension of our lives that often remains hidden in the background. This implies a certain challenge for the development of a theory of existential feelings. Most often we are oblivious of the status of our existential feelings. To overcome this difficulty it has become common to point to mental disorders in order to illustrate what existential feelings are and what they do. It is believed that by carefully examining deviations in existential feeling we can learn how they function under normal circumstances.[158]

This section will briefly present some examples of mental disorders and show how these can illustrate the theory of existential feelings as discussed above. Please note that there are no claims made on these mental disorders themselves or on the relationship between psychiatric diagnoses and particular existential feelings. These are complicated and much debated phenomena that clearly go beyond the scope of this book. Thus, anyone with specific expertise on the clinical conditions mentioned in this chapter will likely be unsatisfied with its superficial and oversimplifying treatment. Yet, please bear in mind the context of this chapter in this book. Its modest goal is to present some psychiatric conditions as illustrations only to further promote our understanding of existential feelings.

The Capgras delusion

Basically, the Capgras delusion consists of the strong and recalcitrant impression that one of your close relatives has been replaced by an impostor. For example, you see your wife and although she looks and speaks like she always did you have the strong feeling that it is not her but a robot behaving just like her. Many contemporary accounts suppose that the loss of some kind of "affect" contributes to this monothematic delusion. For example, in Ellis and Young's account (1990) the Capgras delusion is understood as failure in affective recognition. In their view, there is one neural pathway responsible for overt recognition and another neural

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[158] The most comprehensive attempt in this regard seems to be Ratcliffe's recent study of the phenomenology of depression (Ratcliffe 2015a).

pathway for covert, affective recognition. In the Capgras case the former is intact while the latter is impaired. Capgras patients cognitively recognize the other person, e.g. they see that their counterpart looks and behaves just like their wife. Nonetheless, they do not affectively recognize the other person, thus, they have the experience of unfamiliarity. The woman next to them seems to have all the features of their real wife but it does not feel like her. They do not have the feeling of familiarity and connectedness that you normally have when you meet your wife. Based on this feeling of unfamiliarity they employ the belief that their wife has been replaced by an impostor.

Ratcliffe partly builds on this account in claiming that existential feelings are in the background of this affective error (Ratcliffe 2008, chapter 5). As we saw above, existential feelings shape our space of possibilities. This does not only affect individual possibilities but also the intersubjective dimension. Our interpersonal relationships are full of experienced possibilities. These interpersonal possibilities are substantially different from possibilities inherent to the experience of material objects. We do not encounter another person in the same way as a stone. Both have their possibilities but a stone bears significantly different possibilities than a person. There are many possibilities like verbal exchange, joint awareness or joint action that are only there with other persons. Ratcliffe suggests that these experienced possibilities make interpersonal contact special. These are what makes the feeling of being in the same room with a stone significantly different from the feeling of being in the same room with another person.

Our experienced interpersonal possibilities vary from person to person. There are some possibilities that are only experienced with your spouse (e.g. having sexual intercourse[159]), other possibilities that are experienced with some acquainted persons like your friends (e.g. talking about personal problems), and other possibilities that are experienced with almost everyone else (e.g. shaking hands). These experienced possibilities shape the way we perceive these relationships.

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[159] I ignore the apparently popular practice of adultery here.

When we are with a friend we experience closeness and familiarity that entails certain possibilities. When this feeling is absent we have troubles identifying the relationship as friendship.

Existential feelings are in the background of these interpersonal feelings. They provide the overall tonality of these experiences. In the case of the Capgras illusion, Ratcliffe suggests, there is a general feeling of unfamiliarity with other persons. In Capgras all interpersonal relationships are bereft of certain, more intimate possibilities. Capgras patients have reduced capabilities to feel closeness and familiarity with other people. This becomes most striking in the relationship to close relatives. Therefore, the delusional impostor belief emerges in the relationship to those most close to the patient. Based on a general feeling of unfamiliarity with other people your most intimate relationships appear strangely altered. They should entail the feeling of familiarity and entail certain possibilities but they do not any more.

As can be seen, the Capgras delusion shows how existential feelings influence our interpersonal relationships. They do so in virtue of their shaping of experienced interpersonal possibilities. By determining how we feel when encountering another person they shape the way we experience a specific relationship.

The Cotard delusion

The Cotard delusion consists of the impression that one is dead. People suffering from Cotard delusion are reported to ask to be dressed in a shroud, feel guilty about claiming social security while being already dead, or stab themselves in the arm to prove that there is no blood flowing through their body (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 166). Many traditional accounts treat Cotard delusions as cases of false propositional attitudes. In contrast, Ratcliffe suggests that they are expressions of existential feelings (Ratcliffe 2008, chapter 6).[160]

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[160] Note that Ratcliffe's understanding of the Capgras and the Cotard delusions has been taken up fruitfully, e.g. in McLaughlin (2009).

Existential feelings shape our space of possibilities. In the case of the Cotard delusion this space shrinks dramatically. Our basic sense of existence is harmed so that we do not feel that anything could change at all. The world as a whole appears bereft of possibilities. Everything seems meaningless and unchangeable. At the same time, oneself is bereft of all possible actions. One is trapped in an static world without meaning, unable to do anything significant. Comprehensibly, this may lead to the opinion that one is dead, be it literally or figuratively.

In a way we can understand the Cotard syndrome as intensification of the Capgras syndrome. While in Capgras only interpersonal relationships are bereft of significance, in Cotard one's whole existence appears meaningless and unchangeable. Notably, the Cotard syndrome is often part of a psychiatric depression. Depression has also been described as a state of unchanging insignificance. Both depression and the Cotard syndrome harm the sense of possibilities to an extent that the patient is unable to see alternatives. Recovery seems impossible for them. These absolute absence of alternatives seems to be crucial both for depression and the Cotard syndrome.

In a word, the Cotard delusion shows that existential feelings are part of our basic sense of existence. They provide the basic sense of possibilities. When these experienced possibilities are missing, we feel like being dead.

Depression

Depression might be regarded as particularly good illustration of existential feelings. First, it is a fairly common psychiatric disorder compared to the Capgras or Cotard syndromes. Many people know someone who suffers or suffered from a depression. Thus, based on personal or second hand experience, one might be able to imagine more easily what it is like to suffer from it.[161] Second, depression is by definition closely associated with human affectivity. Global standard diagnostic tools such as the DSM-5 as well as the ICD-10 describe depression as a "lowering of

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[161] However, it could be objected that depression changes our whole structure of experience to such a large extent that it is not easier at all to imagine what it is like to suffer from it. The mere fact that it is relatively common surely does not necessarily entail that it is easy to comprehend.

mood" (ICD-10 1992, F32) and as involving "feelings of worthlessness or guilt" (DSM-5 2013, p. 163). Additional core symptoms of depression are loss of interest or pleasure (DSM-5 2013, p. 163) and loss of interest/enjoyment and loss of energy/fatigue (ICD-10 1992, F32).

This close connection between depression and human affectivity might have been a motivation for Ratcliffe's 2015 book.[162] In a comprehensive phenomenological study (Ratcliffe 2015a) he examines the experience of depression in great detail. He shows that depression is more than just about "feeling sad". Crucially, it should be understood as a substantial shift in our existential affectivity. In depression, our fundamental sense of a shared world is disturbed. Depressive patients feel disconnected from the world and other people, their world lacks certain kinds of possibility that are usually taken for granted (Ratcliffe 2015a, p. 8). Their overall structure of experience has changed. For example, depression often involves feelings of existential hopelessness. Depressive patients not only feel hopeless with regards to specific intentional objects, but for them it does not make sense to hope at all any more. It is not only that specific hopes have been disappointed but that all their hopes have lost their meaning. They are faced with existential hopelessness. Similarly, depressive patients often feel a fundamental sense of inability. Their world is deprived of possibilities to act, it becomes incredibly hard to engage in any activity whatsoever.

As can be seen in the case of depression, our fundamental sense of the world is shaped by existential feelings. When we are suffering from depression, we are not only in a sad mood but our space of possibilities has been profoundly diminished.

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is one of the most complex psychiatric illnesses that comes in many variants and different blends of symptoms. We cannot go into detail in this broadly discussed issue. However, it should be pointed out that we can observe one

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[162] See also further work on existential feelings and depression by the research group around Stephan, Slaby and Jacobs (Slaby et al. 2013; Stephan et al. 2014)

particular feature of existential feelings with the help of this case. Ratcliffe (2008, chapter 7) claims that in schizophrenia your existential feelings vary significantly.

> "Existential feelings have a temporal structure, and differences between kinds of existential feeling to not consist solely of differences in the structure of a static possibility space. [...] Existential feelings can also be anomalous in being excessively changeable or prone to sudden, violent shifts. In addition they might change in unstructured, disorganized ways. [...] Something like this seems to happen in schizophrenia [...]." (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 196)

Under normal circumstances your existential feelings undergo significant changes due to remarkable changes in your life, such as the death of a close relative. In contrast, in schizophrenia your existential feelings are ever-changing. They are unstable and unpredictable. Since existential feelings are a fundamental dimension of our being, their instability affects the core of your relationship to the world. You are destabilized as a whole. Your experienced possibilities change from one moment to another. For example, one moment you experience the TV as means to watch the news. In the next moment you have the feeling that you might get observed through your TV and should get rid of it immediately.[163] Moreover, these ongoing changes in your space of possibilities are unpredictable and self-contradictory.

In short, the case of schizophrenia shows that existential feelings shape our basic sense of reality, of being in a stable world. When they vary too much and unpredictably, our relationship to the world is significantly altered.

2.2.4. Relationship to mood and emotion

Based on the above presentation of the characteristics of existential feelings, questions might arise how existential feelings relate to other affective phenomena like mood or emotion. This section provides answers to these questions.

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[163] In Ratcliffe's most recent, yet unpublished book (Ratcliffe forthcoming-a) he argues that in schizophrenia even the structure of intentionality itself may be altered. In this case, patients lose their capacity to distinguish between different kinds of intentional states, such as between perceiving and imagining something.

Why existential feelings are not moods

It could be argued that existential feelings are no more than mere moods.[164] Moods, just like existential feelings, shape the way we see the world. Additionally, they are bodily feelings. So why should an additional technical term be introduced? Ratcliffe gives several reasons for this move (Ratcliffe 2008, pp. 55f.).

First, the category of existential feeling is broader than mood. While moods last for a typical amount of time (from some hours to some days), the temporality of existential feelings is much wider. An existential feeling can last for a couple of seconds only, can be similar to a mood in terms of duration, or can last for a whole period of life. For the first instance, imagine you are hiking to the top of a mountain. It has been exhausting but now you finally made it. You are sitting on the top, enjoying the gorgeous view and the little snack you carried with you. Around you there is silence and peace. In this moment, and this may last only for a few seconds, you might get the feeling of being at one with the world. You might experience yourself and the whole universe as unity, you might feel at home and embedded in a meaning beyond your own life. A view minutes later, when you walk down again, this feeling may already have disappeared. Typically, you will not call such an experience "mood". Furthermore, some existential feelings can last for several years, shaping a period of your life. Take major depression as an example. It can last for months or even years. In depression, the whole world feels deprived of meaning, everything seems useless and insignificant. Your own life becomes meaningless and your capability to act diminishes. You may feel sad, weak and tired. Normally, one would not call such a phase in one's life a "mood".[165]

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[164] See Bollnow (1941) for an early theory of moods that critically refers to Heidegger's work. He understands moods as foundations for our whole life. They make specific experiences possible and others impossible. In this regard, his account is relatively close to Heidegger and Ratcliffe.

[165] However, we must acknowledge that there is the expression of "being in a depressive mood". How does this relate to the severe psychiatric illness of depression? Probably we deal with a continuum here, which is also reflected in the ICD-10 (ICD-10 1992, F32). There are various degrees of depressive episodes, from very light to major. It begins with light everyday changes in our moods that would not even count as psychiatric illness. Everyone is sometimes in a sad mood, where things sometimes seem worse than they actually are. The next day, everything appears much brighter again. It is a relatively common fashion of our everyday affective lives that comes and goes. The term "depressive mood" seems to cover these light changes in our affective lives. It might also cover

Additionally, long-time existential feelings need not amount to a psychiatric illness but can also form individual character traits. Some persons might feel stronger and more powerful than other persons. They tend to approach more challenging projects because of their self-confidence and good faith. Their feeling of being is different than that of persons who feel more vulnerable and less self-confident. Note that this difference in feeling need not correspond to actual power or talent of the respective persons.

Second, the category of existential feeling is narrower than mood. Existential feelings per definition are not directed at specific objects but are background orientations. An existential feeling colours the world as a whole, not only a specific object. Conversely, there are moods that can be directed at specific objects. One can be in a bad mood with someone or about a particular situation. You can be grumpy with your sister for not lending you her car for the weekend. You can be annoyed by the dumb and old-fashioned party of your cousins that you nonetheless have to attend. Existential feelings, in contrast, are pre-intentional phenomena. They are in the background of every specific experience.

Additionally, many of the phenomena that Ratcliffe subsumes under the term existential feelings, are typically not referred to as moods in everyday language. For example, feelings of belonging, familiarity, completeness, estrangement, distance, separation, and homeliness are best collocated with the term feeling and not with the term mood. A "feeling of belonging and familiarity" collocates better than a "mood of belonging and familiarity" (Ratcliffe 2008, pp. 55f.).

Given these issues, it is appropriate to introduce a new technical term to emphasize the distinctiveness of these affective phenomena. Ratcliffe proposed the term "existential feelings".

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slightly more severe forms, like the ICD-10 "mild depressive episode" that typically lasts for some days only. In contrast, a major depression amounts to a severe change in one's life that typically lasts for much longer (from weeks to months). Notably, there is no distinctive line one can draw between the various degrees of depressive episodes.

Why existential feelings are not generalised emotions

Contemporary mainstream accounts in the philosophy of emotions tend to see moods as generalised emotions (e.g. Solomon 1976). For them, emotions are directed at specific objects while moods have the whole world as their object. Since existential feelings seem to have "the world as their object", too, it is tempting to claim that existential feelings are generalised emotions.

Different from that, Ratcliffe emphasizes that existential feelings should not be understood as generalised emotions (Ratcliffe 2008, pp. 24f.). Existential feelings to not have any object, not even "the world" as a whole. Instead, they shape all our experiences of objects from the background. Contemporary accounts of emotion fail to recognize this pre-intentional character of existential feelings. Therefore, the distinction between emotions and existential feelings is stricter than an account of "generalized emotions" would allow.

Notably, this does not imply that emotions play no role in changes in existential feelings. Ratcliffe explicitly acknowledges that emotions and moods may influence our existential background:

> "It might be that moods and emotions feed back into, and reshape, the context of which they emerge" (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 24)

> "It is important to recognize that, even though existential feelings (amongst which I include deep moods) and intentionally directed emotions play different phenomenological roles, the two aspects of experience are intimately related. Existential feelings and emotions are not wholly separate, static 'states' but inextricable aspects of experience that shape each other." (Ratcliffe 2010, p. 367)

Emotions and existential feelings are in a constant interplay, mutually influencing each other.[166] Our particular existential feeling at a given time serves as the background of all possible experiences and therefore also shapes specific emotional episodes. Single emotions always emerge out of this affective foundation. For example, a depressed person will likely experience emotions of sadness and grief while a healthy person may more likely experience emotions of joy or happiness.

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[166] This point has also been stressed by Slaby (2008b, chapter 7), based on Musil's (1978, pp. 1169ff.) remarks on affectivity.

Accordingly, a sequence of similar emotions might influence our existential feeling. Imagine waking up in the morning with a good feeling, happy to encounter the tasks of the day. During breakfast, you hear in the radio news that there has been a fire in the neighbourhood. You start thinking about who might be affected and begin to worry that it might be one of your friends. On your way to work you see that it was the house of your cousin that burnt down the other night. You feel compassion for the difficult situation your relative is in now. As you approach the burnt house you see the ambulance carrying hurt persons out of the building. Terrified, you recognize that it is your cousin and his wife, suffering from severe injuries. Now, the whole world appears dangerous and merciless. The fragility of life becomes utterly salient. The tasks of the day you were happy to approach only a few hours ago now seem meaningless and dull. Your existential feeling has changed.[167]

2.2.5. Existential feeling and thought

Part four of this book will explore how fundamental affectivity may help to bridge the gap between pre-reflective, pre-propositional self-consciousness (which will be understood as self-feeling) and more elaborate, reflective thoughts about ourselves. As a foundation for that enquiry it has to be examined how existential feelings relate to thought.

Existential feelings influence thought

It should be clear by now that existential feelings are more basic than thought. Being our affective foundation, they shape all experience, including our thought. For example, in depression our thoughts follow our fundamental feeling of being. We feel meaningless, weak, unable to do anything. Consequently, our thinking goes

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[167] Granted, in many cases there will more involved than just emotions when an existential feeling changes. For example, some people are more robust than others. While one person might react just as described, another person that is more robust will not change as easily. Moreover, a third person may take it even worse and becomes traumatized by the events described above. Thus, it is admittedly too quick to say that it only takes a few emotional events to change an existential feeling. Things are more complex after all. However, the point here is that our emotional experience influences our existential affectivity, at least to some extent.

along these lines. Ratcliffe quotes a first-person example from the Durham questionnaire[168]:

> "I can't think about anything positive, just negative thoughts. I only think about my own problems and they keep going round and round my head with no let up and no escape." (Ratcliffe 2016a)

Thus, it seems rather straightforward that existential feelings shape the content of our thoughts.

Notably however, Ratcliffe goes one step further. He claims that existential feelings influence also the form of our thoughts and narratives (Ratcliffe 2012a, 2016a). Take depression as example again. In depression, we are deprived of possibilities, the world has narrowed down and appears bereft of an open future. Many patients express their deep conviction that healing is impossible. This is not just mere self-pity or pessimistic thinking. Their space of possibilities is diminished to an extent that the possibility of their recovery is simply not there anymore. Things becoming normal again does not appear as a possible state of affairs in severe depression. This does not only affect the content of their thinking but also its form. Narratives of depressive persons show a "loss of narrative openness, an inability to entertain certain kinds of possibility, which reflects the experienced loss of an open future" (Ratcliffe 2016a). Things become even worse when the sense of an open future is so reduced that time experience is altered. Some depressive patients report an "acute sensation of being cut off from any temporal flow that can grip you" (Riley 2012, p. 7). They have a feeling of being removed from the natural flow of time, time is not happening for them anymore. Clearly, such a state makes even the production of coherent thoughts and narratives problematic. How should you tell a story when there is no sense of time? It becomes difficult to put words into a meaningful order when you live outside time:

> "….to live on after a death, yet to live without inhabiting any tense yourself, presents you with serious problems of what's describable. This may explain the paucity of accounts. To struggle to narrate becomes not only an unenticing prospect, but structurally impossible." (Riley 2012, p. 57)

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[168] See footnote 139 above.

Granted, these cases are extreme and may not be easily reproduced by a healthy mind. However, even if we put these severe cases of psychiatric illness aside, it remains plausible that existential feelings shape the content and form of our thoughts. Imagine a situation where you feel strong and powerful. You approach the tasks of your day with optimism and self-confidence. Naturally, your thoughts will correspond to these feelings. The danger of potential obstacles will appear less grave, the risk of failure will appear smaller, and your vision of potential success will be greater. Note that Ratcliffe does not claim that thoughts are determined by existential feelings only. Of course, there are several other factors that influence the content and form of our thoughts, e.g. cultural aspects.[169]

As has been shown, existential feelings can shape our thoughts in a straightforward way, so that the thoughts are directly expressing the existential feeling. Interestingly, existential feelings can also shape our thought more indirectly. For example, Ratcliffe discusses the example of the thought "I doubt that the world exists" (Ratcliffe 2008, pp. 247f.). There are at least two ways in which this thought can be related to an existential feeling.[170] First, the doubt can be the expression of a genuine existential shift, such as in the psychiatric case of derealisation. In this case, your whole existential perspective and all your experience has changed. You have the strong feeling of the world being unreal. This all-encompassing perspective leads to the thought "I doubt that the world exists". Second, however, this thought can also be a mere philosophical claim that is not directly supported by an existential feeling. You may sit in your armchair, reflecting on several metaphysical alternatives and this one seems most tempting to you. Therefore, you adopt the belief "I doubt that the world exists".[171] Maybe you even feel a certain appeal to

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[169] This has important methodological implications that will not be discussed here. First-person narratives are an important source of evidence for research on existential feelings. It has to be carefully reflected which aspects of the narratives are influenced by existential feelings and which by other factors (Ratcliffe 2016a).

[170] Ratcliffe discusses three options but for the argument here it seems proper to take only two of them.

[171] You might object that this philosophical thought is fundamentally different from the thought of the depressive patient. Yet, what would make it different? First, on the level of propositional content they are exactly the same, both saying about the world that it perhaps does not exist. Second, if

this proposition, you may have a feeling of "this is it, this must be true". Notably, in this case the supporting feeling is concerned only with the proposition, and not with your world experience as a whole. You still live a normal life and implicitly take the existence of the world for granted. Nonetheless, you feel inclined to affirm a certain thought that claims the world does not exist. The first case (e.g. derealisation) is rather straightforward, an existential feeling directly influences a thought and the thought mirrors the respective existential feeling. In the first case the thought "I doubt that the world exists" corresponds in a direct way to an existential feeling of unreality. In contrast, the second case (philosopher's proposition) is more complicated. The existential feeling is not one of unreality but instead enables quite a normal relationship to the world. With the existential feeling in the second case a normal life seems perfectly possible. Thus, the thought "I doubt that the world exists" is somehow at odds with the underlying existential feeling. Ratcliffe confirms that such a situation is possible (Ratcliffe 2008, pp. 247f.) but does not give an explicit description of how it is possible.

On the one hand it has been shown that existential feelings shape all our experience and thought. On the other hand there seem to be cases where a thought is somehow at odds with the underlying existential feeling. Does this show that thought is more independent than Ratcliffe believes? Is it a counterexample to the claim that existential feelings are an all-encompassing fundamental dimension of our lives? I believe that this is not the case. Instead, existential feelings may influence our thoughts in a way that our thoughts do not express what we really feel.[172] Self-deception is possible not despite existential feelings but because of them. Thoughts that are at odds with our existential feeling are not independent from it. Instead, these thoughts are shaped by our existential feeling, but in a way

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there was a difference it would most likely stem from a difference in the underlying existential feeling. You may say that thought cannot be examined just on a propositional level but as a holistic phenomenon, including its affective components. In this more integrated perspective, surely there is a difference between the two phenomena. Yet, the difference stems from the affective and not from the propositional aspect of it. Therefore, on a restricted, propositional perspective of thought, there is no difference between the two.

[172] Personal conversation with Matthew Ratcliffe was encouraging to follow this line of thought.

that leads to self-deception. Take the example of the second case above. One can doubt the existence of the world while already presupposing its existence in everyday life. In this case the existential feeling of the reality of the world is so stable and consistent that it is not in the focus of attention at all. When an existential feeling is as strong and invariant as this feeling of reality, we can become oblivious of it. We just take it for granted and even this does not become explicit. An analogy from perception might make this clearer. Imagine yourself entering the apartment of a friend. When you enter, you have strong sense of how the apartment smells. You might recognize the smell of cats or a particular dish that has been prepared. After a while, however, this sense disappears. When you have been sitting and talking with your friend for some hours it is likely that you will not smell the cats and the dish any more. Even though the scents are still there in a physical sense they will be gone for you, likely without you recognizing their disappearance. In this sensory case, there is a clear biological reason for the disappearance. Our sensory system is built to recognize differences. When a certain stimulus remains the same over a period of time, it ceases to be relevant for the system and will not be perceived any more. It is plausible that the situation is similar with some existential feelings. When they remain unchanged for a long period of time, we may become oblivious of them. Notably, the existential feeling nonetheless still exists. Based on this oblivion of and detachedness from the existential feeling many kinds of thoughts become possible. It can even be that the most basic existential feeling of the reality of the world is doubted in thought. We can be so oblivious of our existential feeling that our thoughts can literally contradict it. Importantly, this oblivion does not come from nowhere but is an effect of the existential feeling. More specifically, it seems that the particular feature of invariance and stability of the existential feeling leads to the oblivion.[173]

This idea may become clearer when putting it in contrast. Someone whose existential feelings vary to some extent will be more aware of them than someone

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[173] Heidegger's concept of "Seinsvergessenheit" seems to reflect this point. Our relationship to Being is so fundamental that we can become oblivious of it. In fact, proximally and for the most part, we are oblivious of our privileged relationship to Being (Heidegger 2006 [1927], p. 44).

whose existential feelings do not change at all. Take the example of a person who is going through the experience of a derealisation. First, she lives a normal life, taking the existence of the world for granted. Then, the existence of the world becomes more and more doubtful. She gradually falls into derealisation. Eventually, she is in a state where everything seems unreal, not quite there. After a while, she manages to overcome this psychiatric episode and things start to become "normal" again, step by step. After having experienced how things can be different, the existential feeling of "normality" is more salient for her, she does not take it for granted any more. Autobiographic notes of schizophrenic patients might serve as another illustration to this point. In the following passage a patient describes how things appear differently after the psychotic episode:

> "When we were outside I realized that my perception of things had completely changed. Instead of infinite space, unreal, where everything was cut off, naked and isolated, I saw Reality, marvellous Reality, for the first time. The people whom we encountered were no longer automatons, phantoms, revolving around, gesticulating without meaning; they were men and women with their own individual characteristics, their own individuality. It was the same with things. They were useful things, having sense, capable of giving pleasure. Here was an automobile to take me to the hospital, cushions I could rest on. [....] ...for the first time I dared to handle the chairs, to change the arrangement of the furniture. What an unknown joy, to have an influence on things; to do with them what I liked and especially to have the pleasure of wanting the change." (Sechehaye 1970, pp. 105f.)

This patient had a strong experience of abnormal existential feelings. Thus, she is likely to stay more aware of the normal existential feeling after the episode. She knows how badly things can go wrong so she values the state of normal more than someone who never left the normal, invariant sense of reality.

Given these considerations, we see that there are existential feelings that may shape our thoughts in a way that these thoughts are at odds with the respective existential feeling. This feature is important for our discussion of self-feeling and self-interpretation in part four of this book.

Thought influences existential feeling

Importantly, Ratcliffe does not see the relationship between thought and existential feeling as a one-way street. Thought and narrative influence existential feelings, too. This claim has to be further explained.

To begin with, feelings come in a pre-propositional form:

> "Existential feelings, I claim, are not hybrid states. They are non-conceptual *feelings* of the body, which constitute a background sense of belonging to the world and a sense of reality. They are not evaluations of any specific object, they are certainly not propositional attitudes and they are not 'mere affects'." (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 39)

When we have an existential feeling it is not immediately present as pre-formed, particular experience. Rather, it is a blurry sense of a way of being in the world, a specific style of experience. This may also be true for feelings in general. Sometimes we feel something and cannot quite articulate it. The experience is present and overwhelming, nonetheless we are not able to grasp it as single mental phenomenon. Our affective life is not comprised of individualized, single mental states but it is more a holistic sphere of feeling that has various dimensions. Granted, some emotions fit into clear categories. When you fear the dog in front of you, this will probably be quite explicit to you in this moment. But for many other kinds of feelings this is not true, especially regarding deep affective phenomena such as existential feelings.

Our conceptual capabilities (e.g. thought, language) can significantly improve this rather blurry situation. Language and thought help to determine and individuate our feelings. There are no pre-articulate but determined feelings at first that are then merely expressed by language. In contrast, it can be shown that the specific content and experience of a feeling is influenced by language and thought (Bortolotti 2011; Campbell 1997; Colombetti 2009; Slaby 2008b). As we saw in part one of this book, Pothast (1988, 1998) argues along similar lines. In describing the relationship between "sense" and "language" he states that "language without sense is empty, sense without language is blind" (Pothast 1998, p. 88, translated by G.K.).

Let us consider some examples to illustrate this point. Ratcliffe, inspired by Jan Slaby, gives an example of "the feeling of being surrounded by arseholes" (Ratcliffe 2016a): Being in such a situation, you might start to feel a little uncomfortable at first. You cannot really tell what it is but something seems wrong. In further observing and tuning in to the situation, your feelings become more specific. You feel uneasiness, social insecurity and a certain amount of disconnectedness. Still, you cannot really grasp what it is that makes the situation this way. Eventually, you think "I am surrounded by arseholes". It is this thought that captures your affective experience and puts it straight. With the help of this articulation all the various feeling aspects come into an order and point in one direction. The situation as a label now. This, in turn, influences your feeling. Now that you understood that you are surrounded by arseholes, respective feelings emerge. You feel suspiciousness, caution and perhaps a bit of anger. These new feelings presuppose and are shaped by the propositional understanding of the situation. Another example is a conversation with a good friend. You might have a general feeling of discomfort with your career. Somehow, it seems to go in the wrong direction but you cannot really say what exactly should be changed. You go for a walk with your friend and talk for hours. Even though your friend might not serve as interpreter nor gives you advice, you might have a clearer understanding of your situation afterwards. It might be your effort of articulating your feelings only that helps to make them more determinate and graspable. Similarly, many people report that diary writing helps them to get clearer about their feelings and their life situation in general. You might add that some disengaged psychotherapeutic settings amount to the same phenomenon. As a result, we see that our conceptual capabilities shape our feelings in general, including existential feelings. By making them determinate and articulate, they not only translate them but also influence their content.

There is an additional reason for how having an articulate view on your existential feelings can change them. Take again the example of diary writing. Before you write your diary you might feel confused and puzzled with your life. Many things are going on and you feel the overwhelming pressure to cover it all. You feel

disordered, without clear direction, and overstrained. Then you sit down to write your diary. You try to articulate your feelings and bring them to paper in a narrative and therefore to some extent structured form. As we saw above, this process further shapes your feelings in one way or the other. After the writing you have a better understanding of your feelings. Notably, this can also influence your existential feeling in turn. You might feel more organized and structured. Your life perhaps seems more controllable because you managed to bring it in a narrative form. This is different from the phenomenon described above. Above, we examined how in the process of articulation feelings are not only translated but also altered and determined. This time, the process of articulation as such makes you feel differently. You managed to articulate your feelings and this is a good thing. Ratcliffe (2016a) cites Albert Speer's diaries (Speer 2010) in which he emphasizes that the mere project of writing a diary itself was helpful during his time of imprisonment.

A two-way street

As has been shown, the relation between existential feelings and thought must be understood as a two-way street. Being in the background of all experience, existential feelings shape our thought in content and form. Existential feelings are themselves experienced and can be articulated in thought and spoken language. This, in turn, shapes the existential feelings. Ratcliffe emphasizes two points in this regard.

First, existential feeling and thought need to be understood as integral aspects of experience rather than separable components:

> "Although I have distinguished existential feeling from conceptual thought, I do not wish to imply that the two are extricable phenomenological *components*. I have already indicated that existential feeling is presupposed by the intelligibility of thought. However, this is not to suggest that one could strip away all thought, leaving behind an intact framework of existential feeling. The underlying form of experience manifests itself through our various experiences and thoughts. Hence I prefer to think of existential feeling as an inextricable *aspect* of our phenomenology, as opposed to an isolable component. However, it is a well-defined aspect. By analogy, we can attend to and describe one side of a coin, despite the absence of one-sided coins." (Ratcliffe 2012a, p. 47)

Thus, experience is a holistic phenomenon. It has feeling aspects and propositional aspects. Both shape each other and are inextricably intertwined. You could not understand the experience of an existential feeling without at least some articulation. Accordingly, you could not understand the experience of a thought without the underlying existential feeling that serves as the affective background to it.

Second, although the mutual interplay is acknowledged, Ratcliffe sees a clear priority of the feeling dimension:

> "Existential feeling retains a distinctive kind of priority over conceptual and, more specifically, narrative thought. Existential feelings constrain not just the content but the form of the narratives one is able to adopt. [...] Granted, a narrative constructed against the backdrop of some existential feeling could, conceivably, act upon the feeling and reshape it. However, the narrative does not determine which kinds of feeling are currently intelligible possibilities for a person in the way that feeling determines the form of thought and, more specifically, autobiographical, narrative thought. Hence the dependence is not symmetrical." (Ratcliffe 2012a, p. 46)

Existential feeling and propositional capabilities are mutually influencing each other, but the former is more basic. Existential feelings retain priority because they not only shape the content but also the form of our thoughts. As shown above, existential feelings shape what kind of thoughts or narratives are possible for us. Therefore, they are more basic.

2.2.6. Taking stock

Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings has a lot to offer for the understanding of basic dimensions of human affectivity. He presents a phenomenologically rich account of how fundamental affectivity shapes all our experience and thought. Given this, the theory of existential feelings complements contemporary philosophy of emotion, which is predominantly concerned with short-term, object-directed emotions. In addition to that, Ratcliffe's work provides an important step further in our attempt to address the challenges in contemporary philosophy of self-consciousness. In the course of the first part of the book we saw that the core of

self-consciousness needs to be understood as a pre-reflective phenomenon. The Heidelberg School pointed to the fact that this phenomenon might be best understood as an affective phenomenon. The proponents of the Heidelberg School, however, did not succeed in providing an adequate account of human affectivity. Consequently, their account of pre-reflective self-consciousness remained rather empty and formal. This book argues that Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings is suitable to fill this gap. He offers an account of human affectivity that describes our fundamental way of being in the world. Part three of this book will develop an account of self-feeling based on a joint consideration of the Heidelberg School and the theory of existential feelings. However, Ratcliffe's theory has several shortcomings with regard to the project of this book.

Existential feelings and thought

First, Ratcliffe's theory seems to struggle a bit with the relationship between existential feelings and thought. On the one hand he repeatedly claims that existential feelings are more basic, and that they shape all our experience and thought. On the other hand he admits the possibility that thoughts may feedback into existential feelings. Hence, the dimension of thought seems to have its own degree of independence in Ratcliffe's theory. For example, as we saw above, it is possible that a philosopher embraces the proposition that "I doubt that world exists". At the same time, however, this philosopher can have a normal, appropriate existential feeling of sustained reality. Thus, her thought departs significantly from her existential feeling. Ratcliffe does little to explain this issue. He admits that the relationship is a two-way street but remains rather short in explaining how this actually works. In a footnote, he concedes that he is undecided in this regard:

> "I am not sure *how* understandings of events shape existential feelings. A problem we face in attempting to offer a phenomenological account is that, in some cases, an intentional state with content *p* affects existential feeling *q* in such a way as to remove the conditions of intelligibility for intentional states of that type. But how could an intentional state somehow 'act upon' its own conditions of intelligibility? It is not clear to me that much more can be said from a phenomenological perspective – it simply happens, just as existential changes can happen when one is sick, tired or intoxicated. Perhaps, at this point, we need to switch to a non-

phenomenological approach. For instance, there is a neurobiological story to be told." (Ratcliffe 2015a, p. 151)

Above, one attempt to explain the issue was presented. An existential feeling might shape our thoughts in a way that their content is at odds with the existential feeling. For example, an existential feeling can be so stable that we become oblivious of it and employ contradicting beliefs. The relationship between fundamental affectivity (self-feeling) and the propositional level of self-interpretation will be further examined in part four of this book.

Existential feelings and authenticity

Second, Ratcliffe's work seems very much focussed on deviant forms of existential feelings. Granted, he has methodological arguments for it. He claims that the structure of existential feelings and the respective spaces of possibility can be best explored by looking at instances where they are harmed or altered (Ratcliffe 2015a, chapter 1). This is fine. However, we must not stop the exploration with cases of deviances. It is also important to learn more about the functions of existential feelings in a non-psychiatric context. Existential feelings do not only occur in depressive or schizophrenic patients, they occur in all of us. Ratcliffe remains rather silent on the role of existential feelings in everyday life. It seems that he mainly considers two types of states. First, there is the case of normality where existential feelings are in the background and usually not recognized. Here, our space of possibilities is fairly broad and we are immersed in our projects in the world. We are often oblivious of the fact that we even have existential feelings. Consequently, there seems to be little to learn for Ratcliffe in these cases. In contrast, there are cases of psychiatric illness where existential feelings are severely altered. We experience huge changes in our space of possibilities and feel the loss of what we had before. Here, existential feelings are recognized because we see that something is changed or missing. These are the cases that Ratcliffe is interested in.

Let us compare these two types of states with Heidegger's distinction between "inauthenticity" and "authenticity" (Heidegger 2006 [1927], e.g. §§ 9, 27, 38).[174] In "inauthenticity" we are fallen into the world and the beings, we are immersed in our worldly projects. We do things as "anyone" does them and are oblivious of Being as such as well as our own possibilities. This seems quite similar to Ratcliffe's "normal" case where existential feelings are concealed in the background. In contrast, there is Heidegger's "authenticity". Fundamental modes of "attunement" ["Befindlichkeit" in German], e.g. „angst" and „boredom", lead us to the core of Dasein, to "authentic" being. In this mode we are aware of our own possibilities, we are in a state of "resoluteness" ["Entschlossenheit" in German] where the fundamental character of Dasein is disclosed. In "authenticity" we are not obliviously immersed in worldly projects but are aware of the very fact that we are "thrown projections", we see our possibilities *as* possibilities. This does not correspond to Ratcliffe's second type, the case of psychiatric illness. In both "authenticity" and psychiatric illness existential feelings become salient but in rather different ways. In psychiatric illness we become aware of our existential feelings because they determine a diminished possibility space. Conversely, in the case of "authenticity" our existential feelings lead us to a heightened disclosure of ourselves. The examples of "angst" and "boredom" are explicitly felt and promote the awareness of our possibilities *as* possibilities, of the projective character of our Dasein. These phenomena do not appear in Ratcliffe's theory.

Given these points, three types of cases can be distinguished. First, there is Ratcliffe's normal case which is similar to Heidegger's "inauthenticity". Here, we are immersed in the world and oblivious of our existential feelings. Second, there is the case of psychiatric illness. Existential feelings become salient because they significantly harm our experienced possibilities. This case is somehow "below" the normal case, it is a "worse" state of affairs in terms of experienced possibilities. Third, there is the case of "authenticity". Here, we have a heightened

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[174] Notably, for Heidegger "authenticity" and "inauthenticity" are not „states" but equiprimordial aspects or modes of Dasein.

understanding of ourselves as bearer of possibilities, as "thrown projections". Existential feelings become salient in this case because they convey this understanding of possibility *as* possibility. This third type is not discussed enough in Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings. Part four of this book will try to contribute to this lacuna.

Existential feelings and self-consciousness

Third, Ratcliffe does not explicitly discuss the problem of self-consciousness in his work about existential feelings. For him, existential feelings are ways of being in the world. He focusses on the kinds of possibilities that appear in the world and how this relationship to the world is felt in the body. His starting point is our immersion in the world, the way in which we are always already practically engaged in the world. The theory of existential feelings transcends the distinction of „self" and world, as experiences of „self" and world are phenomenologically inextricable. Generally speaking, Ratcliffe is right in doing so. However, he just presupposes this holistic understanding and thus does not explicitly discuss it in the context of existential feelings. Therefore, issues of self-consciousness are left open for the most part in his work on existential feelings. This becomes obvious for example in his discussion of the feeling and the felt body (Ratcliffe 2005; 2008, chapter 3&4; 2012b). He discusses the duality of the feeling body and the felt body but does not refer to the many complexities that arise due to such a dualism. As we saw in part one of this book, self-consciousness cannot be understood in terms of a duality of a perceiving and a perceived entity. Granted, Ratcliffe seems to understand the feeling and the felt part as two sides of the same coin but he does not make this understanding explicit enough. Accordingly, in his discussion of thought insertion (Ratcliffe 2008, chapter 7) in the context of existential feelings Ratcliffe refers to Gallagher's (2005, chapter 8) "ownership vs. agency" model[175] but does not explain

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[175] Sense of ownership refers to the awareness that it is me who is experiencing a particular movement or mental state (e.g. a movement of my leg or a thought). Sense of agency, in contrast, refers to the awareness not only that it is me but also that I am in control of a particular movement or mental state (e.g. I control this movement of my leg or this thought) (Gallagher 2005; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008).

enough how the fundamental "first-personal givenness" of experience is altered in these cases of verbal hallucinations.

In his most recent, partly unpublished work Ratcliffe touches these questions in more detail (Ratcliffe 2015b, 2016b, forthcoming-a, forthcoming-b; Ratcliffe and Wilkinson 2015). He suggests that there is a basic, pre-reflective sense about what kind of intentional state we are in and calls it "modal structure of intentionality". This sense is inextricably linked with the minimal self as e.g. Zahavi (2005, 2014) advocates it, he argues.[176] The "mineness" of experience does not reveal its "first-personal givenness" only, its specific phenomenology also entails what kind of intentional state we are currently in. Being crucially dependent on interpersonal relations, this sense may be disturbed in cases of hallucinations and other psychiatric illnesses. Since there is little published yet and Ratcliffe's monograph on this topic (forthcoming-a) is still work in progress, it is too early today to provide a comprehensive discussion of these newest thoughts. However, current draft versions suggest that these enquiries are not explicitly linked to Ratcliffe's previous work on existential feelings. Thus, the relationship between existential feelings and the modal structure of intentionality remains unclear as of today. Overall, there seems to be room for further research on the relationship between existential feelings and self-consciousness.

2.3. Stephan and Slaby's complementary work

Achim Stephan and Jan Slaby are among the most prominent contributors to the theory of existential feelings.[177] They were not only early, affirmative recipients[178]

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[176] Zahavi (forthcoming) rejects this view.

[177] Of course they are not the only ones who acknowledged and further developed the theory of existential feelings. In fact, they are cooperating with many fellow researchers not only in philosophy but also in cognitive sciences, psychiatry, etc. Kerrin Jacobs, Sven Walter, Wendy Wilutzky, and Asena Paskaleva can be named as examples.

of Ratcliffe's account, they also provided some complementary proposals to his insights, particularly regarding the relation of existential feelings to self-consciousness. This section will present and discuss those genuine developments of Stephan and Slaby that contribute significantly to the project of this book, namely their work on categorizing existential feelings, their focus on agency, and their resulting suggestion concerning self-consciousness. We will see that Stephan's and Slaby's work significantly enriches Ratcliffe's theory, particularly by exploring the relation between our fundamental affectivity and self-consciousness.

2.3.1. Classification of existential feelings

As we have seen above, existential feelings are a broad category and cover many different aspects. In several papers (Slaby and Stephan 2008, 2011; Stephan 2012; Stephan et al. 2014), Stephan and Slaby proposed a classification of existential feelings to bring more clarity in this huge variety.[179] Their classification consists of a two-dimensional matrix covering three types of feelings (two of them being existential feelings in the strict sense) and three aspects of relatedness. There are elementary existential feelings, non-elementary existential feelings and atmospheric feelings. Importantly for the purpose of this book, all these three types of feeling are related to oneself, the social environment, and the world as such. We can see that Stephan and Slaby explicitly understand existential feelings as shaping our relationship to ourselves.[180] This is an important complement to Ratcliffe's theory, which did not put self-relatedness in its focus.

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[178] Jan Slaby stated that „His paper [(Ratcliffe 2005), G.K.] was one of the main inspirations of my present account." (Slaby 2008a, p. 436). See also his critical reviews of Ratcliffe's theory (Slaby 2012b, 2012c)

[179] Note that they slightly changed their initial 2008 proposal in the following papers. Since the changes are not substantially relevant for the purpose of this book, we can rely on the most recent version of the classification.

[180] You might object that we learned in part one of this book that self-consciousness must be non-relational. Thus, an account of existential feelings that understands them as "self-related" is prone to the problems of reflection theories, you might argue. It has to be conceded that Stephan and Slaby indeed do not explicitly deal with this problem and seem to use the term "relatedness" rather naively in this regard. However, their approach does not seem flawed in principle but rather needs

Elementary existential feelings

Elementary existential feelings are the most fundamental affective dimension. It seems that they are Ratcliffe's main point of reference, since most of his examples address them. They constitute a basic sense of reality. Under normal circumstances these feelings remain unnoticed because they are so fundamental and stable. In psychiatric illness, however, they can change and thereby alter our experience dramatically. Stephan et al. (2014) explored these alterations in detail with the example of depressive patients, drawing on autobiographical literature and an online questionnaire. These alterations can be further categorized by their impacts on the relationship to oneself, to the social environment, and to the world as such.

Depressive patients report a diminished sense of themselves. They feel unreal, not quite there. They feel like dead bodies, walking around without meaning. It often seems that they lose first-personal access to themselves to a certain extent. They do not experience themselves as themselves any more. Their self-relational capabilities seem distorted. What they do and how they behave does not seem to be caused by them as agents any more. Rather, it feels like it is just happening with them. In a sense they lost their sense of agency. They experience themselves from the perspective of an external observer. One might describe this phenomenon as "decentering", meaning that they are not centred in themselves any more. As we saw above, the phenomenon of depersonalization is quite common among depressive patients. This loss goes hand in hand with diminished sensual and emotional responsiveness. Depressive patients feel numb, their senses and affects are shallow. They do not care about things, nothing matters anymore.[181] This diminished sense of „self" is not restricted to the mental. Moreover, one's awareness of the body decreases and some report that they cannot feel their bodies in a direct way. Instead their bodies feel like external objects, without being

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conceptual clarification. This will happen in part three of this book. The main point for this chapter is that our fundamental affectivity encompasses not only our world-experience but is also a comprehensive feeling of being ourselves. On this fundamental level we feel who we are and how we are in this world.

[181] It has to be noticed, however, that phases of emotional numbness are sometimes complemented with phases of extremely negative emotions (e.g. sadness, anxiety, fear) in the case of depression.

accessible in a first-personal way. Fuchs (2005) calls this phenomenon "corporealization". Your body feels like a heavy, unresponsive object. Every movement seems to be an enormous effort.

Alterations in elementary existential feelings also impact social relationships. In the case of depression, for example, patients often feel cut off from interpersonal relationships. Other people feel strangely unreal and distant, like puppets or robots. Depressive patients consequently are confronted with a dilemma. On the one hand, they feel alone and detached from social life. They are lonely and sad. On the other hand, their distorted existential feeling makes it impossible for them to experience other people as persons. Therefore they cannot connect with them. When they search for social interaction and try to involve themselves with other people they fail. This often leads into even more severe social isolation and loneliness. Ratcliffe's (2008, chapter 5) interpretation of the Capgras delusion (as discussed above in chapter 2.2.3.) addresses a similar issue. Capgras patients have difficulties to experience other people as persons. Therefore, their sense of familiarity to close relatives can be turned into a sense of unfamiliarity. Their loved ones seem strangely unreal and distant.

Existential feelings are the background of all our experience and thought. Thus, elementary existential feelings shape our experience of the world as such. The whole world can seem unreal, distant or unfamiliar. Depressive patients often report that the world seems so meaningless for them that nothing really matters any more. The world and its occurrences are irrelevant for them, they just do not care anymore. Additionally, they feel that they cannot have any impact on the world. No matter what they do, the world will not change. There seems to be a barrier between the world and themselves. Moreover, experience of time may change as part of an altered elementary existential feeling. Depressive patients, for example, report that everything seems to remain the same. There is no past nor future for the depressive patient. Their experience consists merely of the eternal presence of insignificance. They cannot recall the time when they felt better in the

past and neither they can anticipate how things could become better in the future. Time seems to flow extremely slowly or even stand still. Depressive patients are trapped in a world where time does not exist, they are a-temporal in this sense.

Non-elementary existential feelings

Non-elementary existential feelings predominantly concern one's own vital state (e.g. feeling healthy or strong) and one's position within social environments (e.g. feeling welcome or at home). They are part of the unitary structure of existential feelings. However, they are not as fundamental as elementary existential feelings. Alterations in elementary feelings lead to changes in non-elementary feelings but the opposite is not compulsory. There may be changes in non-elementary existential feelings that do not affect elementary existential feelings. Moreover, changes in non-elementary existential feelings do not presuppose psychiatric disorders, they can happen within the range of a normal life. The example of depression can further illustrate how non-elementary feelings change one's experience in three aspects of relatedness.

Concerning themselves, depressive patients feel fatigue and weak. Their vitality is significantly reduced. Often it seems incredibly hard for them to carry out even simple actions like getting out of bed or taking a shower. Every movement takes enormous effort. Additionally, they lose trust in their environment. They often have a general sense of insecurity and vulnerability. They feel helpless and powerless against potential threats from the environment. This sometimes leads to excessive self-loathing and self-devaluation. They focus on their negative traits and see themselves as having failed their lives.

Concerning their social environment, depressive patients often feel rejected and isolated. They feel like an outsider to any possible group and they do not see how they could be part of a group ever again. In comparison to other people the feel inferior, incompetent and worthless. Social life seems to proceed independently of their own contribution. Depressive patients often feel like an observer of social exchange instead of being part of it. In addition they sometimes report guilt and

shame experiences. Because they focus on their negative traits they perceive others as doing the same. Thus, other people are experienced as hostile and overly critical, sometimes as laughing at them.

Moreover, the experience of the world as such is changed in non-elementary existential feelings of depression. Depressive patients do not experience the world as a place to pursue personal projects and endeavours. Instead, it seems rough and hostile. Depressive patients often do not feel at home with the world, they have a feeling of unfamiliarity concerning literally everything. The world seems hostile and threatening, it appears to be extremely hard to change or succeed in anything. They feel trapped in this dark abyss, unable to escape.

Atmospheric feelings

Atmospheric feelings are not existential feelings in the strict sense. They are directed at specific situations or events and thus not general, all-encompassing background structures. However, they significantly shape how particular situations or events are experienced and are in this sense similar to existential feelings. Being more specific in their directedness they are more salient to our attention and thus accessible to reflection. We might have a specific sense of a situation, a feeling of how things are in a particular moment. This way, atmospheric feelings can be understood as experiences of affective atmospheres. We "perceive" affective atmospheres by means of atmospheric feelings. The notion of affective atmospheres has been worked out by the "new phenomenologist" Hermann Schmitz (e.g. 2007) and also Ben Anderson (2009) and will not be discussed in detail here. Roughly, it refers to the fact that situations or locations can be affectively charged. Imagine, for example, the dense atmosphere of a job interview, or the excitement in a football stadium, or the aura of an old cathedral. The affective experience of such situations immediately pre-structures your space of possibilities in terms of experience as well as in terms of potential behaviour. Atmospheric feelings can be further illustrated by considering examples in the three aspects of relatedness. The case of depression does not provide a good illustration in this regard because it essentially includes changed existential feelings that shape our

overall experience. These changes outplay experiences of specific situations. A depressive patient feels vulnerable in general and is thus less flexible in reacting differently to diverse situations.

Atmospheric feelings shape the way one experiences oneself in a particular situation. Stephan et al. (2014) seem to struggle a bit with good examples for this dimension.[182] Let us take watching a piece of art or a classical concert as example then. Art creates an atmosphere that soaks you in, that immediately involves you and touches your heart. Thus, the affective atmosphere of art appeals and highlights aspects of yourself. While a Wagner opera might make you feel strong and powerful, able to have significant impact on the world, a romantic Mendelssohn Bartholdy concert might lead to feelings of self-comfort, inner silence and peace.

The social dimension seems to be the homeland of atmospheric feelings, since most affective atmospheres are somehow socially determined. Imagine the atmosphere in a football stadium. You might feel a relatedness to the thousands of other people in the stadium, enthusiastically cheering for their team. Moreover, take the example of a job interview. You enter the room with your interviewer and immediately perceive a combination of professional distance and professional warmth intended to make you comfortable. The atmosphere has the character of an examination or assessment, at the same time the interviewer might try to build a relationship with you and make a good impression of his company. The corresponding atmospheric feeling might consist of nervousness, alertness, excitement, interest, and concentration. This feeling determines what possibilities of behaviour appear to you in this situation. Your alertness and concentration promotes your ability to give precise and favourable answers, your nervousness might lead to involuntary movements like trembling, etc.

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[182] They come up with the examples of „feeling stared at" or social stereotypes which would better fit in the social dimension.

Atmospheric feelings can also shape your experience of the world as such. You might feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of an old cathedral or an ancient Greek temple. Such an experience can induce feelings of magnificence and harmony. Similarly experiences in the nature can make you feel at one with the whole universe, you might feel the unity of everything when standing at the top of a mountain or watching the starry sky from a boat in the ocean.

Two-way relationships

The relationship between elementary existential, non-elementary existential, and atmospheric feelings seems to be similar to the above-mentioned relationship between existential feelings and emotions. Generally speaking, more fundamental feelings shape less fundamental feelings. Thus, elementary existential feelings shape all the other types of feelings, non-elementary existential feelings shape atmospheric feelings and emotions, etc. However, as we saw above, there might be a "top down" feedback in addition to this "bottom up" dependency and conditioning. Emotions can over time influence more basic dimensions of human affectivity. Thus, it seems plausible that atmospheric feelings and non-elementary existential feelings may shape elementary existential feelings as well, under certain circumstances. For example, when you feel detached and isolated from the social environment for a long time (which amounts to a non-elementary existential feeling) this might alter you general sense of persons in consequence. You might gradually lose your sense of personhood and start experiencing other people in general as somewhat unreal and strange (which amounts to an elementary existential feeling). Similarly, consistent atmospheric feelings over a certain period of time might lead to altered existential feelings. Imagine that you are continuously in situations that are sad and harmful, e.g. your child suffers from blood cancer over a period of several years. This will likely influence your general sense of the world. You might perceive life as such as harder and the world as rough and dangerous place. Thus, your existential feelings might change in consequence of repeatedly experienced atmospheric feelings.

Comparing Stephan and Slaby's classification to Ratcliffe's account

With this classification, Stephan and Slaby make a proposal for further specification of the theory of existential feelings. The remainder of this section will examine the relationship of their proposal to Ratcliffe's original theory.

Ratcliffe's work points at a class of phenomena that have been largely neglected for a long period of time in philosophy of emotions. Therefore, an initial attempt to map this "newly discovered continent" (Stephan 2012, p. 158) makes sense in principal. Stephan and Slaby emphasize that the described types of feelings always come in complex blending and constitute a holistic unity. The alleged advantage of their classification lies in the possibility to bring a certain order in the broad phenomenon of existential feelings.

Ratcliffe (2012a, pp. 43f.; 2015a, chapter 2), however, does not seem to be too satisfied with Stephan and Slaby's classification. In principal, he welcomes the attempt to further clarify and systematize the phenomenon of existential feelings. Nonetheless, he insists that existential feeling is a unitary phenomenon that encompasses all the aspects Stephan and Slaby describe. For him, a person can only have one existential feeling at a time, and this existential feeling is layered in different spheres. Thus, he prefers to view Stephan and Slaby's classification as a strata theory. In his view, their supposed types of feelings describe different aspects in one unitary phenomenon. There are no different types of existential feelings, but rather different aspects. As discussed above (chapter 2.2.2.), existential feelings for Ratcliffe do not vary in depth. All existential feelings are equally "elementary". No matter what existential feeling a person has, it will cover all the aspects described in Stephan and Slaby's classification. Different from them, Ratcliffe suggests not to classify existential feelings per se but instead classify changes in existential feelings. He proposes to classify changes in existential feelings in regard to their impact on the space of possibilities. The more severe our space of possibilities is changed, the deeper the change in existential feeling was.

For project of this book, this divergence does not seem overly important. The crucial and helpful contribution of Stephan and Slaby consists in the differentiation between elementary, non-elementary and atmospheric feelings as well as the three aspects of relatedness, especially the implications for self-relatedness. However, it is not mission critical for this book if these differentiations express distinct types of feelings within a holistic phenomenon, or aspects in a unitary fundamental feeling. Thus, we may remain neutral on this point.

Generally speaking, Ratcliffe seems to see existential feelings on a slightly more fundamental level than Stephan and Slaby. This can be shown with the help of two issues. First, there is the question if existential feelings are intentional phenomena.[183] Ratcliffe repeatedly emphasizes that existential feelings are not intentional phenomena, they are not directed at objects but are background structures that first enable intentionality as such. Consider the following quote:

> "Intentional states presuppose existential feelings. In order to experience an entity as threatening, enticing, accessible to others or relevant to a project, one's world must accommodate possibilities of those kinds. In their absence, the associated kinds of intentional state could not be adopted. Existential feelings thus shape all experience, thought and activity, insofar as they determine what kinds of intentional state are amongst one's possibilities. Hence we might describe them as 'pre-intentional' rather than 'intentional'" (Ratcliffe 2012a, p. 32)

In contrast, Stephan and Slaby see existential feelings as part of the overarching structure of "affective intentionality", which is at the heart of their theory:

> "In what follows, we understand affective intentionality in an even broader way, as not only unifying the intentional and phenomenal dimensions but also comprising the bodily-corporeal aspects of human affectivity […]. As we will see, major depression affects all of these dimensions simultaneously, which include, among other features, situative awareness, evaluations, thoughts and imaginations, *background feelings* [emphasis by G.K.][184], feelings towards and action tendencies, the sense of ability and (impaired) agency as well as bodily states and bodily sensations" (Stephan et al. 2014, p. 90)

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[183] We cannot enter a detailed discussion on the notion of intentionality here. This example is just meant to mark some slight differences between Ratcliffe's and Stephan/Slaby's account.
[184] The term "background feeling" is often used synonymously with existential feelings by Stephan and Slaby.

Slaby makes a similar point:

> "Additionally, the present conception is based on the conviction that not only some types of affective phenomena are intentional states but all of them – it has to be conceded though, that the intentionality of feelings manifests itself in different ways in the different classes of affective states." (Slaby 2008b, p. 105, translated by G.K.)[185,186]

Being part of the structure of affective intentionality, existential feelings seem to be part of intentionality. Stephan remarks:

> "In contrast to emotions and emotional episodes, existential feelings manifest a different type of intentionality: They are not directed towards anything specific; rather, they are background orientations through which everything we perceive, feel, think, and act upon is structured." (Stephan 2012, p. 158)

However, ultimately the gap between Ratcliffe and Stephan and Slaby does not seem to be all too large. Ratcliffe concedes:

> "I say 'pre-intentional' rather than non-intentional because it is not wholly distinct from intentional states. Rather, it contributes to the structure of intentionally directed emotion, determining the range of emotions that one is capable of experiencing." (Ratcliffe 2010, p. 353)

It seems that both Ratcliffe and Stephan/Slaby see the background character of existential feeling. They both understand that existential feelings shape the specific intentional experiences. Due to their general account of affective intentionality Stephan and Slaby seem to be more tempted to refer to existential feeling as part of the structure of intentionality. Ratcliffe, in contrast, emphasizes the fundamental character of existential feeling, focussing on the fact that intentional experiences presuppose existential feelings. Regarding the actual content of their account, there does not seem to be much difference in this matter. However, this example indicates that Ratcliffe is more committed to a fundamental view on existential

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[185] „Zudem basiert die vorliegende Konzeption auf der Überzeugung, dass nicht nur einige Arten affektiver Phänomene intentionale Zustände sind, sondern alle – wenn auch festzustellen ist, dass sich die Intentionalität der Gefühle bei den unterschiedlichen Klassen von affektiven Zuständen jeweils in verschiedener Weise manifestiert."
[186] Slaby distinguishes three types of affective phenomena: emotions, background feelings or moods, and bodily sensations (Slaby 2008b, chapters 4-7)

feeling while Stephan and Slaby are keener to relate this phenomenon to "higher" levels of human affectivity.

The second issue concerns the difference between spaces of possibility in general and evaluative patterns. For Ratcliffe, existential feelings are essentially about possibility spaces, they shape our experienced possibilities. Somewhat different from that, Stephan and Slaby emphasize the role of evaluative patterns or "import"[187] (Slaby 2008b, chapter 8; Slaby and Stephan 2008). For them, affective intentionality is the most important (if not the only) faculty through which we know what matters for us. It is our affective intentionality, Stephan and Slaby argue, that makes us care for things in the world. Existential feelings are an important background structure in this regard:

> "Evaluative patterns and orientations pre-structure our specific emotional encounters with (and experiences of) the world and ourselves by providing a fine-grained, pre-reflective evaluative framework, according to which we perceive events, situations and objects as, for example, threatening, dangerous, or disgusting." (Stephan et al. 2014)

Again, the difference seems not to be overly strong. However, it shows that Ratcliffe approaches the phenomenon on a more fundamental level, including all kinds of possibilities. Stephan and Slaby, in slight contrast, focus more on the implications of existential feelings on practical agency. They seem to understand them more as a background for practical significance. Ratcliffe made a proposal to mark this difference conceptually (Ratcliffe 2012a, p. 37): He suggests to reserve the term existential feeling for the general sense of possibilities and employ the term "existential orientation" for the evaluative point of view that shows us what is practically significant and why.

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[187] This notion was made prominent by Helm (2001) and Taylor: "By 'import' I mean a way in which something can be relevant or of importance to the desires or purposes or aspirations or feelings of a subject; or otherwise put, a property of something whereby it is a matter of non-indifference to a subject." (Taylor 1985, p. 48)

2.3.2. Sense of ability

Different from Ratcliffe, Stephan and Slaby put much emphasis on the role of agency in their theory of human affectivity (Slaby 2008b, 2011, 2012a; Slaby et al. 2013; Slaby and Stephan 2012; Slaby and Wüschner 2014).[188] They contrast their approach to unitary theories of emotion that see emotions in analogy to perception (Döring 2007, 2013; Goldie 2000; Helm 2001; Roberts 2003). While Stephan and Slaby principally affirm a unitary conception of affectivity which integrates intentional and phenomenal aspects, they criticise the implication of passivity that can be found in these theories. When affectivity is understood as a passive event, a fundamental dimension of human life is undervalued, they argue. Instead, Slaby proposes the following:

> "I propose to locate emotional intentionality in closer vicinity to agency, in relation to our modifiable ability to act, to engage with the world in practical ways. While surely not themselves actions or activities, affective states are the area of "interface" between experiential awareness and intentional action. Affective states are the switch point, so to speak—the point at which awareness of situation ("threat over there!") is phasing over into active situation access ("flight or fight")." (Slaby 2012a, p. 152)

Thus, emotions, and human affectivity in general, are seen as essentially bound up with agency. As human beings, we are constantly engaged in worldly matters. We are involved in things and projects that we care for, in every minute of our lives. We are not detached, external observers to the world but an active, engaged part of the world. We are "in-the-world" as Heidegger (2006 [1927], §§ 12ff.) put it. Affectivity plays a central role in this active engagement in the world. Through our affectivity we know what matters, what we care for in the world. Thereby, affectivity is essential for our agency. Affectivity guides and permeates our actions. Slaby points at two aspects: First, the affective state discloses a situation in a specific way, e.g. as threatening. This amounts to the perceptive aspect of affectivity. Second, the

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[188] Schmid, in his paper on the phenomenology of action seems to be sympathetic with such an interpretation of human affectivity and existential feelings: "I suggest that the sense of ability is the most fundamental existential feeling, and that many other existential feelings – such as the sense of belonging or separation, and even the "sense of reality" – are ultimately based on our sense of ability." (Schmid 2011, p. 230)

affective state determines potential actions in this moment. When you experience fear you may feel energized to run away or paralysed and unable to move. In any case your affective state shapes your possibilities to act. The affective state seems to be the nexus between the awareness of a situation and the immediate pull to perform certain actions.

This can be regarded as a difference to Ratcliffe's theory. Ratcliffe sees existential feelings essentially as shaping possibility spaces. They determine what appears to be possible. Thus, he seems to be rather in the perception-oriented camp in philosophy of affectivity. Of course for him, the space of possibilities also encompasses possibilities to act. However, there is not so much emphasis on this aspect in Ratcliffe, agency is only one aspect among others for him. We saw this above in chapter 2.2.2. in the preliminary list of kinds of possibilities that are shaped by existential feelings (Ratcliffe 2012a; Ratcliffe 2015a, chapter 2).

In more recent papers (Slaby et al. 2013; Slaby and Wüschner 2014), Slaby seems to make an even stronger and less plausible claim. He now sees emotions as actions, as part of our goal-directed, active striving. Consider the following passages:

> "But we want to suggest a more direct involvement of agency in emotion: affective responses consist in more than merely a felt pressure or pull to act in relation to what is grasped as important in the current situation. In our view, action and engagement themselves make up the substance of an emotional episode." (Slaby and Wüschner 2014, p. 220)

> "Emotions, while indeed intentionally oriented towards events or objects in the world appraised as either good or bad, are primarily matters of active striving — various and variable forms of pursuing the good and of avoiding (or otherwise 'opposing') the bad. Hence, emotions belong to the broader class of active world-orientation (engagement, goal-oriented striving, activity) and not to the narrow category of passive mental states (feeling, perception, thought, or mental image viewed as predominantly passive mental occurrences)." (Slaby et al. 2013, pp. 35f.)

Here, Slaby even stronger contrasts himself from traditional approaches. He not only emphasizes the important role of agency as one aspect of emotion but sees emotions themselves as actions. Emotions do not only comprise action tendencies, such as Frijda (1986) or Scherer (2005) proposed. Instead, action is seen as the

essence of emotions. Emotions are part of our active engagement in the world and explicitly not part of the passive class of mental states.

Note, however, that Slaby seems ambiguous how far he really wants to go in this regard. There are other, similarly recent papers where he follows a softer tone. Compare for example this quote from 2014:

> "Take a person's emotionality away, and there's nothing left that deserves to be called 'self'— no valuing, no motivation, no agency, just a colorless plain condition. Emotionality consists in a fundamental, inseparable unity of evaluation, intentionality, agency, and self-involvement. This is the reason why neither cognitivism nor feeling theories about emotion can be right, and why a multi-component theory that views the components as separable elements cannot be adequate in more than a superficially descriptive way. Instead, at the center of emotion is a *sui generis* way of a person's relating to the world: *affective intentionality*" (Slaby 2014, p. 34)

This quote implies that Slaby still allows for motivational and evaluative characteristics in emotions. These characteristics locate emotions at the switch point between awareness of a situation and concrete action, as has been argued for in his earlier texts (see e.g. the above quote from Slaby 2012a, p. 152).

In any case, it seems that a balanced view of affectivity is most appropriate to the phenomenon. Yes, affectivity has its active aspects. We are constantly involved in active engagement in the world and affectivity fundamentally shapes and modifies how we behave in the world. However, there are also passive aspects. Affective states tell us what matters in the world, they are detectors of value. Moreover, at least initially they occur to us. We experience affective states as events that happen to us, at least in the first moments. Even if we can react and try to regulate our affective states, at the moment of their upheaval they just happen to us. Emotions are not only subject to our will. To some extent, they are beyond our control.[189]

These objections apply even more for existential feelings. As pre-structuring background of all our experience and thought they cannot simply be intentional actions. All our intentions and desires are pre-structured and shaped by existential

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[189] This should not imply that actions are fully subject to our will. There might be actions that are at least partly beyond our control, just like emotions are. Think of a fit of rage as an example.

feelings. Therefore, an intentional action cannot directly create an existential feeling. This explanation would be circular. The background of all purposeful activity cannot itself be an action. This does not mean, however, that there is no active aspect in existential feeling.

Ratcliffe seems to follow a more balanced approach, too. In general he sees the modification in the space of experienced possibilities to act as an important aspect of existential feelings. However, he states that there is more than that in existential feelings:

> "It is important not to place too much emphasis on experienced possibilities for *activity*. There are also potential happenings – the world appears as a place in which events over which one has no control can happen, events that matter in a range of different ways. And there are possibilities that appear as available to others but not oneself - depression can involve a pervasive sense that 'I can't act', rather than that everyone can't." (Ratcliffe 2012a, p. 42)

For Stephan and Slaby, however, agency is not just one aspect to human affectivity among others. Instead, it is one of their most central pillars in their view on self-consciousness.

2.3.3. Existential feeling and self-consciousness

Neither Ratcliffe nor Stephan and Slaby have yet developed a comprehensive account of self-consciousness. They have not yet in detail confronted their accounts of existential affectivity with the many complexities in philosophy of self-consciousness. However, they seem to be generally interested in the topic. Ratcliffe states:

> "I will not offer a comprehensive account of the phenomenology of 'self' here and I do not wish to suggest that the sense of self is wholly constituted by existential feeling. Nevertheless, I do at least want to maintain that existential feelings are *partly* constitutive of selfhood. […] Hence the phenomenology of self, whatever else it might involve, is not dissociable from existential feeling. It is a matter of relatedness, rather than of something pre-formed that then enters into a relationship with body and world. Any sense of self that we have is grounded in existential feeling, even though it might not be exhausted by it." (Ratcliffe 2008, pp. 120f.)

Stephan and Slaby offer more than these rather general remarks. Building on their theory of human affectivity they make some initial proposals on how to understand self-consciousness (Slaby 2012a; Slaby and Bernhardt 2015; Slaby and Stephan 2008, 2011; Slaby and Wüschner 2014). Obviously, this is of utmost interest for the enquiry undertaken in this book.

First, they argue that affective states are about the world and ourselves at the same time (Slaby and Stephan 2008, p. 506).[190] They are not only telling us something about the current state of the world as it is, e.g. detecting a threatening situation (mind-to-world direction of fit). They are also evaluations that entail desires and concerns how the world should be (world-to-mind direction of fit). They are about what matters for us, what we care for. Thus, they tell us something about ourselves.[191] For example, when we feel fear in front of a lion this does not only depict the lion as dangerous and threatening (mind-to-world) but it also entails the desire that we wish it to disappear, i.e. that our survival is of interest for us (world-to-mind). It is about the world and ourselves at the same time. In Helm's (2001, p. 69) terminology, our survival would be the "focus" of this emotion of fear. If examined carefully, all emotions seem to have a "focus", something that we care about. If you are sad because your car is demolished, this shows that your car was important to you, that you wish to have your car back as it was. Note that this claim of "two-fold directions of fit" is not uncontroversial in the philosophy of emotion, yet it seems plausible as presented: Affective states disclose the current state of the world as well as evaluate what potential state of the world you desire and thus tell something about yourself.[192]

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[190] A similar point was made by de Sousa and Morton (2002, p. 247), who argued that emotions are "Janus-faced". See also Helm (2001), as presented in chapter 2.1.2..

[191] Interestingly, in an early paper, Rosenthal suggested to take emotions more serious in accounting for the self because they makes us understand better who we are as individuals (Rosenthal 1983).

[192] This desire for a world state does not necessarily need to include change. In the case of romantic love, for instance, you might desire that everything stays the same forever.

In addition to that, affective states open up possibilities to act. An affective state determines which actions seem possible for you in a particular situation. For instance, if you fear the lion, this emotion shapes what potential actions become salient to you, e.g. running away or freeze. Thus, an emotion is not only about what matters for you (situational awareness), it also shapes your potential responses (agency). This is not only true for emotional episodes but also for more fundamental dimensions of your affective life. Existential feelings, Stephan and Slaby argue, should be understood as sense of ability. They determine which actions seem possible for you and which do not. Imagine for example being at a conference as a graduate student. You are well-prepared and listen to the speakers with great interest. If you existentially feel strong and welcome in this world, you will feel able to stand up and challenge one of the speaker's claims. In contrast, if your existential feeling is more a feeling of vulnerability and social rejection you will not experience this action as one of your options. The existential feeling might even alter your initially critical impression of the speaker's claim in a way that your disagreement recedes. Thus, Stephan and Slaby argue, existential feelings are essentially senses of ability. They shape our sense of what we can or cannot do. Notably, this claim about existential feelings as senses of ability does not speak about "objective" possibilities out there in the world. You might argue that a "neutral observer" looking at the two students at the conference would not see any difference in their possibilities to act. In that sense, both the self-confident and the shy student have the same possibilities to participate in the conference. Yet, their senses of ability shape their felt action potential in a particular way and thus make some particular actions "possible" for the self-confident student and "impossible" for the shy student.[193]

This sense of ability is the core of Stephan and Slaby`s concept of "affective self-construal". Our affective self-construal is a pre-reflective sense of what we can do

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[193] This is not meant to draw an all too strict metaphysical line between the "objective" and the "subjective". For instance, it seems plausible that a strong sense of ability is partly self-fulfilling and makes things possible that were seen as "objectively" impossible before, e.g. "landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth" (U.S.-President John F. Kennedy, Address to Congress on Urgent National Needs, May 25, 1961).

or cannot do. It is a sense of one's own potential actions and capabilities. Slaby puts it as follows:

> "Affective self-construals come in view primarily as *internal modifiers* of the process of active engagement, inseparable from the actions and activities of the emotional agent. Thus, these construals do not comprise a separate structure of self-directed contents. Affective self-construals are bound up with action—they are *enacted*." (Slaby 2012a, p. 152)

Importantly, our affective self-construals are not static entities of self-knowledge. They are inextricably interrelated with action, they modify our actions from within. They are not separate representations of our agentive capabilities but part of our agency itself. They are a felt awareness of what we can do and what we cannot do. Note, however, that this does not imply that they cannot be subjects to explicit reflections.

Moreover, the affective self-construal constitutes a "minimal self":

> "Affective self-construal constitutes a kind of 'minimal self'. It is crucial to see that this basic structure is a matter of agency from the outset. Not through reflection, but in an immediately affective way, our being is disclosed to us in relation to what we are currently concerned with. This affective-agentive sense of *possibility* comprises a sense of *facticity* – what the current situation manifestly presents; and second, a sense of 'what's next', 'what needs to be done', including, most importantly: '*can* it be done?' – e.g., specific contentful ways of projecting ahead of what is currently manifest." (Slaby and Wüschner 2014)

The minimal „self" for Slaby amounts to a fundamental sense of ability, a sense of what actions are available to you. This fundamental sense is essentially pre-reflective, it is a felt way of self-awareness. Consequently, it resembles the notion of self-feeling:

> "In some by now almost forgotten quarters of early phenomenology, the term *self-feeling* (*Selbstgefühl* in German) was used to refer to something that comes close to enacted affective self-construals." (Slaby 2012a, p. 153)

As can be seen, Slaby's account of enacted, affective self-construal has much similarities to the key notion of this book. Similar to the account developed in this book Slaby seems to understand self-consciousness as affective phenomenon that is pre-reflective. However, Slaby's work has been of rather sketchy character so far.

He did not engage with the debates on self-consciousness in detail and has not yet offered a comprehensive account of self-consciousness.

A recursive account

As shown above, Slaby's account of affective self-construal is strongly interrelated with agency. It is a sense of what we can do or cannot do and thus determines what appears to us as space of possible actions. Although not stated explicitly by Slaby, this implies a partly recursive relationship between affective self-construal, action, and patterns of behaviour. An affective self-construal determines what particular actions seem possible, it shapes our individual actions. These actions taken together form a pattern of behaviour, a particular way of doing things. Interestingly, these patterns of behaviour in turn shape our affective self-construals.

Consider the following: The notion of affective self-construal can be understood as affective, enacted, pre-reflective self-awareness. In affective self-construals we have a basic and often implicit sense of what we can do. Affective self-construals provide the most basic form of self-understanding. Naturally, this sense of ability is influenced by patterns of behaviour. What we normally and regularly do shapes our experienced space of possible actions. When you are used to regularly smoke a cigarette during your lunch break, this potential action will become salient every time your lunch break begins. Similarly, when you regularly hike in the mountains, this possible activity will become salient when you see a mountain. Another person who does not smoke or does not hike in the mountains will not experience these actions as concrete possibilities in the same way.[194] The same goes for interpersonal behaviour. Imagine a person that regularly accepts new tasks given to her by her boss, even when this means that she has to work long hours. When her boss comes again with a new task, the action to reply "No, I already have enough work to do", while possible in principle, will not become utterly salient. In contrast, imagine a person who is used to work to rule. She regularly declines when asked to do extra work. When her boss approaches her with an additional task, she will routinely

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[194] Arguments along this line are common in (Neo-)Aristotelian philosophy, see e.g. Robert Frank (1988).

decline. The action of accepting the task, while possible in principle, will be less salient for her. These examples show that our habits and patterns of behaviour shape our experienced possibilities for action. We are "creatures of habit" to a certain extent. When it comes to action we do not experience the whole universe of possible actions as equally salient. Instead, there is a structured landscape of particular actions that are more salient and others that are less salient or even seem unavailable. This landscape is significantly shaped by our patterns of behaviour. Routines and habits structure our space of possible activities.

Therefore, patterns of behaviour shape affective self-construals. Affective self-construals can be understood as meaningful expressions and interpretations of our patterns of behaviour. How we act and behave has influence on how we understand ourselves and our abilities. In a word, affective self-construals are causes and effects of our patterns of behaviour at the same time. They influence our particular actions and they are influenced by our patterns of behaviour.[195] This recursivity is not necessarily problematic though. Notably, it is not implied that affective self-construals are entirely determined by patterns of behaviour. Yet, patterns of behaviour have significant influence on our affective self-construals. Surely, there is open space for other factors to shape our affective self-construals. Given that, this recursive understanding seems adequate to the phenomenon.

Patterns of behaviour and the self

Interestingly and somewhat problematically, Stephan and Slaby seem to go one step further. They take patterns of behaviour to be the core of "self". They abandon the traditional notion of „self" as "core" or "fixed entity" and put patterns of behaviour at its place:

> "What people usually have in mind when they use the expression 'the self' is what constitutes the core of an individual's specific personality: that what makes this individual the *specific* person that he or she is. And this is not a thing, nor an entity, but rather a (more or less) stable pattern in the sequence of relations this person

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[195] This structure reminds of Helm's (2001) circular account of import, emotion, and patterns of emotions. Emotions are determined by things that matter for us, that is by import. Emotions form patterns of emotions. These patterns in turn constitute import.

> entertains with her surroundings, its social and physical environment. This pattern of meaningful relations, more than anything else, seems to be what people mainly refer to when they employ the substantial notion of 'self': a pattern of states and processes through which an embodied agent relates to the world and to 'himself' in perception, cognition, evaluation, action, and feeling." (Slaby and Stephan 2008, p. 507)

According to Stephan and Slaby, it is a pattern of meaningful relations that makes a person the distinctive human being he or she is. The pattern of what we do, how we feel and how we see the world is what constitutes our "self". In a word, patterns of behaviour constitute the "self".

Based on the recursive relationship revealed above it seems that affective self-construal and the „self" are recursively interrelated in Stephan and Slaby's view. Our affective self-construal shapes our patterns of behaviour and thereby our individual "self". At the same time, our individual „self" (that is our patterns of behaviour) shapes our affective self-construal. In line with that, in a recent paper (Slaby and Wüschner 2014) Slaby builds on Moran's (2001) existentialist account of self-knowledge and claims that self-consciousness is not primarily an epistemic matter but a matter of agency. In his view the „self" is nothing that we are but something we do.

Generally speaking, it seems plausible that the „self" should be understood in an enacted, dynamic way.[196] It is questionable, however, if it is adequate to equate patterns of behaviour straightaway with the „self", as Stephan and Slaby seem to do. This scepticism is based on the following reasons.

First, as we saw in part one of this book, there is the problem of unity. The phenomenology of „self" requires that it is explained not as a bunch of single states or actions, but as a unitary phenomenon. If the „self" was nothing more than a loose pattern of behaviour, it seems difficult to account for its unity. It is unclear how the particular elements of the pattern are held together, that is what makes

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[196] See chapter 3.3.2. for more thoughts on this issue.

the pattern one single phenomenon.[197] One might try to answer this question by stating that it is the „self" that unifies the elements. However, this would be inappropriate because the „self" is just the phenomenon that should be explained. Such an explanation would be viciously circular. If patterns of behaviour constitute the unitary „self", the unity of the pattern cannot be explained by the unity of "self". Instead, and the Heidelberg School convincingly showed this, we need a more fundamental account of „self" and self-consciousness that escapes this trap of vicious circularity.

Second, a pattern of behaviour cannot be equated with the „self" because we obviously have the ability to explicitly relate to or reflect on our pattern of behaviour. You can say "I know that I normally go crazy when my son's room is messy. But today is his birthday so I won't say a word." Likewise, there is the possibility of fundamental life changes, people can change patterns of behaviour that were once "essential" to their lives. Consider the biblical Saulus-Paulus conversion as an example. More commonly, people can change their habits, they can try to stop smoking or lose their interest in mountain climbing. There seems to be something that is even more basic than our patterns of behaviour, that enables self-reflection, change and personal development. As stated above, the recursive relationship does not imply that patterns of behaviour are the only factor that shape affective self-construals. Our sense of what we can do does not depend on what we regularly do only. Instead, we are able to change.

2.4. Conclusion

In this second part of the book we explored human affectivity. Most importantly, we looked closer at the fundamental dimensions of it. We learned that there is a

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[197] This objection seems to apply for many kinds of pattern theories, such as Gallagher's "pattern theory of self" (Gallagher 2013) or Newen and Zinck's "pattern theory of emotion" (Zinck and Newen 2007). If a phenomenon is experienced as unitary, an explanation that relies on a pattern of elements will always have troubles to account for its unity.

fundamental type of affectivity that can be called "existential feelings". Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings, complemented with Stephan and Slaby's work, provides rich insight in how to understand this fundamental level of our affective lives. We have seen that affectivity is at the core of our being in the world. We are in the world in an essentially affective way. This is much in line with the pointers of the Heidelberg School discussed in chapter 1.3. in part one of this book. For example, the theory of existential feelings can be understood as rich and detailed exploration of the notion of sense in Pothast's much broader and at times vague account. Our fundamental affects, namely existential feelings, are bodily feelings that shape all our experience and thought. They permeate how we perceive the world and our social environment, how we act in it, and the way we are aware of ourselves. This last aspect is most relevant for the project of this book. In some way, existential feelings seem to constitute our self-consciousness. Somehow we feel who and how we are in this world. Thus, it seems promising to address some of the problems of self-consciousness (as discussed in part one) with the help of the theory of existential feelings.

Based on these considerations and equipped with the conceptual tools of the theory of existential feelings we can now make the crucial step in this inquiry: The presentation of an account of self-feeling. This is the content of part three of this book.

3. Self-feeling

This third part presents the main claim of the book. In a nutshell, it argues that self-consciousness must be understood as permeated with affectivity. Self-consciousness is at its core an affective phenomenon, it is self-feeling. Self-feeling is an aspect of our fundamental affectivity. It can be understood as existential feeling.

The relationship between the terms self-feeling and existential feeling need to be further clarified before we proceed with this chapter. It is not claimed that self-feeling is a specific existential feeling or a particular token of the type existential feelings. It is not that there are many different kinds of existential feelings and self-feeling is one of them. Instead, existential feeling and self-feeling are two aspects of the one unitary phenomenon of fundamental human affectivity. Every existential feeling is always a self-feeling, too. At the same time, every self-feeling is always an existential feeling, too. It depends on the perspective we take which of these aspects comes in the foreground of attention. When we look at fundamental human affectivity with the perspective of the philosophy of self-consciousness, we find its character of self-feeling. When we look at it with the question of how it shapes our world experience, we end up at Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings. In other words, an account of self-feeling focuses on how *I* am in the world while an account of existential feeling focusses on how I am in the *world*. This does not deny that many other perspectives on fundamental human affectivity could be taken, too. Thus, self-feeling and existential feeling are two sides of the one coin of fundamental human affectivity that has been described in Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings.

This part has four chapters. First, the main features of self-feeling are presented. Second, it is shown how the account of self-feeling presented here contributes to current debates. Third, the question of unity and the "referent" of self-consciousness or self-feeling is discussed in more detail. This includes some

preliminary thoughts about how we may understand the notion of "self" in relation to self-feeling. The fourth chapter explores how we can evaluate the appropriateness of particular self-feelings.

3.1. The features of self-feeling

Part one of this book presented some of the challenges that contemporary philosophy of self-consciousness faces. This led to a preliminary understanding of what a satisfying account of self-consciousness should be like in order to avoid these challenges. Part two of this book discussed the most worked-out contemporary theory of fundamental human affectivity, namely the theory of existential feelings. It brought the basic features of fundamental affectivity into perspective. This chapter will apply these features from both fields and use them to form an integrative account of self-feeling. Thus, most of the features of self-feeling presented in this chapter build on what we learned in the first two parts of this book.

In a word, self-feeling shall be understood as pre-reflective, pre-propositional, bodily feeling that shapes our space of possibilities. It is the affective disclosure of our individual existence.

3.1.1. Self-feeling is pre-reflective

First of all, self-feeling has the feature of being pre-reflective. The problems of reflective theories were discussed extensively in part one of this book. The Heidelberg School of self-consciousness, especially Dieter Henrich and Manfred Frank, showed that reflective models of self-consciousness lead to vicious circles and infinite regresses (Frank 2012; Henrich 1966, 1970). Their arguments will not be repeated here. We learned from them in part one that an adequate account of self-

consciousness must be understood as pre-reflective. Consequently, self-feeling must be understood as pre-reflective. This can be further explained in negative and positive terms.

First, self-feeling is pre-reflective in the sense that it is non-objectifying, non-identifying, and not the outcome of perception or inner monitoring. Self-feeling is not the feeling of an object (e.g. the self). Self-feeling does not identify something with something. It does not "find" an "inner entity" and identifies it with "the self". Accordingly, it is not an inner sense that "perceives" the "self". Most importantly, self-feeling is not the outcome of reflection or inner monitoring. It is not that there is some faculty within the mind (e.g. self-feeling) that monitors "the self". All these double-digit models constitute a duality in self-consciousness that necessarily leads to the problems of vicious circularity and infinite regress, as shown in part one of this book.

Instead, self-feeling is a direct, unitary, sui generis, "de se" phenomenon. It is our primary and most fundamental awareness of how we find ourselves in this world. First, it is a single-digit phenomenon, it is irrelational.[198] In self-feeling our existence is directly and immediately disclosed to us.[199] Second, it is holistic and encompasses our whole existence in a unitary manner. It is not a feeling of specific objects or events in this world. Rather, our existence as a whole has a specific "feel". It feels like something to exist as ourselves in this world. Third, it is a sui generis phenomenon.[200] It cannot be reduced either to other affective phenomena like emotions or moods or to other mental states like beliefs or desires. Self-feeling is part of our fundamental affectivity, like existential feeling, and this makes it our

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[198] Importantly, this does not imply that we as individuals are not related to our environment. The property of being irrelational means only that self-feeling in its inner structure does not have one feeling (or perceiving) and another felt (or perceived) part. There is no relation within the structure of self-feeling. However, this does not at all deny that our being in this world is utterly relational. Most probably it makes sense to understand human existence as embedded, social, and situated.

[199] Note that this "to us" does emphatically not imply that there is something (existence) that is recognized by something else (us). Our grammar makes it extremely hard to put a strictly direct and non-relational phenomenon into words. Importantly, however, this is a deficiency in language not in the concept itself.

[200] Note that the label "sui generis" emphasizes that self-feeling is a distinct phenomenon. Yet, it is understood as affective phenomenon and thus shares some features with other affective states.

most basic, affective awareness of being in the world. Forth, it constitutes "de se" awareness. Self-feeling is not a feeling of something that somehow turns out to be myself. Instead, it is genuinely a feeling of my being *as* my being. It primordially discloses my own existence *as* my own.

So much for an initial description of the feature of pre-reflectiveness. A more detailed explanation about how self-feeling is pre-reflective partly depends on its other features that will be presented below. Thus, more details on pre-reflectiveness will be provided after the introduction of these other features, especially in chapter 3.2.1..

3.1.2. Self-feeling is pre-propositional

In part one of this book (chapter 1.2.2.) we saw that the question concerning the propositional status of self-consciousness is not trivial.[201] On the one hand, self-consciousness cannot be straightaway propositional, as Manfred Frank showed (2002a, 2012). Propositions share some common features that do not apply for self-consciousness. Propositions presuppose a dual structure, some object "B" is attributed the property "a". They need more than one element, since their function is precisely to put their elements into relation. Therefore, if self-consciousness was propositional, it would enter the problems of higher-order monitoring theories and risk vicious circularity or infinite regresses. Propositions identify while in self-consciousness there is no identification. Additionally, propositions are fallible whereas self-consciousness is not. We can err in our propositional belief that "This book is red". Yet, we cannot err about the fact that we exist. Moreover, propositions are expressed in language, they occur in thoughts or speech acts. In contrast, there are examples of self-consciousness that comes without language,

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[201] Please note that there is a large and complex debate on concepts and propositionality itself which this book cannot attempt to do justice. See Margolis and Laurence (2014) for a general overview. Here the focus will lie on the claim that neither a strict non-propositional nor a strict propositional understanding can satisfy with regards to the phenomenon of self-consciousness.

such as small children or higher mammals passing the mirror-test[202] (Peacocke 2014, p. 192). As can be seen, these features of propositions do not apply for self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is unitary, it does not identify, and it is infallible. Also, it does not occur as thought or speech act but is a more fundamental, pre-lingual phenomenon. Therefore, self-consciousness cannot be understood straightforwardly as propositional. Hence, Frank proposes to understand self-consciousness as non-propositional, being a mere "quale" of existence.

On the other hand, it does not help much to take self-consciousness to be strictly non-propositional. Frank at this point throws out the baby with the bathwater. A strictly non-propositional account of self-consciousness is counterintuitive and unsatisfying for two reasons. First, strictly non-propositional self-consciousness could not be part of our rational, propositional mental structure. After all, humans are (at least for the most part) rational beings. Most of our mental states are part of a rational, propositional structure that makes our mind. Human rationality relies on propositional mental states. An adequate theory of self-consciousness should not ignore this fact. However, if self-consciousness is understood as strictly non-propositional how should it then be part of this rational, propositional structure that makes our mind?

Second, because of this gap strict non-propositional propositional self-consciousness cannot provide a proper foundation for propositional thoughts about ourselves. Some of our propositional mental states concern ourselves. We have propositional mental states that are self-related.[203] Yet, non-propositional self-consciousness is not part of their propositional, rational structure. Thus, it cannot serve as foundation for these propositional thoughts. This seems counterintuitive. Self-related thoughts or beliefs like "I prefer chocolate ice cream" or "I am a shy person" would not be grounded in a more basic experience but would be relatively random mental states. You would be left with self-observation from a third-

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[202] Gordon Gallup's (1970, 1979) famous mirror test tests the ability to recognize oneself in a mirror. For example the forehead of a test person is unconsciously marked with a black spot. Then it is observed if the test person recognizes the spot in the mirror as being on his own forehead.
[203] These are called self-knowledge or self-interpretation in this book.

personal perspective to form these thoughts or beliefs.[204] Alternatively, one could argue that these thoughts and beliefs are a matter of self-creation (see e.g. Moran 2001). However, the question would remain what are the grounds for such a self-creation.[205] As a consequence, a strict non-propositional account of self-consciousness is grist to the mill for the critics of pre-reflective self-consciousness. They accuse pre-reflective accounts for their negativity and material emptiness. A strict non-propositional phenomenon might be experienced in some way but it could not be a positive part of our mental structure that is (at least for the most part) rational and propositional. Because of its negative definition it lacks clear, graspable content and remains a somewhat mysterious phenomenon. This mystery of such an "intrinsic glow view" is exactly what critics point their finger at (e.g. Kriegel 2009, pp. 101ff.). We saw in part one that Manfred Frank does not provide a satisfying answer to this question.[206] Generally speaking, it seems unclear how non-propositional mental states could be part of the rational structure of self-related deliberation. Both consequences of a strict non-propositional account of self-consciousness are unsatisfying and counterintuitive. Self-consciousness that does not tell anything about its content in theory and practice is unsatisfying. Self-related thoughts that are not grounded in a fundamental phenomenon of self-consciousness are counterintuitive in light of everyday experience.

Therefore, we find ourselves in a dilemma. On the one hand, a propositional account of self-consciousness leads to the problems of higher-order monitoring theories. On the other hand, a non-propositional account remains unsatisfying because it leaves out an important aspect or our self-relation. Thus, a middle way seems to be most promising. Jan Slaby (2008b), in his exploration of human affectivity presented an interesting attempt to solve this problem.

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[204] One could argue that a "reason" for such beliefs could be an observed pattern of behavior. I always ate chocolate so it is fair to believe that I prefer chocolate. However, this does not explain how the preference (or the behavior) was established in the first place. It would be counterintuitive to leave that to coincidence.

[205] This problem will be further discussed in part four of this book.

[206] Remember from chapter 1.2.2. in this book that Frank suggests two separate phenomena, „self-consciousness" and „self-knowledge", that cannot be further analyzed (Frank 2012, chapter 6; 2015, pp. 17f.).

Slaby's claim of propositional character as a middle way?

In his 2008 book (Slaby 2008b), Slaby introduces his "claim of propositional character"[207] which looks pretty strong at first sight. He claims that all mental states, including feelings, are propositional in nature:

> "Everything that appears in the frame of a personal perspective in a world – that is all personal comportment – must be understood as propositionally composed. And thus also feelings are propositionally composed." (Slaby 2008b, p. 117, translated by G.K.)[208]

For Slaby, it seems, personhood is essentially propositional. At first sight, this claim might seem counterintuitive. How can all personal comportment be propositional? What about the many aspects of human life that are just sensed, felt, or perceived? To address these counter intuitions (and their corresponding counter arguments) Slaby makes some important qualifications and specifications in his claim (e.g. Slaby 2008b, p. 245). Most importantly, the claim of propositional character does not suggest that all aspects of personhood are actually propositional but only that they are potentially propositional. No matter what content there is in the mind of a person, it has to be structured in a way that it can take a propositional form if needed. Thus, there can be mental states that are not in a propositional form yet.[209] Slaby (2008b, chapter 10-11) presents some arguments to support this claim, mainly building on John McDowell (1994, 1998).

First, persons are (at least for the most part) rational beings. Thus, all aspects of personhood that matter for a person must be able to link to this rational structure. Only content that has propositional character is able to be part of this rational structure, e.g. structures of justification in epistemic or practical endeavours. Thus, all mental content must have propositional character. This can be exemplified with emotions. Emotions, as we sketched above, are now widely recognized as having perceptual character, they tell us something about the world (mind-to-world

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[207] „Begrifflichkeitsthese" in German

[208] "Alles, was überhaupt im Rahmen einer personalen Perspektive in einer Welt auftritt – also sämtliche personalen Verhaltungen – muss demnach als begrifflich verfasst verstanden werden. Und insofern sind auch Gefühle begrifflich verfasst."

[209] Slaby goes so far to concede that even nonverbal gestures or actions can be seen as propositional articulations. This extreme broadening does not seem necessary for his argument.

direction of fit). In the emotion of fear, for example, we perceive something as threatening and dangerous. By constituting evaluative insight in this way, emotions can justify beliefs and be reasons for actions, if they are themselves justified.[210] We can form the belief "This lion is threatening" and justify it (to a certain extent) with the help of the respective emotion. Moreover, emotions can justify actions. You may justify your running away from the lion with your emotion of fear. The emotion is your motivating reason for performing the action. As can be seen, emotions are an inextricable part of our personhood and the rational structure that constitutes it. Therefore, they must themselves be structured in a way that enables their linkage to the rational structure. It is their propositional character that warrants this linkage.

Second, and following the first argument, Slaby argues that experience is only possible with the help of our cognitive and conceptual system. Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" showed that experience and conceptual capabilities are inextricably interdependent:

> "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. The understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing. Only through their unison can knowledge arise." (Kant 1974 [1781/87], A 51, B 75)

Because of this interdependency there cannot be any brute experiences that are strictly non-propositional. Experience is only possible in virtue of propositional capabilities. Necessarily, thus, all experiences must have propositional aspects. There cannot be any strictly non-propositional content. In difference to Kant, Slaby emphasizes that our conceptual capabilities are not transcendentally fixed but changeable in practice (Slaby 2008b, chapter 10). Our propositional capabilities and concepts are constituted in the intersubjective interchange with the environment. Thus, they may vary significantly between ages and cultures. Nonetheless, they are inevitable aspects of human experience. For these reasons, Slaby claims that all mental content (including feelings) must have propositional character, meaning that it has to be open to potential articulation in propositional form.

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[210] More on the appropriateness of emotions and existential feelings in chapter 3.4..

The objection of granularity

There is an important objection against this claim, the "argument of granularity" (Slaby 2008b, pp. 264ff.). On the one hand, our experience is often fine-grained. For example, perceptions of colour encompass a multitude of shadings and tones. On the other hand, compared to this fine-grained perceptions our concepts are relatively coarse-grained. We have a bunch of terms to describe blue colour experiences, e.g. dark blue, ocean blue, turquoise, etc., but these terms will never reach the fine-grained character of the actual experiences. The same applies for affective experiences. Our affective life is so rich and fine-grained that it is questionably how our conceptual capabilities could adequately articulate it. Our concepts are more distinct and coarse than our experiences. Therefore, the argument goes, there has to be non-propositional mental content that cannot be articulated in a propositional form.

Slaby concedes that we have fine-grained, complex and multi-layered experiences. In fact, affective episodes are good examples. They often involve many aspects and include a huge spectrum of overtones. Slaby gives the example of an ambitious young man hoping for a promotion (Slaby 2008b, p. 285). He worked hard in his department and had many long hours. His boss has often given him signals that he will be considered for a prestigious promotion. Before the meeting where the assignment of the position is going to be officially announced he is confident and self-assured. During the meeting, however, his boss presents another man from outside the company who is being assigned the prestigious position. The ambitious man is desperate and shocked. He feels ashamed in front of his colleagues, betrayed by his boss, and stupid himself. How could he not see that coming? How should he explain his wife? Can he even stay in the company after such an embarrassment? This example illustrates that an emotional episode is often multi-facetted and fine-grained. Nonetheless, Slaby argues, it can be the subject of a narrative, one can tell the story of this emotional episode.

Narrativity as partial solution

Slaby makes an important distinction in this context (Slaby 2008b, pp. 284ff.). First, there is the actual narration, the story told. This is the actually articulated version of an experience, its concrete propositional manifestation. Second, there is the narrative structure that encompasses the whole content of the experience, thus everything that might be told in a particular narration.[211] The important point is that the content of an experience is precisely this narrative structure. The claim of propositional character does not suggest more than that all experiences have a narrative structure. Everything that has a narrative structure can be part of an actual narration, that is a story that is told. Thus, no matter how fine-grained an experience is, it will have a narrative structure. And having a narrative structure means that it can be articulated in some form. Consequently, it is propositional in Slaby's sense. Particular concepts play the role of shortcuts and approximations in a narration, but they are not the whole story. Hence, the "argument from granularity" fails, at least in the context of affective experiences. No matter how fine-grained an affective experience might be, it will be possible to at least partly articulate it in a narration. This presupposes that it has a narrative structure.

Note that this does not imply that every experience must be articulated completely. Many experiences might be so complex and multi-layered that in practice it will never happen that they crystallize in a comprehensive narration. However, the fact that it is difficult to articulate something must not lead to the claim that it is impossible. The practical problem of finding concrete propositional narrations for complex experiences does not necessarily imply that it is ontologically impossible. Anyway, a complete narration is not necessary. Slaby's claim of propositional character only demands that any experience must have the principal potential to bring it in a propositional form.

It is convincing that this applies for affective episodes. However, you may have doubts if it also applies for the problem of colour perception. How could the many

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[211] Slaby makes a third distinction, the "narrative unity of the feeling as personal comportment", which seems to be less relevant in this context.

shades and tones of blue be subject of a narration? This seems implausible. Hence, Slaby proposes a different answer for this issue (Slaby 2008b, pp. 265ff.). He argues that there are "demonstrative concepts" that help us to articulate e.g. bluish experiences. Instead of applying a non-adequate term like "ocean blue" you could also say "this blue" and point at the blue thing you attempt to describe. However, this does not seem like a complete solution for the problem. It is questionable if an utterance like "this blue" can really count as articulation of propositional content. It does not "contain" or describe the experience as such, it just points to it. Such an articulation can only be used in the narrow context of the experience, otherwise the other person will not understand what "this" refers to. The content of such a demonstrative concept presupposes the experience to be already understood. You cannot understand the content of the utterance "this blue" if you do not know which blue thing it is referring to or do not see the blue yourself. Anyway, for the purposes of this book it is not necessary that Slaby's claim of propositional character applies for all experiences. Since it is concerned with the affective dimension of human experience it is enough if it sheds some light in this dimension. As we have seen, human affectivity seems to fit quite well into Slaby's claim.

It has to be noted that Slaby himself does not seem overly confident in his claim of propositional character. In his conclusion he concedes:

> „The controversial claim that experiences and thus also affective states of all kind have a propositional content presumably cannot fully convince in the form that has been presented and defended so far." (Slaby 2008b, p. 350)[212]

Moreover, this claim does not seem to play a big role in most of his subsequent papers.

Be that as it may, there is something true in Slaby's intuition. We do not have brute, meaningless experience and only then find or construct meaning in it. Rather, we immediately find ourselves in a world that is meaningfully structured, that has

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[212] "Die umstrittene These, wonach Erfahrungen und damit auch affektive Zustände aller Art einen begrifflichen Gehalt haben, kann in der Form, in der sie bisher vorgetragen und verteidigt worden ist, vermutlich noch nicht vollends überzeugen."

sensible relations. These relations are not ready-made propositions but it seems plausible that they are in principle open for propositional articulation, that is they have a narrative structure. This is even more plausible if we consider the alternative. If there was something like non-propositional content, it would be hard to explain how such content could be integrated in the principally rational person. If we suppose non-propositional content, we are immediately faced with the problem how to bridge the gap between the non-propositional content and the rest of personhood that is of propositional character. We already encountered this problem in Manfred Frank's account, as discussed above.

We have also seen that Ratcliffe similarly insists on the non-propositional character of existential feelings. Consequently, he has difficulties to fully explain their relationship to thought.[213] This is one of the strongest criticisms of Stephan and Slaby against Ratcliffe (e.g. Slaby 2012c). Ratcliffe obviously builds to a large extent on the notion of "attunement" ["Befindlichkeit" in German] in Heidegger's "Being and Time" (Heidegger 2006 [1927]). However, in Heidegger "attunement" is an aspect of the fundamental structure of "care" ["Sorge" in German] and thus closely related to the notions of "understanding" and "discourse" (Heidegger 2006 [1927], §§ 28-38). In a rough and incomplete interpretation we can say that human affectivity ("attunement") for Heidegger is inextricably bonded with cognitive ("understanding") and lingual capacities ("discourse").[214] In his strong focus on "attunement", Ratcliffe seems to overemphasise affectivity and fails to take its counterparts into account. Independent of the question if Heidegger or this interpretation of Heidegger is correct, it seems plausible that the relationship between affectivity and thought is an important issue. Ratcliffe has not yet presented a detailed account of this relationship. With the help of Slaby's

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[213] Note that Ratcliffe himself acknowledged this problem. In one of his papers (Ratcliffe 2012a, pp. 49f.) he explicitly marks the relation between existential feeling and conceptual thought as an important area for further research.
[214] This points to the fact that all our affective experience is inextricably permeated with meaningful structure.

argument, we can now integrate the "propositional" level of "understanding" and "discourse"[215] into the phenomenon of existential affectivity and thus self-feeling.

Self-feeling is pre-propositional

Considering the points above, Slaby's argument makes sense in our context. His "claim of propositional character" opens up a middle way between a strictly non-propositional and a strictly propositional understanding of self-feeling. However, his label is not optimal. It misleadingly suggests that all experiences actually come in propositional form. Looking closer, however, we learned that this needs to be a possibility only. Slaby claims that all experiences can potentially be articulated in a propositional form not that they always already are. Thus, from a terminological perspective it might be better to employ the term "pre-propositional".

Therefore, self-feeling should be understood as pre-propositional. This can be characterized as following: First, self-feeling is not propositional in the sense that it was completely articulated in propositional form. Feelings in general are not instantaneously articulated as propositions. Often, when we experience feelings we do not immediately have them in propositional form. Second, self-feeling is not non-propositional. Self-feeling always has propositional character. It has a narrative structure that allows its expression in a concrete narration. This narrative structure provides basic material content and warrants the possibility to build propositional knowledge based on self-feeling. It enables a relationship between the fundamental phenomenon of self-feeling and our rational, propositional mental structure. Notably, however, self-feeling need not always be actually articulated in a concrete narration. This is similar to feelings in general. Sometimes we have a feeling that is not immediately present as proposition. However, we can make an effort to articulate the feeling and thus bring it in a propositional form. The narrative structure of self-feeling warrants this possibility of a narrative articulation even when it is not propositionally articulated in the very moment it is felt. This is why

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[215] Heidegger would probably turn in the grave if he knew that his existential notions of "understanding" and "discourse" are related here with the notion of propositionality. This is not a historical enquiry, however. Thus, we should keep calm in this regard.

self-feeling is pre-propositional. Our feeling of being in this world is not immediately articulated in a propositional way. However, if we take the time and focus[216], we are able to think or talk about our self-feeling. We can articulate our self-feeling in thought and language. Imagine a good talk with your spouse or a friend about your life. In such a conversation you try to find words for the way you feel in this world, that is your current feeling of being, your self-feeling. Remember, however, that we heard in chapter 2.2.5. that our thoughts and articulations influence our fundamental affectivity in turn. Part four of this book will examine this relation more closely.

This understanding of pre-propositionality seems in principle compatible with some other recent proposals that do not explicitly talk about self-feeling (Bermudez 1998; Block 2007; Hurley 1998; Musholt 2015; Peacocke 2014; to a lesser extent even Tye 1995).[217] For instance, Peacocke (2014, chapter 1) claims that what he calls "non-conceptual, primitive self-representation" offers a basic understanding of ourselves that is below the level of propositions.[218] It points to the fact that our experience comes in a first-personal way. No matter what you experience it is immediately clear that it is you who experiences it. Peacocke argues that this non-conceptual self-representation serves as foundation for the development of the first person concept "I" and other higher forms of self-consciousness. The truth of thoughts that include the first person concept "I" relies partly on its relation to more basic, non-conceptual, "de se" experiences. Consider the following quote:

> "The first person concept is individuated by the thinker-rule, and the nonconceptual *de se* is individuated by its fundamental reference rule, that in any occurrence in a mental state or event, it refers to the subject of that state or event. So the relations between the conceptual first person *I* and the nonconceptual *de se* *i* will be determined as consequences of these two reference rules, when taken in

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[216] You might consider Eugene Gendlin's concept of "Focusing" (Gendlin 1978) as integrating a similar insight into psychotherapy.

[217] See Rödl (2007) for an opposing view.

[218] Note that Peacocke, as well as Bermudez and Musholt, use the term "nonconceptual" to refer to the kind of experience we are focusing on here. They argue that an essential feature of these "nonconceptual" experiences is their interrelatedness with and translatability to the conceptual level. Therefore, they can be legitimately presented as compatible with the proposal of pre-propositionality defended in this book.

> combination with auxiliary principles. […] It follows then from the thinker-rule that the reference of the conceptual first person *I* on a particular occasion, that is, the agent making the judgement, is the same subject as is represented as having various properties and standing in various relations by perceptual experiences with a *de se* content." (Peacocke 2014, p. 86)

Both the non-conceptual "de se" experience and the conceptual usage of the first person pronoun "I" refer to the same subject, each with their own reference rule. Yet, the content of a first-personal "I"-thought receives its correctness partly from the non-conceptual contents of a more primitive self-representation, which Peacocke calls "de se" content:

> "But a normal human who grasps the first person concept, as individuated by the thinker-rule, will rationally take the correctness of his I-thoughts to be answerable, in various defeasible ways, to the *de se* nonconceptual contents of his perceptions and other representational states." (Peacocke 2014, p. 87)

As can be seen, Peacocke argues that what he calls non-conceptual experience can and does inform higher, conceptual levels. The two are not completely separated but are in relation to each other. This is in line with the proposal of pre-propositionality from above.

Bermudez in his book "The Paradox of Self-Consciousness" (1998) argues along similar lines. He describes the paradox as follows (chapter 1 and 10): Normally, we analyze self-consciousness by analyzing our capacity to think I-thoughts. This capacity is typically seen as dependent from our mastery of the linguistic concept of the first person pronoun. However, it is hard to see how this mastery of the linguistic concept could be explained without explaining our capacity to think I-thoughts ("explanatory circularity", p. 268). Moreover, this putative interdependence makes it hard to explain how either of the two capacities arise in the course of normal human development ("capacity circularity", p. 268). To solve this paradox, Bermudez' proposes to distinguish conceptual, linguistic from basic, non-conceptual forms of self-consciousness and argues that a comprehensive theory of self-consciousness needs to include both:

> "The general strategy that I proposed here involves distinguishing between those forms of full-fledged self-consciousness that presuppose mastery of the first-person

concept and linguistic mastery of the first-person pronoun and those forms of primitive or nonconceptual self-consciousness that do not presuppose any such linguistic or conceptual mastery." (Bermudez 1998, p. 269)

Primitive, non-conceptual self-consciousness provides basic, first-personal content that makes I-thoughts possible and solves the paradox. Bermudez identifies four forms of non-conceptual self-consciousness (Bermudez 1998, chapters 5-9)[219]: First, there is self-specifying information in exteroceptive perception (such as your nose in your visual field) that allows primitive, non-conceptual self-consciousness even for infants. Second, there is somatic proprioception that comes in various forms. Third, certain navigational abilities entail a non-conceptual form of self-consciousness. We are able to move through our environment with an awareness of where we are in relation to that environment. The forth form of non-conceptual self-consciousness is the application of certain non-lingustic psychological categories to oneself based on one's ascription of these categories to other psychological subjects in social interaction.

As can be seen, Bermudez provides a thorough analysis of non-conceptual forms of self-consciousness that are necessary for the capacity to form thoughts that contain the first person pronoun.[220] For Bermudez, the non-conceptual level informs the conceptual level of self-consciousness. This makes him compatible with the proposal of pre-propositionality.

Musholt, in her recent book (2015), makes a case for nonconceptual content as foundation for self-consciousness, too. Although she takes self-consciousness to be "the ability to think 'I'-thoughts" (Musholt 2015, p. xi), she crucially builds her explanation of self-consciousness on a gradual transition from implicitly self-related content in our nonconceptual experience to the explicit representation in conceptual thought. She writes:

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[219] Note that these distinctions seem to have inspired Peacocke's (2014, chapters 8-10) three varieties of self-consciousness: Perspectival self-consciousness, reflective self-consciousness, interpersonal self-consciousness.

[220] Note that Bermudez is currently working on a book dealing with higher levels of conceptual first person thought (Bermudez forthcoming), potentially elaborating on their link to more basic nonconceptual levels.

> "A first-person judgment [i.e. self-consciousness as the ability to use I-thoughts, G.K.] that is based on perceptual or bodily experience exploits the fact that the relevant mode of experience is self-specific by making this fact -- which is implicit in the experience -- explicit" (Musholt 2015, p. 81)

One can see, Musholt endorses the view defended in this book that all experience happens in a first-personal mode. Whenever you experience something, it is clear it is *your* experience by means of the way you have the experience. This implicit self-relation happens already on the non-conceptual level. Self-consciousness then makes this fact explicit with the help of a process of self-other differentiation (Musholt 2015, chapter 6-7). Only because we acquire the capacity to recognize others as subjects we are able to make this move. Accordingly, for Musholt, self-consciousness develops in parallel and interdependently with our ability to distinguish our own mental and bodily states from those of others.

Let us now return to the features of self-feeling. With the help of the middle way of pre-propositionality it seems feasible to avoid both the problems of strictly propositional and strictly non-propositional accounts. A pre-propositional account of self-feeling escapes the trap of infinite regresses that would come with a strictly propositional account. At the same time, it keeps open the possibility of relating self-feeling with propositional thoughts about ourselves, which strictly non-propositional accounts cannot provide.

Yet, a word of caution is appropriate in this context. The proposal of "pre-propositionality" as presented here is to some extent negatively defined. Based on the characteristics of the phenomenon it is argued that it can neither be strictly propositional nor strictly non-propositional. Still, the phenomenon is there and asks for clarification. Thus the middle way of "pre-propositionality" is proposed. However, this can only be the beginning of a solution. Much more work that goes deeper into the philosophy of conceptual content and the nature of propositions is surely needed to proceed in this question.

3.1.3. Self-feeling is a bodily feeling

Self-feeling is a bodily feeling. This feature stems from the fact that self-feeling is understood here to be part of our fundamental affectivity, like existential feeling. Thus, it includes the two basic characteristics of existential feelings, being bodily feelings and shaping our space of possibilities (see chapter 2.2.2.). Matthew Ratcliffe's analysis (2008) of the bodily character of existential feelings showed that this has two implications.

First, self-feeling integrates feelings of the body with feelings of the world. It is a bodily feeling of being in the world. The phenomenology of touch is a good illustration for this feature. As we saw in part two of this book, in touch the feeling of the body is at the same time about the world. When you touch the tip of a pencil there are two aspects involved: You feel the changes in your finger (as part of your body), your skin and tissue is deformed by the hard pencil. At the same time, you feel the pencil, you have a feeling of this object in the world. Thus, in touch the body serves as medium of our world experience. The situation is similar with self-feeling. In self-feeling we feel how we find ourselves in the world. It is at the same time a "world-feeling", we feel our being in touch with the world. This may include all the sensual perceptions (touch, vision, etc.) at one moment. However, it is more than that. The feeling body (use as subject) and the felt body (use as object) coincide in self-feeling. We do not have a distinguishable feeling of ourselves that is then somehow related to our experience of the world. Conversely, our self-feeling is about our existence in this world. It is about the way we are in this world, about our specific mode of existence as worldly beings. In self-feeling we feel how the world encounters us, how we are in this world and what possibilities it bears for us. Notably, this also includes other people as part of the world. We do not only feel how we are in an empty, physical world but in a world full of people like us which

we can potentially interact with. Self-feeling and world-feeling are two aspects of one unitary phenomenon. It encompasses ourselves and the world in one turn.[221]

Second, self-feeling integrates bodily and cognitive aspects. Self-feeling is a feeling that our body has, it is felt in the body. Our life in this world has a certain "feel" that is changeable. At the same time, it has cognitive aspects, too. We do not only have a dull feeling of bodily existence or mere feelings of the body, like hunger or tiredness.[222] Instead, self-feeling instantaneously discloses our being in this world as a whole. Our whole life with its cares, projects and possibilities is felt in self-feeling. We feel how things are going for us and what matters for us in self-feeling. This corresponds well to contemporary, unitary theories of emotion that see emotions as involving cognitive and feeling aspects at the same time (Slaby 2008b). Affective states are neither reducible to mere cognitive states such as beliefs or desires nor are they just dull feelings of our body.

Note that the role of the body has been treated differently in the Heidelberg School and the theory of existential feelings. It seems that Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings emphasizes the body more strongly. It explicitly names the bodily aspect of existential feelings as one of their two basic characteristics. Somewhat different from that, the Heidelberg School does not offer a detailed theory of the bodily character of self-consciousness. However, they seem to be in principle open for such accounts. Dieter Henrich (2007, pp. 64f.) explicitly views the body as important link between the subject and the world. In addition, we saw in chapter 1.3.1. that he gives examples of fundamental feelings that shape our being in the world (Henrich 1982b, chapter 1; 1982c, chapter 5; 1999, chapter 6). Ulrich Pothast and Manfred Frank remain reluctant to give a detailed description of how they see the relationship between their theories and the body. However, their account seems in

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[221] Given the line of argument taken in this book, it can be seen that here the role of the body goes significantly beyond the physical "point of view" perspective other philosophers (Bermudez 1998; Evans 1982; Peacocke 2014; Rödl 2007) seem to reduce it to.

[222] This is one of the shortcomings of alternative theories of fundamental affectivity, such as Damasio (1994, 1999, 2003, 2010), Russell (2003), and Stern (1985). They focus too much on feelings of and about the body and underestimate the role that fundamental affectivity plays in our experience of the world.

principle compatible with the bodily features stated above. Pothast's notion of "sense" (Pothast 1988, chapter 1) transcends the self-world distinction as well as a strict cognition-feeling divide. Frank's (2002a) reconstruction of self-feeling involves the feeling of existence as such, including the being of the world and the being of a "self". In addition, Frank obviously takes self-feeling not to be only a cognition but to involve feeling aspects as well.[223]

As can be seen, this feature of being a bodily feeling is an important step beyond the philosophy of pre-reflective self-consciousness as put forward by the Heidelberg School. We saw in part one that they describe pre-reflective self-consciousness "ex negativo", without giving positive characterizations of the phenomenon. Different from that, in this book positive features are provided. Here, self-consciousness is understood as a bodily feeling, namely a self-feeling. This distinguishes the account defended in this book from other, rather empty and formal accounts. Notably, the feature of being bodily does not necessarily distinguish self-feeling from other feelings. As we saw in part two of this book, it may well be a general feature of feelings that they are bodily.

In a word, self-feeling shall be understood as bodily phenomenon. This amounts to a positive feature of pre-reflective self-consciousness that goes beyond alternative, formal and empty accounts.

3.1.4. Self-feeling shapes our space of possibilities

Self-feeling fundamentally shapes our space of possibilities. Because it is part of our fundamental affectivity, like an existential feeling, it has to entail this second basic characteristic, too. Self-feeling is a sense of what is possible for us in this world, it constitutes our universal horizon. All the kinds of possibilities discussed in chapter 2.2.2. can be altered when our self-feeling changes. For example, our sense of

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[223] Frank did not, however, give a comprehensive explanation of the feeling character of self-feeling. This issue has been pointed out in chapter 1.3.2. of this book.

agency is constituted by our self-feeling, as has been emphasized by Stephan and Slaby's notions of "sense of ability" or "affective self-construal" (Slaby 2012a; Slaby et al. 2013; Slaby and Wüschner 2014). Self-feeling shapes what appears as possible action for us, it is a sense of what we can do or cannot do. For instance, when we feel vulnerable and rejected, it is unlikely that we find ourselves capable of holding a speech in front of a large audience. Likewise, we sometimes feel that our life is an uncontrollable chain of events. We are then "trapped in the hamster wheel" and merely reacting on given circumstances. Our space of possible actions appears significantly reduced in this case. Importantly, however, self-feeling does not only include a feeling of what can be done. It also constitutes a sense of potential happenings. For example, if we feel particularly vulnerable we might experience an extensive threat that we might get contaminated while using public transportation during winter season. In this case, we have the fear that an infection could happen for us when using public transportation. This fear is shaped by our self-feeling of vulnerability. Another person who has a different self-feeling may not experience this fear albeit using the same public transportation. Moreover, our self-feeling shapes the way we see our relationship to other people. We may feel like an integrate member of a particular social group, embedded in a shared sense of meaning and joint projects.[224] Alternatively, we may feel like outsiders, having nothing in common with other people, living in isolation and loneliness. Lastly, our self-feeling shapes our sense of the world as such. We feel how we are in this world in self-feeling. The world can appear as a homely space where we belong, offering a secure and safe environment for our life. Alternatively, it can be an unfamiliar, frightening place where potential danger lurks behind every corner. As we saw above, the space of possibilities includes self- social-, and world-directed aspects. All these aspects are shaped by our self-feeling.

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[224] Compare Schmid's interesting recent work on plural self-awareness (Schmid 2005, 2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2016a, 2016b, forthcoming-a, forthcoming-b). He claims that plural agents have plural, pre-reflective self-awareness that is similar in many regards to the singular phenomenon discussed in this book.

Notably, this sense of possibilities must not be understood as being experienced in a detached, neutrally observing manner. Based on Stephan and Slaby's notions of "sense of ability" and "affective self-construal" (Slaby 2012a; Slaby et al. 2013; Slaby and Wüschner 2014) we understand that in self-feeling we feel what matters for us. Remember the example of the risk to get contaminated in public transportation described above. This risk is not only cognitively acknowledged, like a statistician would do when calculating the average germ rate in public transportation. Instead, it is bodily felt as happening that personally matters for us. We strongly fear that we could pick up an illness when stepping in that tramway. Our self-feeling of vulnerability shapes our space of possibilities in a way that the particular possibility of getting contaminated in public transportation becomes utterly salient. As can be seen, self-feeling does not disclose our individual possibilities as abstract possible events that have nothing to do with our own concerns. Conversely, self-feeling discloses our individual cares.

The claim that self-feeling reveals what matters to us seems to have support in neuroscience. It is argued by the "Relevance Detector Theory" (Murray et al. 2014; Sander et al. 2003) that one of the functional roles of the human amygdala lies in detecting relevance. The amygdala is found to play a crucial role in the appraisal of self-relevant events. In other words, it evaluates what matters to us. In addition to that, it has been understood for long that the amygdala plays a crucial part in our affective lives (LeDoux 1992, 1996). These two functional roles have been integrated to the view that the amygdala plays an important role in decision making, detecting what is relevant on the basis of affective processing (Damasio 1994; Rolls 2014). To some extent, we seem to feel what is relevant and important to us. We see that the amygdala is both important in our affective lives and in detecting what is relevant for us. Combined with its integrating role in human decision making, this suggests that affectivity and relevance detection are strongly interconnected. This fits well with the claim that self-feeling, a fundamental part of human affectivity, shapes what matters to us.

3.1.5. Self-feeling is the affective disclosure of individual existence

Above, four features of self-feeling were presented. It is a pre-reflective, pre-propositional, bodily feeling that shapes our space of possibilities. This chapter adds another feature that partly builds on the other four.

Self-feeling has two aspects. First it is a feeling of existence. Second it is a feeling of individuality. Thus, it is the affective disclosure of individual existence. These two aspects need further explanation:

In self-feeling we are aware of the fact that we exist in this world. We feel bare existence, the mere *that* we exist. This aspect has been targeted by Stephan and Slaby's "elementary existential feelings" (Slaby and Stephan 2008, 2011; Stephan 2012; Stephan et al. 2014). Elementary existential feelings provide us with a basic sense of reality. In its self-related aspect it is a feeling *that* we exist, a feeling of one's reality. Similar to that, Frank (2002a, chapter 7) argued that we are in touch with being as such in self-feeling. In accordance with Romantic tradition he claimed that existence as such cannot be determined by cognition but only by feeling. You must be in touch with something to be able to say if it really exists or not. Self-feeling, albeit not excluding cognition, is such a faculty that can "detect" existence. In self-feeling we feel *that* we are in this world. Thus, it fulfils the fundamental function of pre-reflective self-consciousness. It warrants our basic awareness of our own existence.

This aspect is in line with an essential argument in some contemporary non-egological theories of self-consciousness. The "first-personal givenness" of experience describes the fact that all my experiences are had "minely". No matter what their content is, they always include a sense that they are mine. Zahavi and Gallagher's phenomenological account of pre-reflective self-consciousness (Gallagher 2010; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008; Zahavi 1999, 2005, 2014) or Kriegel's self-representationalism (2009; Kriegel and Williford 2006) are examples for this. Zahavi's notion of "experiential self" emphasizes the phenomenological fact that

every experience has a "first-personal givenness", it is had by someone.[225] Likewise, Kriegel speaks of the "subjective character" or "for-me-ness" of experience.[226] Thus, every experience includes the awareness of its own existence. The "first-personal givenness" of experience guarantees that its existence is instantly self-intimating.

Secondly, in self-feeling we feel ourselves as individual beings. Self-feeling not only discloses mere existence but also our being as particular individuals. This corresponds to the aspect of "non-elementary existential feelings" in Stephan and Slaby (Slaby and Stephan 2008, 2011; Stephan 2012; Stephan et al. 2014). We do not only feel the mere *that* we exist. Moreover, we feel *how* we are in this world as particular individuals. For instance, we have a basic sense of our own vital state (e.g. feeling healthy or strong) and one's position within social environments (e.g. feeling welcome or at home). Self-feeling shapes our own space of possibilities, it determines how we see the world and our possibilities in it. This way of finding ourselves in the world varies between individuals and can also change within the life span of one individual.[227] Self-feeling is a feeling of how life is going for us at a specific point in time. Thus, it is personal and changeable. For example, it makes a difference if someone has a self-feeling of vulnerability and social disconnectedness or of strength and social embeddedness. These differences mark a significant aspect of what makes us the individual persons we are. Therefore, self-feeling discloses and shapes our individual way of being in this world.

As can be seen, self-feeling does not only reveal the general fact that you exist but inextricably includes the experience of what it is like to exist as the specific individual you are. It offers material, positive content of your individual way of being in this world. Only because it has this individual characteristic it can serve as

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[225] Note that Zahavi (2005, p. 146) criticizes Gurwitsch's (1941) distinction between egological and non-egological theories as overly crude. He attempts to go beyond this distinction. However, he strongly emphasizes the "first-personal givenness" of experience (that is, of mental states) with his notion of "experiential self". In this regard he seems much in line with contemporary non-egological approaches.

[226] See also Zahavi's and Kriegel's recent joint paper (Zahavi and Kriegel 2015) in this matter.

[227] See chapter 2.2.2. for some initial thoughts on that issue.

source of evidence for more elaborate thoughts about yourself.[228] Your feeling about who you are as an individual person can inform interpretative deliberations about yourself. If this individuality was not an essential part of self-feeling from the very beginning it would be difficult to add it later on. If self-feeling only disclosed the general *that* of your existence there would be no grip for further thoughts about oneself.

After all, self-feeling comes into perspective as affective disclosure of our individual existence. It shapes and pre-structures all we perceive, think, feel, etc. This shaping has at least two dimensions. First, self-feeling shapes the form of our experience. This includes the fact that all experiences have subjective character. They are disclosed as our own experiences when we have them. Self-feeling shapes our experience in a way that always includes its "first-personal givenness". There simply is no experience that you have without the immediate awareness that it is you who has this experience. Secondly, self-feeling shapes the content of our experience. It makes particular aspects more salient and others less salient. For example, a self-feeling of vulnerability will make the possibility to catch a cold in public transportation more salient than a self-feeling of strength and resilience. In a word, self-feeling warrants our fundamental awareness of existence as such as well as the feeling of our individual being.

3.1.6. Possible questions and clarifications

Before we go on it makes sense to give some clarifications to questions that may arise at this point.

First, some might wonder why self-feeling (or self-consciousness) should be understood as a feeling at all? With regards to the "ex negativo" challenge it is not helpful to claim that self-consciousness is totally sui generis because it is then hard to find positive descriptions for it. Instead, it makes sense to explore possible

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[228] This issue will be discussed in part four of this book.

alignments to common types of mental states and describe the phenomenon in some kind of shared terminology. Besides feeling it seems that belief and perception are relevant candidates that come to mind. Moreover, some might consider to understand self-consciousness not as a mental state in the traditional sense but as an action. However, all these alternatives have significant shortcomings.

Beliefs typically come in a propositional form. You believe that P. However, we saw above in chapter 1.2.2. that self-consciousness cannot be understood as propositional because this leads to the troubles of reflective theories. If self-consciousness was a propositional thought like "I believe that P" it would entail a duality of the believer and the believed. This duality leads to infinite regress or vicious circularity, as has been shown above. You might try to escape this problem by claiming that the belief of self-consciousness is pre-propositional. However, it is very unclear how a pre-propositional belief would look like. It would be questionable if such a thing could legitimately count as belief.[229] Perceptions, you might say, do not typically come in propositional form. They might be described as pre-propositional in the sense above. When we perceive something it can potentially be articulated in a propositional form even though it might not be propositional in the first place. Given that, it seems that self-consciousness may be understood as perception. However, there is another problem. Perception objectifies. In perception we typically perceive an object that is different from the perceiver. Thus, again we are trapped in the problems of reflection theories. The moment there is a difference between the perceived entity and the perceiving entity we face infinite regress or vicious circularity.[230] In addition, self-consciousness cannot be an intentional action.[231] While Fichte famously claimed that "The I posits itself" (Fichte 1971, volume 1 [1794], p. 98), today this view is under serious

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[229] See the critique on Henrich and Rödl in chapter 1.2.2. to further elaborate this point.

[230] Notably, one of the first contemporary proponents of the higher-order theory, David Armstrong, suggested that self-consciousness was based on inner perception (Armstrong 1968).

[231] One might think that this point is rather straightforward. However, there are views in contemporary philosophy, e.g. Korsgaard (2009) or Moran (2001), that seem to explain the unity or existence of self(-consciousness) by means of intentional activities.

pressure. In order to be able to act intentionally one must have a specific purpose (or intention). This purpose must be conscious before or at least simultaneous to the action so that it can be performed intentionally.[232] Thus, if self-consciousness was an intentional action it would at the same time need to be prior or at least coexistent with the action. This is obviously circular. One would need to be already self-conscious in order to perform the action to become self-conscious. As can be seen, belief, perception, and action do not represent suitable alternatives to explain the phenomenon. Similar cases could be made for other kinds of mental states.

In contrast, there are good reasons to understand the phenomenon as a feeling. First, a feeling is arguably more basic than belief. Self-feeling can plausibly be understood as pre-propositional, as shown above. Thus it is a better candidate than belief. Second, as a pre-intentional existential feeling it does not objectify. Self-feeling as fundamental human affectivity is not about particular objects in the world, and crucially not "about myself" in an objective sense. Instead, it is the all-encompassing, pre-intentional background that shapes how we are in this world. There is no object in self-feeling. Thus, it is a better candidate than perception. In addition, self-feeling is a passive experience. We are not in control of the fact that we are self-conscious. Self-feeling is something that happens to us, it is just there. Thus, it is a favourable candidate to intentional action. As a feeling it seems to be the best candidate to provide rich, pre-propositional content on a fundamental, pre-reflective level. This allows self-feeling to address the "ex negativo" challenge, as we will see below in chapter 3.2.2..

Furthermore, consider some observations on ordinary language. Typically, when people talk about consciousness it is consciousness of something in the world.[233] Thus, the term consciousness implies a double-digit relation that is concerned with the world. Moreover, consciousness is often understood as a mental phenomenon that is distinct from the body. Historically the term self-consciousness was derived

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[232] These issues are discussed extensively in contemporary action theory. Compare Anscombe (1957) and Davidson (1980) as classics of this field.
[233] Granted, you can also use the term "conscious" intransitively as opposed to "comatose" or "asleep".

from the term consciousness (Frank 1991b, 2002a) and thus entails these misleading elements from the very first moment. In contrast, the term feeling is typically concerned with oneself. It does not necessarily entail problematic misconceptions of being about something else, especially not about the world. Also, the term feeling integrates the mental and the body because it is something that is felt. Therefore, ordinary language seems to provide additional attraction for the idea that self-consciousness can be understood as a feeling.

Second, one might ask how it can it be that we are often oblivious of our self-feeling, given that it is a positive, bodily felt phenomenon. If it is a positive feature of our experience why do we not feel it all the time? An analogy from perception might make this clearer. Imagine yourself entering the apartment of a friend. When you enter, you have strong sense of how the apartment smells. You might recognize the smell of cats or a particular dish that has been prepared. After a while, however, this sense disappears. When you have been sitting and talking with your friend for some hours it is likely that you will not smell the cats and the dish any more. Even though the scents are still there in a physical sense they will be gone for you, likely without you recognizing their disappearance. In this sensory case, there is a clear biological reason for the disappearance. Our sensory system is built to recognize differences. When a certain stimulus remains the same over a period of time, it ceases to be relevant for the system and will not be perceived any more. It is plausible that the situation is similar with self-feeling. Self-feeling is the all-encompassing, bodily feeling of our being in the world. In self-feeling we sense how we are in this world. Notably, it may include a holistic experience of all our sensual perceptions at one point in time ("being in touch with the world"). However, there is more in self-feeling than just that. It is not only perceptual information processing but also includes hedonic valuation. In self-feeling we not only feel what is going on out there but also how things are going for us, what matters for us. So the analogy from perception has its limits. Be that as it may, it is plausible that for many of us our self-feeling does not necessarily change all too frequent. Thus, when it remains unchanged for a certain period of time, we may become oblivious of it. Notably, the

self-feeling nonetheless still exists. This oblivion does not come from nowhere but is an effect of the self-feeling. More specifically, it seems that a certain amount of invariance and stability leads to the oblivion. When our self-feeling changes, we are likely to experience it more strongly again. Alternatively, it seems possible to explicitly focus on your self-feeling in order to make it more salient again (e.g. in meditation, psychotherapy,…). Therefore, our self-feeling can be still in place without being constantly in the foreground of our attention. It can be a bodily feeling of our being in the world (which amounts to a positive feature of the phenomenon) and still not be conspicuously felt in every second of our lives.

Another question that might arise in this context is if animals can have self-feelings. If self-feeling is a bodily phenomenon this might at first sight suggest that the answer is yes. However, we have to be careful here. As has been shown, self-feeling is not just a feeling of how the organism is doing. It is not just a "core affect" (Russell 2003) that tells us if the body is tired, hungry, etc.. Instead, it is a feeling that reveals how things are going for us in this world. Self-feeling pre-structures all our experience, it shapes our space of possibilities. It is the affective disclosure of our individual existences. This crucially entails some cognitive elements, too.[234] Therefore, we cannot straightaway attribute self-feeling to all animals. To have a proper self-feeling, a minimum of cognitive abilities seems necessary.

As a matter of fact, there is much debate in current research on animal consciousness and cognition (see e.g. Allen and Trestman 2015; Andrews 2015). It is unclear which animals have consciousness, what that consciousness is like[235], and what cognitive abilities can be attributed to which animals. Thus, it would be premature to offer a decisive answer on self-feeling in animals in this book.[236]

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[234] Current philosophy of emotions supports that. It has become widely accepted that emotions encompass both bodily and cognitive aspects. For instance, it seems hard to explain complex human emotions like shame or jealousy with reference to bodily changes only, as we saw in chapter 2.1.2..

[235] Compare also Nagel's classic paper (1974) on the difficulties to understand what it is like to be a bat.

[236] You might object that the situation is similar problematic for human beings. Just like with animals there are a lot of open questions, both philosophically and empirically, about human consciousness and cognition. However, our research toolkit is more direct and richer for human beings. After all,

Instead, it seems viable to follow a consensus that many researchers working in this interdisciplinary field share: "The Cambridge Declaration of Consciousness" (Low 2012) proclaims based on collected evidence that consciousness can be attributed at least to mammals, birds and other creatures, such as octopuses. On this perspective, it is not totally implausible that these animals have some form of self-feeling. For instance, a cat or a dog may have some form of affective disclosure of its existence. Presumably, it has a basic feeling how things are going for it and this feeling might not only concern its current bodily state. In addition, it might has a feeling about what matters to it and what possibilities there are for it. Therefore, although we should be reluctant to attribute such higher animals the same affective richness and complexity as humans, it is plausible that they have some kind of affective experience, including self-feeling.

What about lower forms of life, such as jellyfish or even bacteria, then? Some might argue that even these simple forms of life operate on the basis of a fundamental distinction between „self" and "world".[237] Following that line of argument, it might be claimed that there is self-experience even in these animals. However, this conclusion seems to go beyond what current evidence allows. Following the "Cambridge Declaration", there is not enough evidence to claim that all animals (including e.g. jellyfish) can be legitimately attributed experience, consciousness, and feeling. Thus, this book suggests to await further progress in research. It would be premature to attribute self-feeling in the sense it is discussed here to lower animals.

Given these considerations, the question is where to draw the line between those animals with self-feeling and those without? Given incomplete evidence and the state of current debates, it might be most pragmatic to understand it as a matter of degrees as long as we do not know better. The richer your affective and cognitive

every conscious person knows what it is like to be conscious as human being because they first-personally experience it. Further, we can draw on a vast amount of first-personal reports of conscious human experience and cognition. Both is not possible for research on animal consciousness and cognition.

[237] Compare e.g. Colombetti's (2014) recent proposal to understand all life as "affective".

abilities are, the richer your self-feeling will be. Human beings are the strongest known animals in terms of cognition and affectivity so they arguably have the richest form of self-feeling. Mammals like cats and dogs presumably possess some cognitive and affective capabilities so they have a more rudimentary form of self-feeling. Today's evidence considered, lower animals like jellyfish have (almost) no cognitive and affective capabilities and thus cannot be attributed self-feeling in the sense it is presented here.

3.2. How this account of self-feeling contributes to today's debates

We saw in part one of this book that there are many challenges in contemporary philosophy of self-consciousness. The account of self-feeling presented in this book attempts to contribute to these problems. First, it avoids the problems of reflective theories, namely infinite regress and vicious circularity. Second, it overcomes the "ex negativo" challenge that alternative, current pre-reflective theories suffer from. Moreover, chapter 3.3. will further explore the problem of unity. In addition to the problems of philosophy of self-consciousness, this account of self-feeling contributes to philosophy of human affectivity by complementing the theory of existential feelings.

3.2.1. Self-feeling avoids infinite regress and vicious circularity

At first sight, this seems pretty straightforward. We saw in chapter 1.2.1. of this book that infinite regresses and vicious circularity are problems of reflective, higher-order monitoring theories. Any theory that assumes a dual structure in self-consciousness falls prey to an infinite regress or commits a vicious circle. The first entity is made conscious by the second entity and the second entity needs a third one, etc. ad infinitum. We might summarize these insights in the following lines:

A. In reflective (or higher-order) theories a mental state[238] will be conscious if and only if it is made conscious by another (reflective, higher-order) mental state.

B. Reflective (or higher-order) theories face the problems of infinite regress and vicious circularity, so they cannot be true.

As a consequence, we learned from the Heidelberg School (Cramer 1974; Frank 2012, 2015; Henrich 1966, 1970, 2007; Pothast 1971) and Zahavi and Gallagher (Gallagher 2005; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008; Zahavi 1999, 2005, 2014), that a pre-reflective, non-objectifying model of self-consciousness is needed. If mental states are not made conscious by other mental states, they must be conscious by virtue of themselves. Thus, pre-reflective theories conclude:

C. It follows from A and B that mental states must be self-intimating[239].

Thus, the path to a solution seems clear. Based on philosophy of human affectivity we can claim the following:

D. All feelings are mental states.
E. It follows from C and D that all feelings are self-intimating.

Now we include the notion of self-feeling to the argument: It is vital to recall a crucial feature of existential feelings at this stage. It has been shown in part two that existential feelings can be in the background of experience and part of it at the same time. An existential feeling shapes the way we experience the world and at the same time it is bodily felt. The same applies for self-feeling. Self-feeling shapes the way we experience ourselves and it thus constitutes a background structure of all our experience and thought. It determines our space of possibilities, as shown above. At the same time, it is a feeling that is felt and is thus part of experience.[240]

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[238] This book maintains a broad understanding of the term "mental state", not making any point about potential differences to propositional attitudes, mental events, and the like.

[239] The terms pre-reflective and self-intimating are used interchangeably here.

[240] This may also serve as an answer to a potential criticism from an orthodox Heideggerian perspective: Do we take the ontological level of "attunement" serious or are we stuck on a merely "ontic" level here? Besides the fact that it has been controversial among Heidegger scholars for long

These two characteristics warrant the pre-reflective status of self-feeling. It is part of experience without additional, reflective effort. As a feeling it is immediately self-intimating.

> F. Self-feeling is a feeling and a background structure at the same time.
> G. It follows from E and F that self-feeling is self-intimating.

Note that these two characteristics of self-feeling (being a background structure and part of experience at the same time) must not be taken as equivalent to the failing double-digit structure in higher-order monitoring theories. They do not function in a reflective manner. Instead, they represent concurrent aspects of the affective character of self-feeling. These in many ways resemble general features of feelings, as we learned above. Feelings in general shape the way we experience the world and thus function to some extent as a background structure. At the same time, they are bodily felt and thus part of our experience.

As can be seen, self-feeling is not hidden in some unconscious backyard of our minds. Instead, self-feeling is a bodily feeling and thus part of experience. Therefore it shares the common features of felt experience, particularly its self-intimating character. In this way, self-feeling is a pre-reflective, self-intimating phenomenon. Remember, in self-feeling there is no double-digit structure as in higher-order monitoring theories. It does not call for one perceiving entity and another one that is perceived. There is not one entity that observes another. In contrast, self-feeling is unitary and pre-reflective. Consequently, it does not run into the troubles of higher-order monitoring theories. Instead, it escapes vicious circularity and infinite regresses.

> H. It follows from the above that self-feeling does not fall prey to the problems of reflective (higher-order) theories.

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what the ontological-ontic distinction ultimately amounts to (see e.g. Sheehan 2014) we are safe due to the twofold characteristic of self-feeling. First, it constitutes the background structure of our experience so it accounts for the ontological level. Second, as a feeling it is part of experience and thus accounts for the ontic level.

This holds for intensive infinite regress, too

Notably, self-feeling is not only free from an extensive infinite regress, but also from an intensive infinite regress. As we saw in our discussion of Kriegel's self-representationalism (Kriegel 2009) in chapter 1.2.4. of this book, he does not escape Brentano's problem of an intensive infinite regress. Kriegel claims that every mental state has the feature of self-representation. Every mental state has the feature that it represents itself. In Kriegel's view self-consciousness is constituted by virtue of this feature. As shown above, however, this account fails to capture the phenomenon as a whole. The self-representing feature does only represent the mental state in question but not the self-representing structure as a whole. Thus, it leads to an intensive infinite regress. Different from that, the account of self-feeling defended in this book is unitary and not non-egological.[241] It does not refer to single mental states. Instead, it is the affective disclosure of our individual existence. This has two implications. First, self-feeling discloses our being in this world as a whole and not only parts of it. Thus, there is no separate step needed to create unity afterwards. Primordially, self-feeling is about our lives as a whole. Second, self-feeling is in one turn the background of experience and part of it. There is no single mental state that is "elevated" with the help of the feature of self-representation in self-feeling. Instead, self-feeling is primordially a feeling of how we are in this world that is part of experience. There is no extra feature needed to make it experienced (or self-represented). (Self-)feeling is felt, full stop. Therefore, this account of self-feeling avoids the problems of an intensive infinite regress.

Things are not so easy after all

At first sight, the argument above may seem sound and plausible. It seems clear that this account of self-feeling succeeds to avoid an infinite regress by virtue of its pre-reflective, unitary structure. However, things might not be so easy after all. It might be objected that this account represented just another example of vicious

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[241] For more detailed thoughts about the problem of unity please see chapter 3.3. below.

circularity.[242] An objector might argue that self-feeling implicitly presupposed the feature of self-intimation in self-consciousness and could thus not contribute to the explanation of its mystery. This objection would attack proposition C in the argument above and ask: Why does it follow from the negative fact that reflective theories are wrong that all mental states must be self-intimating? After all, there seem to be things going on in our minds that are precisely not self-intimating. For example, we may have unknown desires, hidden prejudices, traumatic memories, etc. that are part of our minds but not self-intimating. The questions that pre-reflective theories seem to struggle with are thus:[243] How do these unconscious states become conscious and why are some mental states self-conscious and others not?

Given these points the objector may argue that we face two equally implausible theories. First, there are reflective theories that either lead to an infinite regress, vicious circularity, or an unconscious mental state on top. This seems unsatisfying. Second, there are pre-reflective theories that merely claim a self-luminosity of mental states but do not give further details ("ex negativo" challenge) and cannot explain how and why some unconscious mental states become conscious and others not. This does not seem completely satisfying either.

Interestingly, these potential shortcomings of pre-reflective theories are often overseen. At the same time, they are a challenge to all theories of this type, be it the Heidelberg School, Zahavi and Gallagher's phenomenological account or the account of self-feeling defended in this book. However, there are four arguments why same-order (or pre-reflective) theories in general are still to be preferred against higher-order (or reflective) theories. First, Block (2011a, p. 423) points to the fact that same-order theories at least recognize the complexities of the phenomenon of self-consciousness while higher-order theories rather naively run into infinite regress and vicious circularity. Thus, same-order theories can claim to

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[242] Notably, Henrich in his long unpublished paper (Henrich 2007 [1971]) shares his own doubts if his proposal actually succeeded to escape vicious circularity.
[243] Block (2011a, p. 423) made a similar remark in his critique on higher-order theories.

be more advanced than higher-order theories even though they might not provide an answer for everything. Second, it seems that same-order theories escape at least the trap of infinite regress. Being one-digit models there just is no hierarchy of mental states that could go ad infinitum. Thus, they seem favourable against higher-order theories in this regard. Third, you could add an evolutionary argument here: It is plausible that it is advantageous for creatures if their most important mental states are self-intimating and do not need an additional mechanism to become self-conscious. For example, a creature that had to undergo a lengthy and exhausting process of self-reflection in order to be able to conclude that it is hungry would be disadvantaged from a creature that had the feeling of hunger right away. The hunger of the second creature is immediately self-intimating and grabs its attention at once. Thus this creature can react faster and is more likely to survive. Our most important mental states cannot wait for a higher-order mechanism to make them conscious. Arguably, feelings in general can count as very important for survival, e.g. fear, disgust, anger.[244] If we understand self-feeling as fundamental sense of how we are in this world, as a feeling of being, it is plausible that it is important enough to be self-intimating, too. Fourth, it must be noted that higher-order theories do not offer a full explanation for why and how unconscious mental states become self-conscious either. They merely state that if a mental state is self-conscious it is accompanied by a higher-order thought. Yet, they do not offer an explanation for why some mental states are accompanied by a higher-order thought and others not. This is especially crucial if first-order mental states are understood as "causing" higher-order thoughts, such as in Rosenthal's account (Rosenthal 1986, p. 338). He does not explain why some first-order mental states cause higher-order thoughts and others do not. Consequently, higher-order theories suffer from the problem of unconscious mental states, too.

Given these points, two things can be concluded: First, while pre-reflective theories are not perfect, they seem more advanced than higher-order theories. Second, the critical points against pre-reflective theories apply to all of them equally. Neither

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[244] Compare Ekman's (1972, 1980) work on basic emotions.

the Heidelberg School nor Zahavi and Gallagher provided a positive account of self-consciousness. They did not give informative answers to how and why some unconscious mental states become conscious and others not. Thus, the account of self-feeling presented here might be criticized along these lines but it is no worse than its alternatives.

In addition to that, there are two arguments why the account of self-feeling defended here has advantages over its pre-reflective alternatives in this regard. First, in order to establish this account of self-feeling it is not necessary to claim that all mental states are self-intimating. Statement C can be qualified in this regard. It is only important to understand feelings as self-intimating because self-feeling is a feeling. This seems fairly plausible. Feelings are like pain[245] in this regard. It does not make sense to say "I have pain but I do not feel it" (Kripke 2011). Whenever there is pain it is necessarily felt. Likewise, it does not make sense to say "I fear the lion in front of me but I do not feel it." It seems necessary for a feeling to be felt, that is to be self-intimating. Feelings arguably have the features of shaping our experience from the background and being part of it at the same time. They can operate at these two "levels" simultaneously. Remember the common features of emotions as introduced in part two of this book: They typically come with a unique qualitative "feel" and physiological arousal. It is hard to imagine "unconscious" emotions. Therefore, even if there might be other mental states that are unconscious (like unknown desires or prejudices) feelings seem to be self-intimating after all. As a consequence, self-feeling can count as self-intimating.

Second, remember the "ex negativo" challenge introduced in part one of this book. More about that will be said in the section below. Just a quick word for now: Existing pre-reflective accounts of self-consciousness claim a pre-reflective, non-objectifying and sui generis phenomenon in order to avoid the problems of higher-order theories. However, they often have not much to tell about the positive

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[245] Please note that there is a complicated and controversial discussion on the phenomenon of pain which I will not address in further detail here (for an overview see Aydede 2013). Pain shall here just be understood as an illustration of the complexities of subjective experience.

character of self-consciousness. They remain reluctant to tell us what self-consciousness actually *is*. In contrast, this book proposes to understand self-consciousness as an affective phenomenon. It argues for what self-consciousness *is*, namely self-feeling. Consequently, this account does not fall prey to the "ex negativo" challenge, as will be elaborated below.

What does this all mean for the problem of vicious circularity? An account would be viciously circular if it argued like this: "Self-consciousness is self-intimating because it is self-intimating." In contrast, the argument here includes this: "Self-consciousness is self-intimating because it is a self-feeling. Self-feeling has the feature of being a background structure and part of experience at the same time. This makes it self-intimating." Thus, it is not viciously circular. Nonetheless, the objector may insist on a circularity in self-feeling. He may claim that even if self-consciousness is understood as a feeling, its self-intimation is still an implicit presupposition. However, even if we grant that self-feeling involves some kind of circularity, it cannot be taken to be vicious. Even if self-intimation was implicitly presupposed in self-feeling, the account still has explanatory value. By linking the phenomenon of self-consciousness with philosophy of affectivity many new implications arise. The remainder of this book will present examples for that. These new aspects could not be reached with a traditional, cognitive account. Thus, the account of self-feeling presented here contributes to the problems of self-consciousness no matter if it involves some kind of circularity or not.

Some thoughts about unconscious mental states

The remainder of this section presents two sketchy thoughts about how the account of self-feeling presented in this book could address the general problem of unconscious mental states: Why and how are some mental states conscious and others not? Please note that these thoughts are preliminary and non-conclusive.

First and foremost, the problem of unconscious mental states seems to be connected with our space of possibilities. It determines what becomes salient and what matters for us. Depending on how you experience your possibilities some

mental states will have more relevance than others. Consequently, they will more likely become conscious. Our space of possibilities is shaped by our self-feeling, notably. Thus, our self-feeling provides the general background in which some mental states can rise to consciousness. Take the following example. You are at a cocktail party and feel vulnerable and socially anxious. Other people in general appear as potential threat to you, you have the strong feeling that they hate you. Now, at the party there are several concurrent conversations going on and you are standing near one of them. Currently you are listening to what these people say. You hear the other conversations as part of the general background noise but you do not understand what they are saying. Suddenly, you hear the word "looser" in one of the more remote conversations and immediately you are sure that they must be talking about you. Your space of possibilities was utterly open for this kind of perception and thus it immediately emerged from the general background noise to your conscious experience. Among all the possible words in the background noise only this one made it to your conscious experience. It is plausible that your self-feeling of social anxiety shaped your space of possibilities in a way that made this happen. Recent research in neuroscience on the role of the human amygdala as "relevance detector" supports this view (Murray et al. 2014; Sander et al. 2003). The amygdala is found to play a crucial role both in the appraisal if certain events are relevant for us and in our affective lives (LeDoux 1992, 1996). To some extent, we seem to feel what is relevant and important to us. Our space of possibilities is shaped by our self-feeling and influences what kinds of mental states are more likely to rise to conscious experience.

Second and based on this affective foundation, attention seems to play an important role in making mental states conscious. Building on the topography provided by the felt space of possibilities we can intentionally focus our attention to specific areas. For instance, the person from the example above could intentionally focus on what is said in the conversation next to her and thereby shift her attention from the conversation she is actually participating to the other one. She is then more likely to hear and understand what they are talking rather than what the

people next to her are saying. In this case, the perception of what the more remote group is doing becomes more likely to rise from background noise to conscious awareness. However, our understanding of self-feeling suggests that this intentional direction of attention works only on the basis of a pre-structured, felt background and not independent from it. After all, our intention to shift attention has to be motivated by something that precedes it.[246]

3.2.2. Self-feeling overcomes the "ex negativo" challenge

Current pre-reflective theories of self-consciousness (e.g. the Heidelberg School, Zahavi and Gallagher) claim a pre-reflective, non-objectifying phenomenon in order to avoid the problems of higher-order theories. However, they have not much to tell about the positive character of self-consciousness. They tell more about what self-consciousness is not than about what it is. They leave us with fairly vague descriptions of the phenomenon of self-consciousness, e.g. "quale of existence" or "mineness of experience." Thus, they are often criticized for lacking material content. For instance, Kriegel (2009, pp. 101ff.) criticizes these approaches for their rather negative, esoteric character and calls them "intrinsic glow" views. This "ex negativo" challenge implies two problems. First, they struggle in actually explaining the phenomenon because they do not mention positive features of it. Second, an empty and formal account of self-consciousness has problems to inform higher levels of self-reflection. A satisfying account of self-consciousness needs to provide the possibility to relate it to our more elaborate capabilities to think reflectively about ourselves.

In contrast to that, this book suggests to understand self-consciousness as a bodily feeling, namely a self-feeling. Thus, it makes a proposal for what self-consciousness *is*. It makes it part of our fundamental affectivity. Thus, this book goes beyond both

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[246] Be that as it may, we cannot go into more detail on attention in this book. There is a great deal of work on this fascinating phenomenon that this book cannot do justice (see for an overview Mole et al. 2011; Nobre and Kastner 2014).

the Heidelberg School and Zahavi and Gallagher's account and overcomes their "ex negativo" challenge.

In contrast to Manfred Frank's reconstruction of self-feeling (Frank 2002a), the term "feeling" in self-feeling is taken very serious here. Particularly, the account of self-feeling presented here includes findings of contemporary philosophy of affectivity. This enables it to provide much richer material content than the Heidelberg School. Self-feeling is taken to be part of our fundamental affectivity, like existential feeling. Thus, it entails all the phenomenological richness that we saw in part two of this book. In self-feeling we can feel healthy, vulnerable, strong, powerful, weak, at home, estranged, welcome, rejected, superior, inferior, etc. Self-feeling is not only the awareness of our mere existence. We do not only feel ourselves as existing in self-feeling. Moreover, we feel how things are going for us, we have a feeling of our whole, individual existence as persons in self-feeling. Consequently, there is a lot of material content in self-feeling.

Recall the dual character of self-feeling again. As a background structure, self-feeling shapes the way we experience and act in this world. At the same time, self-feeling is part of our experience because it is a feeling. As a feeling it is bodily felt. The *how* of our existence does not only shape our experience from the background, it is also part of it.

This is a crucial difference to Manfred Frank's work. For him, self-feeling refers to the quale, the "what it is like", of pure existence. As we saw above, this leads to a certain amount of material emptiness in his account. For Frank, self-feeling constitutes only the awareness *that* I exist but does not tell us anything about the *how*. Different from that, if we understand self-feeling as part of our fundamental affectivity, like an existential feeling, it can account for the richness of the *how* of human existence. Self-feeling is a feeling of what it is like to be in this world as particular individuals and not a mere awareness of existence as such. It is a feeling that shapes our experience and is part of it at the same time.

Zahavi and Gallagher's account (Gallagher 2005; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008; Zahavi 1999, 2005, 2014) faces a similar challenge. Zahavi's notion of "first-personal givenness" of experience accounts for the formal fact that every experience is had "minely". No matter what experience you have, it is immediately clear that it is you having this experience. However, not much more is said about what this "first-personal givenness" amounts to. Conversely, it is emphasized that there is no experiential content in "for-me-ness":

> "More specifically, and contrary to what seems to be assumed by the critics, the mineness of experience is not some specific feeling or determinate quale. It is not a quality or datum of experience on a par with, say, the scent of crushed mint leaves or the taste of chocolate (which is also why one shouldn't conflate my proposal with that of Hopkins). In fact, the for-me-ness, or mineness, doesn't refer to a specific experiential content, to a specific *what*; nor does it refer to the diachronic or synchronic sum of such content, or to some other relation that might obtain between the contents in question." (Zahavi 2014, p. 22)

As can be seen, Zahavi's "for-me-ness" remains an empty and formal notion. It describes a formal feature of our experience but not more.[247] This may have advantages concerning the compatibility of his account to the broad field of philosophy of mind.[248] However, it exposes him to the "ex negativo" challenge as presented above. It remains unclear what exactly are positive features of the phenomenon and he has problems linking this basic level to the more elaborate level of "narrative self" which forms reflective, propositional thoughts about itself. Zahavi's recent try to introduce an intermediate "interpersonal self" (Zahavi 2014, part 3) has value in itself but does not help much to clarify how exactly the empty and formal notion of "experiential self" should inform these higher levels.

The account of self-feeling presented here contributes in two ways to these problems. First, it offers a positive description about what self-consciousness is. Self-feeling is a pre-reflective, pre-propositional bodily feeling that shapes our space of possibilities. It is the affective disclosure of individual existence. With this move,

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[247] Compare Rousse's (2009) similar critique on that issue.
[248] Personal conversation with Zahavi suggests that this is precisely what he had in mind.

it goes beyond the narrow borders of the current debate in self-consciousness and integrates findings of the philosophy of human affectivity to the debate. This enriches and broadens our view on self-consciousness. Particularly, it helps to overcome the "ex negativo" challenge by giving positive, material content to the phenomenon in question. Second, this account of self-feeling is more capable to build a bridge to reflective thoughts about ourselves. As has been shown, self-feeling is part of our experience. We feel how we are in this world. This fundamental feeling of being ourselves offers the holistic foundation for all other mental states, including reflective thoughts about ourselves. It informs our self-interpretation and thus truly bridges the gap between the pre-reflective and the reflective level. This will be explored in more detail in part four of this book.

As can be seen, self-feeling escapes the "ex negativo" challenge and provides more material richness than existing pre-reflective accounts of self-consciousness.

3.2.3. One unitary fundamental affectivity: Self-feeling complements the theory of existential feelings

As we have seen in part two of this book, the theory of existential feelings has not yet presented a comprehensive argument of how existential feelings are related to self-consciousness. One of the aims of this book is to provide a clearer picture of the interrelatedness of fundamental human affectivity with self-consciousness. Self-feeling can contribute to that. It complements the theory of existential feelings with detailed reflections on their interrelation to self-consciousness. This interrelation has been explained in the introduction of this part three.

In a word, self-feeling and existential feeling are two ways of looking at our fundamental affectivity. Self-feeling is not a specific existential feeling or a particular token of the type existential feelings. It is not that there are many different kinds of existential feelings and self-feeling is one of them. Instead, every existential feeling is always a self-feeling, too. At the same time, every self-feeling is

always an existential feeling, too. It depends on the perspective we take which of these aspects comes in the foreground of attention. When we look at fundamental human affectivity with the perspective of philosophy of self-consciousness, we find its character of self-feeling. When we ask how it shapes our world experience, we end up at Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings.

Therefore, self-feeling brings to attention an aspect of fundamental human affectivity that has so far not been explored in detail by the theory of existential feelings. It focuses on the implications of fundamental human affectivity on self-consciousness. In a word, fundamental human affectivity is the core of self-consciousness. Self-feeling provides the most basic disclosure of our individual lives in this world.

3.2.4. Taking stock

This chapter presented the core benefits of the account of self-feeling defended in this book. It is based on the Heidelberg School of self-consciousness and the theory of existential feelings and has five features: Self-feeling is a pre-reflective, pre-propositional, bodily feeling that shapes our space of possibilities. It is the affective disclosure of our individual existence.

By virtue of this, it escapes infinite regress and vicious circularity that higher-order theories suffer from. In addition, notably, it does not fall prey to the "ex negativo" challenge that other current pre-reflective accounts are criticized for. Instead, it provides rich material content. Last but not least, it provides a complement to the theory of existential feelings.

As can be seen, it makes sense to take a closer look at the relationship between self-consciousness and affectivity. Self-feeling integrates these two dimensions and thereby contributes to both philosophy of self-consciousness and philosophy of affectivity.

The remainder of this book will take this account of self-feeling as a foundation for further explorations. Although its basic benefits have already been presented, it can shed some light on other, related problems, too.

3.3. Self-feeling and unity

The section above showed that self-feeling can overcome both the problems of reflective theories and of pre-reflective, egological theories. However, the problem of pre-reflective, non-egological theories have not been addressed so far.[249]

Non-egological theories of self-consciousness tend to have troubles with accounting for the unity of self-consciousness.[250] They fail to explain how a multitude of single, self-conscious mental states is usually experienced as unified. Under normal circumstances you do not experience yourself as a bunch of single mental states but as concrete individual. This problem was labelled as problem of synchronic unity in chapter 1.2.4.. Likewise, non-egological theories fail to explain the diachronic unity of self-consciousness. We normally experience personal identity over time despite of the fact that many (if not all) of our mental states and bodily cells change during the course of our life.

There are two arguments that indicate that self-feeling may contribute to this challenge as well. First, it is not non-egological. It is not about the self-intimation of particular mental states. Thus, it may not run into the problem of strict non-egological theories. Second, it is not egological in a traditional sense. It is not

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[249] Interestingly, self-feeling as presented here does not fit nicely into the distinction between egological and non-egological theories of self-consciousness. It is neither non-egological because it does not refer to single mental states that are made conscious through it. It is neither egological in a traditional sense because it does not refer to a "core self". We will go into more detail on that in this chapter.

[250] This book cannot go into the details of the wide debate on unity of consciousness (compare e.g. Bayne 2010; Brook and Raymont forthcoming; Dainton 2000; Tye 2003; Zahavi 2014, part 1). Instead, it will focus on one question, namely to what extent self-feeling can explain unity of self-consciousness.

concerned with a "core self". Instead, self-feeling is understood to be the affective disclosure of our individual, dynamic existence. Thus it seems viable that it should be able to contribute at least something to the problem of unity.

3.3.1. Self-feeling and the „care-structure"

This section will further explore the questions: What is felt in self-feeling? How is it not only a bunch of features but has a unitary structure? Some answers can be found in Heidegger's notion of "care".

Heidegger's notion of "care"

In "Being and Time", Heidegger introduced his concept of the „care-structure" as fundamental characteristic of the way we are in the world (Heidegger 2006 [1927], esp. § 41).[251] Heidegger uses the term "care" differently from everyday usage, thus it should be regarded more as a technical term. Heidegger states:

> "In defining 'care' as 'Being-ahead-of-oneself – in-Being-already-in… – as Being-alongside…', we have made it plain that even this phenomenon is, in itself, still structurally *articulated*." (Heidegger 2006 [1927], p. 196, translated by Macquarrie and Robinson)[252]

„Care" has three essential features that together form a unified albeit articulated phenomenon: First, we are "ahead of ourselves". As human beings we live in a space of possibilities. We do not only see what there is but always already what there could be, what we could do. We are constantly projecting possibilities when dealing with the world. Second, we are "already in". We do not encounter an empty space or pure possibility but are always already in a given environment. Our space of possibilities is at the same time grounded in a factual world. There are things just

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[251] Please note that this book is not dedicated to a comprehensive interpretation of Heidegger's work. Heidegger's thinking is used merely to enrich and illustrate its line of argument. This seems appropriate, since two major proponents of the theory of existential feelings, Ratcliffe and Slaby, extensively build on Heidegger's work. Beside their already mentioned contributions also see their papers that predominantly focus on Heidegger (Ratcliffe 2002a, 2002b; Slaby 2007, 2010, 2015).

[252] Since Heidegger's original text is in German, the page numbers of the German original text are provided in my direct quotations. The translation into English, however, is taken from the respective sources mentioned.

given to us, such as our bodily and physical prerequisites or our socio-historical environment including a shared sense of meanings. Our life is grounded in this facticity. Third, we are "alongside". We are not detached, neutral observers, "objectively" looking at this world from the outside. Instead, we are immersed in the world and our projects in it. The world means something to us, it entices and catches us.

In addition, Heidegger also speaks of „care" as "thrown projection" (Heidegger 2006 [1927], e.g. p. 199).[253] We are thrown into the world, many aspects of being in the world are just given to us as facticity. At the same time, we project, we see possibilities and act in this world. Both aspects must be seen as two sides of the same coin, namely the „care-structure". Both are part of the fundamental phenomenon of "being-in-the-world" that encompasses our "being alongside", that is our constant involvement in worldly projects.

Note that the „care-structure" comprises a balance between active and passive aspects. By including the feature of "projection" and "being ahead of ourselves" it accounts for the active side of human existence. We are actively involved in the world, shaping it according to our projections. Accordingly, by including the feature of "thrownness" and "being already in" it accounts for the passive side of human existence. We are always already in a given world that we are "thrown in". This world is not only subject to our creative projects but also to a certain extent uncontrollable and given to us as mere factum. Thus, we are to a certain extent passive in relation to the world.

Also note that the „care-structure" encompasses the temporality of being. Consider the following quote from Heidegger:

> "*The primordial unity of the structure of care lies in temporality.* The 'ahead-of-itself' is grounded in the future. In the 'Being-already-in…', the character of 'having

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[253] Heidegger speaks of "thrown possibility", too: "But this means that Dasein is Being-possible which has been delivered over to itself – *thrown possibility* through and through. Dasein is the possibility of Being-free *for* its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. Its Being-possible is transparent to itself in different possible ways and degrees." (Heidegger 2006 [1927], p. 144, translated by Macquarrie and Robinson)

been' is made known. 'Being-alongside…' becomes possible in making present."
(Heidegger 2006 [1927], p. 327, translated by Macquarrie and Robinson)

Roughly speaking, our "thrownness" or "being-already-in" accounts for given features often stemming from the past. This does not mean that these features do not constantly re-actualize themselves. Second, the "being-alongside" feature accounts for our present involvement in the world. We are always immersed in worldly projects that occupy our presence. Third, the "being-ahead-of" ourselves accounts for the dimension of the future. We are not only looking at things how they are but always also how they could be. This projection into the future is an integral aspect of the „care-structure", too.

Self-feeling as affectively disclosed „care-structure"

Self-feeling can be understood as affectively disclosed „care-structure". In self-feeling we feel the three features of „care". Self-feeling is the affective awareness of this basic structure of our being in this world. Note that this "awareness of" is not the awareness of an object or entity. Instead, the "of" stands for the fact that the basic structure of human existence, namely the "care-structure", possesses a feature that is constitutive for it: its affective disclosure in self-feeling. The fundamental "care-structure" is part of experience in self-feeling. Self-feeling affectively discloses the "care-structure". Both are equiprimordial. Therefore, the answer to the question "What is felt in self-feeling?" is: Self-feeling is the feeling of the „care-structure", where the "of" signifies that self-feeling is a constitutive feature of the "care-structure". This could also be expressed by saying: Self-feeling is the "care-structure's" feeling.

This can be explained in further detail: We saw above that self-feeling discloses and shapes our space of experienced possibilities. This neatly corresponds to the "projection" or "being ahead of ourselves" feature in Heidegger's „care-structure". Second, we saw that self-feeling is an awareness of existence as such, of the fact that we are bodily creatures who exist in this concrete world. This corresponds to

the "thrown" or "being already in" feature of the „care-structure". We are thrown into existence, and this personal existence feels like something. We feel it in self-feeling. Third, self-feeling is a sense of ability, a feeling of what we can do in a particular situation. This seems to correspond to the "being alongside" feature of the „care-structure". We are always already immersed in worldly projects. Our sense of who we are is predominantly concerned with what we can or cannot do with respect to specific, worldly projects. Thus, self-feeling makes our "being alongside" explicit and shapes our specific activities.

Heidegger, too, seems to think that the „care-structure" is to some extent disclosed to us. He explains his notion of "transparency" as follows:

> "The sight which is related primarily and on the whole to existence we call '*transparency*' [*Durchsichtigkeit*]. We choose this term to designate 'knowledge of the Self' in a sense which is well understood so as to indicate that here it is not a matter of perceptually tracking down and inspecting a point called the "Self", but rather one of seizing upon the full disclosedness of Being-in-the-world *throughout all* the constitutive items which are essential to it, and doing so with understanding." (Heidegger 2006 [1927], p. 146, translated by Macquarrie and Robinson)

As can be seen, the „self" is here not understood as fixed entity, but as a disclosed structure. Note that this passage is taken from Heidegger's explanation of "understanding" and not "attunement". However, also in his explanation of "attunement" one finds a similar line of thought:

> „In attunement, Da-sein is always already brought before itself, it has always already found itself, not as perceiving oneself to be there, but as one finds one's self in attunement." (Heidegger 2006 [1927], p. 135, translated by Stambaugh)

These passages show that our fundamental way of being, the „care-structure", is disclosed in an immediate, affective way. Self-feeling is the disclosure and manifestation of the „care-structure". It does not refer to a fixed "core self", because this would lead to a double-digit model and thus to the severe problems discussed in part one. It refers neither, notably, to a pattern of particular actions. This also has turned out to be unsatisfying, as we saw in part two of this book when

discussing Stephan and Slaby's contributions. Instead, self-feeling discloses a fundamental structure, namely the "care-structure". This structure provides the formal frame for self-feeling, it is not by itself filled with content. Self-feeling thus discloses the formal background structure of our being in this world.

The relationship between "care-structure", self-feeling, and everyday experience

The relationship between the "care-structure", self-feeling, and everyday experience might be illustrated with the help of the following model. Note that this does not imply that there actually are levels of „self" or something alike. Rather, such a model shall serve as illustration, emphasizing analytically distinguishable features of a nonetheless unitary structure.

First, there is the relation between concrete, everyday experience and self-feeling. For example, you head off to work in the morning to meet your boss for the yearly appraisal interview. Your feel a bit nervous and rehearse your arguments on your way to work in order to be well prepared. As has already been shown, your feelings and expectations concerning this interview are significantly shaped by your fundamental affectivity. Imagine for example a self-feeling that makes you feel vulnerable and endangered. You experience the interview as potential risk to lose your job. All your little mistakes and imperfections from the last year become utterly salient. You feel like a mouse in front of a cat, awaiting to be killed. Alternatively, imagine a self-feeling that makes you feel self-confident. You then experience the interview as potential opportunity to present your strengths to your boss and perhaps achieve a salary increase. All your successes from the last year become salient. You feel like an equal discussion partner, entering a professional conversation. As can be seen, your self-feeling fundamentally shapes your everyday experience. At the same time, it is part of it, notably. These two aspects constitute the first two levels in this illustrative model.

The „care-structure" constitutes the third, most basic level in this model. It provides the formal framework for the concrete, individual experience. The structure of

„care" is a formal common ground for all human beings. We are all in the world as "being ahead of ourselves" in "being already in" as "being alongside". Importantly, this formal structure does not itself include material content.[254] It only provides the most basic structure of our being in the world. Self-feeling, then, is the individual manifestation of the "mineness" ["Jemeinigkeit" in German] of the „care-structure". Self-feeling fills the formal structure with material content and makes your way of being distinct from anyone else's. Through self-feeling the fundamental „care-structure" gains its individual character of "mineness". Self-feeling thus enables differences within and between individuals. Consider the example above. The experience that you have when going to work for an appraisal interview displays the basic features of „care-structure" (as all experiences do): First, you are "ahead of yourself" by anticipating and planning what is going to happen in the interview. Second, you are "already in" by building your considerations on given facts like your specific boss, your company, your past performance, your communication abilities, the way appraisal interviews are done, etc. Third, you are "alongside" by being immersed in the project of the appraisal interview. Your thoughts and activities are clearly focussed on this particular topic. Importantly, these three formal features apply no matter which particular self-feeling you have at this moment. No matter if you feel vulnerable or strong, the basic „care-structure" is the underlying framework. Self-feeling then makes the particular experience *yours* in an emphatic sense, it fills it with specific material content.

3.3.2. The problem with the "self": What is self-feeling about?

Looking at Heidegger, it was suggested in the section above that the "referent" of self-feeling is the fundamental „care-structure". What we feel in self-feeling is precisely this structure, shaped in our particular, individual way. What does this mean for the notion of "self"?

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[254] Remember Heidegger's distinction between "existential" and "existentiell" (Heidegger 2006 [1927], §§ 4 ff.). Roughly speaking, the sphere of the former refers to a formal background structure of "Dasein" whereas the latter refers to its everyday concretions.

It is crucial to understand that self-feeling does not refer to an entity, to a thing or anything like that. There is no object in self-feeling. Our being in this world is affectively disclosed in self-feeling. Thus, self-feeling is not the feeling *of* something else in the sense that it somehow perceives a "core self".

Our being in this world is dynamic in nature. Heidegger's „care-structure" is not a matter of static sameness. Conversely, we are immersed in worldly projects, always already in a changing world and anticipating future possibilities. Being-in-the-world means to actively engage in worldly projects. This process is not an entity, not a "core self", but an activity, a fundamental way of being in the world. This makes the „care-structure" dynamic. Notably, the „care-structure" provides the formal framework of human existence and is thus formally fixed. Its material content, however, is subject to constant change.

Accordingly, self-feeling is the "care-structure's" affective resonance. Our individual existence as a dynamic process is disclosed in self-feeling. Self-feeling "refers" to our way of being. It is the disclosure of our own, particular style of experiencing and acting in this world. In self-feeling we feel what it is like to be in this world as ourselves, we feel our individual way of existing. We feel what it is like to live *for us*. Thus, self-feeling is also about the *how* and not only about the *that*. This felt *how* of our existence (that is our self-feeling) is a background structure and part of experience at the same time. Let me emphasize again that this does not amount to an object of self-feeling because there is no object of self-feeling. Instead, the relation should be understood like this: Individual human existence is a dynamic process. This process of human life is equiprimordial and co-constitutive with its affective resonance, namely self-feeling. Self-feeling manifests and self-intimates this dynamic process of individual human life.

One of Fuchs' (2012) contributions points in a similar direction. He argues for a "feeling of being alive" that constitutes our self-awareness as living organisms. For him, the most fundamental dimension of self-awareness is the feeling of life itself. Notably, he understands life as dynamic process that is the ground for this feeling.

In line with that, Legrand (2007, pp. 500ff.) introduced the notion of the "performative body"[255]. It refers to the pre-reflective awareness we have of ourselves while skilfully performing an activity, such as dancing. When we skilfully engage in dancing our body is not the object of our experience. At the same time, however, we experience a conspicuous awareness of ourselves. The activity we are skilfully engaged in is self-intimating. We feel how we are doing in this dynamic process. Note, however, that these accounts are more focused on physiological body-aspects. The account presented in this book, in contrast, is closer to Ratcliffe in emphasizing our embeddedness in a meaningful world. Self-feeling is not only a matter of feeling one's living body but also essentially a matter of how we find ourselves in this world full of projects, cares, meanings, etc..

Note that it should not be implied that self-feeling is secondary to the "care-structure". It is not the case that there could be human existence as "care-structure" without its affective resonance as self-feeling. Conversely, self-feeling and „care-structure" are two equiprimordial sides of one coin. The „care-structure" stands for the active aspect of human existence, for the fact that we are dynamically living our lives. Self-feeling, accordingly, stands for the passive side of human existence. It discloses our fundamental way of being. Consequently, human existence should be understood as activity that is disclosed in an affective way. Self-feeling is the affective resonance of our individual, dynamic lives. Both sides of the coin are co-constituents of human existence.

Remember that we already saw in part two (chapter 2.3.2.) that human existence cannot be activity only. Every activity presupposes basic self-awareness which is at least to some extent a passive phenomenon. We could not do anything, e.g. striving for self-persistence, without basic awareness of ourselves. An intentional action has at least two prerequisites: First, it is necessary to have basic awareness of the one who has the intention. You have to be aware that it is you that intends something. Second, it is necessary to have basic awareness of the one who shall perform the

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[255] Gallagher (2005, p. 74) presented a similar notion of "pre-reflective pragmatic self-awareness" that is "performative awareness".

action, namely yourself.[256] Therefore, and this has been shown by the Heidelberg School, self-consciousness has to be inherent to our basic activity in the first place. Additionally, it is quite obvious that not everything in the world is subject to our own activity. To some extent we are dependent on given circumstances. For example, you are not the reason for your own being, you did not create yourself. Neither is it up to you how long you succeed to pertain in existence. Nobody can ultimately avoid death. An account of human existence that only builds on activity will struggle to account for that. The proposal presented in this book chooses a different path. Human existence here is understood as fundamental „care-structure" that emphatically entails activity. At the same time, it includes self-feeling as passive and individual disclosure of the whole structure. Importantly, self-feeling includes a fundamental sense of ability, a feeling of what we can do and cannot do.

Self-feeling goes beyond the egological / non-egological distinction

Given these considerations, the question might arise how self-feeling fits into the distinction between egological and non-egological theories, as introduced in part one of the book. This book claims that self-feeling goes beyond that distinction. It is neither non-egological nor egological in the traditional sense.

On the one hand, it has become clear that there is no such thing as a "self". There is no "core ego" that would then become self-conscious by some mysterious mechanism. We saw in part one that this traditional understanding leads to severe problems. Whenever there is a "core self" that is somehow made self-conscious, we run into vicious circles or infinite regresses. On the other hand, however, we saw with the problem of unity that a mere non-egological approach does not satisfy either. We need some explanation for the fact that we experience ourselves as unitary, dynamic agents.

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[256] Compare also Shoemaker's concept of "self-blindness" (Shoemaker 1996, pp. 30ff.). He argues that there could not be a rational agent that does not have self-awareness. Basic self-awareness is a prerequisite for rational agency.

What about searching for the „self" not among different "things" but among features of our existence? It may be more promising to understand "the self" not as a thing but as a feature of the way we are in this world. This more functional explanation would describe it not by means of what it is but by what it does or by what features it has.[257] The account of self-feeling defended here tries to follow this path. Part of our existence as human beings is the fact that we experience the affective resonance of self-feeling. We feel how we are in this world, how things are going for us. Given our consideration above, we might try to understand the notion of "self" as being nothing more than the dynamic „care-structure" affectively disclosed in self-feeling. It is not understood as fixed, core entity and can thus escape the problems of reflective theories. Moreover, it is not a pattern of concrete behaviour but a dynamic background structure that constitutes our fundamental way of being in the world. "Self" is thus co-constituted by the active aspect of the dynamic "care-structure" and the passive aspect of its affective resonance, namely self-feeling.

As a consequence, self-feeling is egological in a new, unorthodox sense. It does not refer to a "core ego" but to the dynamic process of our individual human life that is captured in the „care-structure". Thus, it is positioned in the middle between pre-reflective, non-egological self-consciousness and reflective, egological thoughts about ourselves. First, all self-intimating mental states (the non-egological dimension) occur within a pre-structured space of possibilities. Self-feeling provides the background for these single mental states. Second, self-feeling accounts for a pre-reflective experience of unity. In virtue of self-feeling, our individual lives are self-intimating in a holistic way. We feel how life is like for us in a unitary, comprehensive way. This enables further reflective thoughts about ourselves that occur on a higher, reflective level. These thoughts may then establish what has been called a "narrative self" (Zahavi 2005, pp. 104f.), that is an egological story about our lives as egological "selves". Only because our individual existence is

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[257] Schmid suggested something along these lines in his recent paper on plural self-awareness (Schmid 2014c).

already disclosed in self-feeling we are able to think about ourselves in this reflective way. Self-feeling is thus the foundation for reflective thoughts about ourselves. We will go into more detail into this relation in part four of this book.

3.3.3. Self-feeling can contribute to synchronic and diachronic unity

Based on the considerations above, we can now see what self-feeling contributes to the problem of synchronic and diachronic unity. Generally speaking, self-feeling can account for unity because it is egological, albeit in a new, unorthodox sense. Unity was introduced above as a problem of non-egological theories. Therefore, an egological account of self-feeling should not struggle with this. Let us nonetheless have a quick look on how this might spell out.

First, there is synchronic unity. In self-feeling we experience our individual existence as a whole at a given moment in time. Our whole relationship with the world is disclosed in a specific way. We feel healthy, strong, vulnerable, at home, etc. All these potential self-feelings concern our person as a whole and unify the multitude of single mental states. Every single mental state occurs in the pre-structuring context of self-feeling. Our self-feeling shapes every single state. Thus, self-feeling is compatible with synchronic unity.[258]

Second, there is diachronic unity. It may be explained with the help of Heidegger's „care-structure".[259] As we saw above, self-feeling is the affective resonance of the „care-structure". The „care-structure" is the formal structure of our being in this world over time, it accounts for our temporality (Heidegger 2006 [1927], p. 327).

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[258] The question might arise how to deal with fragmented selves with split personalities. Consider the following: Self-feeling integrates cognitive and bodily aspects. In split personalities the bodies remain the same but there is a split on the cognitive level. Thus, we would expect that there are two self-feelings in split personalities because the two personalities are likely to have different ways of being in the world, different cares and concerns. Yet, the two self-feelings cannot be too much apart from each other because they are bodily felt in the same body. Be that as it may, we should not overemphasize extreme examples like this because they are derivative to the normal case where one body coincides with one person.

[259] Manfred Frank (Frank 2012, chapter 3) seems to follow a similar line of argument by building on Sartre's work.

Thus, self-feeling also includes temporality. It is not just a feeling of how things are going for us now in this very moment. Instead, in self-feeling we immediately experience how we are ahead of ourselves, how we always already anticipate the possibilities of the future. Accordingly, we experience how the past shapes our given facticity. A recent paper by Fuchs (2016) points in a similar direction. He argues that a person's persistence over time can be explained by integrating the continuity of experiential self as for instance first-personally felt in what he calls "feelings of being alive" (Fuchs 2012) and the converging, physical continuity of the autopoietic organism as conceived in a third-personal perspective. Therefore, self-feeling seems to be compatible with diachronic unity. Importantly, however, there is a lot more to say about diachronic unity and temporality. These sketchy remarks should rather be seen as initial starting point for how a solution might look like. At this point, a full account of temporality of self-feeling must remain subject for substantial, future research.

3.4. Appropriateness of self-feeling

In part four of this book we will look deeper into how self-feeling can inform reflective thoughts about ourselves, that is our self-interpretation. Before we go into more detail on this question it seems necessary to explore if self-feeling can go wrong. When we think about self-feeling as a source for knowledge about ourselves we must evaluate if our self-feeling is always correct or if it can be false sometimes. This chapter will work on this question. First, Ratcliffe's proposal about appropriateness and pathology of existential feelings is introduced. Since self-feeling and existential feeling are two aspects of one fundamental human affectivity, findings on existential feeling should apply for self-feeling as well. Second, we explore what criteria have been developed for the appropriateness of emotions in current literature. Third, we test to what extent these criteria can be applied to existential feeling and self-feeling.

Before starting the discussion, please note that self-feeling cannot fail in one aspect: It is immune to error in its function to be the affective disclosure of individual existence in a narrow sense. As long as we exist as human beings we have a self-feeling that directly and immediately discloses our mere existence. This fundamental, constituting function of self-feeling cannot go wrong. The mere fact that we exist is infallibly disclosed in any self-feeling, no matter if pathological or not. There is no self-feeling that could fail in this regard. However, as we saw above, there is more in self-feeling than mere awareness *that* we exist. Self-feeling discloses the *how* of our individual being in the world. In this broader sense, there are several ways in which it can be more or less appropriate. These are similar to what can go wrong with existential feelings.

Let us now start with the following question: How can existential feelings be evaluated, how do we know if they are appropriate? The ideal solution to this problem would be a 100% rock-bottom criterion that tells us if an existential feeling is appropriate or not appropriate. Such a criterion would need to meet two logical preconditions: First it must be the case that if an existential feeling is appropriate, the criterion must be fulfilled (A → C). Second it must be the case that if an existential feeling is not appropriate, the criterion must not be fulfilled (¬A → ¬C).

The case of belief may by analogy serve as an illustration for this. You might say that whenever a belief is appropriate, its content must be the case (A → C). Accordingly, whenever a belief is inappropriate, its content must not be the case (¬A → ¬C). For example, when you believe that "This ball belongs to Barbara", it has to be the case that this ball belongs to Barbara in order for this belief to be appropriate. Accordingly, it has to be the case that this ball does not belong to Barbara in order for this belief to be inappropriate. As long as these preconditions hold, the criterion "the content being the case" is reliable for the evaluation of the appropriateness of a belief. This criterion would not be reliable if at least one of the following counterexamples could be found: The first would be a case of an appropriate belief that has a content that is not the case (violation of precondition 1). The second

would be a case of an inappropriate belief that has a content that is the case (violation of precondition 2).

As we will see, there is no criterion that completely fulfils these demanding logical preconditions in the case of existential feelings. One reason for this seems to be that existential feelings are fundamental and all-encompassing background orientations. They come in many varieties and shape numerous kinds of possibilities. Because they are so fundamental there is hardly any single indicator that is influenced by existential feelings only. Thus, whatever criterion we will examine there will be counterexamples that show that this specific indicator could also be present without the respective status of the existential feeling. As a result, it seems difficult to draw a clear borderline between inappropriate and appropriate existential feelings. Nonetheless, it will be argued that it makes sense to thoroughly analyse potential criteria. Even if they are not 100% reliable, they can still contribute to a pragmatic and holistic evaluation of existential feelings.

3.4.1. Criteria from Ratcliffe: Two explicit and one implicit

Ratcliffe touches the topic in the last chapters of his 2008 book (Ratcliffe 2008, chapter 7-10) and provides two explicit and one implicit criteria, namely openness to alternatives, openness to other people, and stability over time.[260]

Openness to alternatives

First, appropriate existential feelings to some extent allow for their own contingency. Healthy persons feel that their own life perspective is not the only one possible, that it could change. They have their own world view, shaped by their existential feeling and at the same time they know that it could be all different.

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[260] Ratcliffe works with the distinction pathological/non-pathological rather than appropriate/inappropriate. Since the project of this book is decisively not restricted to the psychiatric, clinical context, the latter distinction is preferred. To avoid overcomplexities, pathological and inappropriate (and non-pathological and appropriate, respectively) are treated to mean roughly the same. Thereby, we remain ignorant of the fact that there might be appropriate existential feelings that are pathological in some sense or inappropriate existential feelings that are not pathological in some sense.

Appropriate existential feelings provide a fundamental orientation that includes the attitude that this orientation is not the only one possible. They are open to change. In contrast, inappropriate existential feelings withdraw this sense of alternatives. Put formally, this first criterion states that whenever an existential feeling is appropriate (A), there will be contingency inherent to it (C1). Additionally, whenever an existential feeling is not appropriate (¬A), there will not be contingency inherent to it (¬C1). Take depression as an example. One of the widespread symptoms of depression is the strong conviction that things will not change. A depressed person lives in a world without the possibility of recovery.[261] Her existential feeling is utterly stable, it does not involve the possibility of alteration. Her life is irrevocably stuck in misery. Thus, it is the case that ¬A → ¬C1. Conversely, in normal life circumstances we are at times happy and at other times miserable. No matter which existential feeling is predominant at a specific moment, we always feel the possibility of change. Thus, it seems to be the case that A → C1. Please note that we are talking about existential feelings here that shape our general perspective on life. It is not claimed that a person could not have an intense, short-term experience of full joy or sorrow that does not entail in that very moment the awareness that it will be over soon. As a result, openness for contingency appears to be an important criterion for the appropriateness of existential feelings. However, as we will see below, the second precondition might be not that solid after all. The openness for contingency must not be too excessive in order to constitute an appropriate existential feeling, as we will see below.

Things are much similar with self-feeling. Appropriate self-feelings contain their own contingency. They are the affective disclosure of our individual existences and allow for the awareness that we can change. An appropriate self-feeling is open to alternatives, it can change. For example, imagine you were just unexpectedly dismissed from your job. Your self-feeling is one of uselessness, rejection, exclusion,

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[261] Note that the depressed person may assert the proposition "it is possible that things could change in a positive way". However, this is only an abstract possibility. For the depressed person this proposition does not entail the possibility that things could become better for her own life, that good things could happen to her. (Ratcliffe 2015a, chapter 5)

and unworthiness. As long as it stays non-pathological and you do not fall into serious depression, however, your self-feeling will also allow for some faith that you will feel different again. Your troubled self-feeling may be intense but it does not cut so deep that hope becomes impossible. On some level you still know that this is not the end of the road. There is the possibility that your self-feeling will change and you will feel useful, welcome, and worthy again. In contrast, take the example of the pathological self-feeling of a depersonalized patient. She feels unreal, dead, not quite there. Her whole existence has not only become fragile but literally disappeared from her eyes. She does not feel alive any more. This pathological self-feeling does not entail an openness to alternatives. She is trapped in the pathological state of feeling dead. As can be seen, the criterion of openness to alternatives applies for self-feeling, too.

Openness to other people

The second criterion is connected with the first one. An appropriate existential feeling enables the experience of other people as people (A → C2). Appropriate existential feelings disclose specifically interpersonal possibilities, such as communication, joint action, etc. For example, the appropriate existential feeling of a grieving person includes the possibility to talk to other people and share her feelings. She experiences other people as possible counterparts for communication. This interchange with other people further enhances our sense for alternative possibilities. Not only our own existential feelings are changeable to a certain amount, there are also existential feelings of other persons that may be significantly different from our own. Appropriate existential feelings enable to be in touch with other people and thereby open up a world full of alternatives. In contrast, inappropriate existential feelings prohibit exchange with other people and thereby also the sense of variability (¬A → ¬C2). Take depression as example again. The pathological existential feeling of a depressed person often does not enable true exchange with other people. Depressed patients experience other people as impossible to reach, they are often incapable to experience them as persons. Their world has shrunk to a meaningless, quasi-automatic chain of events without real

people to get in contact with. Thus, they often withdraw from their social life, they feel encapsuled and remote from the normal. Their communication activities decrease and they gradually lose contact with the world around them. Notably, this makes their situation even worse. By reducing their openness to other persons they also reduce their sense of alternative possibilities. Thus, their depressive existential feeling becomes stronger and even more unescapable. Ratcliffe subsumes his proposal as following:

> "Once it is acknowledged that experience is not just a matter of perceived actualities but also of possibilities, the difference between healthy mystical experiences and pathological experiences looks quite pronounced. One experience is open to possibilities in a way that the other is not. One incorporates the possibility of escape, a sense of its own contingency, and the other does not. […] This contrast, I suggest, is the key to an understanding of what makes something *existentially* pathological. […] But what distinguishes a predicament as *existentially* pathological is a particular kind of loss, a loss of the sense of other people or a loss of possibilities involving access to other people." (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 287)[262]

The problem with this criterion seems to be that there might be inappropriate existential feelings that nonetheless enable the experience of other people as people. Thus, the condition ($\neg$A $\rightarrow$ $\neg$C2) might be violated. Take the "helper syndrome" (Schmidbauer 1977) as an example. Imagine a social worker that predominantly experiences the world as needy and dependent of her help. Every situation she approaches seems to ask for her help. This might lead to excessive labour and eventually burnout. It seems that this way of being in the world, this existential feeling, is not healthy. At the same time, however, it does not imply that the social worker is unable to experience other people as people. On the contrary, it seems that she emphatically sees other people as people, namely as people with

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[262] Ratcliffe discusses the question concerning the appropriateness of existential feelings in the context of religious or mystic experiences. His claim, however, includes all kinds of existential feelings.

important needs that only she can satisfy.[263] As a consequence, the condition (–A → –C2) seems to be violated in this case.

Things are similar in self-feeling. An appropriate self-feeling discloses our own capability to get in touch with other people. Persons with an appropriate self-feeling feel that they are persons embedded in a social environment they can participate in. They feel that they are part of a larger social context they can explicitly connect with. Appropriate self-feelings warrant for our sense that we can get in contact with other people, exchange ideas and follow joint projects. In contrast, pathological self-feelings deprive us from these possibilities. Take the example of a depressed patient. Her self-feeling of exclusion makes her feel like a detached observer, watching from the outside. She does not experience herself as a potential counterpart for communication with other people. As a result, the criterion of openness to other people applies for self-feeling, too.

Stability over time

In addition to these two criteria there seems to be a third one implicit in Ratcliffe's book. In his discussion of schizophrenia (Ratcliffe 2008, chapter 7), he emphasizes the practical implications of constantly changing existential feelings:

> "Existential feelings can also be anomalous in being excessively changeable or prone to sudden, violent shifts. In addition, they might change in unstructured, disorganized ways. […] Something like this seems to happen in schizophrenia […]." (Ratcliffe 2008, p. 196)

> "One important distinction is that between consistent and changeable existential feeling. A central difference that sets apart many of those diagnosed with depression from others with schizophrenia is that the former inhabit an enduring existential orientation that is recalcitrant to change. […] Descriptions of schizophrenic experience generally suggest a possibility space that unfolds in a disorganized way. […] So a major difference between kinds of existential feeling is diachronic in nature, rather than being a structural difference between two kinds of fixed enduring orientation." (Ratcliffe 2008, pp. 212f.)

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[263] However, you might argue that in fact she does not see other people as people. For to see someone as people may include to see the other person as autonomous, self-sufficient creature that could in principle help itself.

Healthy existential feelings change rather comprehensibly, e.g. in response to certain life events such as marriage or the death of a relative. Thus, it seems to be the case that whenever there is an appropriate existential feeling, it must not change too excessively and incomprehensibly (A → C3). Normally, you are in principle able to explain why a change in your existential feeling happened, at least to some degree. In contrast, there are reports of pathological cases with tremendously unsteady experiences (¬A → ¬C3). For example, schizophrenic persons often perceive the world as unstable, unpredictable and frightening. Their space of possibilities often changes suddenly and without structure. They do not have existential feelings that persist for some time and change in a comprehensible way. Instead, they live in a world where nothing remains predictable, where things change from one minute to the other. This may not only include experiential facts but also the meaning of things. The housemaster sweeping the floor in front of your door could be experienced as quite normal in one moment. Suddenly, only a minute later, he may appear as secretly observing and planning to harm you. For these reasons, it seems plausible to add this volatility of existential feelings as a third criterion to examine their appropriateness.

This links back to the first criterion in two ways. First, while the case of depression served as argument in favour of the first criterion (contingency), at the same time it is a counterexample to the third criterion (volatility). The lacking contingency and invariability of the existential feeling in depression shows that there are existential feelings that are immune to change and thus inappropriate. Hence, a precondition of the third criterion is violated, namely ¬A → ¬C3. An inappropriate existential feeling can be stable and unchanging. Second, the case of schizophrenia shows that there are existential feelings that allow contingency and are at the same time inappropriate. They are so prone to changes that their volatility constitutes their inappropriateness. Thus, a precondition of the first criterion is violated, namely ¬A → ¬C1.

On the one hand we saw above that an appropriate existential feeling must not exclude the possibility of alternatives. An existential feeling that does not allow for change must be regarded as inappropriate (criterion 1). It needs to incorporate a certain amount of contingency to be appropriate. On the other hand, as we just saw, existential feelings must not be too prone to changes either (criterion 3). If our space of possibilities constantly moves, there is no fixed ground we can build our life perspective on. Thus, such a state must be described as inappropriate, too. All in all, it seems that a balanced view is most appropriate. Existential feelings should be open to other possibilities, especially to those conferred by other people, and at the same time not too changeable so that they provide a fairly stable basic orientation.

Appropriate self-feelings need to display a similar level of stability over time. They must not change too frequently or too incomprehensibly. As we will see in a later part of this book, self-feeling is one of the foundations of self-interpretation. Self-interpretations demand a certain amount of stability. You cannot construe a narrative of your own life and personality with a constantly changing self-feeling. Take the example of a teenage girl finding her way into adult life. For some time she might feel socially accepted, attractive, intelligent, and funny. Then, an unfortunate incident in the classroom turns it all around. Imagine one of her blouses pops up while she talks in front of her classmates. For weeks then she will suffer from a severely changed self-feeling. She might feel socially excluded, unattractive, stupid, and to be laughed at. Some months later she might encounter a handsome boy from another school that turns everything around again. He maybe had not heard anything about the incident and gives her a feeling of attractiveness again. Although this example is surely not one of clinical pathology, one can understand that adolescence is a time in life with severe and frequent changes in self-feeling. These changes can make it difficult to find out who we actually are. Many adolescents, we may assume, struggle with answering the question "who am I?" because their self-feelings are so unstable. Only later in life, when things have calmed down a bit, one develops a fairly stable self-interpretation. It is based on a settled and more stable

self-feeling. As can be seen, the criterion of stability over time also applies for self-feeling.

3.4.2. Appropriateness in philosophy of emotion

In philosophy of emotion several criteria have been developed to examine the appropriateness of short-term, object-oriented emotions. This chapter will quickly introduce them before their applicability to fundamental human affectivity will be explored.

The concept of a "formal object" is one of the most basic attempts to explain the appropriateness of emotions. It was first introduced by Anthony Kenny (1963) and further developed by William Lyons (1980) and Ronald de Sousa (1987).[264] De Sousa defines it as follows:

> "For each emotion, there is a second-order property that must be implicitly ascribed to the motivating aspect if the emotion is to be intelligible. This essential element in the structure of each emotion is its *formal object*. The formal object is a second-order property in the sense that it is supervenient on some other property or properties: something is frightening by virtue of being dangerous, for example." (De Sousa 1987, p. 122)

According to de Sousa the emotion of fear is appropriate if and only if the object of the fear has the second order property of being frightening. It is frightening in virtue of being dangerous, which is the first-order property. Thus, the criterion of appropriateness for an emotion is its specific formal object. Something can be appropriately induce fear only if it displays the formal object of fear, namely being frightening. De Sousa suggests, that this concept can be a general tool to examine the correctness of mental states:

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[264] Note that the idea of a formal object appears already in Heidegger's account of emotion, albeit in different terminology: "That before which we are afraid, the 'fearsome', is always something encountered within the world, either with the kind of being of something at hand or something objectively present or Mitda-sein. […] What is it that belongs to the fearsome as such which is encountered in fearing? What is feared has the character of being threatening." (Heidegger 2006 [1927], p. 140, translated by Joan Stambaugh)

> "The notion of formal object applies to any state having a content assessable for correctness: it is then, by definition, the *standard of correctness* for that state. Thus, *truth* is the formal object of *belief*, and goodness or *desirability* is the formal object of *want*. The specific formal object associated with a given emotion is essential to the definition of that particular emotion." (De Sousa 1987, p. 122)

According to de Sousa, a belief is correct when its content is true and a desire is correct when its object is desirable. Emotions are more complex in this regard, because every emotion (or type of emotion, you might specify) has its respective formal object: fear requires something frightening, joy requires something fun, and shame requires something embarrassing.

At first hand, the concept of a formal object seems helpful. However, when we look closer we have not gotten far in our explanation. When we claim that fear needs something frightening to be appropriate the initial question remains: What makes the object of fear frightening? What makes something embarrassing? It seems hard to explain and specify a formal object without referring back to its relation to the respective emotional response.[265]

Answering these questions requires navigating between two extreme positions. First, one could argue for radical subjectivism and affirmatively embrace the circularity. An object is frightening just and simply because of the fear that is experienced in front of it. An emotion has no epistemic relevance beyond arbitrary, subjective appraisal. For this view, there are no extrinsic values in the world or in the objects that would provide grounds for "objective" or universal evaluations. Second, one could argue for strong realism.[266] For this view there are values in the world, an object can indeed have the self-sufficient property of being frightening. Emotions are then understood as detecting the subject-independent value of objects in a perception-like way.

Both these extreme positions face serious challenges. Concerning the first, when you experience fear you do not believe that it is just an arbitrary, subjective

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[265] See Slaby (2008b, esp. chapter 8) for a detailed discussion of this challenge. His conclusion is quite similar to the one outlined in this section.
[266] Christine Tappolet (2000), inspired by Max Scheler (1921), is one contemporary advocate of such a view.

reaction but that it is about something real, about a property of the object that is really there. When we have an emotion, we normally take it to mean something. Additionally, for radical subjectivism emotions can by no means have a truth value. You simply cannot be right or wrong on your emotional responses in this view because an emotion is understood as purely subjective. This is problematic even for paradigm cases of subjectivism, such as the experience of beauty.[267] When people experience beauty in looking at a piece of art, they typically call it beautiful. They attribute the reason for their experience to a property of the object that is supposed to be seen by other people as well. Granted, some might refrain from announcing such a judgement because it may seem intolerant or authoritarian in some peer groups. Yet, even in these cases they will take their experience of beauty to mean something beyond their mere subjective experience. They do not experience beauty in every object they see but only in some. So there must be something in these objects that stimulates the experience of beauty. These considerations make radical subjectivism counterintuitive.

Concerning the second view, it seems odd to assume that all values stem directly and solely from the objects in the world. There are lots of cases where different people have different emotions about the same object and it cannot easily be decided who is right, e.g. diverse emotional reactions to a football match. Some might find the match exciting and thus inducing joy and others might find the same match annoying and thus inducing boredom. The same problem arises in one of the paradigm cases for realism, namely danger and fear. Take the example of walking home alone at night. Let us assume it is a summer midnight in Vienna and your walk home is about 20 minutes. There can be different emotional reactions to the same objective situation. Some may experience fear to get mugged and find it dangerous to walk alone. Others may experience confidence and enjoy the quiet walk home in a mild summer night. It cannot be easily decided who is right and who is wrong in this case. Criminal statistics may suggest some risk to get mugged so the fearful

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[267] We cannot enter the many complexities of aesthetic judgement here. Yet, one of the classics in this field, Immanuel Kant (1974 [1790], §§ 6-9), seems to support the critique of radical subjectivism put forward here.

person is not straightaway wrong. Yet, the risk is surely not high enough to make the confident person's emotion straightaway wrong. Strong realism supposes an objective value of the football game or the danger of walking home at night and thus has to regard one of the respective emotional responses as wrong. This seems counterintuitive, too.

In current philosophy of emotion there is a vivid debate on the relation between emotion and value, exploring these complexities in more detail.[268] This chapter will focus on three basic criteria to evaluate appropriateness of emotions that are discussed in this field: biological function, social fitness and consistency.

Biological function

An emotion can be seen as appropriate if it fulfils a biological function. According to this criterion appropriate emotions promote biological fitness. The underlying, evolutionary story seems plausible: Living organisms have their basic needs, they are in some way dependent on objects in their environment. Affective responses to the environment thus help the organism interacting with it. For example, when you fear the poisonous snake in front of you, this emotion should help you to react fast and in the right way, e.g. with flight.[269] A creature with immediate, emotional responses to threats obviously has some evolutionary advantage. First, the reflex-like immediacy enables a quicker reaction than the deliberative system could provide. Second, emotional appraisal allows more differentiated reactions than mere bodily reflexes.

These thoughts are supported by empirical evidence from neuroscience. Joseph LeDoux (1996) showed that some of our emotions come instantaneously, without involving the cognitive system. When we see the snake, this perception directly triggers the emotion of fear, regardless of what our deliberative system would

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[268] There are many competing attempts to find the right path such as "dispositionalism", "fitting attitude analysis" or "no priority view". See Deonna and Teroni (2012) for an introduction.

[269] Granted, there are other possible reactions, such as freezing in fear, that might be regarded as less useful. However, freezing in fear is not totally counterproductive. First, it leads to high alertness and adrenaline release, too. This might help to find the right reaction after the initial shock. Second, motionlessness can indeed be a good strategy against predators, since running away might stimulate their chasing instincts.

judge. This response is so quick that deliberation can only evaluate it afterwards. It might be that conscious deliberation leads to the judgement that a direct emotional response was wrong. For example, it can be that we have full knowledge, backed with enormous empirical evidence, about the complete absence of danger from Austrian spiders[270]. Still, when we face one, we react with fear. A similar case is possible for lions in cages. LeDoux explains these recalcitrant emotions with the help of "hard-wired", direct emotional responses that have or had once a biological function. In the past is was an advantage to react immediately with fear when facing a spider. Today, in modern civilisation it is not any more. Still, some hard-wired emotions persist. The neuro-scientist Antonio Damasio has a similar concept of hard-wired emotional responses, he calls them "primary emotions" (Damasio 1994, chapter 7).

Therefore, to evaluate if the emotion of fear is appropriate in a given situation there are two questions to probe. First we ask if the object of fear is really frightening. To examine that we ask if fear has a biological function in relation to the particular object. Only if this can be approved, the emotion of fear can count as appropriate.

Social fitness

Secondly, an emotion can be seen as appropriate when it promotes our social fitness, for instance by helping us to meet a social norm. Ronald de Sousa (1987) provided a seminal account of the rationality of emotions by strongly employing a social perspective.[271] His key concept in this regard is "paradigm scenario".

> "We are made familiar with the vocabulary of emotion by association with *paradigm scenarios*. These are drawn first from our daily life as small children and later reinforced by the stories, art, and culture to which we are exposed. Later still, in literate cultures, they are supplemented and refined by literature. Paradigm scenarios involve two aspects: first, a situation type providing the characteristic *objects* of the specific emotion-type […], and second, a set of characteristic or "normal" *responses* to the situation, where normality is first a biological matter and then very quickly becomes a cultural one." (De Sousa 1987, p. 182)

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[270] And not Australians, notably.
[271] Compare also Wiggins' (1987) and McDowell's (1998) accounts. They emphasise the role of intersubjective practice in the constitution of evaluative properties, too.

Obviously, the social aspect builds on the biological aspect in de Sousa's account. This book will not explore if this hierarchy is correct. Be that as it may, de Sousa argues that it is not just a hard-wired, reflex-like response that is responsible for our emotions. Our emotional variability is so broad that it is unlikely that all of them are biologically fixed. Instead, he claims that our emotions are learned to a certain extent. Objects or situations that regularly induce similar emotional reactions might over time constitute an emotional category. For example, poisonous snakes might in general be regarded as frightening. Thus, it seems plausible that our emotions are at least partly culturally and socially shaped. In a given society there are a number of paradigm scenarios that prescribe which emotional responses are appropriate in each case. Notably, we are usually not explicitly aware of these prescriptions. When we are guest at a wedding, we feel happy for the bridal couple. A wedding is a joyful happening and most people experience emotions of joy when being at a wedding. Normally, there is no felt obligation to experience joy at a wedding, we are just intrinsically happy for the couple. Similarly, when we are at the funeral of our sister we do not feel obliged to grief but we are just sad.

These insights are not backed by de Sousa only. Similarly, the neuroscientist Damasio distinguishes biologically determined, primary emotions from learned, "secondary emotions" (Damasio 1994, chapter 7). In Ancient Greek traditions (e.g. Aristoteles or the Stoa) the education of emotional dispositions was regarded as important for a good life.[272]

Accordingly, when we assess the appropriateness of an emotion with the help of this second criterion we again ask two questions. First, we ask if the object of the emotion has the required property of the formal object, e.g. if the object of fear is frightening. To examine if it is frightening we might compare it to similar situations (paradigm scenarios) to see if the object is normally seen as frightening and if fear is a usual response to it. If this can be approved the emotion can be seen as appropriate.

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[272] Compare Robert Frank (1988) for a contemporary version of the Aristotelian view.

Consistency

Thirdly, an emotion can be regarded as appropriate if it is consistent with other mental states of the person, e.g. other emotions, beliefs, desires, etc.. If you love dancing, believe that dancing is a healthy activity and wish to go to dancing events more often it would be inappropriate to experience anger when someone asks you to go to the Vienna Opera Ball. Other possible criteria (e.g. biological or social) set aside, it seems inappropriate to have emotions that are in strong inconsistency with your overall attitudes.

Bennett Helm (2001, 2002, 2011) builds his account of appropriateness mainly on the consistency criterion. He introduces a number of distinct concepts: Every single emotion (e.g. anger) has a "target" (e.g. the rowdy trying to destroy my car) and a "focus" (e.g. the car which is important to me). The target is the object that my emotion is directed at (I am angry at the rowdy). The focus is the object that the emotion is about because it is important to me in some way (I am angry about my car being destroyed because it is important to me). "Import"[273] is in the background of every emotion, it makes it understandable (e.g. because the car is important for me, I am inclined to be angry at someone destroying it). Import stands for the fact that things matter to us in our world. We are not neutral, detached observers of objects and events in this world. Instead, we care about our surroundings. We value things and they are important to us. Therefore, they cause emotional responses. Thus, emotions show what is important to us and they are detectors of value in this sense. Interestingly, in Helm's account import is itself constituted by patterns of single emotions directed at a specific focus. Import and value is not something that comes from nowhere or is just given. Conversely, import has its background in emotions for Helm. We react emotionally in various ways regarding one specific focus object, e.g. we feel relieved when the car-damaging rowdies are gone, we feel happy when we drive our car, we are proud to show the car to our friends, etc. All these single emotions amount to a pattern of emotion that has one focus object. It is this pattern then, that constitutes import. Notably, Helm's patterns do not only

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[273] Helm takes this term from Taylor (1985, p. 48)

consist of emotions but also include other mental states like beliefs or judgements. The ideal situation would be a "complete evaluation" (Helm 2001, p. 180). An evaluation is "complete" if all mental states concerning one focus object are consistent. Admittedly, this is a challenging demand and in most cases we will not reach "complete evaluation". Nonetheless, consistency arguably remains the ideal strived for.

Obviously, this construction makes Helm's theory circular. Emotions are constituted by import, import is constituted by patterns of emotions, and patterns of emotions are constituted by single emotions. This circularity has some problematic consequences. For example, and this is also criticised by Slaby (2008b, chapter 8) and Müller (2011), his account becomes overly subjective through this circularity. If import is constituted by subjective patterns of emotions only, it can have almost any content. For example, a psychopath could have very consistent patterns of emotion that constitute the import of killing other people. Every single emotion he has in regard to other people might be anger and desire to kill. Helm's account cannot sufficiently show how this is wrong. The only criterion he has to assess emotions and import for their appropriateness is their consistency. However, this example shows merely that consistency cannot be the only criterion. It does not show that consistency has to be totally abandoned as a criterion. Instead, it seems adequate to include consistency in our portfolio of possible criteria because it can add something when correlated with other criteria.

Therefore, if we want to know if an emotion is appropriate according to this criterion, we have to compare it with our further dispositions to the relevant object. Notably, this includes present other mental states as well as past ones. If you fear the spider, you should ask yourself what else you feel, believe and desire with regard to spiders. For instance, you could ask yourself what experiences you had with spiders in the past. You might find much evidence in your memory to suggest that this kind of spider is not dangerous. Thus, there is an inconsistency between

your beliefs and this particular emotion of fear. This could lead to the judgement that the emotion of fear is inappropriate in this case.

An imperfect portfolio of criteria

Given these considerations it appears that the relationship between the formal object (or the respective first-order property of the object) and the emotion is a co-constitutional process. Neither can the emotion be defined without taking "real" properties of the object into account nor can the respective properties of the object be explained without recurrence to the corresponding emotion of individuals. Moreover, these "property-response-pairs" (Slaby 2008b, p. 195) are not fixed but depend on the continuous interplay of the individuals with the world and among each other. Emotional responses and their appropriateness depend similarly on biological prerequisites in relation to the environment, on contingent socio-cultural-historical processes and circumstances, and on rational commitments based on consistency requirements. However, none of these criteria alone is a decisive tool. They all have something to offer to assess the appropriateness of an emotion but at the same time they all have their shortcomings. The following brief cases will show that.

First, an emotion can be appropriate even if it does not directly fulfil a biological function. For example, there are complex social emotions that gain their appropriateness with some independence from biology. Take the case of shame. We feel ashamed for several (socially) appropriate reasons that have no direct cause in hard-wired, biological advantages. Complex social emotions like shame have a certain degree of freedom from hard-wired biology. What counts as shameful is contingent on various socio-historic-cultural context factors and cannot be reduced to biological function only. Granted, you can construct a case where an appropriate emotion of shame also fulfils a biological function. For instance take an upper class young girl in the 19th century in Vienna. Her feeling ashamed in certain social situations (e.g. when too much of her skin becomes visible in public) makes her fit in her social environment. Because she is part of that social environment she can sustain access to the resources and privileges of that milieu and thus improves

her chances for reproduction. This might count as biological function of shame. Notably, however, the biological function in this case is indirect. The emotion of shame leads to a better social fit and this fit then fulfils a biological function. Thus, in this case the emotion of shame has an indirect biological but a direct social function. Importantly, more complex social emotions exist in a remarkable variety. This sheer broadness of our (more complex) emotions suggests that they cannot all be hard-wired biological responses. There is no strict biological pathway to what is shameful, independent of the socio-historic-cultural context. Thus, the variability of our emotional responses is much better explained by taking social dynamics into account, too.

Second, social appropriateness alone cannot be the end of the road either. There are cases of socially appropriate emotions that nonetheless cannot be approved. To employ a harsh example, in Nazi Germany it was "appropriate" to feel disgust and hate against Jewish people. It was "normal" to have these emotions and children were raised with respective paradigm scenarios. Nonetheless, today we regard these emotions as strictly inappropriate.

Third, consistency alone cannot guarantee appropriateness. There are cases of consistent experiences that are nevertheless inappropriate. The example of the psychopath stated above can show that. He might have consistent beliefs, desires and emotions all leading to killing other people. He may believe that other people want to kill him and the only way out it to kill them first. He may desire to kill them and has corresponding emotions of hate and anger against them. This consistency notwithstanding, we would not say that his emotions are appropriate.

Given these points, we see that there is no single decisive criterion to assess the appropriateness of an emotion. Instead, the three criteria must be understood as being in a dynamic interplay. This way they can provide some guidance. The more criteria are fulfilled the more likely it is that an emotion is appropriate.

3.4.3. Additional criteria: Biological function, social fitness and consistency

This section will argue that the three criteria from philosophy of emotion discussed above can to some extent be applied for assessing the appropriateness of existential feelings and self-feelings. However, there are severe shortcomings to each of these criteria. Thus, they display an imperfect portfolio of criteria that does not provide rock-bottom evidence.

Biological function

First consider the criterion of biological function. Whenever an existential feeling is appropriate, it should serve a biological function (A → C4). Accordingly, when an existential feeling shapes our space of possibilities in a way that harms biological functioning, it can be counted as inappropriate (¬A → ¬C4). Please note that a fairly broad understanding of biological function is employed here. For instance, successful reproduction is taken as part of biological function. When a woman gets pregnant and gives birth to a child, her own biological function might be harmed or at least put at risk for the sake of the biological function of her descendant. Nonetheless, since successful reproduction counts as part of biological function the overall biological function is not harmed even in the case of injuries caused by giving birth. The same applies when parents risk their life to save their children. Also note that this criterion is not about judging every single action as inappropriate that may harm biological function, such as drinking a glass of wine with friends. Remember that we assess existential feelings here. We try to evaluate what makes these general, fundamental, affective background orientations appropriate or inappropriate. An existential feeling is inappropriate if it in general promotes behavior that harms biological function.

Take an existential feeling as example where your sense of agency is significantly reduced. Such an existential feeling may be part of depression. You are deprived of possibilities in general and feel unable and unmotivated to act. It becomes hard even to get out of bed and conduct basic activities such as preparing food or taking

a shower. As a consequence of your inactivity, your overall biological functioning becomes weaker and weaker. You become even more weak and tired, your muscles shrink and your cognitive abilities like concentration recede. Given that, this existential feeling can be marked as inappropriate due to its bad consequences for the biological functioning of the body.

Note that Ratcliffe explicitly discusses biological factors in the assessment of inappropriateness of existential feelings (Ratcliffe 2008, pp. 276ff.). He dismisses the view that bodily pathologies can be seen as direct cause for pathologies in existential feelings. For example, in influenza there is obviously something wrong in the body, the body is sick. As a consequence, we feel differently. Our existential feelings change, e.g. we feel detached from the world and vulnerable in general. However, Ratcliffe argues that this existential feeling in the case of influenza need not be seen as inappropriate in itself. When being sick it is quite natural to feel sick. Additionally, he argues that inappropriate existential feelings can emerge without being caused by biological malfunctioning. For example, someone can experience the whole world as threatening and other people as dangerous. Paranoia may be a label for such a state. Notably, this state need not be caused by a biological pathology according to Ratcliffe. Nonetheless, it deprives from normal communication with other people and can thus be regarded as inappropriate existential feeling according to criterion 2 presented above. Therefore, Ratcliffe argues, we cannot conclude from biological malfunctioning to the inappropriateness of an existential feeling. There can be cases of biological pathology that do not cause inappropriate existential feelings (e.g. influenza) and cases of inappropriate existential feelings that are not caused by biological pathology (e.g. paranoia). Even if an existential feeling was in fact the effect or symptom of a biological malfunction, this would not make it inappropriate itself. There have to be distinct criteria to assess the appropriateness of existential feelings that are independent from biological pathologies.

Does this lead to a complete refutation of the criterion of biological function? Ratcliffe's line of argumentation seems convincing to a certain extent. Take the case of influenza as example. Here the precondition A → C4 seems to be violated. There is an appropriate existential feeling and at the same time there is a biological malfunction (influenza). Thus, there are cases where appropriate existential feelings coincide with biological malfunctioning.

However, biological function can partly serve as criterion notwithstanding. An existential feeling can be seen as inappropriate when it is not the effect but the cause of biological malfunctioning. In Ratcliffe's argument the biological level is taken as the cause for existential feelings and that direct link is dismissed. There is an alternative option, though. An existential feeling can be the cause of biological malfunctioning, e.g. it can promote unhealthy behaviour. As shown in the example above, an existential feeling of significantly diminished agency can harm the body although it need not itself be caused by a bodily pathology. When you are so depressed that you cannot do anything, over time your body will be harmed by your inactivity. For this reason, the criterion of biological function can contribute to the evaluation of existential feelings. If an existential feeling harms our biological functions to a certain extent, it can be marked as inappropriate. This does not, however, suspend the problem to examine if a biological malfunctioning is caused by an existential feeling or by something else. For example, in the case of paranoia there could be biological malfunctioning (e.g. unusual conduct of the cardiovascular system or unusual brain activities), and it cannot easily be decided if it is a cause or an effect of the inappropriate existential feeling. Nonetheless, in those cases where the causal relationship of the biological malfunctioning and the existential feeling can be clarified (such as influenza), the criterion is still valid and useful.[274]

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[274] In his recent book (2015a, chapter 3) Ratcliffe explores the relationship between depression and bodily changes in more detail. He modifies his position and challenges the distinction between psychological and somatic illness in general. He argues that in most cases of pathology there are both psychological and somatic aspects. Thus, he may question the line of argument taken here because it still builds to some extent on this distinction. However, even if he is right this would not refute the criterion of biological function. If every biological malfunction coincides with psychological malfunction and vice versa, then biological malfunction is a valid criterion for detecting psychological

Self-feeling has consequences for our biological functioning, too. The appropriateness of a self-feeling can thus be evaluated with a look at its biological effects. Take the example of a self-feeling with a reduced sense of ability. You feel weak and powerless. Potential actions seem either meaningless or too hard to execute. You lie in your bed at home and reflect on your life and what should be done about it. But no matter what idea pops up in your mind, you are unable to actually perform anything reasonable. You constantly feel "I cannot do it". You hardly ever leave home. Obviously, such a condition harms you biological wellbeing. Your body will lose strength in a similar way than in the example above. Your muscles will shrink, your cardiovascular system will decrease its capabilities, you might even lose skills like orientation, behaving properly in traffic, etc. Probably your immune system will weaken due to less exposure to unfamiliar places. Notably, this will eventually result in actual weakness and powerlessness. Such a self-feeling has self-fulfilling character in this regard. In contrast, an appropriate self-feeling of strength and power will make you embark challenging projects. These projects will train your bodily capabilities and make you stronger. Importantly, this is not a black and white situation. Surely, there are self-feelings of power that lead to daredevilry and unreasonable danger. Such an overly risky behaviour may not improve your biological well-being. Accordingly, a certain amount of reservation concerning your own strength might prove not the worst option under some circumstances. For example, it could help to keep a cool head and decide with reason what to do in some situations. Be that as it may, it seems helpful to take biological effects into account when assessing the appropriateness of self-feelings.

Social fitness

Second, consider the criterion of social fitness. As existential feelings do not have specific objects they cannot be assessed with the help of specific paradigm scenarios. There is not one specific existential feeling that is appropriate for a specific situation because existential feelings encompass the general way of being in

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malfunction, i.e. pathological existential feelings. In this view, if there is a pathological existential feeling, there will be biological malfunction, too. Accordingly, if there is no biological malfunction, there cannot be psychological malfunction and thus no pathological existential feeling.

the world as a whole. However, social aspects should not be left out in the evaluation of the appropriateness of existential feelings. Imagine an existential feeling where your sense of agency is overly strong. The whole world seems subject to your creative powers. For itself, such an existential feeling need not harm your biological functions. However, you might experience difficulties in social interaction. People might regard you as too self-confident, as narcissistic and overestimating yourself. There is a certain norm in every society of how much power an individual may attribute to its own activity and how much it should see itself as dependent on influences of the environment.[275] If you break this norm it is regarded as inappropriate. Thus, an existential feeling of extreme, individual creative power may appear inappropriate in certain rather collectivistic/interdependent societies. This leads to the conclusion that there are existential feelings that are socially inappropriate in a certain society.[276] Therefore, the criterion of social fitness could be stated as follows: Whenever an existential feeling is appropriate, it will promote your social fitness (A → C5). Accordingly, if an existential feeling is inappropriate, it not promote or even harm your social fitness and thus may lead to difficulties in social interaction (¬A → ¬C5).

Notably, this criterion is dependent on a specific cultural-historic social setting. Thus, the counterexample provided in the context of emotions applies here as well. We have seen social settings that regarded existential feelings as appropriate that cannot be seen as appropriate at all anymore. In Nazi Germany many people presumably had existential or self-feelings of grandiosity and superior power. Many felt being a privileged "race", justified to dominate other nations and ethnicities, and to rule over life and death. These existential or self-feelings were "socially appropriate" in the society of Nazi Germany. Nonetheless, it is clear that they cannot be seen as appropriate today. Importantly, this does not seem to be a

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[275] Although not completely analogous, compare Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (Hofstede 2001) or Markus and Kitayama's distinction between independent and interdependent cultures (Markus and Kitayama 1991, 2010) for more details.
[276] Notably, an existential feeling that is appropriate in one society (e.g. a collectivistic/interdependent one) may be perfectly appropriate in another society (e.g. an individualistic/independent one).

matter of socio-cultural relativism. The social norms of Nazi Germany are not just one option equivalent to others in the history of mankind. Instead, today it is believed that those social norms were wrong in a much stronger sense.[277] Therefore, we have to acknowledge that there can be cases where inappropriate existential feelings coincide with social acceptance. Hence, the precondition ¬A → ¬C5 is violated. Be that as it may, this counterexample is obviously an extreme case. Cultural-historic social settings are usually stable and reasonable enough to serve as yardstick for the evaluation of existential feelings within the lifetime of a particular individual.

In a word, existential feelings can be inappropriate when they harm your social fitness. Take psychopathic patients as an example. Their existential feeling discloses a world without empathy or remorse. Another person appears solely as object for their own egoistic projects. They are unable to anticipate the consequences of their actions in other people. This often leads to antisocial behaviour like cheating, cruelty, or exploitation. Naturally, such existential feelings and such behaviour harms their social fitness. Even if there are examples of psychopaths that are well-integrated in society for some time, in the long run most of them are doomed to be unmasked.[278]

As can be seen, inappropriate self-feelings can harm our social fitness, too. Take a person who is overly fond of himself and feels unjustifiably stronger and more intelligent than the rest. Such a person will likely suffer from difficulties in social interaction. He will find it hard to engage in true cooperation, other people will be reluctant to expose themselves to his self-praise. Notably, these social norms depend on the socio-historical context. There are cultures that embrace strong self-confidence more than others. Therefore, when applying the criterion of social fitness the respective socio-historical context must always be taken into account.

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[277] Although this is a fascinating philosophical issue we obviously cannot go into more detail here.
[278] Take the Austrian examples of Jack Unterweger or Josef Fritzl.

Consistency

Third, appropriate existential feelings need to be to a certain extent consistent with our overall mental states. If your existential feeling strongly contradicts the majority of your beliefs and desires, you may become suspicious about it. Put more formally, this criterion states: Whenever your existential feeling is appropriate, it will be consistent with your other mental states (A → C6). Accordingly, whenever your existential feeling is inappropriate, it will be inconsistent with your other mental states (¬A → ¬C6). Consider the following example: Normally, you have the belief that other people are to a certain extent similar to you, they live their own lives and pursue their projects. Most of them treat you with respect and dignity. Now imagine that suddenly an existential feeling emerges where other people seem constantly watching you. You have the strong feeling that they are waiting for the right moment to hurt you. You are starting to be affected by paranoia. At this moment, your until-then stable beliefs are still active and you might feel puzzled and wonder why everything feels different now. On the one hand you know that other people have better things to do than trying to hurt you. On the other hand you have the strong feeling that they do want to do bad things to you. There is an inconsistency in your overall state that implies that some elements must be wrong. Now two things can happen. Either your paranoid existential feeling is so strong and overwhelming that your beliefs change eventually or you manage to change your existential feeling with the help of your cognitive abilities. This two-way interaction was discussed above in chapter 2.2.5.. Important for now is the fact that an existential feeling can stand against your beliefs and desires. In this case it is not clear that your beliefs and desires are wrong, it could also be that your existential feeling is inappropriate, as in the example of beginning paranoia.

We can see that the criterion of consistency is not rock-bottom either. On the one hand, there are cases where an inconsistency between your existential feeling and your other mental states coincides with an inappropriate existential feeling. The example of beginning paranoia showed that. On the other hand, there are cases where such an inconsistency coincides with an appropriate existential feeling

because the other mental state is wrong. The section concerned with the relationship between existential feelings and thought (chapter 2.2.5.) discussed the example of a philosopher claiming that "The world does not exist". She has an inconsistency between her belief and her appropriate existential feeling.[279] Thus, the precondition (A → C6) is violated. Granted, an important feature of this example is her obliviousness of the existential feeling. So you might argue that there is no actual awareness of the inconsistency. Be that as it may, the situation is even clearer with the other precondition (¬A → ¬C6). Clearly, there are cases where inappropriate existential feelings are consistent with other mental states. We explored these cases when showing how existential feelings shape our thoughts. For example, we saw that in depression our thoughts are largely expressing our existential feeling and are thus consistent with it. Notably, the existential feeling in depression is obviously inappropriate and pathological. Hence the precondition ¬A → ¬C6 is violated.

Ratcliffe discusses similar issues under the term "pragmatic" (Ratcliffe 2008, pp. 282ff.). Ratcliffe dismisses the view that an existential feeling can be seen as pragmatically inappropriate when it prevents a person from living her life as she normally does. This criterion of pragmatism may come up in cases of psychiatric illness that involve inappropriate existential feelings. For example, in depression or schizophrenia people are obviously bereft of their normal lives. Thus, one may be inclined to conclude: An existential feeling is inappropriate when it leads to an inconsistency in ones behaviour. However, as Ratcliffe points out, existential feelings can lead to substantial change in one's life in a good way. There are awakening religious experiences that are regarded as epiphany. These experiences and the respective existential feelings can lead to severe inconsistency in one's behaviour, they can stop you living your normal life and make you do and see things in a completely different way. Nonetheless we would not speak of inappropriate existential feelings in these cases. Any good theory of the appropriateness of

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[279] Compare chapter 4.2.2. below for more examples of appropriate self-feelings and inconsistent other mental states. These cases are called self-deception in this book.

existential feelings must allow for radical life changes as long as these changes lead to experienced or felt improvement. There must be the possibility for appropriate existential feelings that coincide with severe life changes and thus inconsistencies.

As a consequence, consistency in one's mental states or behaviour is not a decisive criterion to assess the appropriateness of existential feelings. However, this does not imply to abandon this criterion completely. At least, a detected inconsistency between one's existential feelings and other mental states should lead to suspiciousness and careful observation. The additional application of other criteria might help then to evaluate the appropriateness of the existential feeling. Additionally, inconsistency seems appropriate if it leads to improved life perspectives. The examples mentioned by Ratcliffe are rare cases of outstanding illumination and lead to enriched approaches to life. Inappropriate cases of inconsistency, in contrast, lead to impoverished life perspectives. Granted, it is not always so clear whether a change in existential feeling lead to better or worse life perspectives. One might argue that the life improvement of a person converting to the roman-catholic church and taking the veil is not immediately obvious. However, it can be, at least in the perspective of that person.

Self-feelings need to display a certain amount of consistency, too. An appropriate self-feeling must be for the most part aligned with our overall mental states. Take the example of a patient with a narcissistic personality disorder. Some interpretations[280] of this disorder believe that narcissistic patients have feelings of diminished self-worth deep down in their hearts. Their self-feeling seems to include a sense of unworthiness, of not being quite right. Grandiose, ego-centric beliefs are meant to compensate this fundamental self-feeling. Obviously, there is an inconsistency between megalomaniac thoughts and a self-feeling of unworthiness. In this case, the inconsistency points to a pathological self-feeling. However, inconsistencies between self-feelings and other mental states need not imply an inappropriate self-feeling. It can also mean that the other mental states are wrong.

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[280] Such as psychoanalysis or schema therapy (Kernberg 1984; Kohut 1971; Young et al. 2003).

We will further explore these cases below in chapter 4.2., when exploring the relationship between self-feeling and self-interpretation. In any event, the criterion of consistency should be included in the evaluation of self-feelings, too.

Epistemic reliability as additional criterion?

In addition to the criteria discussed above, Ratcliffe mentions and dismisses another criterion, an epistemological one (Ratcliffe 2008, pp. 281f.). One might argue that an existential feeling can be seen as appropriate if it enables epistemic reliability (A → C7) and as inappropriate if it leads to epistemic errors (¬A → ¬C7). Appropriate existential feelings help you to perceive the world as it actually is. However, the relationship between existential feelings and epistemic capabilities does not seem so tight. First, there are many epistemic errors that are not caused by inappropriate existential feelings. For example, if someone is deceived by an optical illusion (like the Müller-Lyer examples), this need not have anything to do with his current existential feeling. In fact, many people believe in quite strange things like UFOs, ghosts, telepathy, etc., without having inappropriate existential feelings. Thus, precondition one is violated. Second, there are inappropriate existential feelings that still enable epistemically correct beliefs. For instance, a depressive patient may have epistemically correct beliefs about his room in the clinic, the personal details of his nursing staff, etc. Therefore, precondition one is violated, too, and the criterion of epistemic error cannot be seen as reliable to detect inappropriate existential feelings.

Hence, there is not much reason to apply this criterion to self-feeling. It seems that the appropriateness of self-feelings does not have much correlation to the epistemic reliability of its bearer.

3.4.4. Conclusion: An imperfect portfolio

In this chapter we saw that criteria to evaluate the appropriateness of existential feelings for the most part apply for self-feelings, too. This does not come too much

as a surprise, since existential feelings and self-feelings are understood as two aspects of fundamental human affectivity. In addition, we saw that three criteria from philosophy of emotion hold in principle for existential feelings and self-feelings, too.

Importantly, however, all things considered it is difficult to find an ultimate criterion that decisively marks a particular existential feeling or self-feeling as appropriate or inappropriate. Every examined criterion failed to provide rock-bottom reliability. Even the two criteria explicitly suggested by Ratcliffe, openness to alternatives and to other people, seem to provide approximate tools only, as there are counterexamples for them. All the criteria examined thus seem to be viable rather for practical purposes than for rock-bottom philosophical certainty. In many cases it cannot be ultimately determined if someone's openness to alternatives or other people is rooted in an appropriate or inappropriate existential feeling or self-feeling. Of course, in cases of severe psychiatric illness, such as schizophrenia or depression, it is quite obvious that there are inappropriate existential feelings and self-feelings involved. However, we would not need a theory of fundamental affectivity to detect the pathological status of these disorders. There are other distinctive criteria that suffice to do that. Different from that, in normal cases with rather subtle deviances none of the abovementioned criteria will decisively distinguish appropriate from inappropriate existential feelings and self-feelings. This relativity must be acknowledged and accepted.

Nonetheless, we should not abandon the possibility to evaluate existential feelings and self-feelings in principle. Instead, this book suggests a fine-grained spectrum where inappropriate, pathological existential feelings and self-feelings are the one extreme and fully appropriate cases the other. Within this spectrum there is a lot of space for many kinds of existential feelings and self-feelings, from slightly inappropriate to more appropriate cases. This seems most adequate to the phenomenon. Even if there is no single rock-bottom tool to work with, the combination of different criteria may increase the probability of a productive

assessment. If we combine the criteria of openness to alternatives and other people, the right amount of stability over time, biological functionality, social fitness, and consistency, it is possible to make an evaluation of an existential feeling or a self-feeling that is more than an arbitrary guess. In fact, contemporary epistemology has gotten used to the fact that knowledge is seldom (if not never) absolute (Reed 2012). Epistemic faculties like perception or deliberation have their own shortcomings and are far from perfect. It might be that the only instance that completely fulfils both preconditions $(A \rightarrow C) \wedge (\neg A \rightarrow \neg C)$ would be a case of logical tautology. Thus, the partial fallibility of criteria to examine the status of an existential feeling is not much worse than our situation in other fields. We often face the challenge that our criteria are not 100% reliable, still we do not abandon them as a whole.

Above all, it is questionable if we need complete reliability for the assessment of existential feelings and self-feelings at all. It might be useful to determine if a belief concerning a specific feature of a specific object (e.g. a gold nugget weighing 500g) is true. In contrast, the question if life in this world is worth living cannot and need not be solved in this way. Existential feelings and self-feelings are fundamental phenomena that encompass all our experience and thought, they are not directed at specific objects. They are pre-propositional and cannot easily be described in terms of truth or falseness. Instead, they are life perspectives that shape the way we are in this world. They are more a matter of pragmatic life conduct than a matter of epistemic truth. Moreover, our fundamental perspective on life and ourselves is not just a matter of discovery. There is an element of self-creation or self-determination in it, too. To a certain extent we "make up our minds". We decide and influence who and how we are in this world. This has been emphasized by existentialist philosophers like Sartre and contemporary proponents of agentialist views on self-knowledge (Bilgrami 2006; Boyle 2009; Moran 2001). We will go into more detail on these questions in part four of this book. This element of self-creation amounts to a partial owner's authority over our fundamental life

perspective and thus our existential feelings and self-feelings. As a consequence, there cannot be an ultimate criterion for their appropriateness.

Given these points, this chapter did not provide rock-bottom criteria to assess the truth value of particular existential feelings and self-feelings. Instead, it provided some guidance about when an existential feeling or self-feeling can be regarded as appropriate or inappropriate. All the presented criteria are fallible and do not provide more than suggestions concerning one's existential feelings and self-feelings.

The two aspects of self-feeling

In chapter 3.1.5. we saw that self-feeling has two concurrent aspects. First, it is a feeling of one's bare existence. Second, it is a feeling of one's individuality. Together it is a feeling of individual existence. It is important to understand that the first and the second aspect differ in their possible inappropriateness.

First, there is self-feeling as a feeling of the *that* of bare existence. It cannot fail. Whenever we have a self-feeling, no matter what kind, we feel that we exist. Thus, self-feeling as feeling of bare existence is always completely adequate. This includes cases of psychiatric disorders where our sense of reality is harmed. Even if people feel unreal or dead, they feel something. Even patients with severe depersonalization or derealisation disorders have a self-feeling, namely one that tells them that they are unreal or dead. Thus, on a fundamental level, they have an awareness of their bare existence, although they cannot experience this existence properly. They are self-conscious in the most basic sense there is. The mere fact that there is any self-feeling suffices to assign this basic self-consciousness.[281] In a word, in these psychiatric disorders self-feeling still warrants existence but involves distorted feelings of reality. This shows that self-feeling is immune to error through

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[281] The situation seems to be similar in extreme cases of meditation where some people report complete self-loss (Fasching 2008). However, even these experiences of self-loss are experiences that are had by someone. A person who reports these experiences obviously has the awareness that these experiences are had by her. Otherwise she could not report them. As a consequence, even these cases involve a basic self-consciousness that is warranted by self-feeling.
A similar response can be given to defenders of a No-Self-Theory (Metzinger 2003, 2009, 2011; Siderits 2011) who claim self-consciousness to be a construction.

misidentification. Your experience is immediately disclosed as being your own. Whenever a self-feeling is felt, it infallibly discloses our bare existence, no matter what pathological content it might have.

The situation is different for the second aspect of self-feeling. Feelings of individuality (the *how* of our existence) can fail. We saw above that self-feeling does not comprise of one's feeling of bare existence alone. At the same time, self-feeling is a feeling of *how* we are in this world. It is the affective disclosure of our individual life as a whole. In self-feeling we do not only feel *that* we exist but also *how* life is for us in this world. This aspect of self-feeling is much richer and more diverse in content than the first one. While the first aspect is fairly the same for every subject, the second aspect is different for everyone. We all feel *that* we exist as long as we exist. Additionally, we feel *how* we are as individual persons, and this feeling varies from person to person. Obviously, these individual feelings can fail. We might feel overly strong and powerful and must recognize later that we overestimated ourselves. Likewise, we might feel an essential part of a particular social group and must acknowledge at some point in time that in fact we are not. Therefore, we can err concerning the content of our individual self-feelings. Although the awareness *that* it is always me who has a particular experience is infallible, the felt experience of *how* things are going for us might be subject to error.

The question might arise how Stephan and Slaby's (Slaby and Stephan 2008, 2011; Stephan 2012) distinction between elementary and non-elementary existential feelings fit into this distinction between the aspects of bare existence and individuality in self-feeling. It seems reasonable to argue that both types of feelings belong to the aspect of individuality. This is quite intuitive for non-elementary feelings. They are predominantly concerned with one's own vital state and one's position in the social environment. These dimensions seem to be central for our individual personhood. Thus, they are part of the individual aspect of self-feeling. However, it might be not so intuitive for elementary feelings. They are concerned with our fundamental sense of reality. As we have seen, elementary feelings can go

wrong. One can have the feeling of non-existence, such as in the case of depersonalisation. Notably, even in these cases the fundamental awareness of one's existence has not completely vanished. Even if you have the strong feeling that you are dead, you still have this very feeling. It is the experience of this feeling then, that warrants the awareness of your existence. As long as you have a feeling, no matter which content it has, you are aware that you exist. Therefore, even in extreme cases of depersonalisation the fundamental aspect of self-feeling as feeling of bare existence is not completely extinguished. Thus, elementary feelings are part of the aspect of individuality, shaping our individual way of being in this world.

In a word, at its core self-feeling is immune to error through misidentification and thus completely adequate. It accounts for our most fundamental self-awareness. In its role as disclosure of our individual being in this world, however, it can go wrong.

3.5. Conclusion

This part presented the core claims of the account of self-feeling defended in this book. This was achieved by synthesizing the findings from part one and two of this book. Self-feeling is understood as pre-reflective, pre-propositional, bodily feeling that shapes our space of possibilities. It is the affective disclosure of individual existence. In this way, several problems in current debates can be addressed. Self-feeling escapes the problems of infinite regress and vicious circularity that reflective theories struggle with. It overcomes the "ex negativo" challenge that current pre-reflective accounts face. Moreover, it complements our understanding of fundamental human affectivity by clarifying its tight relation to self-consciousness. In addition, self-feeling can be understood as affective disclosure and manifestation of the formal background structure of our being in this world, that is the "care-structure", and thus avoid the problem of unity. This makes self-feeling egological in a new, unorthodox sense. The last chapter of this part discussed several potential criteria to evaluate the appropriateness of specific existential and self-feelings. We

learned that all examined criteria are fallible so there is no rock-bottom truth available in this question. However, taken together as a portfolio of criteria, they can provide some guidance. Particularly, the following criteria for existential and self-feelings were found: Openness to alternatives, openness to other people as people, stability over time, biological function, social fitness, and consistency. Building on all this, we are now in the position to explore the relationship of self-feeling to higher levels of more elaborate thoughts about ourselves. This is going to happen in part four of this book.

4. Self-feeling and thought: Self-interpretation

This forth part of the book is concerned with the question how self-feeling relates to higher level reasoning about ourselves. It explores how self-feeling might inform how we think about ourselves, that is how we develop self-interpretations. This links back to one of the major challenges in contemporary philosophy of self-consciousness.

Part one of this book showed that existing, pre-reflective theories of self-consciousness struggle with the "ex negativo" challenge. This has two implications. First, they do not offer a satisfying account of the phenomenon itself. Their explanations remain formal and empty. In contrast, part three presented positive features of self-feeling and thus showed how the account presented in this book is different in this regard. Second, existing, pre-reflective accounts of self-consciousness do not entail material content. This implication is in the focus of this chapter of the book. They restrict themselves to the formal character of "mineness" or "for-me-ness" of experience. Thus, they cannot explain how our most basic awareness of ourselves may inform more elaborate thoughts about ourselves. For example, we saw that in Zahavi's account (Zahavi 1999, 2005, 2014) there is a gap between his basic "experiential self" and the higher levels of "interpersonal" or "narrative self". This part of the book attempts to bridge this gap by giving an account for the relationship between the basic level of self-feeling and the higher level of more elaborate thoughts about ourselves, such as in self-interpretation.

This part has three chapters. First, an account of self-interpretation is presented and its interplay with self-feeling is discussed. Second, we explore what can be said about the appropriateness of particular self-interpretations. Third, some ideas are shared how this might inform our notion of authenticity.

4.1. Self-interpretation

This chapter explores how self-feeling is related to more elaborate thoughts about ourselves. It is argued that self-feeling plays a crucial role in self-interpretation both as a source of evidence and by shaping the process from the background.

4.1.1. A terminological framework

As mentioned at the beginning of this book, there is no clear and common terminological framework to define and distinguish notions such as self-consciousness and self-knowledge.

Based on what has been developed so far in this book, we are now ready to make a proposal for a terminological framework to deal with this ambiguity. Please note that this might not be relevant for the whole field of discussion. Yet, it may help to clarify the claims taken in this book.

We begin with the notion of self-knowledge. It typically accounts for the fact that we are able to hold propositional attitudes about ourselves. These attitudes are often understood as "knowledge" about ourselves and discussed under the term "self-knowledge" (e.g. Bar-On 2004; Bilgrami 2006; Boyle 2011; Byrne 2005; Dretske 1994; 1999; Evans 1982; Gallois 1996; Lawlor 2009; McGeer 1996; Moran 2001). Moreover, it seems that many of the contributions from the early days of the analytic debate on the phenomenon can be subsumed under this category (e.g. Castañeda 1966; 1999; Chisholm 1981; Lewis 1979; Perry 1979; Shoemaker 1968, 1996). In current debates it is unclear to what extent knowledge about ourselves is similar to or different from knowledge in the traditional, world-oriented sense. Dretske and Evans (Dretske 1994; 1999; Evans 1982), for example, argue in their "transparency model" that self-knowledge can be acquired by focusing on our world-knowledge. A contrasting example is Moran's non-epistemic approach (Moran 2001). He argues that self-knowledge is not so much a matter of knowing

but rather of committing oneself. In self-knowledge we create commitments and thereby shape ourselves.

Given these points, in this book self-knowledge is understood as explicit, propositional knowledge of our own mental states. It refers to our capability to use the first person pronoun in a meaningful way. We can form thoughts and sentences like "I want to eat vanilla ice cream" or "I believe that Robert Musil was Austrian". The correct usage of the term "I" entails that the subject is able to self-ascribe propositional attitudes. In these cases we know that we have a certain mental state. This capability shall be captured by the notion self-knowledge in this book.

However, it has been shown by some authors (Bermudez 1998; Frank 2012, 2015; Peacocke 2014; Zahavi 1999, 2005, 2014) that there must be a more basic phenomenon underlying these propositional capabilities. In this book, the term self-consciousness refers to this phenomenon, as discussed in part one. Whenever you experience something, it is at the same time clear that the experience is your own, without reflection or propositional thinking.

Looking even closer we see that this self-intimating character of experience is still not the end of the road. We must acknowledge that there are deeper levels which can only be touched superficially in the context of this book. We came across these levels during the discussion of how self-feeling avoids problems of reflective and current pre-reflective theories in chapter 3.2.. We discovered that not all mental states are experienced consciously. Many current theories struggle with explaining why and how some mental states become conscious while others do not. There seem to be at least two levels below conscious experience. First, there are mental states or events that are part of our overall experience but not in the focus of attention and thus not conscious in the strong sense. They are rather subconscious processes and experiences that are in the background of our mind. We might perform a task well without being consciously aware of every detail of it, e.g. driving a car. Further examples include the unnoticed smell of a room, background noises, my clothes touching my skin, or the phenomenon of inattentional blindness (Mack

and Rock 1998). Notably, these subconscious experiences are accessible to consciousness. Often it just takes a shift of our focus of attention in order to consciously (and minely) experience the smell of the room, a background noise, the touch of my clothes on my skin, or the gorilla in the video.[282] Second, there is an even deeper level, namely unconscious mental states. They are parts of our mind that are not part of our experience. For example, we possess memories that are not present in our experience at the moment but may be remembered once we try to. We may have deep values and desires that influence our personality, behavior and experience without being experienced themselves. Traumatic events may leave their traces in our mind that are not easily accessible to conscious experience. All these phenomena are below the level of direct self-consciousness or "for-me-ness".

Let us now have a closer look at the propositional level of self-knowledge. Cassam (2014), Schwitzgebel (2012) and Lawlor (2008, 2009) propose to distinguish two kinds of "self-knowledge". Cassam (2014, chapter 3) and Schwitzgebel (2012, p. 191) regard self-knowledge such as "I know that I believe that it is raining" or "I know that I prefer vanilla over chocolate ice cream" as "trivial" and "boring". They acknowledge the fact that most philosophers of self-consciousness or self-knowledge are concerned with phenomena like these and that they deserve a proper explanation. However, they see it as a kind of mental phenomena that has little to do with the problem we refer to as "self-knowledge" in everyday life. They argue that thinking about ourselves becomes especially interesting and relevant when we try to make sense of more sophisticated aspects of our mental lives. This is what they call "substantial self-knowledge". It includes knowledge of one's character, one's values, one's abilities, one's aptitudes, one's emotions, and knowledge about what makes one happy (Cassam 2014, p. 29). Knowledge of the first "trivial" kind seems to come pretty easy to us. Normally, we are rather immediately aware of a standing belief like that about the current weather

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[282] Obviously, there is much more to say about that, which would detract us far away from the project of this book. But there is fascinating ongoing research on these problems at the intersection between philosophy and neuroscience, e.g. the work on blindsight (Carruthers 1996; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008; Weiskrantz 1986, 1997), Block's overflow thesis (2011b, 2014) or Gazzaniga's (2015) split-brain patients.

situation. Likewise, we normally know immediately about our simple preferences such as those about ice cream. In contrast, "substantial" self-knowledge seems much harder to acquire. We often struggle in knowing what kind of person we are or what actually makes us happy. Rather than thinking about how we come to know that we believe that we are wearing socks today (Cassam 2014, pp. vii f.) we should focus on how we come to know that we value democracy and cooperation, or desire to become a parent, Cassam and Schwitzgebel argue. Similarly, Lawlor (2008, p. 337) distinguishes "basic" from "quotidian" and "deep" self-knowledge. "Basic" self-knowledge seems to be similar to "trivial" self-knowledge. It is supposed to come to us effortless as a "routine by-product of consciousness". It concerns mental states such as the belief that one is awake. In contrast, "quotidian" and "deep" self-knowledge are forms of knowledge that require effort and interpretation. They are different ends of one continuum with no sharp borders. "Deep" self-knowledge concerns unconscious mental states, such as those investigated in psychoanalysis and "quotidian" self-knowledge concerns more everyday mental states that are nonetheless not immediately obvious. Both "deep" and "quotidian" self-knowledge seem to be compatible with Cassam's and Schwitzgebel's "substantial" self-knowledge.

This distinction makes sense with regard to the phenomena in question. Indeed, there seems to be a difference between the immediate articulation of everyday experiences and the more sophisticated soul-searching we are engaging in when trying to acquire more substantial knowledge about ourselves. Therefore, it seems adequate to talk about self-knowledge when it comes to rather direct articulations about one's conscious experiences. These articulations contain the first person pronoun. Examples include: "I know that I believe that Robert Musil was Austrian", "I know that I see an apple in front of me", and "I know that I prefer vanilla over chocolate ice cream". For more sophisticated questions about ourselves, however, the term self-knowledge is misleading. Given the ambiguity and uncertainty connected to these substantial questions it seems sensible to use the term self-interpretation instead. Self-interpretation is the self-reflective activity of making

sense of our own individual lives and create synthesized, general narratives about who we are. There will be more details on this later in this chapter.

The following table summarizes the proposed terminology:

Level	Term	Description
0	Unconscious mental state	Mental state but not part of experience
1	Subconscious mental state	Part of experience but not conscious
2	Self-consciousness	Conscious and thus experienced „minely"
3	Self-knowledge	Explicit propositional knowledge about our mental states, using the first person pronoun
4	Self-interpretation	Self-reflective activity to create a general narrative about ourselves

Table 3: A terminological framework

It must be emphasized that there are no clear-cut borders between the "levels", even if numbers are appointed. Borderline cases can surely be found in many instances. For example, the two levels below consciousness will likely come in degrees. The question whether something is at the very back in the background of your experience or already outside it may be hard to decide in specific cases. Additionally, the distinction between self-knowledge and self-interpretation may become blurry in some self-referring propositional attitudes that entail some kind of general interpretation of yourself. Nonetheless, it makes sense to have some terminological guideline when exploring a topic as complex as this.

Based on this framework we can now explain what role self-feeling plays in it. Above, self-feeling was described as pre-reflective, pre-propositional, bodily feeling that shapes our space of possibilities. It is the affective disclosure of individual existence. It covers our individual existence as a whole and is thus egological in a

new, unorthodox sense. Based on the features of being pre-reflective and pre-propositional, it is not on level 3 or 4, that is it is neither self-knowledge nor self-interpretation. What about the more basic levels between 0 and 2? Remember that being a bodily feeling that shapes our space of possibilities means that self-feeling is part of experience and shaping it from the background at the same time. As a consequence, self-feeling covers both the level of self-consciousness (2) and the levels below that (0 and 1). In self-feeling we can consciously experience how things are going for us, how we are in this world. This is the level of self-consciousness (2). Self-feeling can also be part of experience but not in the focus of attention. We might be so immersed in a current project that the feeling of our being is not salient at the moment. This is the level of subconscious mental states (1). Moreover, self-feeling shapes how we experience the world and ourselves altogether. It is the pre-structuring background of all our experience. Thus, it seems to be in contact with the most basic level of unconscious mental states (0) as well.[283]

Given the breadth of this terminological framework, the whole range of potential questions related with it cannot be explored in this book. Instead, this part of the book restricts itself to the question how the pre-reflective, pre-propositional levels (0-2) that are covered by self-feeling and the reflective, propositional levels (3-4) of self-knowledge and self-interpretation are related. The focus will lie on self-interpretation. One of the criticisms against pre-reflective accounts of self-consciousness is their alleged inability to explain our capability for self-interpretation. For example, Manfred Frank (2012, chapter 6; 2015) remains silent on the possibility to bridge the gap from pre-reflective self-consciousness to propositional thoughts about ourselves. Different from that, one of the benefits of some higher-order theories of self-consciousness is their presumed ability to include explicit, propositional self-interpretation. Since they explain all self-

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[283] You might object that there is a contradiction in the claim that self-feeling is as bodily feeling part of experience and at the same time it covers the most basic level of unconscious mental states. Self-feeling is indeed part of experience and thus predominantly on levels 1 and 2. However, since it encompasses our being in this world as a whole, it would be odd to claim that it has nothing to do with our basic, unconscious mental states. Thus, self-feeling is involved with this most basic level as well.

consciousness by inner monitoring, there is no difficulty in claiming that self-interpretation is just an explicit version of inner monitoring. Obviously we are able to reflect on ourselves, we can consciously observe what is going on with us. However, we saw that higher-order monitoring theories face other severe troubles. As an alternative, it is argued here that with self-feeling there is a promising way to bridge the gap.

Self-interpretation rather than self-knowledge

This part of the book focuses on a phenomenon that has been labelled self-interpretation above. It is an aspect of our propositional self-relation that has been largely neglected in contemporary debates. The analytical tradition of "self-consciousness" or self-knowledge has been predominantly focussed on the role of the first person pronoun (e.g. Castañeda 1966; 1999; Chisholm 1981; Dretske 1994; Evans 1982; Lewis 1979; Perry 1979; Shoemaker 1968, 1996). Cassam (2014, p. 10) is right in claiming that most of these contributions are concerned with in some way trivial examples. Notably, this does not at all question their philosophical worth. Surely it is important to take effort to improve our understanding about how statements including the first person pronoun work. However, there has been comparatively little philosophical research on more substantial questions about ourselves. We know surprisingly little from a philosophical point of view about how we come to understand our own character, values, or what makes us happy. This is the phenomenon that this part of the book explores in more detail. Since the term self-knowledge has been used extensively to examine relatively trivial questions, it makes sense to employ another term for the questions that are central to this part of the book. As will be argued below, the term self-interpretation fits better for this than the term self-knowledge.

Notably, in contemporary philosophical literature there is not all too much work to be found on the interconnected relationship between our fundamental, pre-reflective self-consciousness and higher levels of more elaborate thoughts about ourselves. Both the Heidelberg School and Zahavi/Gallagher struggle with the "ex negativo" challenge. As a consequence, the debate on pre-reflective self-

consciousness (Frank 2012, 2015; Zahavi 1999, 2005, 2014) seems to run rather separate from the debate on "narrative self" (Flanagan 1992; Goldie 2012; MacIntyre 1985; Ricoeur 1985, 1990; Schechtman 2011) which seems to come close to what is called self-interpretation here. Admittedly, Zahavi tries to establish a bridge between what he calls "experiential self" and "narrative self". However, as has been shown above, his notion of "experiential self" is too formal and empty to provide enough material content to inform the narrative level. Therefore, it is questionable if he succeeds in explaining how this relation actually works (see also Rousse 2009). The account of self-feeling presented here is in a better position in this regard. It is a bodily feeling that shapes our space of possibilities. Thus, it has a rich phenomenology that can provide the grounds for more elaborate thoughts about ourselves. In word, we see that the phenomenon of substantial reasoning about ourselves has not been in the focus of contemporary philosophical research so far. Particularly, there is a lacuna in the explanation of how these higher levels relate to our fundamental, pre-reflective self-consciousness.

The term self-knowledge is a suboptimal candidate to describe this phenomenon. First, there are severe problems concerning the accuracy of substantial, self-related thoughts. We are often wrong when we form more substantial thoughts about ourselves. Self-feelings cannot easily be translated into self-related thoughts. There are many obstacles that prohibit such a straightforward translation. In addition, remember the difficulties concerning the appropriateness of self-feeling itself that were outlined in chapter 3.4.. Not only the process of articulation is prone to failure, also self-feeling itself may be pathological. This uncertainty renders it rather odd to speak of knowledge when articulating self-feeling. Granted, contemporary epistemology has become used to the fact that even knowledge is fallible (Reed 2012). Still, it seems strange to speak of knowledge in a case where so many aspects can go wrong.[284] Second, the term "knowledge" has rather epistemic connotations and implies that self-knowledge was knowledge about something, some object

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[284] There might be accounts of self-knowledge that include the vagueness and uncertainty that comes with thoughts about ourselves. Even so, the term "knowledge" seems not all too appropriate for the phenomenon in question.

called "the self". In contrast, things are different in our self-relation. We are not a fixed entity, a "core self", but rather a dynamic process. Third, knowledge is usually understood as being digital in its truth value. Your knowledge represented in the justified belief "A" is true or not true. There is no third option. For example, you might hold the justified belief "this ball in front of me is red". It is presupposed that its truth value is either "true" or "false". You know it or you do not know it.[285] Normally, there are clear criteria to examine if your knowledge is true or not. In the case of the ball this criterion is its redness. If the ball is indeed red, you have knowledge. If it is not red, you do not have knowledge. This is at odds with substantial thoughts about ourselves. Usually, they are not true or false in a straightforward manner and there are no clear criteria. As a result, it seems preferable not to use the notion self-knowledge in this context.

Three arguments suggest that self-interpretation is a better term to describe the phenomenon than self-knowledge. Charles Taylor (1985) and Bennett Helm (2001) seem to support this view.[286] First, self-interpretation includes two aspects. For one, there is its rootedness in some grounding. Self-interpretation needs something to be interpreted, it cannot be just a matter of imagination. This is similar to knowledge, which is supposed to be grounded in reality, too. Further, notably, self-interpretation involves an element of hermeneutic openness. Unlike a strict description or translation, an interpretation offers space for creative composition and ambiguity. An interpretation always remains preliminary. We can never be sure that it is ultimately true. It includes the presumption that there is no ultimate certainty in it. Thus, the term self-interpretation allows for the common failures in our substantial self-related thoughts and thus fits better to the phenomenon that the term self-knowledge. Second, self-interpretation need not be focused on a fixed entity, such as a "core ego". The term interpretation is much used in hermeneutics and literature. Unlike the term knowledge, it is more open to refer not to fixed "objects" but to processes and narratives. Third, when we interpret ourselves, there

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[285] We leave aside the enormous debates about the nature of knowledge as justified true belief.
[286] Notably, also Manfred Frank (1986, 1991a, 1991b) employed the term in earlier writings to emphasize the hermeneutic character of self-consciousness.

is not just one way to do it. There are many possible self-interpretations and it cannot easily be decided which one is true. It may be that there are several different truths in interpretation. Thus, your interpretation represented in the proposition "B" need not be digital in its truth value. It can be fully true or partly true or partly wrong, etc. There is an infinite number of possible truth values in this spectrum. An interpretation can be true in one perspective and wrong in another one. There can be parts of it that are true and others that are not. Moreover, often there is no clear criterion to examine if an interpretation is true or not. If there was a criterion, we would rather speak of knowledge than of interpretation. Take the interpretation of one of Shakespeare's plays as an example. If you interpret the story of "Hamlet" it is presupposed that you will not provide the ultimate truth of it. One interpreter might argue that "Hamlet" is a psychoanalytic story about unconscious desires. Another one might argue that "Hamlet" is a about philosophical positions like relativism and existentialism. Notably, it cannot be decided if one of these interpretations is true. There are many pieces of evidence missing and many aspects that appear differently depending on the perspective you look at them. Thus, one interpretation of "Hamlet" is not simply true or not true. Rather, it is one way to see it. It is common sense that there could be many different and nonetheless valuable interpretations of "Hamlet" that do not differ in their truth status. Even though they might strongly contradict each other, there is no criterion to ultimately evaluate their truth.

For these reasons, when we have substantial thoughts about ourselves, we should speak of self-interpretation rather than of self-knowledge. These thoughts about ourselves are always preliminary and they do not provide ultimate truth. There are no decisive criteria to examine the truth of a substantial thought about oneself. There could be several, contradictory thoughts about oneself and you could not ultimately decide which one is correct. It can be that many of them are simultaneously true in their respective contexts. For example, the self-interpretation "I am a shy person" can coincide with "I am an extravert person". Maybe you are shy in the context of your workplace but extravert when going out

with your friends. There are times when you are affectively overwhelmed by your shyness and there are other times when the experience of extraversion is dominant. You could not say in this case which self-interpretation is true. It seems that both have their accuracy in some regard. Our existence is multi-facetted and so our self-related thoughts should be. Notably, however, our self-interpretation is not totally arbitrary. Instead, it needs some grounding.

4.1.2. Self-interpretation and self-feeling

Krista Lawlor (2008, 2009) and following her Quassim Cassam (2014) are notable exceptions from the predominant focus on rather trivial forms of self-knowledge in the literature. They explore how we come to more substantial thoughts about ourselves. Lawlor presented an account for how to explain the relationship between pre-propositional "inner promptings" and propositional self-interpretation. Although her account of "causal self-interpretation" does not explicitly include the notion of self-feeling, it gives us a better understanding about how the relationship might work.

Lawlor's basic claim is that self-interpretation does not come for free.[287] It requires cognitive effort and is based on inference from what she calls "internal promptings". In real life we often do not immediately know what we want. Often, it puzzles us to answer such questions as "Do I want another child?", "What is the right career for me?", or "Should I marry this man?". These are problems of Cassam's (2014) and Schwitzgebel's (2012) "substantial self-knowledge". In contrast to most existing accounts of self-knowledge[288], we do not know the answers to these questions right away. How can we then become clearer on what we want in these substantial cases? Lawlor proposes that we need to look closer at what she

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[287] Cassam draws heavily on Lawlor's account in his recent book (Cassam 2014). However, he does not seem to advance much in the question of self-interpretation besides the claim that we need to take more into account than just inner promptings. Lawlor is explicitly open to this move (Lawlor 2009, p. 48).

[288] Lawlor discusses Shoemaker, Taylor, and Moran as contrasting examples. She also offered a similar account on how we come to know about our beliefs (Lawlor 2008).

calls "inner promptings". These include spontaneous inner images, natural language sentences, or memories. Lawlor also uses the term "feeling" to describe inner promptings:

> "Often one feels that one does in fact want or not want some particular thing, but cannot say immediately, all the while feeling that if one could only discover what it is that one wants, one would be better off. Katherine, for instance, may feel that there is a fact of the matter about her desire for another child—she really does or doesn't want one, and she feels that it is of great importance for her to find out which." (Lawlor 2009, p. 57)

Lawlor (2009) uses the example of Katherine who wonders if she wants another child. While sitting in her first child's bedroom looking at the sleeping baby, the question becomes salient for her. Thus, she starts to notice all kinds of inner promptings that come to her during the day. At some point she remembers how it feels to hold a newborn in her hands. At another moment she finds the already too small clothes of her first one and imagines how they would look like on another baby. Based on these phenomena, Lawlor suggests that inner promptings like these are relevant sources of self-interpretation. Once the question is asked we may observe our inner promptings more carefully and use them as basis for our deliberation. We also may "try out" one answer to the question and see what kind of inner promptings follow. For example, Katherine might say to herself tentatively "Yes, I want another child". Then, it could be that she experiences feelings of rightness, positive anticipation and images of a new-born in her hands. Alternatively, she could feel anxious about what it will be like. There could be inner images of her carrying around a crying baby and the feeling of frustration for lost career opportunities. If it is like the first scenario, this might serve as support for the hypothesis that she actually wants another child. If it is more like the second scenario, this might serve as support that she does not want another child. Also, there could be both kinds of inner promptings which would not help much for self-interpretation. Lawlor also proposes that it is possible to actively emphasize a particular stream of inner promptings and see how it develops. Katherine could actively engage in daydreaming and imagine what it would be like to have another

child.[289] She could then see what inner promptings come up and use this as guidance for her self-interpretative efforts. Notably, Lawlor admits that the inference from inner promptings is just one way to become clearer on one's desires. Surely, there are other, complementing ways (Lawlor 2009, p. 48).

This account of causal self-interpretation has an important advantage over other accounts that emphasize immediate, effortless self-knowledge. Lawlor's account of causal self-interpretation can explain how we err about our own desires. Because it requires interpretative effort to come to conclusions about our own desires, it can go wrong. In contrast, if self-knowledge came immediately and for free, it would be questionable how the possibility of error should be accounted for. Even if immediate and free self-knowledge is understood to be fallible, such an account cannot offer means to recognize such failures. When you immediately know what you want, why and how should you think about that it could be wrong?

We can now discuss how Lawlor's account fits into the terminological framework of this book. First, it seems that Lawlor tries to explain the relation between self-interpretation (level 4), self-consciousness (level 2), and sub- and unconscious levels (0 and 1). For her, self-interpretation is based on inner promptings that come up on the level of pre-propositional, "first-personally given" self-consciousness (level 2). These inner promptings are caused by deeper, hidden desires from the subconscious or unconscious (levels 0 and 1). Notably, it is not necessary that these deeper desires are understood as fixed and fully determined beforehand. It remains an option that these fundamental levels are undetermined to a certain extent and become more specific in virtue of the process of articulation and interpretation. Anyway, inner promptings on level 2 function as intermediaries between the deeper realms of our minds and the rational, deliberative level or self-interpretation. In self-interpretation, we collect all the free-floating mental events

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[289] It is also possible that because one engages in active soul-searching and observing one's inner promptings suddenly the formerly hidden desire jumps into consciousness. There are these moments when suddenly everything becomes clear and no further interpretation is needed. This is not explicitly covered by Lawlor.

like emotions, inner images, memories, inner speech, etc. and try to make sense of them.

We saw above that self-feeling covers the pre-propositional levels 0-2 and offers an affective disclosure of our individual existence. Therefore, it is intuitive that it plays a role in self-interpretation similar to Lawlor's inner promptings. We will explore in the remainder of this chapter how this might spell out.

Self-feeling and thought: A reciprocal relationship

In chapter 2.2.5. we saw that existential feelings and thought mutually influence each other.[290] As a result, existential feelings and thoughts are in a dynamic interplay, they are not separated occurrences but two aspects of an integrated phenomenon.

Self-feeling and thought are in a similar, reciprocal interplay. This has the following aspects: First, self-feeling is more basic than thought and thus shapes its content. In self-feeling we feel how we are in this world, it is a sense of our individual possibilities. This affective disclosure is a foundation for our thoughts about ourselves. For example, if we feel strong and powerful, our thoughts will follow this basic self-feeling. We will think about possible projects and aims to achieve, about opportunities to shape the world according to our plans. This goes hand in hand with corresponding thoughts about ourselves. We will believe in our power to achieve our aims, we will maintain self-related thoughts about our sufficient skills and competencies. Conversely, if we have a self-feeling of vulnerability and weakness, our thoughts will likely be about potential threats and dangers. Thoughts related to ourselves could be self-doubt or other beliefs of belittled self-worth. As can be seen, self-feeling shapes the content of our thoughts.

In addition, self-feeling shapes the form of our self-related thoughts. A particular self-feeling opens a specific space of possibilities. This space includes potential happenings and actions but also includes potential thoughts about ourselves. Thus,

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[290] This was an important aspect in the argument for the pre-propositional status of self-feeling in part three (chapter 3.1.2.).

given a particular self-feeling there are thoughts that are possible and others that are not. For example, in the case of severe depression our self-related thoughts are predominantly concerned with our insignificance and disability. We believe that we are worthless and unable to live a normal life. Thoughts like "Things will become better for me again" or "I have strengths and skills, too" are likely to be impossible in severe depression (Ratcliffe 2015a, chapter 5). Our sense of an open future is so diminished in depression that thoughts about positive sides of life just disappear from our space of possibilities. Things can become so bad that our sense of time is altered in depression. Patients report that they feel encapsuled in unchanging eternity, unable to experience the pass of time. This makes it hard to articulate thoughts about the narrative of their lives. Past, present and future merge to an ageless abyss of darkness. Thoughts are restricted to this current state, without the possibility to imagine anything else. Given these points, it becomes clear that self-feeling has such an intense influence on our space of possibilities that even the form of our self-related thoughts are shaped by it.

The relationship between self-feeling and thought cannot be described properly as a one-way street. Thought influences self-feeling, too. Our self-feeling is an affective phenomenon that comes in a pre-propositional form. Thus, it is not already articulated when experienced. Rather, our self-feeling occurs as blurry feeling of being, as a feeling of how we are in this world. This does not at all belittle its phenomenal richness. Self-feeling is a holistic, affective disclosure of our individual existence. However, we need to make some effort to articulate it in propositional form. Importantly, this process of articulation may change the underlying self-feeling. It can happen in two ways, similar to what we learned for existential feelings in chapter 2.2.5.. First, language and thought contribute to determine rather blurry feelings, including self-feeling. The blurry and indeterminate self-feeling is not merely expressed in language, it is shaped by this process, too. Second, the mere fact that you manage to articulate your self-feeling might improve it. You may feel more competent when you see that you are able to put your self-feeling into words.

Let me make this clearer with the following example: Imagine that you feel that your life is not going too well. You have a self-feeling of general uneasiness. Your life feels somehow going in the wrong direction. However, you do not quite know what is the precise reason for that. Your self-feeling is one of general discomfort but without clear determinacy. Then, you make an effort to articulate this fundamental feeling. Perhaps you go for a long walk with an old friend and discuss your situation. Suppose that your friend does not give any specific advice but behaves rather as a good listener. She gives you the opportunity to put your feeling into words. In the process of this articulation, things become clearer to you. Suddenly, everything is right in front of you. You understand that it is your marriage that causes the discomfort. In recent years, you and your husband have drifted apart and this makes you feel uneasy with your life. This articulation in turn influences your self-feeling. It is not one of general discomfort any more but now it is concerned with your abilities to have a happy marriage. Your self-feeling now may consist of feelings of defectiveness and guilt. You may feel that you failed to maintain a good relationship with your husband and that you are unsuitable for marriage. This may go hand in hand with feelings of loneliness and vulnerability. This is the first aspect of how the process of articulation can shape your self-feeling. The second one is not so much on a content level. Your self-feeling might change just because of the fact that you managed to articulate it. You may feel better because now you know what makes you unhappy. You feel more competent because you were successful in transforming your general self-feeling of uneasiness into a more determinate kind. This success makes you feel stronger. Note that these two effects are separate. In the first one, you articulate your blurry self-feeling and by virtue of this articulation it becomes more determinate and changes eventually. In the second one, you understand that you are capable of articulating your self-feeling and this raises it in turn.

Ulrich Pothast's relation between sense and language

Ulrich Pothast's (1998, chapter 2) considerations about the relationship between his notions of "sense" and "language", which have been outlined in chapter 1.3.3. of

this book, point in a similar direction. For Pothast, sense is the fundamental, primary, pre-propositional way of experiencing our being in this world. Language, for Pothast, includes all kinds of propositional cognition like thought, speech, etc. and is derivative to sense. These two phenomena are understood as distinct functions that are strongly interconnected.[291] When we have a certain belief, we normally "feel" that it is right. It would be odd to hold a belief that does not feel right. Pothast calls this phenomenon "sensing support" ["spürende Stützung" in German] (Pothast 1998, chapter 3) to emphasize the fact that every thought needs to be supported by sense.[292] Correspondingly, language contributes to make sense more specific and determinate. Sense is so fundamental that it does not come at first in a distinguished, propositional form. Language provides the possibility to articulate our sense and thereby make it clearer and more explicit.

This applies to self-feeling, too. Self-related thoughts need support from our self-feeling. Granted, when we formulate thoughts about ourselves we obviously do not rely on self-feeling only but also on self-observation, past experiences and the like. However, every self-related thought comes with a specific feeling of credibility. When we have the thought "I am a shy person", it is accompanied by a specific feeling. We feel the extent to which it matches with our underlying self-feeling. If our self-feeling is one of shyness and insecurity, it will lead to an affirmative feeling with regards to the self-related thought. Conversely, if our self-feeling is one of strength and high self-esteem, it will lead to an adverse feeling with regards to the self-related thought. Thus, self-related thoughts require support from our self-feeling. This is in line with Pothast's phenomenon of „sensing support". Correspondingly, self-feeling can become more determinate and specific with the help of self-related thoughts. As we saw above, a general self-feeling of uneasiness can be transformed into a self-feeling of unsuitability for marriage. When we make

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[291] We saw in chapter 1.3.3. however, that Pothast pays little attention to this recursive relationship. Rather, he emphasizes the grounding role of "sense" and "inner ground".

[292] Compare Proust's (2013) account of metacognition that works without representation and involves a feeling of being right.

up our minds and try to articulate our self-feelings, they may change and become clearer.

Pothast's concept of „inner ground" (Pothast 1988, chapter 4; 1998, pp. 108ff.) is much in line with this. "Inner ground" senses are not about anything specific in the world but about our general life situation. They provide a major source of grounding and disclosure for our lives. "Inner ground" senses are about what matters for us. They show us what we care for. Thus, they are the core of our individuality and are important contributors to good decision making.

In summary, we see that self-feeling and thought constitute an integrated phenomenon. Self-feeling without articulation in thought would remain blurry and indeterminate. Thoughts without foundation in self-feeling would lack their grounding. Notably, Ratcliffe and Pothast are right that the affective dimension of existential feeling, „inner ground" sense, and self-feeling is more basic. It shapes our entire space of possibilities, is constitutes our fundamental way of being in this world. Thus, it not only shapes the content of our experience but also its form. Our self-feeling determines what thoughts are even possible for us. It provides the fundamental grounding of our cognitive abilities. Also, it is a basis for our self-interpretation.

Three sources of evidence for self-interpretation

It seems that there are three major sources of evidence for self-interpretation that only combined lead to satisfying results: Self-observation, testimony, and self-feeling.

First, there is self-observation. We can observe our present and past behaviour from a third-personal perspective and take this as basis for rational self-interpretation. This is the same way other people form their opinion about us. For example, on workdays a person has a hard time getting up every morning and often comes late to work but on the weekend she is up with the birds for her morning run. This suggests the interpretation both for herself and her friends that she might does not like her work all too much. As a variant of this first source one could count

our own experience as "behaviour". We can observe how we experience the world around us and draw conclusions from this. Rousse (2009) in his notion of "self-understanding" suggests something along these lines. For example, imagine a person who keeps noticing every single pregnant woman crossing her way. No matter what time in the day or what place she is in, whenever there is a pregnant woman around her she cannot help but looking at her. Her space of experiential possibilities is shaped in a way that pregnant women become utterly salient to her. When reflecting about this "experiential behaviour" of hers she might come to the conclusion that this pattern of salience is a sign for her wish to have another child of her own.

Second, in our self-interpretation we can rely on testimony. We can ask our friends how they see us and draw conclusions from that. This seems a usual way of reaching self-interpretations. Imagine having serious talks with your friends asking the question "What do you think is right for me?". Obviously, there is much more to say about testimony, which would go beyond the scope of this book.[293]

Third, self-feeling should be regarded as an important source of evidence for self-interpretation. Self-feeling is part of experience and shapes our space of possibilities at the same time. Based on the first feature, self-feeling is part of Lawlor's stream of inner promptings (2009). It offers a direct, affective experience of one's overall being in this world. As affective resonance of one's individual existence it can itself function as source of evidence for self-interpretation. For example, a depressive patient may have an overall feeling of being vulnerable and worthless.[294] This will inform his self-interpretative efforts.

Importantly, self-feeling is not only a source for our self-interpretation but shapes it as a whole. Self-feeling shapes our space of possibilities and thus also the form of our thoughts. It determines which of the many aspects in our stream of

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[293] For an overview on the epistemology of testimony see Lackey (2010) or Fricker (2004).

[294] Importantly, the depressive patient most likely has a pathological self-feeling, as described above. Therefore, his self-interpretation will be pathological as well. Thus, in this case, the objection that the depressive self-interpretation is wrong misses its target. We will go into more detail on the appropriateness of self-interpretation later in this book.

consciousness becomes salient. Thus, it influences whish aspects of your self-observation or you acquired testimony[295] will look relevant for you. It determines which inner promptings become conspicuous. For example, a depressive patient will likely experience more sad and hopeless inner promptings than a healthy person. Also, he will remember much better what other people criticized rather than what they praised about him. Moreover, self-feeling influences what kinds of interpretation become possible. We saw above that it shapes the content and form of our thoughts. Thus, there is a space of possible interpretations that is determined by our self-feeling. A depressive patient will likely interpret his inner promptings in a pessimistic, hopeless way. Therefore, the interpretations based on the first and second sources (self-observation and testimony) are shaped by self-feeling as well. Furthermore, self-feeling perhaps plays a role on the most fundamental levels, too. Because it is an overall feeling of how we are in this world, it may shape also our deepest desires on levels 0 and 1. Your feeling of who you are shapes what you want in life.

Please note that there are both passive aspects of self-discovery and active aspects of self-creation in self-interpretation. When you rely on self-observation or testimony, this much looks like passive self-discovery. You explore who you are mostly from a third-personal perspective. There is also something like that in self-feeling, for instance when you "feel your guts" to learn what you actually want. However, self-interpretation includes an active element of self-creation, too. The process of interpretation is an open-ended and effortful activity. You do not just read off the pre-existing evidence. To some extent, you are free to create your own self-image. You make up your mind. You decide who you are and what you want. Obviously this should not run completely against your sources of evidence (self-observation, testimony, or self-feeling). Especially, it seems hard to form and maintain a self-interpretation that is strongly at odds with your self-feeling. Self-feeling is such a fundamental and all-encompassing perspective on one's life that it seems hard to live against it long term. You might be able to form and maintain a

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[295] It will also shape what kind of testimony you acquire, for instance whom you ask for testimony.

self-interpretation that significantly contradicts what your friends say about you. But it seems hard to do that against your self-feeling, also because self-feeling influences the process of self-interpretation, as shown above. Self-feeling is not just a source of evidence but a shaping factor, too. Be that as it may, there remains the freedom of the artist creating his own work. We will go into more detail on that in the remainder of this part of the book.

In conclusion, self-feeling is a pre-reflective, pre-propositional foundation for reflective, propositional self-interpretation. While self-feeling is the affective, holistic disclosure of our individual existences in this world, self-interpretation is the fallible articulation of parts of it. Self-feeling shapes our self-interpretation in two ways. First, it displays a source of evidence for self-interpretation. Second, it shapes the process of self-interpretation in a more fundamental way by shaping our space of possibilities.

4.2. Appropriateness and inappropriateness in self-interpretation

On the one hand, in everyday life we often seem to experience failure in self-interpretation. On the other hand, it seems debatable if error is even possible in fundamental questions about our lives. This chapter will explore these problems in more detail.

4.2.1. Challenges for an appropriate self-interpretation

There are two levels to consider when trying to constitute an appropriate self-interpretation, namely self-feeling and self-interpretation. First, our self-feeling can be appropriate or inappropriate. A self-interpretation should not be called appropriate if it is based on an inappropriate self-feeling. Chapter 3.4. showed that there are many forms of inappropriateness or pathology of self-feeling and

respective, yet fallible, criteria. Thus, any self-interpretation might just be wrong because of the pathology of the underlying self-feeling. This seems more adequate than the alternative: You could call any self-interpretation appropriate as long as it corresponds to its underlying self-feeling no matter if the self-feeling is appropriate or not. This would make the corresponding self-interpretation of a depressive self-feeling "appropriate". The depressive patient likely has a self-interpretation including beliefs like "I am a worthless person" and "I am unable to achieve anything". However, it seems odd to call such a self-interpretation "appropriate" or "authentic" even if it correctly reflects the current state of affairs for this person. Even if the depressive patient cannot see it at this point, she still has the potential to recover and live a healthy life again. Appropriate or authentic self-interpretation involves a certain degree of openness, i.e. a sense of one's potentiality. In contrast, pathological self-feelings normally include a restricted space of possibilities and often impede one's openness to the world. Thus, self-interpretations that are based on inappropriate self-feelings should not be called appropriate. As a consequence, in what follows the notion of appropriate self-interpretation will be used only in cases with appropriate self-feelings.

Second, self-interpretation can itself go wrong. It faces some major obstacles that are different from what we discussed with self-feeling. Even if our individual existence is appropriately disclosed in self-feeling, it might be that our self-related thoughts do not adequately correspond. Self-interpretation is always threatened by potential mistakes in the process of articulation.[296]

Some general problems for articulating self-feeling

Our attempts to articulate our self-feeling can fail in various ways. Relying on Pothast (1988, 1998) we can start with the following general problems.

First, there is the problem of constant flow. Self-feeling (like Pothast's „inner ground") is a dynamic phenomenon. It is the affective resonance of how life is going for us. As shown above, this is a dynamic enterprise. Thus, its articulation will

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[296] Not to mention that the other sources of evidence for self-interpretation have their flaws, too.

always be late. Any self-interpretation runs the risk of being outdated the moment it is articulated. When we manage to articulate a specific self-feeling it might already have changed.

Second, self-feeling is a holistic experience. Just like the „inner ground" it is embedded in the holistic sphere of sensing. Self-feeling encompasses our existence as a whole. This experience cannot be articulated without losing its holistic character. Any articulated self-interpretation can only include parts of this unitary experience and thus risks to miss relevant other parts. Its necessary focus on particular aspects misses the holistic experience that is essential to self-feeling. This inadequacy of self-interpretation must be acknowledged and accepted. We cannot gain explicit, articulated access to our individual existence as a whole. After all, this is much in line with everyday experience. There is no actual human being who was capable of entirely analysing itself. This seems to be a fundamental truth of human life: Whenever we try to comprehend ourselves, there will always remain a space of ungraspable openness.

In addition, language has a propositional structure. As we saw above, propositions presuppose a double-digit structure. They need specific objects and properties to associate. This propositional structure is inevitable when we articulate something in language. However, the fundamental dimension of self-feeling does not seem to work in the same way. It is a holistic, affective disclosure of one's individual existence. Therefore, the process of articulating our self-feeling is not a straightforward matter. It does not reach stable, certain knowledge but rather has the status of an interpretation. This interpretation is made possible by the pre-propositional status of self-feeling, as discussed in chapter 3.1.2..

Going beyond Pothast, we saw in chapter 2.2.5. that oblivion of our fundamental affectivity can lead to non-corresponding thoughts. Our existential feelings can be so stable that we tend to neglect them. This oblivion makes possible all kinds of thoughts, including those that are at odds with our existential feeling. A similar case can be made with self-feeling. It seems possible that a self-feeling is so stable and

inconspicuous that we become oblivious of it. This then enables self-interpretations that are at odds with it. We may call such self-interpretations self-deceptions.

Self-deception is not uncommon. Even though we might have an appropriate self-feeling, we tend to miss it in our self-interpretation. It can happen that we establish a self-interpretation that is at odds with our self-feeling. This leads to inevitable uncertainty in self-interpretation. In a word, self-interpretation is usually not completely adequate. Notably, this is not a problem for the theoretical concept. After all, it is in line with our requirements for the term interpretation. An interpretation does not need to be completely adequate because per definition it can never achieve that. In addition, incomplete self-interpretation is what we experience in our everyday lives. Importantly, an incomplete and inadequate self-interpretation does not imply that the underlying self-feeling is incomplete and inadequate, too. Conversely, it could be that a complete and appropriate self-feeling is articulated for whatever reason into an inadequate self-interpretation.

4.2.2. Four combinations of self-feeling and self-interpretation

Based on the thoughts above we can now be more systematic in our exploration of appropriate and inappropriate cases of self-interpretation. There are four combinations of appropriate and inappropriate self-feelings with corresponding and non-corresponding self-interpretations. First, an inappropriate self-feeling can associate with a corresponding self-interpretation. Second, an appropriate self-feeling can associate with a non-corresponding self-interpretation. Third, an inappropriate self-feeling can associate with a non-corresponding self-interpretation. Forth, an appropriate self-feeling can associate with a corresponding self-interpretation. All these combinations bear many questions and complexities.

Inappropriate self-feeling & corresponding self-interpretation
First, there is the possibility of an inappropriate self-feeling that associates with a corresponding self-interpretation. The case of depression can serve as an example

for this. In depression, our self-feeling is pathological. We feel vulnerable, weak, unable to do anything. Sometimes we even feel that we lack proper existence, we feel dead. Our lives seem to shrink to a dark eternity of nothing. In most cases, our self-interpretation will correspond to this fundamental affective condition. We will think about our weakness, about our inability to engage in activities, about our meaningless life as a whole. When someone asks us about our current state of affairs, we would likely answer something like "I am weak and tired. Nothing concerns me really. My life is not worth living". These self-interpretative thoughts correspond well to our underlying self-feeling in this moment. They are just as pathological as the self-feeling. Generally speaking, it seems that corresponding self-interpretations of pathological self-feelings are themselves pathological. These cases are the main subject for Ratcliffe's analysis (2005, 2008). They lead him to the conclusion that fundamental affectivity is forcefully shaping our thoughts. However, there are three other combinations.

Appropriate self-feeling & non-corresponding self-interpretation

An appropriate self-feeling can associate with a non-corresponding self-interpretation. Take the case of a philosopher claiming that "the world does not exist". We saw in part two of this book that the structure of this case is as following: The philosopher most likely has an appropriate fundamental affectivity. Her existential feeling takes the world for granted. Nonetheless, she has a thought that contradicts this existential feeling, namely the thought that the world does not exist. This contradicting thought becomes possible because of her existential feeling. It is so appropriate and stable that it makes her become oblivious of it.

A similar case can be made for a person that is not a philosopher and has the self-interpretation "my life is an illusion". Let us imagine a "normal" person living a "normal" life. Robert is a hard worker, loves his wife and children, and volunteers for Greenpeace. His self-feeling is quite appropriate, he feels like a worthy member of society. However, at some point in his life Robert happens to watch the movie "The Matrix". It claims that our lives are illusory and that we are in fact dreaming

bodies in vats only.[297] Robert cannot avoid to contemplate about this movie. While engaging in metaphysical deliberations he might come to the conclusion that the most plausible option for him is to affirm the movie's claim. He might come to the conclusion that his life is an illusion. Note that the exact details of this philosophical position and their possible theoretical shortcomings are irrelevant for this example. As a matter of fact, it is possible to have such a self-interpreting thought. It is possible that someone thinks of himself as being trapped in an illusory system similar to what is known as "The Matrix". At the same time, however, it is possible that Robert keeps his rather healthy self-feeling. It is so stable and inconspicuous that Robert became oblivious of it. Thus, a non-corresponding self-interpretation becomes possible. Although he holds the belief that his life is illusory, he still engages in projects that he cares for. He may still work to earn money, he buys food to eat, he is eager to spend time with his family and friends, etc. His appropriate self-feeling opens up a space of possibilities that is full of his individual cares and concerns. This can lead to contradictory situations like the following: Robert might think that "I know that my workplace is an illusion and does not really exist. I do not really work because in reality I am a body in a vat. Thus, it is impossible for me to actually contribute to society with my work." At the same time, Robert might gain self-worth from his working experience. He might love to achieve results and see the success of his efforts. He cares for what he is doing. Helping Greenpeace makes him feel a valuable member of society. In this situation, his self-interpretation tells him that his work is meaningless. At the same time, his self-feeling comprises a heightened self-worth that stems from his work. As can be seen, this is an example of an appropriate self-feeling and a non-corresponding self-interpretation. Granted, this example might be too farfetched. There are not many of people believing to be trapped in "The Matrix". Most likely, this will be a temporary situation only. Over time, Robert will either adapt his self-interpretation to his self-feeling and refuse the "Matrix"-belief. Alternatively, his self-feeling will adapt to his self-interpretation

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[297] Talking about movies, another blockbuster, Christopher Nolan's "Inception", deals with a similar problem. One of the main characters has the strong and resistant belief that her life is only a dream. This conviction is so strong that it motivates her to commit suicide.

and he will fall into psychosis. Be that as it may, an example much closer to everyday life is possible, too.

For instance, imagine a hardworking risk manager in a bank who we call Rosie. Work is everything for her. She wakes up in the morning, has breakfast and goes to work. During the day she sits at her computer and calculates her numbers. Every now and then she has a quick chat with her colleagues. Late at night, Rosie walks home from work, telephones with her mother, eats a bit and watches TV. There is not much more going on in her life: No boyfriend, no children, hardly any friends. Her self-interpretation might go like this: "I am a bank risk manager. I work hard and love to see results. I have got a safe job and good income, I can afford all my needs. My parents and colleagues like me, I am a valuable person". These self-interpreting thoughts might perfectly correspond to her self-feeling. It is possible, however, that they do not. It is possible that deep down in her heart, Rosie feels a certain discomfort with her life. She cannot really tell what it is, but it is there. When she contemplates about her life she cannot find one thing that is missing, everything seems to be just fine. Still, her disturbing self-feeling does not vanish. It might be that this feeling comes only seldom and not with great intensity. It might be that Rosie lives a rather stable affective life and only rarely (e.g. during Christmas) she has this disturbing feeling.

This may remind of Heidegger's notion of the "they" (Heidegger 2006 [1927], § 27). He argues that "proximally and for the most part" we are immersed in our worldly projects. The aspect of "being alongside" is predominant in most of our everyday lives. We live our lives as we normally do it. This usual everyday behaviour discloses ourselves and the world in a "standard" way. For Heidegger, it is the fundamental feeling of "angst" (Heidegger 2006 [1927], § 40) that has the potential to push us out of the comfort zone of the "they". In "angst" we feel the fundamental facticity of our existence. We feel that we are thrown into existence, that we are "thrown projections". "Angst" discloses our being in this world as potentiality. There is no fixed ground in our lives, we are just there, forced to exist.

For Rosie, her disturbing self-feeling might be a similar but softer version of what Heidegger describes as "angst". She has a feeling that something is wrong with her life, that there must be more in it than she is aware of. Thus, her self-feeling is at odds with her self-interpretation. Her self-interpretation tells her that everything is ok and her life is just as she wants it to be. Different from that, her self-feeling discloses that there is more in life than mere "standard" living. There is more than what the "they" offers.

As can be seen, this is another case of an appropriate self-feeling[298] that associates with a non-corresponding self-interpretation. Importantly, this does not mean that her self-feeling will change her life or her self-interpretation. Her self-feeling might be so shallow that Rosie only rarely experiences it and remains oblivious of it most of the time. This is an important general feature of self-feeling. It can be an intense part of experience but it does not have to. There are people, and there may be many, who hardly ever explicitly focus on their fundamental affectivity. If their self-feelings are sufficiently quiet, they might manage to live their lives without ever explicitly referring to it. This does not mean, however, that such unrecognized self-feelings do not influence their bearers. Even those who are ignorant of their self-feelings will occasionally experience them. If their self-interpretations diverge largely from these feelings, this will lead to a disturbance, such as in Rosie's case. In a word, healthy self-feelings can be so shallow and quiet that all kinds of self-interpretations are possible. This includes the possibility that our self-interpretation contradicts the underlying, appropriate self-feeling.

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[298] It seems fair to assume the appropriateness of Rosie's self-feeling in this case. Her self-feeling does not violate the criterion of openness to alternatives, as she explicitly reflects about possible reasons for her discomfort. It does not violate her openness to other people, as she remains in at least a few relationships with her colleagues and her mother. It is stable over a certain period of time, so it does not violate this criterion. It does not violate biological fitness and social fitness, as she remains capable to conduct her normal life. Lastly, it touches the criterion of consistency, as it discloses a tension between her self-interpretation and her self-feeling. Importantly, this inconsistency alone is not an indicator for an inappropriate self-feeling. In sum, Rosie's self-feeling seems quite appropriate. Notably, it points to a more authentic life that exploits much more of her potentiality as human being.

Inappropriate self-feeling & non-corresponding self-interpretation

Thirdly, the reverse case is possible, too. We can have a pathological self-feeling that associates with a non-corresponding self-interpretation. Take the case of narcissistic personality disorder as an example. Within psychoanalytic theory, it is broadly supposed that pathological narcissism is in parts rooted in low self-esteem (e.g. Kernberg 1984; Kohut 1971)[299]. When we take the concepts developed in this book to understand the phenomenon, we see the following: A pathological narcissist has a pathological self-feeling.[300] Deep down in his heart he feels unworthy, weak, and small. At the same time, however, he develops a self-interpretation of grandiosity to compensate this low self-esteem. He maintains thoughts like "I am superior to the others. My needs are more important than those of other people. My skills and competencies outperform the average". Thus, there is a relation of non-correspondence between the pathological self-feeling and the self-interpretation.

You now may ask if it would be possible for a non-corresponding self-interpretation of an inappropriate self-feeling to offer an appropriate perspective. Would that make for an appropriate self-interpretation even though there is an inappropriate self-feeling? This seems unlikely. No matter how appropriate the self-interpretation might be there would always remain a tension because of its non-correspondence with the underlying, inappropriate self-feeling. In Pothast's words, there would be no "sensing support" for the self-interpretation. It would not properly capture our life as a whole because it would not correctly express our self-feeling, which is an important part of it. This would make it shallow and not appropriate.

Two forms of self-deception

Note that these two combinations of non-correspondence share some important aspects. First, they can be subsumed under the term self-deception. They are both

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[299] This is also true for contemporary schema therapy (Young et al. 2003).

[300] Obviously, psychoanalytic theory does not operate with the term "existential feeling" or "self-feeling" as presented in this book. However, it seems fair to assume that their basic assumptions regarding the nature of pathological narcissism are for the most part valid also within the theoretical framework employed in this book.

cases where our self-interpretations fail in one way or the other. Robert deceives himself by downgrading the meaningfulness of his life and supposing he exists in a "Matrix". Rosie deceives herself by maintaining a self-interpretation that may not comprehend the whole truth about her existence. The pathological narcissist, finally, deceives himself by compensating his low self-worth with a self-interpretation of grandiosity. Secondly, all these cases seem to be unstable and fragile. Normally, they should not last for long. Eventually, either the self-interpretation adapts to the self-feeling or the other way round. For example, Robert's enthusiasm for the movie "The Matrix" might decline in time. Thus, he could gradually be convinced by his everyday experience of meaningfulness and reality that life is not so much of an illusion after all. His self-interpretation adapted to his self-feeling. Rosie might develop the wish to look closer at her recurrent feeling of uneasiness. She might start a psychotherapy to get to know better her deepest feelings and desires. After some time, she might discover that her true passion lies in marriage with children.[301] This might just as well serve her needs for stability and additionally might give her the opportunity to truly care for other people. In this case, Rosie's self-interpretation adapted to her self-feeling. The pathological narcissist, thirdly, could make strong experiences of his self-feeling of unworthiness during a psychotherapy. This might change his self-interpretation to the worse at first. However, a long process of psychotherapy might guide him to a healthier self-feeling and a corresponding self-interpretation of balanced self-worth eventually.

Notably, there need not be a "happy ending" in every case. Robert could be so overwhelmed by his thought that his life is illusory that over time his self-feeling would adapt to it. He could fall into psychosis and develop a severe mental illness. In this case, his self-feeling had adapted to his self-interpretation. Rosie could maintain the ignorance of her self-feeling and continue her life in self-deception. She might manage to suppress her recurrent, disturbing feelings by engaging in

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[301] This is one, arbitrarily chosen example that should not imply any moral prejudice. Similar examples could be made with totally different life choices.

hard work or drinking too much alcohol. In this case, neither her self-feeling nor her self-interpretation would change. However, this continuing state of non-correspondence would demand a constant (partly unconscious) effort to suppress its disturbing effects. Rosie would need to actively manage the tension between her feelings and her self-interpretation. Thirdly, the pathological narcissist may never recover. He might be trapped in his illusory thoughts of grandiosity and never gets in touch with his deep feelings of unworthiness. Like Rosie, he would have to make a constant effort to manage this mental imbalance.

These examples of non-corresponding self-interpretations show that self-related thoughts can be at odds with our self-feeling. It is possible that our self-interpretation diverges from our self-feeling. This does not, however, harm the fundamental status of self-feeling. Even if our self-interpretation can miss our self-feeling, self-feeling is still the most fundamental level of self-disclosure. Self-feeling shapes all our experience and thought, it opens up our individual space of possibilities. These possibilities, notably, can include thoughts that do not correspond with the self-feeling.

This can be shown in the cases of Robert and Rosie. Both have healthy self-feelings and non-corresponding self-interpretations. Their self-feelings shape all their experience and thought. Importantly, their self-feelings are so healthy, stable, and appropriate that they both become oblivious of them. This is similar to the case of the philosopher who denied the reality of the world. They all never had a strong experience of their fundamental affectivity. They live their life in oblivion of that fundamental experience because their self-feelings are rather stable and inconspicuous. Thus, they are not overly aware of it. This enables them to develop self-interpretations that contradict their affective foundation. Their problems are not their feelings but their thoughts.

For Rosie, there is one important difference though. Robert lives a life that suits his self-feeling. He has a long track record of corresponding self-interpretation. It is only this one movie experience that triggers the self-deceptive process. Different

from that, Rosie does not have a life that suits her self-feeling. She has a long track record of non-corresponding, self-deceptive thoughts. Her self-feeling occasionally challenges this self-interpretation and questions if the life she is living is really the one she is meant to live. Thus, for Robert the solution lies in returning to the common practice and trust in his up-to-then corresponding self-interpretation. For Rosie, the solution is more difficult. She does not yet know what it is that her feeling tells her. She has no such corresponding practice she could return to. Thus, she must first learn to listen to her self-feeling, develop a corresponding self-interpretation, and then change her life accordingly.

The fundamental status of self-feeling is also safe in the case of pathological narcissism. As has been argued for in psychoanalytic literature (e.g. Kernberg 1984; Kohut 1971), the non-corresponding self-interpretation of pathological narcissists serves as compensation for pathological self-feelings.[302] Their self-feeling of unworthiness shapes their thoughts in a way that leads to neglect precisely this feeling and build a self-interpretation of grandiosity. This self-interpretation helps them to live with their severely disordered fundamental affectivity. However, as we see, this compensation can never fully succeed. The fundamental dimension of self-feeling remains a nail in the coffin and makes a normal life quite hard.

Appropriate self-feeling & corresponding self-interpretation

There is one final possible combination: The possibility of an appropriate self-feeling associating with a corresponding self-interpretation. This combination could be called authenticity. It supposes that our self-feeling is appropriate and our self-interpretation adequately articulates it. Bearing in mind all the above-mentioned difficulties of correct articulation of self-feeling, it seems adequate to assume that this does not happen very often. The happy endings mentioned for Robert, Rosie, and the pathological narcissist would serve as initial examples. Robert would have to return to his old way of life, Rosie would have to find her true passion and the

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[302] Obviously, they did not use the notion of "self-feeling" as developed in this book.

narcissus would have to "upgrade" his self-feeling and "downgrade" his self-interpretation, roughly speaking.

The following table subsumes the four possible situations described in this chapter:

	Non-corresponding self-interpretation	Corresponding self-interpretation
Appropriate self-feeling	Self-deception 1: obliviousness, "they"; examples: Robert, Rosie	Authenticity
Inappropriate self-feeling	Self-deception 2: compensation; example: pathological narcissist	Psychiatric pathology; example: depression

Table 4: Four combinations of self-feeling and self-interpretation

These cases can be used to enrich our understanding of the challenges to acquire an appropriate self-interpretation.

4.2.3. Three types of self-relatedness

We saw above that Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings focusses too much on pathological cases. He does not say much about healthy existential feelings or their relation to authentic lives. Based on this criticism chapter 2.2.6. suggested to distinguish three types of cases. They fit nicely to the four possible situations described above.

First, there is Ratcliffe's case of "normality". Under normal circumstances we are immersed in the world and our projects. We live our lives as *one* does it. Usually, we are oblivious of our fundamental affectivity. Our self-feeling remains mainly in the background and is not experienced as such. Heidegger's notion of "inauthenticity" (Heidegger 2006 [1927], e.g. §§ 9, 27, 38) fits well to this case. The case of Rosie from above may serve as an example for this. She lives a rather "standard" life, with

a decent self-interpretation and takes herself to be happy with it. However, there is this nasty, nagging feeling that disturbs her every now and then. It is her fundamental affectivity that pushes her to a more adequate self-interpretation and a more authentic life accordingly. She has a fairly appropriate self-feeling but a self-interpretation that does not do full justice to it. Something is at odds here. Something does not feel quite right. This is the upper left corner in table 4, the first case of self-deception.

Second, there is Ratcliffe's case of pathology. An inappropriate self-feeling is either combined with a corresponding or non-corresponding self-interpretation. These are displayed in the two bottom fields in the table above. When our fundamental affectivity is severely distorted, we cannot live authentic lives no matter what kind of self-interpretation we adopt. What we are really heading for in authenticity is not mere correspondence to our self-feeling whatsoever. Instead, when we ask for authenticity, we strive for an appropriate self-relation through all the levels. Thus, an emphatic account of authenticity must aim at a self-relation that is based on a non-pathological self-feeling. For this reason, the pathological case is excluded from the notion of authenticity. It is not possible to live an authentic life with a pathological self-feeling.

Third, there is the rather unexplored case of authenticity. It presupposes an appropriate self-feeling that is associated with a corresponding self-interpretation. At its most basic level, it is a felt disclosure of your whole existence that is properly articulated in your thoughts. Your "how" of being in this world has come to an articulated form. This authentic self-interpretation allows you then to make authentic decisions and to live an authentic life. Note that in this basic form of authenticity there is no need for a strongly experienced self-feeling. We do not have to be overwhelmed by a comprehensive self-feeling to have corresponding self-related thoughts. It could well be that Robert from the example above eventually comes to the conclusion that his belief in an illusionary existence was just a chimaera. He then comes back to his former, appropriate self-interpretation. This

does not need to include an explicit reference to his self-feeling. He could return to a self-interpretation that implicitly corresponds to his still oblivious self-feeling. The criterion for authenticity would be fulfilled in this case: Robert has a non-pathological self-feeling, and as a matter of fact he does not have a strong experience of it. His self-interpretation corresponds well to this self-feeling.

4.3. Authenticity

This last chapter of the book attempts to give some initial thoughts on how the account developed so far may relate to the notion of authenticity. Importantly, this is far away from a full account on the complex problem of authenticity. Neither can it do justice to the rich literature that has already been published on it (e.g. Golomb 1995; Guignon 2004; Trilling 1972).[303] Instead, it will focus on potential applications for self-feeling in this field.

4.3.1. What kind of self-feeling in authenticity?

For Heidegger, there are particular fundamental "moods" that lead us to authenticity[304]. The phenomena of "angst" ["Angst" in German] and "boredom" ["Langeweile" in German] disclose our fundamental way of being in this world (Heidegger 2004 [1929]; 2006 [1927], § 40; 2010 [1929/30], esp. §§ 16-38). They confront us with our facticity, with the fact that we are "thrown projections". We are thrown into this world, forced to live our very own lives. We are here in this world and always already immersed in it. At the same time, "angst" and "boredom" disclose our existence as ungrounded. We experience the "nothing". The "nothing itself nothings" (Heidegger 2004 [1929], p. 114). We cannot get hold of it, it

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[303] Compare also Helm (2001), Kraemer (2011), and Salmela (2005) for interesting suggestions on the authenticity of emotions.

[304] Again, this is not meant as comprehensive interpretation of Heidegger's work. Instead, his basic ideas serve as indication for how self-feeling and authenticity may be related.

withdraws from the possibility to grasp it. In this experience it becomes salient that we are undetermined in our potentiality. There is utterly much openness in this our existence. We are not predictable, determined machines that exist in strict accordance to a pre-defined plan. Instead, based on our "being-already-in" and besides our "being-alongside" we are "being-ahead-of-us". This projective feature of our existence warrants its deep openness. Heidegger's fundamental moods do not disclose specific ontic possibilities in our lives but rather the ontological truth that there are possibilities as possibilities for us. An authentic life must take this openness serious.

One of Heidegger's contemporary followers, Paola-Ludovika Coriando, adds further flesh to this claim. In her phenomenological book on affectivity she describes "fundamental moods"[305] such as "essential love", "unity with nature", and "farewell and finitude" based on poetic works of Goethe, Hölderlin and Rilke (Coriando 2002, §§ 15-17). In these "fundamental moods" we pre-reflectively and pre-propositionally experience a unity with the world. They overcome us passively and reveal our most basic way of being in this world. This our being in the world cannot be understood as a distinct "core ego" being surrounded by a multitude of beings, according to Coriando. Instead, we experience "being-in-the-world" as unitary, dissolved phenomenon and ourselves as part of a greater whole.

Granted, for the non-Heideggerian non-phenomenologist these claims may sound a bit over-the-top. However, there seems to be some truth in them. Given these considerations, it seems that authentic self-feelings require more than just an appropriate self-feeling and a corresponding self-interpretation. Instead, an authentic self-feeling reveals fundamental truths about how we are in this world. It makes us affectively aware that we are thrown projections. That is, it discloses and manifests the „care-structure" as our fundamental way of being. The phenomena of

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[305] She uses the German term "Grundstimmung". It will be translated here as "fundamental mood" in quotation marks in order not to confuse it with Ratcliffe's existential feelings. Obviously, they are not moods in the common sense of the term.

"angst" and "boredom" and Coriando's "fundamental moods" confront us with this potentiality and our dissolved, unified being-in-the-world.

You might object that "angst" and "boredom" are regular symptoms of pathological cases, too. For instance, in depression patients often are anxious and experience deep boredom. However, there is an important distinction to make between these cases and the case of authenticity. In the pathological case, the experience of "angst" and "boredom" is continuous and stable. Thus, it leads to a general pathological perspective on life. In contrast, in the case of authenticity "angst" and "boredom" are episodic, short-term experiences that enlighten our perspective on life and lead to a stronger experience of potentiality. Svenaeus (2013) pointed at this difference, too.

In a word, there is a difference between Rosie's case of "inauthenticity" and what could be called "authenticity". In authenticity we are affectively aware through our self-feeling that we are potentiality that is unified with its world. Our authentic being in this world is one of dissolution and potentiality. Thus, authenticity may not be so much about "finding one's true self" but about recognizing one's unity with the world and one's open potentiality. This openness is revealed in authentic self-feelings.

4.3.2. The downside of authentic self-feelings

Holzhey-Kunz (2012) claims that authentic self-feelings[306] have their downsides, too. Strongly building on Heidegger's "Being and Time" (2006 [1927]), Holzhey-Kunz argues that an authentic self-feeling can be frightening and burdensome. Authentic self-feelings confront us with our individual space of possibilities and the fact that it is up to us what we actually do with it. We are confronted with our "potentiality-for-Being", with our own, individual potentials. This is not only pleasant. For many

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[306] She does not use the term "self-feeling" but uses the terms "feelings of being" or "existential feelings". These terms can all be understood as pointing at the same fundamental affectivity that we explore in this book.

people this sense of open potentiality involves fear and burden. It does not only mean personal freedom, it does also imply personal responsibility. It is up to us what we make of our lives. We are responsible to what extent we live our potentials. There is no ultimate ground we can rely on except our own "potentiality-for-Being". We are thrown into the world, forced to exist. The awareness of this existential situation can comprehensively be frightening and burdensome. Heidegger used the term "angst" to refer to the experience of this open space of potentiality. In "angst" we are confronted with pure "potentiality-for-Being". Understandably, this can be a frightening experience.

Holzhey-Kunz argues further that some people may therefore be inclined to adopt inappropriate self-feelings to escape from this burden. It can be a relief for some people to decrease their feeling of existence and feel dead in the extreme case of depersonalization. The self-feeling of being dead in depersonalisation need not be seen in a straightforwardly pathological way only. It has also the character of successful escape from the burden of a full-fledged feeling of potentiality. When you feel dead you are unburdened, you need not act or think in a meaningful way. Ironically, life is in some sense easier when you feel dead. It is discharged from the responsibilities of an appropriate self-feeling that discloses all your "potentiality-for-Being". Heidegger's analysis of the "they" points in a similar direction (Heidegger 2006 [1927], § 27). The "they" offers an escape from burdensome, authentic being oneself that does not go so far as adopting an affective pathology. However, it has similar discharging effects. When you live your life as "they" do it you escape to a certain extent from your responsibility to enact your potentiality. Hence, it might be concluded that it is not a straightforward goal to have an authentic self-feeling because this is always connected with the felt responsibility to live your own life properly. This is an important aspect to consider. We should be aware that authentic self-feelings are not always pleasant through and through. Instead, they also involve the character of a burden – the burden to live one's life properly. This may explain why truly authentic self-feelings are so rare.

In her paper, Holzhey-Kunz goes further than what was reconstructed above (Holzhey-Kunz 2012, pp. 139ff.). However, this additional step seems one too far. Quoting Heidegger, she insists that human existence is at its core frightening and burdensome. Human existence is inevitably marked with ontological guilt because it is based on groundless self-empowerment. We are thrown into life without the possibility to ever justify it. Pathological feelings, thus, are a sign of increased understanding of this unpleasant character of existence, she argues. They are aware of the ontological truth of life, namely its frightening and burdensome character. Regardless of the question if this interpretation of Heidegger is correct or not, this claim seems too strong. Indeed, as we have seen, authentic self-feelings can disclose the burden of "potentiality-of-Being". It seems, however, that this potentiality is not only unpleasant. It also constitutes individual freedom to live our lives as we want.

To sum up, we learned that authentic self-feeling is not just about being non-pathological. Not every appropriate self-feeling automatically leads to authenticity. In addition, it seems that there must be the two elements in it: First, authentic self-feelings reveal our potentiality, they show us that we live in a space of open possibilities. Second, in authentic self-feelings we experience our being in the world as unified. The borders of world and „self" are dissolved in authentic self-feelings. Overall, in authentic self-feelings we affectively experience our existence as „care-structure" that has been described as "being-already-in" the world and "being-alongside" our worldly projects in a mode of "being-ahead-of-us". In other words we are "thrown projections".

4.3.3. Evaluation of self-interpretation

Given all these points, what can we do to increase our chances for an authentic life? How can we evaluate if a particular self-interpretation is appropriate? Despite all the difficulties, the attempt to articulate one's self-feeling and form an appropriate self-interpretation makes still sense. It contributes to a self-controlled and mindful

life. When we find words for our fundamental feelings, they cannot control us unconsciously so much. By articulating our self-feelings we learn about our deepest concerns and desires. Self-feelings show what matters to us in this world. They open a specific space of possibilities that is filled with concrete concerns. In self-feeling we feel what is important for us. Articulated self-feelings help thus to build a unitary self-narrative, a story of one's life. This chapter presents some ideas about how to evaluate particular self-interpretations.

First, it has to be emphasized again that the appropriateness of any self-interpretation depends on its underlying self-feeling. Thus, we should only allow the predicate "authentic" for self-interpretations that correspond to appropriate self-feelings. Consequently, to evaluate a particular self-interpretation for its appropriateness, the underlying self-feeling must first be evaluated. Chapter 3.4. developed some imperfect criteria to conduct this evaluation.

Second, there is the evaluation of self-interpretation itself. In this regard, we can build on Pothast's advice (Pothast 1998, chapters 3-5) on how potential failures in searching the „inner ground" can be overcome.

He suggests the following: First, there is the phenomenon of „sensing support". Its evaluative benefit of course presupposes that our fundamental affectivity is non-pathological beforehand. If this is the case, thoughts that correspond to our (healthy) fundamental affectivity will be associated with feelings of approval. In contrast, thoughts that do not correspond to our (healthy) fundamental affectivity will likely suffer from felt disapproval. Any self-interpretation can be evaluated this way. Lawlor's (2008, 2009) account discussed in chapter 4.1.2. makes a similar point. We can form a particular self-related thought and test if our feelings approve or disapprove. If there is lacking „sensing support", it is either the self-feeling or the self-interpretation that is inadequate. Imagine a case where there is an inadequate self-interpretation. We may continuously try to convince ourselves that things are as we think. Every now and then, however, we might experience feelings of uneasiness. This imbalance demands a constant effort of repression. As rational

beings, we strive for equilibrium and consistency in our states of mind. When our self-interpretation is regularly challenged by transverse feelings, it can take a great portion of energy to suppress it over a long time. For example, Rosie's recurrent feelings of uneasiness could be seen as a sign that there is something wrong with her self-interpretation. These feelings point to the fact that her self-interpretation may be inappropriate.

Second, we can learn to focus on our fundamental feelings and listen to what they tell us. Pothast suggests to establish a practice of regular contemplation (Pothast 1998, chapters 3-5). Thereby, we can learn and extend our capabilities to focus on our „inner ground". This might apply to self-feeling as well. It seems possible that we can learn to gain a better access to our self-feeling. Rosie might try regular contemplation as a tool to better get to know her disturbing feelings. The experiences she makes in this practice could then be reflected upon in a psychotherapeutic setting. It may help her to gain better access to her deepest passions and concerns in her life.

Third, there is the criterion of consistency. We can compare our self-interpretations with our other mental states and actions. If there is inconsistency, this can be a sign for a failing self-interpretation. Additionally, the criterion of consistency does not only apply at one point in time only. Self-interpretations should display a certain amount of consistency over time, too. Robert's sudden change in his self-interpretation is an example for this. For a long time, he had beliefs about the value of his work, the importance of his fatherhood, etc. He had a passion to contribute to society and educate his children well. After the movie experience, however, his thoughts begin to change and he starts doubting many of his convictions. The fact that his new self-interpretation ("My life is an illusion") is at odds with so many of his former mental states and actions should be a hint that there might be something wrong with it. Notably, however, Rosie's case challenges the criterion of consistency. In her case, it is precisely a temporary inconsistency she should strive

for. Only a profound change in her thoughts and practice will allow to reach better correspondence between her appropriate self-feeling and her self-interpretation.

Fourth, a possible anchor to overcome inappropriate self-interpretations can be to compare yourself with other people.[307] If a self-interpretation is heavily challenged in an intersubjective context, it might be worth reconsidering it. For example, the pathological narcissist is likely to experience social exclusion with his grandiose construct of ideas. People will challenge his arrogance and overestimation. This might help him in reconsidering his self-interpretation.

A fifth option can be concluded from what we learned about the nature of authentic self-feelings in this chapter. Authentic self-feelings disclose our nature as potentiality. They are the affective disclosure and manifestation of the „care-structure". Thus, they bring us in affective resonance with our dissolved being in this world. This can be used to evaluate a particular self-interpretation. If it includes a sense of potentiality and dissolved being-in-the-world it may count as authentic. In contrast, a self-interpretation that presents myself as solitary being without possibilities to act or change should not be called authentic.

It should be emphasized at this point, however, that these strategies to minimize failure in self-interpretation are fallible themselves. Just like the criteria for the appropriateness of self-feeling they do not provide rock-bottom evidence. Our „sensing support" can fail if it relies on pathologies in our fundamental affectivity. And we can never be ultimately sure that a self-feeling is non-pathological. Second, contemplation is not for everyone. It may just not work for a pathological narcissist to sit down and meditate about his fundamental feelings. His mental disorder might prohibit a proper meditation because the unconscious, compensating mechanisms are too strong. Alternatively, he might just not be the type for it. Third, consistency

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[307] Note that Frank points at two of these criteria, too (Frank 1986, p. 100, pp. 116ff.; 1991a, 1991b; Frank 2012, chapter 1). First, he suggests that self-interpretation is path-dependent, meaning that today's thoughts about yourself are dependent on what you thought about yourself in the past. You cannot easily contradict your past self-interpretations. Second, he sees intersubjective exchange as valuable source of consolidation of self-interpretations. Any self-interpretation must prove its value in an intersubjective context.

can be (at least for some period of time) the opposite of what we want, as the case of Rosie shows. Forth, intersubjective feedback can direct you in the wrong direction, too. Suppose that Rosie talks to her colleagues in the bank's risk management department. These colleagues may be quite similar to her. They might be workaholics in comparably alienated life situations and might be detached from their true, inner feelings. Thus, they might try to discern her doubts and affirm her inadequate self-interpretation. The fifth option to evaluate self-interpretation seems in a better position in this regard. Whenever a self-interpretation includes a sense of potentiality and dissolution this points to its appropriateness. However, in real life we normally do not deal with clear-cut extremes like full conviction or full neglect of potentiality. Instead, our self-interpretation will take some position in between. This will make many real life situations borderline cases.

4.3.4. Self-interpretation integrates two aspects of authenticity

This last section of this chapter asks how these considerations relate to the notion of authenticity in the literature (e.g. Golomb 1995; Guignon 2004; Trilling 1972). Without going into details of this field it seems that contemporary work on authenticity in general sees two aspects of authenticity. Some approaches emphasize the former, others the latter. On the one hand, there is the existentialist emphasis on active self-creation in liberty. Here, an authentic life demands to free oneself from traditional social conventions and ethical norms. It is suggested that you can create who you are almost only by free will. The maxim behind this view may be coined as "Be as you wish!". On the other hand, there is the romantic tradition that focuses on self-discovery. It presupposes a seed inside you that needs proper nurture to develop its full potential. An authentic life here demands to improve one's self-understanding and live a life that corresponds to one's "inner, true self". The maxim here might be "Be who you really are!". Charles Taylor (1985, 1991), and with him Bennett Helm (2001, pp. 211ff.), propose an integrated view. They concede that both extreme views are accurate to a certain extent. Thus, a

comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon should be developed around the notion of self-interpretation. Self-interpretation integrates the aspect of self-creation, one actively construes one's individual „self", and the aspect of self-discovery, one's interpretation is not totally arbitrary but must be aligned with given facticity.

This understanding of self-interpretation fits nicely to the account as developed above. First, there is self-feeling that provides the foundation for our interpretative efforts. Our self-interpretation is not all arbitrary but bound to an affective grounding. Therefore, there is an aspect of self-discovery in self-interpretation. Second, our fundamental affectivity is pre-propositional. Thus, our interpretation has a certain openness, it is not predetermined altogether. This points to the aspect of self-creation. Note that the relationship between the two aspects is to be understood as recursive, just like the relation between self-feeling and thought (see chapter 4.1.). Self-creation makes who we are but at the same time it is influenced by our desire who we want to be. This desire stems from the grounding aspect of self-discovery (or self-feeling). Likewise, self-discovery finds who we are but at the same times it is influenced by our previous self-creating decisions that made us who we are.

Two aspects of self-creation

We saw above that the experience of potentiality is crucial in authentic self-feelings. Thus, it has to be reflected in authentic self-interpretation, too. Two aspects of self-creation seem important in this. First, there is reason-based deliberation. When exploring who we are and who we want to be, we also ask ourselves who we should be.[308] These considerations might be influenced by cultural, rational, or moral factors.[309] For example, a person living in a certain culture may seem to feel obliged to be a good mother or have a successful career. Likewise, rationality demands a certain amount of consistency. When you chose a certain path in your life there is

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[308] There is a huge amount of work in philosophy on how reason can and should guide the way we live. Moran (2001) and Larmore (2012) might be good points to start. However, they seem to overemphasize the element of self-creation at the cost of downplaying aspects of self-discovery.
[309] And presumably much more than these.

rational pressure not to abandon it altogether. For example, if you engage yourself in the communist party, it may be hard for you to wholeheartedly join a capitalist hedge fund. Moreover, there may be moral considerations about what your life should look like. Perhaps a person thinks that she ought to be generous and tolerant to other people. All these examples are aspects of Cassam's (2014) and Schwitzgebel's (2012) "substantial" self-knowledge. They are self-interpretative answers to substantial questions about who we are. However, they are not totally arbitrary. Instead, they are based on reasoning. They are the outcome of a rational thought process that suggests a particular direction. This suggests that they lead to a certain amount of stability, consistency and predictability. Nonetheless, this should be understood as an element of self-creation in authentic self-interpretation because it is not predetermined what is the outcome of such rational deliberation.

Second, it seems that not everything about ourselves can be decided on rational bases. When we think about hard questions about ourselves and our life, sometimes reason reaches the limit of its power. Philosopher's like Chang (1997, 2002), Raz (1986), or Griffin (1986) have pointed to the fact that there are moments when there are good reasons for alternative A and good reasons for alternative B, yet no positive true statement can be made about one being better than the other. In these "hard choices" we are faced with incomparability of values. It is neither the case that one alternative is better than the other nor that both alternatives are of equal value.

The second claim may seem counterintuitive but what Chang calls "argument of small improvement" (Chang 2002, p. 667) may help to clarify. Imagine a choice between a career as a musician (M) versus a career as lawyer (L). Both have good reasons for them so you cannot decide which one is better than the other. Importantly, you cannot say that they are equally good either. If they were equally good the problem would be solved if you could make one alternative just a little bit better. For example, the law firm may offer a slightly higher payment if you start with them. This would make this alternative better than before. We call it L+ now.

Thus, if before M and L were equally good the question should be clear now because L has been upgraded to L+. It should be the case that L+ is the better alternative. However, in real life things are often not that way. If you are undecided between a career as a musician and a career as a lawyer, a small increase in payment does not make for your decision. Instead, it is likely that you remain undecided which career path you should follow. The two options are incomparable in some sense.

We need not go into further details and complexities of this discussion. What is important now is the fact that reason-based deliberation sometimes does not exhaust the realm of self-creation. There are situations in which reason does not provide an answer about who or how we should be. The hard career choice above may serve as an example. In addition, sometimes reason might be experienced as oppressive. Normally, reason obliges us to follow rather stable and consistent paths. If you got married and have children, reason suggests that you are supposed to stay with your family and not abandon them. However, sometimes people have strong feelings that they must radically change their lives. For example, Rosie's feeling that something is wrong with her life may grow stronger and stronger. At first, she might stay with her established life and tries to oppress the nagging feeling. However, eventually she might decide that she leaves behind her whole life and starts a new one by entering a convent, or emigrate to India. Rational deliberation might keep telling her that it is wrong. Yet, she might just choose to change her life, even against rational deliberation.[310] The point here is that self-creation is not just a matter of reason-based choice. Beyond that, there seems to be an element of genuine freedom in the way we create our lives.

In a word, authentic self-interpretation should be understood as including a significant element of self-creation next to the element of self-discovery. Self-creation has two aspects. First, it accounts for the fact the we can employ rational deliberation in order to decide who and how we want to be. Second, beyond this

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[310] Compare Arpaly (2000) for an argument that feelings can lead to good choices against reason-based deliberation and Jones (2003) and Döring (2010) for its critical discussion.

rational deliberation there seems to be a genuine freedom to choose, especially in cases where reason does not provide clear answers.

Self-interpretation must not depart too much from self-feeling

In the section above we saw that authentic self-interpretation includes the element of self-creation in order to account for the fact that authentic self-feelings point to our way of being in this world as "thrown projection", as potentiality. However, it must be emphasized that authentic self-interpretation must not depart too much from its founding self-feeling. The element of self-discovery needs to remain in place properly.

After all, our life as human beings is not a just matter of self-creation. Many aspects of our life are beyond our control. Much of what we are and do is not fully determined by personal choice. Sartre's emphatic claim that "existence precedes essence" (Sartre 2007 [1946], p. 20) seems too strong in this regard. First, there are obvious obstacles from the outside world. For example, you may form the decision to become a prima ballerina at the Vienna State Opera. However, when you are twelve years old you have a car accident and your leg has to be amputated. In this case, your chances to become what you decided are very low. More interesting in the context of this chapter are obstacles from the inside. We all know cases in which we form a decision to follow path A but it turns out that it just does not feel right. There is something inside us that tells us that the decision maybe was not the right one. For example, Rosie's self-interpretation seems fine at first sight. However, there is this persistent and nagging feeling that there is something missing in her life. People can feel alienated, estranged from their lives. Although there are good reasons for the way they live, they still feel that it is not quite right for them.

This leads to the question if in these cases they should follow their originally chosen self-interpretation or if they should explore their disobeying feeling more closely. We know from empirical evidence that object-oriented, short-term emotions often lead to biased choices (Kahneman 2011). It would be wrong to claim that if we have emotions that speak against well-deliberated choices we should just uncritically

follow them. However, things are different for more fundamental kinds of human affectivity. Particularly, self-feeling should play an important role in informing authentic self-interpretation. First, self-feeling is the affective disclosure of our individual lives as a whole. In self-feeling we experience how we are in this world and how life is going for us in a pre-propositional and holistic manner. It is not just a particular, object-based, short-term emotion but a general experience of who we are. Thus, it contributes to a coherent, unitary experience of ourselves. This is in line with the fact that self-feeling is a source of evidence in self-interpretation (chapter 4.1.). Second, we saw above that self-feeling shapes our space of possibilities and thus all our experience and thought. It is not just one experience among others but a founding background that significantly determines what happens in the foreground. Thus, it is very hard to live against your self-feeling. Self-feeling is not just a single mental state that you may successfully ignore but it permeates all your experience. No matter what you perceive, do, or think, your self-feeling will be in the background and shape from there. Therefore, if you choose a self-interpretation that is at odds with your self-feeling, this is likely to result in discomfort because you will experience a constant tension. Granted, it is possible to stick with a non-corresponding self-interpretation but it takes effort to live against your fundamental affectivity. The example of Rosie above showed that.

You may object that it is possible that our self-feeling is pathological and in this case we should not let it influence our self-interpretation. A corresponding self-interpretation to an inappropriate self-feeling, such as described in the case of depression, cannot be regarded as authentic. Yet, consider the following: First, this book developed some imperfect criteria to evaluate self-feeling. Although these criteria cannot provide ultimate certainty they may well serve as a guideline to identify inappropriate self-feelings. If you recognize that your self-feeling might be inappropriate it seems right to deal with this problem first. Although this aspect has not been covered in detail it seems possible to influence and improve your pathological self-feeling. This is a task for psychotherapy. Potential methods could include changing one's habits through continuous practice, changing one's social

environment, changing one's thought routines, taking medication, etc. Second, there is no ultimate right or wrong in self-interpretation after all. There is no decisive criterion that makes a particular self-interpretation correct. There always remains an element of interpretative freedom. Thus, in authentic self-interpretation the concept of truth through correspondence just does not work. There is no "reality" that an authentic self-interpretation could correspond with. Rather, self-interpretation is a continuous work in progress of trying to make sense of our dynamic life that includes our fundamental affectivity, that is self-feeling.

4.3.5. Taking stock

This chapter suggested that an authentic self-feeling reveals our existence as "thrown projection", as potentiality that reveals our dissolved existence in this world. Such an authentic self-feeling may at times be experienced as burdensome. Particular self-interpretations can be evaluated for their authenticity in various ways that are all fallible. An authentic self-interpretation unites elements of self-discovery and self-creation. It is grounded in an authentic self-feeling thus it is self-discovering. It displays a certain level of interpretative freedom that comes from rational deliberation and genuine choice. Thus, it is self-creating. Notably, self-feeling plays a role in both elements. First, self-feeling serves as source of evidence in self-interpretation and thus in self-discovery. Second, self-feeling shapes the way we create ourselves. Since it fundamentally shapes our space of possibilities there is no creative aspect in our self-interpretation that is not influenced by our fundamental feeling of being ourselves. Our self-feeling determines the space in which self-creation can take place. Thus, there are limits on how far a self-interpretation may depart from its underlying self-feeling. This fits well to a general characteristic of human affectivity. As we saw in part two of this book feelings are both passive experiences and part of human agency. They shape the way we experience our agential possibilities, that is our sense of agency. Likewise, self-

feeling fundamentally shapes the experience of what it is like to be ourselves and what we can do. Thus, our self-creation is motivated and shaped by our self-feeling.

Overall, this is just a brief sketch that tries to explore the relation between self-feeling and the notion of authenticity. An authentic life, it seems, consists of an authentic self-feeling that is well-articulated in a corresponding self-interpretation.

Summary and open questions

The main claim of this book is that self-consciousness should be understood as self-feeling. This move offers a fresh perspective on the phenomenon and opens new ways to approach certain problems in the debate. The following chapter gives a summary of what happened in the book and highlights some potential areas for future research.

Summary of the book

Part one

The book starts with an introduction to the debate over self-consciousness. First, a distinction can be made between egological and non-egological theories of self-consciousness. Classical egological approaches understand self-consciousness as consciousness of a distinct entity that is the underlying subject of mental states, a core "ego". Self-consciousness here refers to the whole individual as self-conscious. In contrast, non-egological approaches understand self-consciousness as a property of mental states. It is not "me" who is conscious of "myself". Instead, my mental states are themselves self-conscious.

A second important distinction deals with the question of how self-consciousness is actually established. Higher-order (or reflective) models see self-consciousness as reflective process where a higher instance makes a lower instance self-conscious. Alternatively, there are same-order (or pre-reflective) models of self-consciousness. They argue that the bearer of self-consciousness is itself self-conscious, without the need for an additional level.

Given these distinctions, we may distinguish four types of theories of self-consciousness, each facing significant challenges: Reflective egological, reflective non-egological, pre-reflective egological, and pre-reflective non-egological.

Reflective theories face two significant difficulties no matter if they are egological or non-egological. First, there is the problem of infinite regress. Put more formally, in reflection models of self-consciousness there is a lower-level b1 that is made self-conscious by a higher-level b2 that has b1 as its object. Take the case of reflective, non-egological theories as an example. For them the bearer of self-consciousness is a mental state. B1 could be the mental state "seeing an apple". Based on the assumption of the reflection theory b1 would be unconscious at first. B1 can only become self-conscious by means of another, higher-order mental state b2. B2 recognizes that "there is a mental state b1 "seeing an apple"" and this makes b1 self-conscious. However, b2 is not per se self-conscious. At first, it occurs as unconscious mental state. In order to make b2 self-conscious we need another, even higher-order mental state b3. The mental state b3 would then be "There is a mental state b2 "There is a mental state b1 "seeing an apple"""". Obviously, this model leads to an infinite regress, because b3 is not per se self-conscious as well. One always needs an additional higher-order mental state to capture the former, ad infinitum. The explanation why a mental state is self-conscious is deferred one level after the other, without reaching an endpoint.

Second, there is the problem of vicious circularity in reflective theories. It can be shown in two variants. One, we saw above that reflective models assume that every mental state is unconscious at first. A mental state can become self-conscious only with the help of another (unconscious) mental state. We see that ex ante there are only unconscious mental states in the reflective account. The challenge is then how self-consciousness should emerge out of completely unconscious states? The only explanation seems to be that self-consciousness was implicitly already there. Otherwise it remains dark how the combination of two unconscious states should constitute self-consciousness. Two, there is vicious circularity in virtue of the "de

se" constraint. There is a substantial difference between consciousness of an external object (b1 "seeing an apple") and consciousness of consciousness, namely self-consciousness. The difference lies exactly in the identity condition. In self-consciousness the perceiving entity must be identical with the perceived entity and know about it, it needs to have the status of "de se" consciousness. For reflective, non-egological theories a self-conscious mental state has to know that it is itself it is self-conscious of in its self-consciousness. So the higher-order state b2 has to be conscious not only of the lower-order state b1 but also of the fact that b1 and b2 are identical. However, to be able to perform this identification self-consciousness must be already in place. This is impossible in the reflective model.

Based on these critical considerations it can be concluded that self-consciousness needs to be a pre-reflective, non-objectifying, non-identifying, "de se" phenomenon. In addition, the question arises if self-consciousness can be understood as propositional. Propositions presuppose a two-digit relationship and are thus objectifying and identifying. Therefore, it seems that self-consciousness cannot be propositional because it would fall in the trap of reflective theories. Moreover, there is empirical evidence that even small children and some mammals show a form of self-consciousness (e.g. passing the mirror test) without possessing propositional capabilities. On the other hand, if self-consciousness was completely non-propositional how could it relate to higher levels of rational, propositional deliberation which is an essential part of our minds? We face a dilemma here. Self-consciousness can neither be understood as strictly propositional nor as strictly non-propositional. This dilemma was further addressed in part three.

The next type of theory under consideration are pre-reflective, egological models. It seems that because reflective theories fail we need to switch to pre-reflective ones. However, existing pre-reflective accounts suffer from the "ex negativo" challenge. They follow the strategy that all problematic features of reflective theories must be eliminated in order to reach a satisfying theory. As a result, pre-reflective theories build their account mostly by means of "ex negativo" definitions. While these claims

seem largely plausible, they are negative in nature. Thus, current, pre-reflective accounts do not provide enough positive, material content. They merely show how reflective accounts fail and what self-consciousness is not. This alone is unsatisfying for a theory of self-consciousness for two reasons. One, it does not sufficiently explain the phenomenon in question when there are little positive features described. Two, it makes it difficult to explain how self-consciousness could relate to higher levels of propositional, more substantial thoughts about ourselves.

The last type of theory remaining are pre-reflective, non-egological theories. They understand self-consciousness as a feature of mental states. For them it is mental states that are self-conscious instead of an individual person. Consequently, they face an additional problem to the "ex negativo" challenge. They struggle in explaining the unity of our experience. Our phenomenal experience is not just a bunch of separate, self-intimating mental states. Instead, we make unified experiences that consist of many different aspects. When you experience a train approaching the train station, you see something, you hear something, perhaps you also feel something. All these different sensations are unified in the experience of the train. They are experienced as a whole. Moreover, you experience yourself as a unified person. You are not a bunch of single, self-intimating mental states but a concrete individual. A non-egological account of self-consciousness fails to capture this aspects.

As can be seen, contemporary philosophy of self-consciousness suffers from serious problems. Many of them have been recognized by the Heidelberg School. In addition, they repeatedly point to the potential of understanding self-consciousness as an affective phenomenon. This book follows this intuition because many of the challenges of today's philosophy of self-consciousness can be addressed if we understand self-consciousness as an affective phenomenon, namely as self-feeling. Dieter Henrich presents notions of "happiness", "misery" and "gratefulness" that are not mere short-term, object-oriented emotions but general, fundamental, affective perspectives on our lives. Manfred Frank re-introduces the notion of "self-

feeling" from the Romantic tradition and finds that it is surprisingly similar to his own account of pre-reflective, non-propositional self-consciousness. Ulrich Pothast introduces a whole network of concepts including "sense" and "inner ground". These suggest that our most fundamental way of being in this world is affective. As interesting as these pointers to the significance of affectivity in self-consciousness are, the Heidelberg School does not go far enough to offer a satisfying account of self-consciousness as an affective phenomenon. Henrich gives some examples of fundamental feelings but does not integrate them to a comprehensive account. Frank and Pothast follow the intuition that affectivity plays an important role but do not explore the phenomenology of affectivity deeply enough to be able to establish a plausible theory of affective self-consciousness or self-feeling.

Part two

The pointers of the Heidelberg School towards affectivity lead to the second part of this book. In order to explore what role affectivity may play in self-consciousness it takes a closer look at contemporary philosophy of human affectivity, which has reached an enormous level of detail and complexity today. However, it is mainly concerned with short-term, object-oriented emotions. The reader is introduced into the field with some properties of emotions, especially their being both bodily feelings and cognitive evaluations. Yet, for the purpose of this book we have to dig deeper and explore more fundamental levels of human affectivity. Matthew Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings is the most elaborate attempt to do that. Existential feelings constitute the affective background of all our experience. They have two features.

First, existential feelings are bodily. The body has two aspects: One, it can be described as the felt body, the body that is the object of perception. Two, it can be described as the feeling body, the body that experiences and perceives. Thus, bodily feelings can be intentional, a way of relating to the world. As a consequence, Ratcliffe suggests that the notion "bodily feeling" should refer to both aspects, the feeling of the body and the feeling through the body. Building on these observations, he argues that existential feelings are bodily feelings in the

abovementioned sense. Notably, existential feelings are not directed at specific objects. Instead, they shape our way of being in the world, our whole experience. Thus, they are about the world as a whole and our relationship with it.

Second, existential feelings shape our space of possibilities. They form our sense of what is possible or what possibilities there are. Thus, they are background orientations that structure all our experience and thought. Ratcliffe suggests that in the background of all the object-specific horizons there is a "universal horizon" that encompasses all possibilities of experience, thought and action. This background is constituted by existential feelings. In our respective existential feeling, the world as a whole appears in a specific way, yielding specific possibilities. These possibilities can be described in many ways. They include our relationship to agency, our experience of significance, interpersonal accessibility, temporality, and others.

In the context of this book one thing is crucial about existential feelings: They are both a pre-structuring background of all experience and a part of experience at the same time. Qua shaping the space of possibilities they are in the background of our experience. Qua being a bodily feeling they are part of our experience. They are background orientations that are feelings at the same time. Thus, we can be aware of them. Existential feelings live in both worlds simultaneously. They pre-structure our experience and are part of it at the same time.

Following this introduction to Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings some remarks can be made about their possible sources of variations. They change and vary based on culture, social environment, developmental factors, and the process of getting older. Moreover, the phenomenon of existential feelings is illustrated by quickly showing how they work in mental illnesses such as the Capgras and the Cotard delusions, depression, and schizophrenia. Further, existential feelings are neither generalized emotions nor mere moods but a distinct kind of affective phenomena. The discussion of Ratcliffe's theory is concluded with an exploration of how existential feelings relate to thought. It is shown that the relationship can be

described as reciprocal. Existential feelings influence thought and vice versa. Notably, however, existential feelings remain the more fundamental phenomenon.

In sum, Ratcliffe offers a detailed theory of fundamental affectivity. He shows that existential feelings are an ever-present background that shapes all our experience and thought. Our way of being in this world is influenced by this fundamental affective dimension. However, there are three shortcomings in Ratcliffe's theory. First, he does not offer much detail regarding the relationship between existential feelings and thought. Especially, he does not say too much about how we can have thoughts that do not correspond to our existential feelings. Second, Ratcliffe seems to overemphasize pathologies and tells us too little about healthy, authentic existential feelings. Third, Ratcliffe remains rather silent on the relationship of existential feelings and self-consciousness. He sees them as predominantly shaping our experience of the world and seems to underexpose their influence in how we experience ourselves.

This third lacuna in Ratcliffe's theory can be partly addressed by looking at Stephan's and Slaby's complementary work. They offer a classification of existential feelings explicitly including their relation to oneself. Moreover, they explore how existential feelings influence our sense of ability and thus our self-consciousness. The discussion of their ideas concludes part two of this book.

Part three

Part three synthesizes the findings of parts one and two and claims that self-consciousness is an affective phenomenon, namely self-feeling. Self-feeling and existential feeling are both aspects of our fundamental affectivity. While the theory of existential feelings emphasizes how fundamental affectivity shapes our world-experience, the account of self-feeling presented here emphasizes how fundamental affectivity shapes how we experience our individual existence. Thus, every self-feeling is an existential feeling and vice versa.

Self-feeling shall be understood as a pre-reflective, pre-propositional, bodily feeling that shapes our space of possibilities. It is the affective disclosure of individual existence. This can be explained in more detail.

First, self-feeling is pre-reflective in the following sense. It is our primary and most fundamental awareness of how we find ourselves in this world. It is a direct, unitary, sui generis, "de se" phenomenon. One, it is a single-digit phenomenon, it is irrelational. In self-feeling our existence is directly and immediately disclosed. Two, it is holistic and encompasses our whole existence in a unitary manner. It is not a feeling of specific objects or events in this world. Rather, our existence as a whole has a specific "feel". It feels like something to exist as ourselves in this world. Three, it is a sui generis phenomenon. It cannot be reduced either to other affective phenomena like emotions or moods or to other mental states like beliefs or desires. Self-feeling is an aspect of our fundamental affectivity, like existential feeling, and this makes it our most basic, affective awareness of being in the world. Four, it constitutes "de se" awareness. Self-feeling is not a feeling of something that somehow turns out to be myself. Instead, it is genuinely a feeling of my being as my being. It primordially discloses my own existence as my own.

Second, self-feeling should be understood as pre-propositional to escape the dilemma of propositionality introduced in part one. On the one hand, a strictly propositional account of self-consciousness leads to the problems of higher-order theories. On the other hand, a strictly non-propositional account remains unsatisfying because it leaves out an important aspect of our self-relation. Thus, a middle way seems to be most promising. Building on Slaby's work, we can claim that self-feeling is pre-propositional in the following sense: One, self-feeling is not propositional in the sense that it was completely articulated in propositional form. Feelings in general are not instantaneously articulated as propositions. Often when we experience feelings we do not immediately have them in propositional form. Two, self-feeling is not non-propositional. Self-feeling always has propositional character albeit it does not immediately come in propositional form. Just like

feelings in general, it has a narrative structure that allows its expression in a concrete narration. When we feel something, we can try to articulate it. Its narrative structure provides basic material content and warrants the possibility to build propositional knowledge based on self-feeling. It enables a relationship between the fundamental phenomenon of self-feeling and our rational, propositional mental structure. Notably, however, it need not always be actually expressed in a concrete narration.

Third, self-feeling is a bodily feeling. This has two implications. One, it integrates feelings of the body with feelings of the world. It is a bodily feeling of being in the world. In self-feeling we feel how we find ourselves in the world. It is at the same time a "world-feeling", we feel our being in touch with the world. Self-feeling and world-feeling are two aspects of one unitary phenomenon. It encompasses ourselves and the world in one turn. Two, self-feeling integrates bodily and cognitive aspects. Self-feeling is a feeling that our body has, it is felt in the body. Our life in this world has a certain "feel" that is changeable. At the same time, it has cognitive aspects, too. We do not only have a dull feeling of bodily existence or mere feelings of the body, like hunger or tiredness. Instead, self-feeling instantaneously discloses our being in this world as a whole. Our whole life with its cares, projects and possibilities is felt in self-feeling. We feel how things are going for us and what matters for us in self-feeling.

Fourth, self-feeling fundamentally shapes our space of possibilities. Self-feeling is a sense of what appears as possible for us in this world, it constitutes our universal horizon. For example, our sense of agency is constituted by our self-feeling. Self-feeling shapes what appears as possible action for us, it is a sense of what we can do or cannot do. Also, it constitutes a sense of potential happenings. Moreover, our self-feeling shapes the way we see our relationships to other people. We may feel like an integrate member of a particular social group, embedded in a shared sense of meaning and joint projects. Likewise, our self-feeling shapes our sense of the world as such. We feel how we are in this world in self-feeling. The world can

appear as a homely space where we belong, offering a secure and safe environment for our life. Alternatively, it can be an unfamiliar, frightening place where potential danger lurks behind every corner. As we saw above, the space of possibilities includes self-, social-, and world-directed aspects. All these aspects are shaped by our self-feeling.

Given these points, self-feeling can be described as affective disclosure of individual existence. This has two aspects. One, it is a feeling of existence. In self-feeling we are aware of the fact that we exist in this world. We feel bare existence, the mere *that* we exist. Two, it is a feeling of individuality. Self-feeling not only discloses mere existence but also our being as particular individuals. We do not feel the mere *that* we exist only. We feel *how* we are in this world as particular individuals. In a word, self-feeling warrants our fundamental awareness of existence as such as well as the feeling of our individual being. Our life as a whole is affectively disclosed in self-feeling.

After having presented the main features of self-feeling, we turn to how it contributes to problems in the current debates.

First, self-feeling is pre-reflective and thus avoids infinite regress and vicious circularity. Given the problems of reflective accounts we may follow proponents of pre-reflectivity and assume that mental states are self-intimating. This holds true for feelings, too. Self-feeling is a feeling so it is self-intimating as part of experience. At the same time, it is an all-encompassing background structure that shapes our experience and thought. Thus, it is the affective disclosure of our whole existence and does not fall prey to infinite regress. However, one might object that the argument for self-intimation of mental states is another example of a vicious circle. After all, there are some mental states that are not immediately self-intimating, such as unknown desires or traumatic memories. Yet, consider the following two points: One, while reflective theories commit both infinite regress *and* vicious circularity and often not even see the problem, pre-reflective theories avoid at least infinite regress and are aware of the problem. Thus, they can be considered as more

advanced than reflective theories. Two, this objection applies for all existing pre-reflective accounts so the one presented in this book is no worse than its alternatives. In addition to that, the account of self-feeling presented here has more to offer than existing, pre-reflective theories. It builds on the feature of self-intimation only for feelings and describes the phenomenon not only "ex negativo" but with the positive features of fundamental affectivity, namely existential feelings. This fundamental affectivity (that is our self-feeling) shapes our space of possibilities and thus also determines what parts of our minds become salient. Therefore, it also makes it more likely for some unconscious mental states to emerge to self-consciousness than for others. Moreover, our self-feeling shapes our attentional faculty so it influences what we pay attention to und thus what part of our minds we focus on. In a word, even if some kind of circularity can be attributed to self-feeling, it does not seem to be vicious.

Second, self-feeling overcomes the "ex negativo" challenge and offers material content. In contrast to negative, pre-reflective accounts like those of the Heidelberg School or Zahavi and Gallagher self-feeling is here understood to be a bodily feeling that shapes our space of possibilities. This points at its positive characteristics. It is not an empty, formal notion but includes all the phenomenological richness associated with fundamental affectivity. In addition to that, this positive material content enables a bridge between self-feeling and higher levels of self-reflection. Self-feeling offers a particular, affective experience of what it is like to be me. This experience can be the foundation for more elaborate thoughts about oneself.

Third, self-feeling complements the theory of existential feelings. Both are aspects of one unitary, fundamental affectivity. The theory of existential feelings focuses on how our world-experience is shaped by fundamental affectivity and the account of self-feeling presented here focuses on what it is like to be ourselves.

This unitary, affective perspective on our individual existences enables self-feeling to contribute to the problem of unity, too. Self-feeling is the affective disclosure of individual existence as a whole. It is not the experience of particular, self-conscious

mental states. Thus, it is not non-egological. Interestingly, self-feeling is not egological in the traditional sense either. It is not revealing a "core self". Instead, it is the affective resonance of our dynamic lives as human individuals. This can be further explained by introducing Martin Heidegger's notion of the „care-structure". It has three elements that are affectively manifested and revealed in self-feeling: One, we are "ahead of ourselves". As human beings we live in a space of possibilities that is shaped by self-feeling. Two, we are "already in". We do not encounter an empty space or pure possibility but the bodily self-feeling makes us feel that we are always already in a given environment. Three, we are "alongside". Self-feeling is a sense of ability that pulls us into concrete worldly projects. We are not detached, neutral observers, "objectively" looking at this world from outside. Instead, we are immersed in the world and our projects in it. Importantly, Heidegger's „care-structure" is not static but essentially temporal. It includes a sense of what has been, what is and what is going to be. Thus, self-feeling is not about ourselves as static sameness but as dynamic, living beings. It affectively discloses and manifests the basic, dynamic structure of "care". There is no "core self" that would be the object of self-feeling. Instead, self-feeling is the affective resonance to our active way of existing as human beings. As can be seen, this account of self-feeling goes beyond the egological/non-egological distinction. It is not non-egological because it reveals our individual existence as a whole. It is not egological in the traditional sense because it is not about a "core self". Instead, it is egological in a new, unorthodox way because it is the affective resonance of the dynamic process of our individual human life. As a consequence, self-feeling can account for the unity of self-consciousness both in its synchronic and its diachronic aspect.

After having explained to what extent self-feeling contributes to current problems we explore in what sense particular self-feelings may be called appropriate or pathological. Notably, self-feeling cannot err in the awareness of mere existence. Whenever we have a self-feeling, this already entails our awareness *that* we exist. However, self-feelings can be called inappropriate based on the way they shape the

overall experience of our individual lives. The first three criteria discussed to evaluate the appropriateness of self-feelings are based on Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings. An appropriate self-feeling must display a middle way between being open to alternatives (criterion 1) and being stable over time (criterion 3). They contain their own contingency and include the awareness that we can change. At the same time, they must not change too frequently or too incomprehensibly. Also, appropriate self-feelings must enable openness to other people as people (criterion 2). They disclose our own capability to get in touch with other people. Persons with an appropriate self-feeling feel that they are persons embedded in a social environment they can participate in. In addition to these criteria coming from Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings, the philosophy of short-term, object-oriented emotions has additional criteria to offer for what they count as appropriate or inappropriate. Based on that, we see that self-feelings can be evaluated along the following three additional criteria. First, the appropriateness of self-feelings can be evaluated with a look at its biological effects (criterion 4). When a self-feeling has strong negative impact on our biological functioning it may be regarded as inappropriate. Second, inappropriate self-feelings can harm our social fitness (criterion 5). They make social life harder for us because they prohibit participating in the social world around us the way we are supposed to. Third, self-feelings need to display a certain amount of consistency (criterion 6). An appropriate self-feeling must be for the most part aligned with our overall mental states. In a word, six criteria are presented to evaluate the appropriateness of self-feelings. Importantly, there is no decisive, ultimate criterion to assess a particular self-feeling. All discussed criteria have their shortcomings. Nonetheless, in sum they can provide some guidance.

Part four

Part four of this book explores the relation between self-feeling and more substantial thoughts about ourselves, such as those about one's character, one's values, one's abilities, one's aptitudes, one's emotions, and those about what makes one happy. They are called self-interpretation here.

Based on what has been argued for in this book so far, part four begins with introducing a terminological framework to make some aspects more precise. First, pre-reflective, pre-propositional self-consciousness is distinguished from reflective, propositional self-knowledge that uses the first person pronoun. Second, there are parts of our mind that require the terms unconscious or subconscious. Those mental states are called unconscious that are part of our minds but not part of experience, such as unknown desires, hidden prejudices or traumatic memories. Those mental states that are part of our minds and part of experience but not in the focus of attention are called subconscious. These include the unnoticed smell of a room, background noises, my clothes touching my skin, or the phenomenon of inattentional blindness. Third, the term self-interpretation should be used to refer to more general and complex, narrative thoughts about ourselves. Self-feeling covers both pre-reflective, pre-propositional self-consciousness and the levels below that. It is part of our conscious experience of how we are doing and how things are going for us. In addition to that, it is not always in the focus of our attention and thus part of the subconscious. Further, it shapes our space of possibilities from the background and thus touches the unconscious as well. Altogether, it serves as the foundation for more elaborate thoughts about ourselves, which are called self-interpretation here.

This book prefers the term self-interpretation over self-knowledge to talk about more substantial thoughts about ourselves for the following reasons. First, this phenomenon requires both rootedness in some grounding and a certain hermeneutic openness. The term self-interpretation captures both aspects well. Second, thoughts are about ourselves as changing, dynamic beings and not about a static objects like a "core self". Since interpretations are typically well suited for dealing with processes and narratives, self-interpretation fits better as a term than self-knowledge. Third, knowledge is usually understood as being digital in its truth value. Normally there are clear criteria to examine if your knowledge is true or not. Things are different for interpretation. Your interpretation need not be digital in its

truth value. It can be fully true or partly true or partly wrong, etc. Moreover, often there is no clear criterion to examine if an interpretation is true or not.

The next chapter looks closer into the relationship between self-interpretation and self-feeling. It starts with Krista Lawlor's account of "causal self-interpretation". She argues that in order to come to an opinion about ourselves it helps to interpret what she calls "inner promptings". These include spontaneous inner images, natural language sentences, or memories. This seems compatible with the account of self-feeling presented in this book. Self-feeling occurs as part of experience and allows interpretative deliberation based on it. It has a reciprocal relationship to thoughts, just like existential feeling. Because of its general feature of shaping our space of possibilities it influences the content and form of our thoughts. At the same time, our thoughts may influence our self-feeling. For example, the process of articulating a rather indeterminate, pre-propositional self-feeling may not only express a pre-existing mental state but beyond that shape and change the self-feeling itself. Additionally, the fact that one manages to articulate one's self-feeling may in turn influence it.

Overall, there are three sources of evidence for self-interpretation: Self-observation, testimony, and self-feeling. In addition to being a source of evidence, self-feeling also influences the whole process of self-interpretation because from the background it shapes our space of possibilities and thus our thoughts.

Based on this understanding of self-interpretation we can explore what an appropriate self-interpretation might look like. Some challenges may stand in the way to develop an appropriate self-interpretation. We can distinguish four possible combinations of self-feeling and self-interpretation. First, there is an inappropriate self-feeling that associates with a corresponding self-interpretation. The case of depression can serve as a good example for this. Second, an appropriate self-feeling can associate with a non-corresponding self-interpretation. The examples of Robert and Rosie show cases with fairly appropriate self-feelings but a self-interpretation that does not correspond. Third, we can have a pathological self-feeling that

associates with a non-corresponding self-interpretation. The case of narcissistic personality disorder can be taken as an example. Both the second and the third combination may be called cases of self-deception. The fourth possible combination consists of an appropriate self-feeling associating with a corresponding self-interpretation. This may be called authenticity.

This book is ends with a brief discussion on how the notion of authenticity relates to self-feeling and self-interpretation. Based on Martin Heidegger and his follower Paola-Ludovika Coriando it is argued that appropriate self-feelings in the case of authenticity reveal the character of our existence as potentiality that is part of a greater whole. However, we have to take into account that these appropriate self-feelings are not always easy to bear. In the form of "angst" or "boredom" they confront us with the burden of freedom and open possibility. Thus, there is some benefit in adopting self-deceptive self-interpretations in order to avoid this burden.

In light of this, some potential, fallible means to evaluate a self-interpretation are discussed, partly building on Pothast's work. First, an appropriate self-interpretation depends on an appropriate self-feeling. There cannot be appropriateness on the higher levels if something is wrong in the foundation. Second, we can ask if our self-feeling provides "sensing support" for the self-interpretation, we can learn to focus on our self-feeling and listen more closely, we can look at the consistency of our self-interpretation with our other mental states and over time, and we can look at what influence it has on our relation to other people. Also, we can examine if our self-feeling incorporates an experience of potentiality and unity with a greater whole.

Overall, authenticity includes two elements. First, there is the element of self-discovery. Our self-interpretation must not depart too much from our self-feeling. Second, there is the element of self-creation. It has two aspects. One, there is reason-based deliberation that leads to conclusions about what you should do and be. Two, there is an aspect of a genuine freedom to choose when we are facing incommensurable, hard decisions. Both these elements are shaped by self-feeling.

Open questions for further research

This book offers an argument for why it makes sense to understand self-consciousness as an affective phenomenon, namely as self-feeling. However, as mentioned in the introduction, in this broad project some areas could be covered at a certain level of detail only. This section will highlight open questions that may guide future research on the topic.

First, there is embodiment. It would be interesting to further explore what is bodily about self-feeling. What role does the physical body play in self-feeling? How does self-feeling change when the body changes? For example, what is the self-feeling of patients with severe physical conditions such as Mobius syndrome or spinal cord injuries (Cole 1997, 2006, 2016)? Likewise, it would be interesting to know more about the neural correlates of self-feeling (Gaebler et al. 2012). What does self-feeling look like in the brain? Further, there is much ongoing work in cognitive science emphasizing the role of the body (e.g. Colombetti 2014; Varela et al. 1991). How does self-feeling relate to these lines of research?

Second, there is the problem of temporality. This book did not say all too much about how self-feeling relates to the temporality of our existence or our consciousness of time. However, these seem to be relevant questions. Given the fact that self-feeling shapes our space of possibilities temporality presumably plays a role in the way we experience the future. Likewise, in self-feeling we feel what our whole existence is like and that notably includes what we experienced in the past. This topic was touched when discussing the temporality of the "care-structure" and the dynamic character of our existence. However, there would be much more to say. Possible starting points may be Frank's (Frank 1990; 2012, chapter 3) or Zahavi's (Zahavi 2003, 2005, 2010, 2012b, 2014) work about the relation of pre-reflective self-consciousness to temporality.

Third, there is the relation between self-feeling and "self" that was only superficially discussed in this book. Some may argue that there simply is no "self" that an

account of self-feeling could relate to. Yet, even such a claim should be carefully analyzed and argued for. If we assumed that there was some phenomenon that justified philosophical research on a "self", how would it relate to self-feeling? Gallagher recently proposed the idea of a "pattern theory of self" (Gallagher 2013). What role would self-feeling play inside such a framework? In the course of this book it was emphasized that our existence must be understood as dynamic and self-feeling as "referring" to that process of human life. This is only the beginning of philosophical research on a dynamic, active understanding of the "self". Slaby (Slaby 2012a; Slaby and Bernhardt 2015; Slaby et al. 2013; Slaby and Wüschner 2014) strongly emphasized the role of agency for our existence. Should thus the "self" be understood primarily from its agential power? Would self-feeling then amount to the affective awareness of our agency?

Last but not least, there is the issue of intersubjectivity. It has not been dealt with sufficiently in this book. There are strong arguments for the primacy and fundamental status of individual self-consciousness amongst the proponents of pre-reflective accounts (e.g. Frank 2012, chapter 4; Zahavi 2005, chapter 6). However, recent proposals suggest a stronger role for intersubjective phenomena in pre-reflective self-consciousness and thus self-feeling (Ratcliffe 2016b; Ratcliffe forthcoming-a ; Ratcliffe forthcoming-b; Zahavi 2014). Particularly, there are serious attempts to establish an account of pre-reflective self-consciousness in plural subjects, mostly put forward by Schmid (Schmid 2005, 2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2016a, 2016b, forthcoming-a, forthcoming-b).[311] This is a promising project that could relate well to self-feeling as presented here. While self-feeling is the affective disclosure of individual existence, "we-feeling" could be the affective disclosure of the existence of a plural subject. Obviously, one has to offer sound explanations of how we should understand the notion of plural subject and in what way it would be able to be in fundamental affective states. However, this remains subject to further research.

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[311] See Sánchez Guerrero (2011), Slaby (2014), and Krueger (2016) for ideas that point in a similar direction.

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Abstract (English)

"Gnōthi seautón – Know thyself!" is a long-standing imperative in philosophy. In this tradition, there has been a vivid debate on problems of self-consciousness and self-knowledge in the last years. What is self-consciousness? How do we know ourselves? This book attempts to contribute to these issues by approaching them from an unusual angle. It suggests to understand self-consciousness as an affective phenomenon, namely as self-feeling.

Self-feeling is presented here as pre-reflective, pre-propositional, bodily feeling that shapes our space of possibilities. It is the affective disclosure of individual existence. This sheds new light on some pressing, current problems. First, the account of self-feeling proposed here overcomes the difficulties of infinite regress and vicious circularity that reflective (or higher-order) accounts of self-consciousness struggle with. At the same time, it goes beyond existing, rather formal, pre-reflective accounts of self-consciousness. Second, it allows to build a bridge between the basic level of self-consciousness and the higher level of more substantial thoughts about oneself. Third, it enriches philosophy of human affectivity by explicitly focusing on what fundamental "feelings of being" tell us about ourselves.

This book has four parts. Based on the work of the Heidelberg School, the first part introduces to contemporary philosophy of self-consciousness and discusses some of its most pressing challenges. The second part turns to an exploration of fundamental affectivity, especially Matthew Ratcliffe's theory of existential feelings. Part three synthesizes findings from parts one and two. It presents an account of self-feeling and argues for its value in current debates. Part four investigates how self-feeling relates to more substantial thoughts about oneself, namely to self-interpretation.

Abstract (German)

"Gnōthi seautón – Erkenne dich selbst!" ist eine seit alters her bekannte Forderung der Philosophie. In dieser Tradition hat sich in den letzten Jahren eine lebendige Debatte um Selbstbewusstsein und Selbsterkenntnis entwickelt. Was ist Selbstbewusstsein? Wie erkennen wir uns selbst? Dieses Buch möchte einen Beitrag zu diesen Fragen leisten, indem es sich ihnen aus einem unüblichen Blickwinkel nähert. Es schlägt vor, Selbstbewusstsein als affektives Phänomen zu verstehen, konkret als Selbstgefühl.

Selbstgefühl wird hier als prä-reflexives, prä-propositionales, körperliches Gefühl vorgestellt, das unseren Möglichkeitsraum prägt. Es ist die affektive Eröffnung individueller Existenz. Das wirft neues Licht auf einige drängende, aktuelle Probleme. Erstens überwindet der hier vorgeschlagene Begriff von Selbstgefühl die Schwierigkeiten des infiniten Regresses und der vitiösen Zirkularität, unter denen reflexive Theorien des Selbstbewusstseins leiden. Gleichzeitig geht er über existierende, eher formale, prä-reflexive Theorien hinaus. Zweitens erlaubt er einen Brückenschlag zwischen der basalen Ebene des Selbstbewusstseins und der höheren Ebene von substanzielleren Gedanken über uns selbst. Drittens bereichert er die Philosophie der menschlichen Affektivität, indem er explizit darauf fokussiert, was fundamentale „Seinsgefühle" uns über uns selbst eröffnen.

Dieses Buch gliedert sich in vier Teile. Basierend auf den Arbeiten der Heidelberger Schule führt der erste Teil in die zeitgenössische Philosophie des Selbstbewusstseins ein und diskutiert einige ihrer drängendsten Probleme. Der zweite Teil wendet sich der Erkundung von fundamentaler Affektivität, besonders Matthew Ratcliffes Theorie existenzieller Gefühle, zu. Der dritte Teil synthetisiert die Ergebnisse aus den Teilen eins und zwei. Er präsentiert einen Begriff von Selbstgefühl und argumentiert für seinen Nutzen in aktuellen Debatten. Der vierte Teil untersucht die Beziehung von Selbstgefühl zu substanzielleren Gedanken über uns selbst, nämlich zur Selbstinterpretation.