

‘I’ without ‘I am’: On the Presence of Subjectivity in Early Buddhism, in the Light of Transcendental Phenomenology

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ABSTRACT

Investigating the Pāli suttas, compiled prior to the development of Abhidhamma, from a phenomenological perspective reveals an internally coherent and consistent doctrine/theory whose crucial theme is the intentionality and subjectivity of consciousness. Reductive interpretations tend to interpret the basic Buddhist principle of ‘non-self’, and its correlative repudiation of the concept/conceit ‘I am’, as entailing a rejection of any genuine (phenomenological) meaningfulness for the term ‘I’ as a legitimate expression of subjectivity, intentionality, and consciousness. Indeed, it is occasionally even claimed that Buddhas and Arahants cannot possess subjective intentional consciousness at all. In the following reflections, then, a few key aspects of an alternative (phenomenological) perspective upon early Pāli Buddhism are introduced and sketched out, whereby it is argued that the presence of subjective intentional consciousness, even in the case of Buddhas and Arahants, is not only presupposed by the suttas, and is not only quite unproblematic for early Buddhist doctrine/theory, but is also actually of fundamental importance for the very possibility of Buddhist truth and practice. Thus, early Buddhist doctrine/theory is not only non-reductive; it also eminently invites a deep dialogue with, and a serious and detailed interpretation from the perspective of, Transcendental Phenomenology.

Keywords

anattā, consciousness, early Buddhism, Husserl, ‘I’, ‘I am’, intentionality, non-self, phenomenology, subjectivity

1. INTRODUCTION

asmimānassa yo vinayo, etaṃ ve paramaṃ sukhan ti.

‘The removal of the conceit, “I am”: that, verily, is the ultimate bliss!’¹

The title (and abstract) of these reflections is intentionally provocative; even though, ultimately, I believe that it is neither controversial nor problematic for early Buddhist doctrine/theory. Very often I have encountered, in learned scholarly studies by both non-monastic and monastic scholars, a virtually unconscious and uncritical conflation of the expressions ‘I’ (*ahaṃ*), ‘I am’ (*asmī’ti*), and ‘self’ (*attā*), as though they were simply and unquestionably synonymous. On this assumption, given the fundamental importance of the early Pāli Buddhaddhamma (EB) ‘axiom’ of *anattā*, ‘non-self’, both ‘I am’ and ‘I’, taken as virtually interchangeable expressions, must together be denied and rejected, as nothing more than pernicious synonyms of *attā*, in the disputed eternalist sense of that term. However, while the sense of ‘I am’ is certainly theorized as fundamentally problematic, and as having not merely epistemological but actually *metaphysical consequences* (cf. §7.1 below), there is never, in the EB *suttas*, any problematization of *subjectivity* as a given (and necessary) fact of consciousness (to the contrary, the subjectivity of consciousness is essential not only to the actual mechanisms of EB practice, but also to the ultimate EB goals of enlightenment and liberation), nor of its expression by means of the term ‘I’.

Yet, this is not merely a matter of words and their alleged definitions: it is a question of the *phenomenological*, and therefore also *practical*, sources of *meaning* for these, and all, words. An oft-quoted statement of the Buddha reads: ‘These, Citta, are the world’s names, the world’s expressions, the world’s usages, the world’s indications, which, indeed, the Tathāgata uses, without being attached to them’.² There can be no doubt, though, that if the Buddha used the world’s words without attachment, be they ‘colloquial’ words or ‘technical’ words,³ be they ‘non-Buddhist’ or ‘Buddhist’ words,⁴ it is because he intended to communicate something that he had *experienced* to others: something that was not dependent on words; and therefore, as we might put it, was ‘logically prior’ to words. The important word, here, is ‘*experience*’: and that is why a phenomenological approach to the Buddha’s ‘worldly words’ is, arguably, so important.

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1. Ud 2.1 (Ud 10). (Except where otherwise indicated, translations are by the author.)
 2. DN 9 (at D I 202): ‘*imā kho citta, lokasamaññā lokaniruttiyo lokavohārā lokapaññattiyo, yāhi tathāgato voharati aparāmasan’ti.*
 3. Note that the context of the just cited passage from DN 9 is in fact a discussion of *atta-paṭilābha*, or various kinds of ‘acquisition of self’; a technical term that is not found elsewhere in the *Suttanta Piṭaka*, but was certainly not ‘colloquial’. It was probably a term used by a particular school of *samaṇas*, ‘spiritual ascetics, recluses, wanderers’. The Buddha himself was technically a *samaṇa*, and was addressed as such by those who were not his followers.
 4. On this point, one should bear in mind the famous ‘raft simile’ of MN 22 (at M I 134–135) and MN 38 (at M I 260–261). The latter passage reads: ‘Bhikkhus, purified and bright as this view is, if you adhere to it, cherish it, treasure it, and treat it as a possession, would you then understand that the Dhamma has been taught as similar to a raft, being for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of grasping [*nittharaṇatthāya no gahaṇatthāyāti?*]’ (Nāṇamoli and Bodhi 2009, 352).

Consequently, the following quite incomplete reflections sketch out just a few key aspects of an ongoing inquiry into the many deep correlations that exist between Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology (TP) and early Pāli Buddhādhamma.⁵ The elements of these reflections are organized around what is arguably the most essential theme — one might even say, ‘philosophical problem’ — at the heart of both TP and EB.

My arguments propose the conclusion that ‘*pure subjectivity*’ is an inherent and irreducible property of *intentional consciousness* (i.e., ‘*consciousness-of*’), and thus an essential *a priori* condition for the actual process of lived conscious experience;⁶ and that there is a definite phenomenological sense in which, when everything else has been phenomenologically ‘excluded’ and ‘reduced’, ‘pure consciousness-of’ remains as an absolutely irreducible principle; intentionality and subjectivity are ‘*transcendental*’ facts.⁷ Moreover, if there were no phenomenon whatsoever for consciousness-of to be conscious-of, then, given that consciousness-of already, apodictically (i.e., self-evidently and self-provingly), demonstrates the irreducible nature of ‘being conscious-of’, it could be conscious-of nothing but its own (purely *non-phenomenal*) consciousness-of. In other words, this would be an *absolute cessation* (*nirodha*) of consciousness as a temporalized experiential process, through the complete cessation of all ‘contact’ (*phassa*) with phenomena⁸ — a state that could be

5. This present article serves as a development and clarification of an earlier essay (cf. Nizamiz 2012), partly as an attempt to respond to many useful questions and criticisms (see ‘Acknowledgements’, below). Ideally, it would be most useful to read both of these closely-related papers in conjunction.
6. In Husserl’s TP terminology, this is *Erlebnis*, ‘lived experience’, ‘mental process’.
7. I use this term in Husserl’s sense, as when he designates the notion of ‘pure consciousness’ (*das “reine Bewußtsein”*) as ‘transcendental consciousness’ (*transzendentes Bewußtsein*), and the method by which it is reached, ‘the transcendental *epokhē*’ (Husserl 1982, 66; 1976, 68–69). He writes: ‘[C]onsciousness has, in itself, a being of its own [*Eigensein*] which in its own absolute essence, is not touched by the phenomenological exclusion. It therefore remains as the “phenomenological residuum”, as a region of being [*Seinsregion*] which is of essential necessity quite unique’ (*ibid.*, 65–66 (italics in original); 1976, 68). He sees, as the ‘most radical of all ontological distinctions [*Seinsunterscheidungen*], that between ‘being as [transcendental] consciousness and being as something which becomes “manifested” in consciousness, “transcendent” being’. Between these, there is an ‘essential relationship [*Wesensbeziehung*]’; but transcendental consciousness is ‘the primal region [*Urregion*]’ of being, ‘the one in which all other regions of being are rooted, to which, according to their essence, they are relative and on which they are therefore all essentially dependent’ (*ibid.*, 171; 1976, 159). It is one of my claims that EB doctrine/theory and method are not only perfectly consistent with these TP conclusions, but actually go much farther. The EB notions of *viññāṇa anidassana*, ‘non-manifestive consciousness’ (D I 223, M I 329; with *anidassana* used also as an epithet of *nibbāna* (S IV 370)); of *appatiṭṭhita viññāṇa*, ‘unsupported or unestablished consciousness’ (D III 105, S II 102, etc.); of *viññāṇa-dhātu*, the ‘consciousness-element’, after ‘transcendental reduction’, as *parisuddha pariyodāta*, ‘pure and bright’ (M III 342), a description reminiscent of *pabhassara citta*, ‘luminous mind’ (A I 10); these (and many other concepts and contexts connected with these) are all indications of EB’s ‘transcendental’ understanding of the inherent nature of consciousness. A detailed presentation of this particular argument, however, must be reserved for a separate article.
8. ‘Cessation’ (*nirodha*) does not necessarily imply a nihilistic sense of ‘annihilation’: it can be understood in the sense of the ‘coming-to-an-end’ or ‘stopping’ of a process (for a somewhat similar understanding, cf. Harvey 1995, chs. 11 and 12); in this case, a process that is contingent upon many conditions, one of which is consciousness in its aspect as purely transcendental, and therefore non-contingent, ‘supporting principle’ (*dhātu*: cf. MN 140 (M III 237) and fns. 10, 143, and 164 below).

identified with the sense of ‘emptiness’ (*suññatā*),⁹ yet not with a mere *absolute annihilation* (*uccheda*) of consciousness in its most ‘essential’ and ‘transcendental’ sense.

It should be clearly noted here that, on my arguments, pure consciousness-of and its intrinsic subjectivity *cannot be constituted as a ‘self’ of any kind*: whether of the ‘permanent’ and ‘independent’ or of the ‘impermanent’ and ‘dependently-arisen’ variety. In other words, while a ‘permanent, unchanging self’ cannot be found in the contingent, processive, and thus impermanent aggregates (*khandhas*), *neither* a ‘permanent’ *nor* an ‘impermanent’ self can be found in the nature of pure consciousness-of, even despite its ‘intrinsic property’ of ‘subjectivity’. By ‘self’, here, I mean *any* sense of an ‘individual personal being’, of an ‘identity’ that can be defined as existing through its own unique and essential qualities, whether such a ‘being’ is conceived as ‘permanent’ or as ‘impermanent’; for reasons to be presented below, such a sense of ‘self’ can in no way be ascribed to the intrinsic subjectivity of ‘transcendental consciousness’. Rather, subjectivity is a transcendental *a priori* condition for the very *possibility* of experience: and, in turn, without the givenness of experiencing as a prior condition, there can be no construal of being just such a ‘being’, just such a ‘self’. For precisely this same reason, though, subjectivity is also the transcendental *a priori* condition for the ‘self-realization’ of non-self, as expressed, most eloquently, and with only apparent paradoxicality, by the important EB formula, *netam mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā*, ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self’.

Moreover, I argue that the structure of subjectivity is necessarily ‘actualized’ in *all* states of consciousness, including that state which one *sutta* describes as the ‘*nibbāna*-state with fuel remaining’ (*sa-upādi-sesā nibbāna-dhātu*), as distinguished from the ‘*nibbāna*-state without fuel remaining’ (*an-upādi-sesā nibbāna-dhātu*).¹⁰ In the case of the ‘*nibbāna*-element with fuel remaining’ — i.e., in the case of a living, embodied Tathāgata or Arahant — intentionality and subjectivity are *necessarily still actualized*, but in a mode that, by definition, must be different from that of the non-Arahant. The ‘cause’ or ‘condition’ of this actualization is precisely the continuing fact of their ‘residual embodiment’. Whereas the *non*-Arahant experiences the ‘I’ of subjectivity (and, indeed, of intersubjectivity) as ‘*I am*’ through identification with and appropriation of the ‘five clung-to aggregates’¹¹ (*pañc-upādāna-kkhandhā*), and on this basis actively and continuously re-constitutes their psychophysical embodiment,¹² the Tathāgata or Arahant, by definition, does

9. Cf. MN 121 (M III 104), which explains how *suññatā-vihāra*, ‘dwelling in (the meditative state of) emptiness’, can lead to liberation; the *sutta* makes it very clear that meditation upon and experiencing of emptiness in the highest sense is meditation upon and experiencing of *nibbāna*. Cf. also MN 43 (at M I 297–298).

10. (It 38). In this context, I take *dhātu* to imply a ‘condition’ or ‘state’ (in this case, of consciousness): cf. Cone 2010, 481a–b, s.v. ‘*dhātu*’, §4, ‘a domain of experience or existence’, citing the commentary to this passage (It-a I 164); and cf. also, e.g., SN 35.117 (at S IV 97): ‘That sphere should be known, where the eye ceases and visual forms fade away’ (*se āyatane veditabbe yattha cakkhu ca nirujjhati, rūpasaññā ca virajjati*); and so on for the other five sense spheres. For the phrase itself, cf. Thānissaro 2012, It §44, who translates as ‘the Unbinding property without fuel remaining’; Bodhi 2012, 500 and 1144, who translates as ‘the *nibbāna* element without residue remaining’; and Cone 2001, 482a, who defines as ‘(of *nibbāna*, at death) without any remnant of material support’.

11. For an explanation of this rendering of *pañca-upādāna-khandhā*, cf. Nizamis 2011, SN 22.22, n. 5.

12. An explicit statement of this idea can be found in SN 22.47 (at S III 46): “‘I am’ is not vanished [*aviḡataṃ*] in him. Since “I am” is not vanished in him, monks, there is the descent (or

not identify the ‘I’ of pure subjectivity with any phenomenon whatsoever, yet still continues to experience subjectively; we are told, e.g., that even the Buddha himself on several occasions experienced severe physical pain, and endured it mindfully.¹³ Thus, when Buddhas and Arahants use the term ‘I’ *subjectively*, rather than *objectively*,¹⁴ what they are expressing is precisely just that *experiencing subjectivity*, but without identifying that subjectivity with anything phenomenal.

Consequently, this essay will quite intentionally *not* contradict the fundamental EB axiom of *anattā*, ‘non-self’. In other words, the arguments presented here will *not* posit *any* essentially permanent or separable subjective or objective *entity* or *identity* called *attā*, or ‘self’. Nor will they assert ‘*asmī’ti*, ‘I am’; or ‘*ayam aham asmī’ti*, ‘I am this’; or *asmi-māna-anusaya*, the underlying tendency towards the concept/conceit ‘I am’; i.e., *ahaṃkāra*, ‘I-making’, and *mamaṃkāra*, ‘mine-making’.

2. THE ‘AXIOM’ OF ‘NON-SELF’ (ANATTĀ)

For the sake of clarity and reference, the axiom of *anattā* will be summarized here in five items: a general premise and four arguments.¹⁵

1. Whatever might be regarded as a personal ‘self’ (*attā*) or ‘I am’ (*asmī’ti*) will in fact turn out only to be the five clung-to aggregates or some one of them (SN 22.47, at S III 46).
2. Yet the five aggregates are not a permanent, autonomous ‘self’ or its possessions because one cannot control them to prevent affliction.¹⁶
3. The five aggregates are impermanent (*anicca*), painful (*dukkha*), and have the nature of change (*vipariṇāma*); therefore, it is not befitting or proper (*kallaṃ*) to think of them as a ‘self’.¹⁷
4. Nor is it acceptable (*na khamati*) to posit a ‘self’ that is entirely separate from experience and the phenomena of experience.¹⁸
5. Dependent co-arising is a sufficient and valid explanation of the continuity of temporal experience; therefore, there is no need to posit a separate and permanent ‘self’ in order to account for that continuity.¹⁹

manifestation) [*avakkanti*] of the five (sense) powers [*indriyānaṃ*]: the power of seeing, of hearing, of smelling, of tasting, of touching. There is, monks, the mental faculty [*mano*], there are phenomena [*dhammā*], there is the state of ignorance [*avijjā-dhātu*]. When the spiritually-unlearned common person has been touched by a sensation born from contact (in the state of) ignorance, there is “I am” in him, there is “I am this” in him [*avijjāsamphassajena, bhikkhave, vedayitena phuṭṭhassa assutavato puthujjanassa ‘asmī’tipissa hoti; ‘ayamahasmī’tipissa hoti’*].

13. Cf., e.g., DN 16 (at D II 99, 100, 127–128).

14. Cf. §8 and §12 below.

15. Items 2 to 5 have been adapted from the taxonomy of arguments in support of the *anattā* doctrine in Collins 1982, 97–110.

16. SN 22.59 (at S III 66): *rūpaṃ, bhikkhave, anattā. rūpaṃca hidam, bhikkhave, attā abhaviṣṣa, nayidaṃ rūpaṃ ābādhāya samvatteyya, labbhetha ca rūpe ‘evaṃ me rūpaṃ hotu, evaṃ me rūpaṃ mā ahoṣī’ti.* (So also for *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhārā, viññāna.*)

17. SN 22.59 (at S III 67–68): *yaṃ paṇāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassituṃ: ‘etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā’ti?*

18. Cf. the refutations of DN 15 (at D II 67–69), which are presented in §12 below. Cf. also Bodhi 2010, 42–48, for a detailed discussion of those arguments. Arguments 3 and 4 above, taken together, constitute a nice dilemmatic argument in support of *anattā*.

19. The *locus classicus* is MN 38 (M I 256). I do not think that this argument can be treated as an

3. SOME EXPLANATORY PHENOMENOLOGICAL 'AXIOMS'

1. *Consciousness* — or, as I shall often express it, *consciousness-of* — is an apodictic transcendental fact. It is 'transcendental' primarily in the specific sense that, although it is *immediately knowable* — more precisely, *immediately self-knowing*, self-intimating, non-thetically self-aware²⁰ — it is fundamentally *non-phenomenal*. It does not, and in principle cannot, in any sense 'appear' (Gk. *phainesthai*, from which derives the term 'phenomenon'), not even to itself, as a *phenomenon*. But, in a certain metaphorical sense, i.e., in the sense of its *being conscious-of*, it does 'illuminate' (Gk. *phainein*) the phenomena of which it is conscious; and, in doing so, it also 'illuminates' itself.

2. Moreover, in being conscious-of (phenomena, and itself), consciousness reveals a certain inherent structure belonging essentially to its own nature: a *transcendental* structure that inheres not in 'things', not in *their own transcendent* structure,²¹ but in our own transcendental *consciousness-of* things. In one sense, our recognition of this structure is quite immediate, since we cannot be conscious-of without it; and yet, in another sense, it is also mediate, since we can only be aware of it in and through our being conscious-of 'things'. This structure can be made known, expressed, described, and even theorized, through the two intimately inter-related concepts of *intentionality* and *subjectivity*. To put it another way, intentionality and subjectivity are intrinsic and irreducible structures and properties of consciousness; there is no valid sense in which they can be posited of, or described in terms of, anything other than consciousness itself, apart from which they have no meaning.

3. (i) Consciousness without intentionality would not be consciousness. Intentionality without consciousness would not be intentionality. (ii) Consciousness without subjectivity would not be consciousness. Subjectivity without consciousness would not be subjectivity. (iii) Intentionality without subjectivity would not be intentionality. Subjectivity without intentionality would not be subjectivity.

independent one, as it only has decisive force in combination with the arguments of 3 and 4. Here, I understand dependent co-arising as applying not only to the 'phenomenal content' of experience (i.e., the five clung-to aggregates), but also to the 'essential relationship' (*Wesensbeziehung*; cf. fn. 7 above) between consciousness-of and the aggregates as dependently co-arisen phenomena of that consciousness-of. Although, in the ultimate sense, 'transcendental consciousness' is an 'unsupported' and 'non-manifestive' primal region (*Urregion*) or dimension (*dhātu*) of 'being', its 'beginningless' (cf. A V 113, A V 116, S II 178ff., S III 149) *actualization* as consciousness-of phenomena is itself dependently co-arisen with respect to phenomenal-ity and temporality; and that is precisely why, in accordance with EB, this relationship has a specific condition (*idappaccaya*), and can, in principle, be brought to cessation.

20. In essence, then, I empathize with the so-called 'self-illumination' version of the 'reflexivity thesis' as presented in Siderits, Thompson and Zahavi 2011, 9–10.
21. By its very nature, the phenomenal 'world' (*loka*: S IV 95), 'the All' (*sabbam*: S IV 15), with all the kinds of phenomena that it comprises ('physical' or 'mental', 'real' or 'ideal'), is 'transcendent' with respect to any 'moment' of actual experience, or even any indefinite 'continuum' of experience: it 'exceeds' the grasp of experience, and does so in an 'objective' and 'necessary' manner. (Note, then, that 'transcendent' and 'transcendental' have different meanings in TP. E.g., the cup in your hands, which you can never experience as a concrete or intellectual totality in its every possible aspect, is a transcendent object. Your *consciousness-of* that cup, however, is a *transcendental* fact that you cannot doubt or deny: it itself never 'appears', but is the *awareness* of what appears.)

I would add here the assertion (which I intend to demonstrate in the following reflections) that the ‘axiom’ of subjectivity is fully compatible with the ‘axiom’ of non-self. Not only that, but the ‘axiom’ of non-self could not be known to be true if the axiom of subjectivity were false: to intuit the truth of non-self requires an intentionally-conscious subjectivity in and through which the intuition of that truth can actually be experienced and known to be (apodictically and immediately) true. Thus, to cite the best possible example of this principle, the Buddha himself is reported as saying, in the first person singular: *yathābhūtaṃ abbhaññāsiṃ. tassa me evaṃ jānato evaṃ passato ... abbhaññāsiṃ* (e.g., MN 4 [M I 23]). ‘I directly knew as it actually is... When I knew thus and saw thus ... I directly knew...’²² We should not forget or ignore the fact that it was nothing more nor less than this first-personal act of direct knowing that is supposed to have been the single actual origin of the whole of Buddhism.

4. INTENTIONALITY AND SUBJECTIVITY

Signs [Zeichen] are in fact not objects [Gegenstände] of our thought at all, even surrogatively; we rather live entirely in the consciousness of meaning, of understanding [Bedeutungs-, Verständnissbewußtsein], which does not lapse when accompanying imagery does so.²³

It might be customary to introduce the concept of intentionality with a classical definition from Husserl himself, such as the following from *Ideas I*:

Intentionality is an essential peculiarity of the sphere of mental processes [Erlebnissphäre] taken universally in so far as all mental processes [Erlebnisse] in some manner or other share in it ... Intentionality is what characterizes consciousness [Bewußtsein] in the pregnant sense and which, at the same time, justifies designating the whole stream of mental processes [Erlebnisstrom] as the stream of consciousness [Bewußtseinsstrom] and as the unity of one consciousness [Einheit eines Bewußtseins]... Under intentionality we understand the own peculiarity of mental processes ‘to be consciousness of something’ [“Bewußtsein von etwas zu sein”].²⁴

As an initial definition, this is conceptually clear, but it is quite abstract, and I

22. Nāṇamoli and Bodhi 2009, 106 (slightly modified).

23. Husserl 2008, 210; 1913, 68.

24. Husserl 1982, 199–200; 1975, 187–188. The notion of the ‘unity of one consciousness’, here, need not be taken in any sense contrary to EB. Rather, just such a sense of ‘unity’ and ‘continuity’ is necessarily presupposed when, e.g., the Buddha, on the night of his enlightenment, attained the first of the ‘three knowledges’ (*tisso vijjā*): ‘So, I [*ahaṃ*] ... abided, having entered the fourth *jhāna*. When my concentrated mind [*samāhite citte*] was thus purified, bright [*parisuddhe pariyoḍāte*] ... I directed it to [*abhininnāmesim*] knowledge [*ñāṇa*] of the remembrance [*anusati*] of previous abodes (of existence) [*pubbenivāsā*]. I remembered [*anussarāmi*] my various previous abodes (of existence)’ (MN 4, at M I 21–22). If we describe this act of ‘remembering’ in terms of ‘the unity of one consciousness’, this does not imply that consciousness abides in the sense of being ‘one entity’, a permanent transmigrating ‘self’ (cf. the error of Sāti discussed in §9 below), but a causally-connected continuum or stream of events unified through the transcendental subjectivity of consciousness; what makes this an act of ‘remembering’ is precisely the continuity of ‘first personal experience’ throughout the causal-impermanent phenomenal continuum. But subjectivity, as transcendental, is in itself fundamentally empty of all phenomenality, identity, and so forth. Moreover, if we take seriously the concept of ‘knowledge of the remembrance of previous states of existence’ (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*), then we are

have found that, in practice, many people may grasp the idea intellectually, yet without understanding how to apply it to, or investigate it through, their own present lived experience. In addition, the concept often seems to be conceived, and discussed, as though it pertains primarily at a highly conceptual and even predominantly linguistic level of experience.²⁵

Moreover, especially in the context of Buddhist studies, there is a common tendency to misinterpret the term ‘intentionality’ as an abstract noun having the same basic (non-technical) sense as the term ‘intention’: i.e., ‘purpose, goal, aim’.²⁶ It is the latter sense that may be taken as more or less near to the Pāli term *cetanā*:²⁷ as when a *sutta* states, ‘*Cetanā*, I say, is *kamma*: having thought (intended) [*cetayitvā*], one performs an action [*kammaṃ karoti*] with the body, with speech, or with the mental faculty [*manasā*’.²⁸ But ‘intentionality’, in the TP sense, is a much broader and deeper (indeed, all-encompassing) concept than the narrower concept of ‘intention’. One might say that ‘intentionality’ is the highest genus, while ‘intention’ is but one species of mental act falling under that genus.

As Husserl puts it, intentionality is common to *all* mental acts: e.g., perceiving is a perceiving-of something; judging is a judging-of; valuing a valuing-of; wishing a wishing-for. ‘Acting bears upon action. Doing bears upon the deed, loving bears upon the loved one, being glad bears upon the gladsome...’.²⁹ He describes this structure as ‘a radiating “regard”’ (*ausstrahlender “Blick”*) directed from the ‘pure I’ (*reine Ich*) to the ‘object’ (*Gegenstand*). But he goes on to say that phenomenological reflection reveals that this structure and act of ‘I-advertence’ (*Ichzuwendung*), ‘this being-directed-to’ (but also even ‘away-from’) the ‘object’, is not found in every mental process or experience (*Erlebnis*); even so, every mental process can include intentionality within itself.

So, for example, Husserl describes seeing and touching a sheet of paper lying on his desk before him in the half-darkness: his ‘mental regard’ (*geistiger Blick*) is actively adverted to and focused on his seeing and touching of the sheet of paper, his mental ‘grasping’ (*Erfassen*) of it is a ‘singling out and grasping’ (*Herausfassen*); but at the same time, this act is embedded within an ‘experiential background’ (*Erfahrungshintergrund*), an enviroing ‘field of intuition’ (*Anschauungsfelde*): the books, pencils, and inkstand arrayed around the paper; the desk, the curtained

committed to the necessity that *consciousness itself* must be the ‘bearer’ of such ‘memory’, for no *physical* substrate remains from previous bodies to act as such a ‘bearer’.

25. I think this tendency is evident in the (quite different) way the concept is defined and utilized in analytical philosophy. Searle, who is more sensitive to the concept of intentionality than many other analytical philosophers of mind, defines intentionality as ‘the feature by which our mental states are directed at, or about, or refer to, or are of objects and states of affairs in the world rather than themselves’ (Searle 1984, 16).
26. Cf., e.g., Martini, who translates *cetanā* as ‘intentionality’, and defines the latter in accordance with the term ‘intention’, understood in an ‘ethical’ sense (2012, 413).
27. *Cetanā*, ‘consciousness; intention; volition’ (Cone 2010, 164b, 1 [ii]).
28. AN 6.63 (at A III 415): *cetanāhaṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi. cetayitvā kammaṃ karoti — kāyena vācāya manasā*. Cf. *ceteti (cetayati)*, ‘forms an idea in the mind; thinks about, is intent upon; has in mind (to); intends, forms an intention (to); strive mentally (for)’ (Cone 2010, 167b). But cf. also the second element of the noble eightfold path, i.e., *sammā-saṅkappo*, ‘right thought, intention’, which the commentary glosses as *sammā abhiniropanalakkhaṇo* (Sv I 314 to DN 6, at D I 157), ‘having the characteristic of the right applying or fixing (of thought)’ (cf. Cone 2001, 203b).
29. Husserl 1982, 200; 1976, 188.

window, the room itself; the sounds of children in the garden beyond the room; all of which he is only passively ‘conscious of’, when his attention is actively and attentively adverted to the sheet of paper. But this ‘halo of consciousness’ (*Bewußtseinshof*) includes not only perceptual content; it includes a ‘knowing’, a ‘sense’ of what is not actively seen or heard, a concept of an environing ‘world’ and its structure; it also includes sensations, feelings, memories, phantasies, thoughts, beliefs, intentions, already ‘stirring’ (*sich schon* “*regen*”) and ‘arising’ (*auf tauchen*) in the ‘background’ (“*Hintergrund*”) of adverted consciousness, without having to be ‘fully effected’ (“*vollzogen*”); that is, without the ‘mental regard’ of the ‘I’ actively adverted to them, grasping them up and singling them out.³⁰

Thus, Husserl distinguishes between ‘actional’ (*aktuell*) and ‘non-actional’ (*inaktuell*) mental processes:³¹ the former are characterised by *active* ‘I-advertence’, (e.g., I-think-this, I-perceive-this, I-feel-this, I-attend-to-this, I-intend-to-do-this, etc.), whereas the latter are not. Husserl also describes the latter as ‘an objective background’ (*gegenständliche Hintergrund*), as a ‘potential field of perception’ (*potentielles Wahrnehmungsfeld*). But, as we have just noted, this ‘field’ includes not only what is already appearing and disappearing — and what *potentially* may appear or disappear — within (physical) sense-consciousness, but is not actively adverted to; it also includes ‘mental processes of the actionality-background, such as the “arousal” of likings, of judgments, of wishes, etc., at different distances in the background or, as we can also say, at a *distance from* and a *nearness to the I* [*Ichferne und Ichnähe*].’³² The actional, adverted ‘pure I’ living in these acts is the ‘point of reference’ (*Beziehungspunkt*) for all of these mental processes, ‘actional’ and ‘non-actional’; and he reserves the term *cogito* precisely for the *actional* mental processes, in the sense of ‘I have *consciousness* of something [“*ich habe Bewußtsein von etwas*”], ‘I effect an *act* of consciousness [“*ich vollziehe einen Bewußtseinsakt*”]. But he stresses the point that the actional processes of the *cogito* ‘are surrounded by a “halo” of non-actional mental processes; the *stream of mental processes* [*Erlebnisstrom*] can never consist of just actionalities’.³³

Now, this last point is very important, for Husserl says that ‘with respect to their own essence these non-actionalities [*Inaktualitäten*] are likewise already “consciousness of something”; therefore, he does not define the essence of intentionality (*das Wesen der Intentionalität*) in terms of ‘I-advertence’, i.e., in terms of the *cogito*; rather, he includes ‘I-advertence’ ‘as a particular modality of that something universal which we call intentionality’.³⁴ The *whole field of conscious-*

30. Husserl 1982, 51–55, 69–71, 200–201; 1976, 56–60, 71–72, 189.

31. I follow here Kersten’s rendering of Husserl’s terminology (in Husserl 1982), which seems to me appropriate to Husserl’s conceptual intention, by emphasizing the sense of the mental act (*Akt*) *qua act*.

32. Husserl 1982, 200; 1976, 189 (emphasis in the original). Here, we might perhaps discern a correlation with the sense of *saṅkhāra-kkhandha* as constitutive of all five *khandhas* (e.g., SN 22.79 (at S III 87): *saṅkhatamabhisāṅkharontīti ... tasmā ‘saṅkhārā’ti vuccati*. “They (intentionally) constitute the constituted” ... hence they are called “constitutive processes”).

33. Husserl 1982, 72; 1976, 73. This sense of the ‘actionality’ [*Aktualität*] of the ‘I’ could be seen as the basis of *cetanā* as ‘volition’, ‘intention’, and hence as *kamma*. Cf. SN 12.38 (at S II 66): ‘That which one thinks (intends) [*ceteti*], which one (mentally) shapes [*pakappeti*], which one dwells on [*anuseti*], that becomes a support [*ārammaṇam*] for the continuance [*thitīyā*] of consciousness: when there is a support, there is an establishing [*patitṭhā*] of consciousness’.

34. Husserl 1982, 200–201; 1976, 189.

ness (i.e., in all ‘six senses’, as ‘the All’ (*sabbam*), as EB describes it: SN 35.23 (S IV 15)) is *fundamentally* a *consciousness-of*, and is therefore always-already *essentially intentional* (is essentially characterized by *intentionality*), whether the ‘I’ actively adverts to any particular ‘object’ (‘real’ or ‘ideal’, ‘physical’ or ‘mental’), or not. Although the actional, adverting ‘I’ can be described as the ‘reference point’, and as the ‘focal point’, of this whole field, it should be evident that, as an all-embracing field of *consciousness-of*, that whole field is inherently subjectively-structured: what provides for its structural unity and continuity *as a field* is its inherent structure of subjectivity, which underlies and makes possible every actual act of ‘I-adverting’. In other words, the actional ‘I’ presupposes the pure subjectivity of *consciousness-of*; i.e., of *intentionality* as a fundamental and universal fact necessary to the presence of any *consciousness* whatsoever. We might say that there is a background-foreground relationship between the ‘global subjectivity’ of *consciousness-of*, and the focal point of the cognitively active ‘I’, which accrues to ‘itself’ the (invalid) sense of a more or less independent foreground ‘existence’ (Lat. *ex-sistere*, to stand forth); in other words, the sense of ‘I am’, ‘*asmīti*’.³⁵

For the purposes of this present article, it is important to communicate how *intentionality* is fundamental to *all* levels and modes of *consciousness*, including the ‘preverbal’ or ‘prelinguistic’, and even the very ‘simple’, ‘primitive’, or ‘primordial’.

Intentionality is not exclusively connected with what, colloquially, might be called ‘thinking’, for example; whether such ‘thinking’ occurs ‘linguistically’ or otherwise. Rather, the principle of *intentionality* is quite essential to what *consciousness* ‘is’, in the most universal and fundamental sense. *Intentionality* is essential to the common, immediate fact that we are *conscious-of* things, all kinds of things, whether or not we attentively attend to them, think about them, make judgments about them, feel emotions towards them, etc.; it is simply essential to the fact that we *experience* experiences.

Perhaps a more useful introduction to the meaning of *intentionality* might be an experiential kind of illustration that can be readily reflected or meditated upon; and with reference to which the more abstract and complex structures of *intentionality* can be gradually worked out and comprehended at a later stage. Interestingly, the illustration I have in mind occurs, in more or less similar forms, in the writings of both Frege (in his late essay, ‘The Thought: A Logical Investigation’, of 1918) and Husserl (in his early work, *Logical Investigations*, of 1901).³⁶ In both cases, the illustration concerns the relationship between ‘sensation’ and ‘sense perception’. I shall present both passages, letting them ‘speak for themselves’, *without pre-judging their philosophical presuppositions*. First, Frege:

[S]ense-impressions [*Sinneseindrücke*] are necessary constituents of sense-perceptions and are a part of the inner world. In any case two people do not have the

35. Just here, therefore, I would indicate, again, the point at which we can discern a distinction between the sense of ‘*I am*’ — here, as underlying the modes of the ‘I am conscious-of’, ‘I think’, ‘I can’, ‘I do’, ‘I intend-to-do’, etc. — and the deeper, fundamental sense of ‘I’ (or of ‘I-ness’: cf. Nizamis 2012, 234–235) as the pure subjectivity and *intentionality* intrinsic to the very essence and nature of *consciousness-of*. Cf. also §7.4 below on the sense of *ahaṃkāra*.

36. The parallelism of these two passages was brought to my attention through Dummett’s discussion of Frege and Husserl on the topic of sense perception (cf. Dummett 1991, 272–273, 280; and Dummett 1993, 95–96, 112).

same, though they may have similar, sense-impressions. These alone do not disclose the outer world to us. Perhaps there is a being [*Vielleicht gibt es ein Wesen*] that has only sense-impressions without seeing or touching things. To have visual impressions is not to see things. How does it happen that I see the tree just there where I do see it? Obviously it depends on the visual impressions I have and on the particular type which occur because I see with two eyes. A particular image arises, physically speaking, on each of the two retinas. Another person sees the tree in the same place. He also has two retinal images but they differ from mine. We must assume that these retinal images correspond to our impressions. Consequently we have visual impressions, not only not the same, but markedly different from each other. And yet we move about in the same outer world. Having visual impressions is certainly necessary for seeing things but not sufficient. What must still be added is non-sensible [*nichts Sinnliches*]. And yet this is just what opens up the outer world for us; for without this non-sensible something [*dieses Nichtsinnliche*] everyone would remain shut up in their inner world. So since the answer lies in the non-sensible [*Nichtsinnlichen*], perhaps something non-sensible [*ein Nichtsinnliches*] could also lead us out of the inner world and enable us to grasp thoughts where no sense-impressions [*keine Sinneseindrücke*] were involved. Outside one's inner world one would have to distinguish the proper outer world of sensible, perceptible things [*sinnlich wahrnehmbaren Dinge*] from the realm of the non-sensibly perceptible [*nicht sinnlich wahrnehmbar*]. We should need something non-sensible [*eines Unsinnlichen*] for the recognition [*Anerkennung*] of both realms.³⁷

And Husserl:³⁸

If we imagine [*Fingieren wir*³⁹] a consciousness prior to all experience [*vor allen Erfahrungen*], it may very well have the same *sensations* as we have. But it will intuit no things, and no events pertaining to things, it will perceive no trees and no houses, no flight of birds nor any barking of dogs. One is at once tempted to express the situation by saying that its sensations *mean* nothing [*bedeuten die Empfindungen nichts*] to such a consciousness, that they do not *count as signs* of the properties of an object, that their combination does not count as a sign of the object itself. They are merely lived through [*erlebt*], without an objectifying *interpretation* [*Deutung*] derived from experience. ... [T]he above talk should not be misread as implying that consciousness first looks at its sensations, then turns them

37. Frege 1956, 308–309 (modified); 1918, 75. Dummett (1991, 273) supposes that Frege's 'non-sensible component ... clearly belongs to the third realm': i.e., Frege's 'realm of thoughts'. Yet, here we see that Frege thinks that this 'non-sensible' is what *makes possible* the perception *not only* of the 'external world' of 'sensible, perceptible things', *but also* the realm of the 'non-sensibly perceptible', i.e., the 'realm of thoughts' (the correlates of what in EB would be those *dhammas* that are the 'objects' of *mano* as the sixth sense-power (*indriya*) or sense-base (*āyatana*)). Thus, it seems plausible to understand Frege's notion of a 'non-sensible something' to be referring not to those '(timeless) thoughts' that can be apprehended, *but to the means by which* such 'thoughts' can be apprehended; just as 'sensible, perceptible things' can also be apprehended by just this same means. In this respect, it seems to me that Frege is thinking of precisely that structure or principle that Husserl, adopting and adapting from Brentano, calls 'intentionality'.

38. Cf. also Husserl 1970b, 233; 1954, 236.

39. *Fingieren*, 'to fake, fabricate' (cf. Terrell *et al.*, 247a). Cf. Lat. *fingere*, 'form; invent; imagine; contrive; pretend'.

into perceptual objects, and then bases an interpretation upon them ... Sensations plainly only become presented objects in psychological reflection: in naïve, intuitive presentations they may be *components* of our presentative experience, parts of its descriptive content, but are not at all its objects. The perceptual presentation arises in so far as an experienced complex of sensations gets informed by a certain act-character [*Aktcharakter*], one of conceiving [*Auffassen*] or meaning [*Meinen*]. To the extent that this happens, the perceived *object* appears, while the sensational complex is as little perceived as is the act in which the perceived object is as such constituted. Phenomenological analysis teaches us, further, that sense-contents provide, as it were, the analogical building-stuff [*analogisches Baumaterial*] for the content of the object presented by their means.⁴⁰

Although of course much could be said about these passages, I want to focus only on one important and very interesting core idea, one intuition, which they both share in common. Both Frege and Husserl try to imagine a fictitious, hypothetical consciousness that experiences *only* ‘sensations’, *only* ‘sense impressions’; it *only senses*, but does not *perceive*. In effect, therefore, its combined sensations would be no more than a kind of ‘sensory noise’. This fictitious consciousness would not experience any ‘depth-structure’ within this sensory noise: it would not experience a ‘world’ or ‘things’ or ‘events’. Husserl supposes that this fictitious consciousness ‘may very well have the same *sensations* as we have’; and this hypothesis invites us to try to imagine what it might be like if we were conscious *only* of our sensations as *nothing but* sensations, but not conscious of the ‘world’, whether ‘inner’ or ‘outer’, and all of its objects, both ‘real’ and ‘ideal’, of which we *are* in fact always conscious, and which we take absolutely for granted as a ‘natural reality’.

The important idea, the intuition, here, is that the hypothetical ‘consciousness’ in Frege’s and Husserl’s illustration cannot, so to speak, (*mentally*) ‘see through’ its sensations: it ‘experiences’ only various kinds of irritation of the sensitive nerve-endings of its ‘sense-organs’ (if it is even appropriate to name them as such). Although ‘mere sensations’ occur in it, it does not see, or hear, or smell, etc. Nor can it think, or react, or act. It seems difficult to imagine that it could even experience *itself*, i.e., its own supposed ‘consciousness’; and if it cannot even do that, then one might well question whether what we are trying to imagine, here, is really any kind of ‘consciousness’ at all.

What is fundamentally lacking for this fictional consciousness is the means by which it could, as it were, (*mentally*) ‘see through’ its sensations and perceive a surrounding world of things and events. Such a consciousness, we could say, is *intentionally blind*: what this imagined consciousness lacks is precisely *intentionality*. Or rather, if we were to admit that *it is at least conscious-of its sensations*, then we would actually be admitting that it does indeed possess a minimal kind of intentionality: because *consciousness-of* is precisely what ‘intentionality’ designates. But its minimal intentionality would be not only extremely limited, but also extremely strange: and that, I think, is why Husserl implies that the supposition of such a consciousness is merely a convenient explanatory pretense, a fiction. Intentionality (consciousness-of) never *actually* seems to work in this way. But by pretending that it *might*, we can discern more clearly what intentionality

40. Husserl 2008, 214; 1913, 75.

'is' or 'does' in and for consciousness. 'Intentionality' would therefore name the difference between, on the one hand, this only *partially*-conscious fictional consciousness, which is aware of nothing but a senseless sea of 'sensory noise'; and, on the other hand, a consciousness that might have *exactly the same sensations*, but barely, if at all, even *experience* or *be aware of* those sensations *as sensations*: rather, it would 'see straight through' them, and directly experience a world of things and events by means of them.

A potentially useful experiential analogy for this difference — but it is *merely* an analogy, and therefore potentially also misleading — might be that interesting kind of image called an 'autostereogram', which, some years ago, enjoyed a brief popularity. These are single-image stereograms that at first glance might look like a two-dimensional image of random visual noise. But if you gaze deeper into the image, adjusting the angle and focus of your eyes, as though you are looking through its surface, you will suddenly see a three-dimensional image (a three-dimensional space and object) embedded inside what previously appeared as a two-dimensional image of mere noise.⁴¹

Now, although Frege and Husserl are thinking rather differently about what is essentially the same reflection, the same meditation, the same thought experiment, they both intuit that whatever it is that can constitute the difference between a hypothetical 'consciousness' conscious *merely* of its 'sensations' and nothing more, and a consciousness that, *through its sensations*, is conscious of a 'world', is something — a principle, a structure — *that is not itself anything sensory*. It is, therefore, by definition, 'transcendental'; moreover, the illustration already suggests to us why this principle or structure cannot be the product of, or explicable in terms of, purely 'physical' factors. For Husserl, that principle or structure is 'intentionality'. 'Intentionality' is the name given to that capacity of 'consciousness' to be a *consciousness-of something*; in this case, for our sensations to be not the 'objects' of our consciousness but the 'media' of our *consciousness-of* the 'world', of its 'objects' and 'events'. In the EB context (which in this respect is far more advanced than modern Western philosophy and psychology), this must include also our 'purely mental sensations', which, just like those sensations that arise in connection with the 'physical' sense organs, occur as the process of 'contact' (*phassa*) or, in TP terms, 'primal sensation' (*Urempfindung*): this is the fundamental medium for *all* modes of consciousness-of phenomena, *including* ideational *dhammas* or phenomena. Thus, 'contact' is the medium not only of our intentionally-constituted perception of 'physical' phenomena, but also of our intentionally-constituted consciousness of ('mental perception of') 'thoughts' and 'ideas' (as well as of our 'emotions' as kinds of 'meaning').⁴²

41. For some nice on-line visual examples of autostereograms, cf. Pakin 2012 (I recommend 'Scattered Shards').

42. Husserl speaks of the 'datum of sensation' (*Empfindungsdatum*) as the 'bearer of an intentionality' (Träger einer Intentionalität), but 'not itself a consciousness of something' (1982, 75; 1976, 75). In the EB context (cf. §8 below), we find that *phassa*, 'contact', is a necessary prior condition for the effecting of differing but inter-dependent constitutive functions of intentionality, which are represented by: *vedanā-kkhandha*, the mental process of 'feeling' and the 'ensemble of feelings' that it engenders; *saññā-kkhandha*, the mental process of 'perception' and the 'ensemble of perceptions' that it engenders; *sañkhāra-kkhandha*, the mental processes of 'constituting experience', which include both conditioned (instinctive and habitual) mental reactions and (self-conscious or non-self-conscious) volitional mental actions, and 'the

Naïvely, in what Husserl calls the ‘natural attitude’ (*natürliche Einstellung*), it may seem ‘self-evident’ that ‘objects’ simply ‘present themselves’ to our consciousness ‘just as they are’, in their own ‘being-present’. But deeper reflection and meditation upon this point can make one sensitive to the profound and transformative recognition that the ‘self-givenness’ of any kind of ‘object’ to consciousness is not and cannot be an immediate, unproblematic fact. Let me emphasize that this recognition is *not* merely about the ‘concepts’ or ‘meanings’ that we might impose or superimpose upon the ‘appearing’ of any kind of ‘object’ (in EB terms, by the actions of *saññā* and the *sañkhāras*): rather (and this is the deeper point of Frege’s and Husserl’s illustration), it is about the very fact that objects ‘appear’ at all. This very ‘appearing’ is, in itself, and quite immediately, the *very fact of being-conscious-of*. Moreover, the ‘appearing’ of objects, just because it is immediately identical to the *being-conscious-of* them, is also immediately a ‘subjective’ fact. ‘Appearing’ just is equivalent to ‘consciousness-of’, and ‘consciousness-of’ cannot have any structure other than that of ‘subjectivity’: to ‘appear’ is to appear in and to and for a ‘subjective consciousness-of’. The concept of ‘intentionality’ focuses specifically upon this principle, this structure, of the *subjective consciousness-of* the various kinds of ‘objects’ of consciousness.

In any event, the main point, here, is that intentionality and consciousness are not separable facts: to be conscious is to be *conscious-of*, and to be conscious-of is to be *intentionally conscious*, i.e. to be conscious in an intentional way. Frege’s and Husserl’s illustration draws our awareness and attention to our own lived experience: we can try, with an effort of will and concentration, to focus upon, isolate, and experience our ‘bare sensations’, rather than our intentionally-constituted ‘perceptions’; but this is by no means an easy feat to accomplish.⁴³ Our consciousness is automatically and fundamentally intentional; and already is so even in the womb. Moreover, to be *intentionally* conscious is immediately and simultaneously to be *subjectively* conscious. Intentionality, inherently and automatically, just has this structure: to bring a world of objects — both ‘real’ and ‘ideal’ — into cognitive relief is a function that naturally and automatically has the structure of subjectivity. Subjectivity, intentionality, and consciousness are inseparable and irreducible: they are the ‘bottom line’ of consciousness as genuine and actual consciousness-of.

Therefore, anyone who claims that Buddhas and Arahants must lack subjectivity, or intentionality, or even consciousness, just because they must lack a sense of permanent ‘self’ or a sense of ‘I am’, clearly does not really understand the nature of subjectivity, or intentionality, or consciousness. Nor can it be claimed that, even if it is the case, on these phenomenological grounds, that Buddhas and Arahants *must* after all be subjectively and intentionally conscious in order

ensemble of constituted experiences’ thus engendered; and of *viññāṇa-kkhandha*, the mental processes of ‘sensory and conceptual consciousness’ and the ‘ensemble of contents of consciousness (in all six sense modalities)’ that it engenders. These four kinds of mental processes, and their ‘contents/correlates’, are ‘interwoven’ (like ‘warp and weft’) with the six sense modalities (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and noetic); this is very clearly expressed, to cite but one example, in SN 22.56 (S III 58). (The sixth modality, *manoviññāṇa*, is especially interesting, but requires a detailed separate discussion.)

43. The very notion of doing such a thing may well be a pure ‘countersense’ (cf. fn. 46 below); or else simply self-defeating; but I must set this question aside, here. Cf., however, the quotation from MN 43 (at M I 293) in §8 below.

to behave in the way that we are told that they do, the EB texts nevertheless say that they are *not*. Other parts of this present paper will provide examples of the kind of EB textual evidence that also contradicts this second claim.

5. AGAINST REDUCTIONISM AND NIHILISM

As has already been noted, some scholars assert that, thanks to a Buddha's or an Arahant's elimination of the sense of 'I am' and of 'I-making' and 'mine-making', there is no longer any subjectivity present in them;⁴⁴ and perhaps even no consciousness at all. This latter view would suggest that Buddhas and Arahants are essentially non-conscious robots or zombies;⁴⁵ and this condition would be the alleged reality corresponding to the EB notion of the '*nibbāna*-state with fuel remaining'. From a TP perspective, such assertions constitute a fundamental absurdity or 'countersense' (*Widersinn*);⁴⁶ but if that *were* what EB *actually* asserted, then no genuine correlation would be possible between TP and EB; at

44. To cite just one recent example, cf. Wynne 2010, who conflates the idea of 'subjectivity' with the expression 'I am' (cf., e.g., 2010, 126), and thus interprets the absence of the sense of 'I am' and of the act of 'I-making' in the Arahant as 'the unusual psychology of a person devoid of self-consciousness' (2010, 116). Wynne is thereby led to a peculiar interpretation of, e.g., SN 28.1-9 (S III 235-238), a series of parallel *suttas* in which Sāriputta says to Ānanda, of each of the eight *jhānas*, as also of the attainment of 'the cessation of perception and feeling' (*saññā-vedayita-nirodha*), 'Here, I [*ahaṃ*], having entered, abided [*idha ahaṃ ... upasampajja viharāmi*]' in each consecutive meditative state; 'Yet there was not for me (the thought) "I am attaining..." or "I have attained..." or "I have emerged..." [*tassa mayhaṃ ... na evaṃ hoti 'ahaṃ ... samāpajjāmi'ti vā 'ahaṃ ... samāpanno'ti vā 'ahaṃ ... vuṭṭhito'ti vā ti*]. It is significant that, on the one hand, Sāriputta is certainly asserting a fact: 'I entered and abided in and emerged from (each meditative state)'; what he *denies* is that, *while doing so*, there was for him any thought or concept of 'I am attaining', etc. Obviously, he not only *knows* that he has attained these states, but he *also knows* that, in attaining them, no thought or concept of attainment had occurred to him (and it is precisely *these facts* that he is reporting to Ānanda). Ānanda infers that it is because 'I-making, mine-making, and the underlying tendency to conceit' (*ahaṃkāra-mamaṃkāra-mānāsuyā*) have for a long time been well-removed in Sāriputta, that there were not for him such thoughts as 'I am attaining...', etc. Here, we arguably have a clear example of the distinction between the pure 'I' (or 'I-ness') of subjectivity (Husserl's all-encompassing but non-actional 'halo' of subjective consciousness-of), and the "'I am'" (*asmī'ti*) and 'I do' (*ahaṃkāra*) (Husserl's actional *cogito*, in its naïve sense of *ego sum*, 'I am'). But Wynne's interpretation is as follows: 'Such a description seems to imply the complete cessation of the subjective aspect of self-consciousness, as if Sāriputta is in a totally impersonal and 'selfless' state in which there is no sense of being an inner perceiver or 'I' that observes and comprehends what is happening' (2010, 128). Yet, this (countersensical) view is not only flatly contradicted by the text of the *suttas* in question, but also by other key *suttas*. To cite just one example: in AN 10.7 (at A V 9-10), Sāriputta, in describing to Ānanda his experience of *nibbāna* while in (a quite obviously exceptional and radically transcendental) *samādhi*, says: 'but I was still percipient [*saññī ca pana aho sin ti*]'.

45. Cf., as an extreme example of (self-styled) 'Buddhist Reductionism', Siderits 2011, who, by hypothesizing the concept of 'Buddhas as zombies', argues that not only the 'subject' but 'subjectivity' and 'consciousness' are merely conventional and convenient illusions, but do not really exist as part of an ultimate ontology. Thus, 'the difference between zombies and us is just one of our taking all too seriously the merely useful device of self-representation' (Siderits 2011, 329).

46. Husserl distinguishes between 'nonsense' and 'countersense' or 'absurdity': 'nonsense' (*Unsinn*) is simply ungrammatical, it evokes no meaning; 'countersense' (*Widersinn*) does yield a unified, purely 'ideational' meaning, 'but it is *apodictically evident* that no existent object can correspond to such an existent meaning' (Husserl 2006, 67; 1913, 326: 'aber es ist eine apodiktische Evidenz, daß der existierenden Bedeutung kein existierender Gegenstand ent-

best, a TP reading of EB would amount to the experimental but forced imposition of an essentially alien interpretation upon the EB texts. Moreover, if that *were* what EB *actually* asserted, then, from a TP perspective, just about everything the EB texts say about consciousness, including that of Arahants and Buddhas, is fundamentally self-contradictory.

However, I am deeply convinced that such a reductive and nihilistic view is by *no means* what the EB texts *actually do* assert; and therefore, one of the purposes of this present article is to clarify and validate the basis of a reading of those texts that understands them as having an intrinsic and profound phenomenological import of their own; one from which, indeed, TP can learn, and by which it can be both challenged and enriched.

6. SUBJECTIVITY AND THE TERM 'I'

My primary concern in this article is the question of 'subjectivity', rather than the various philosophical problems attaching to the linguistic term 'I'. Zahavi is clearly correct when he insists that the linguistic term 'I' is not fundamental to the nature of subjectivity, and that 'self-awareness', and, correlatively, 'other-awareness', do not depend upon a mastery of the first-person pronoun.⁴⁷ In recent decades, for example, there has been 'a revolution in our understanding of intersubjectivity': 'modern-day findings support and elaborate the ideas of ... pioneers' such as Husserl and Merleau-Ponty (Meltzoff and Brooks 2007, 149–150). There are various phenomena that 'illuminate the nature of preverbal intersubjectivity'. These include the ability of newborn infants (even as early as 42 minutes after birth), who have never seen their own faces in a mirror, to imitate another person's facial actions (Meltzoff and Brooks 2007, 151–154);⁴⁸ the ability of infants to follow the mother's or another's gaze and look at the object she is looking at (and also to point at it as a gesture intended for the other) (Meltzoff and Brooks 2007, 154–158); and the ability of infants to comprehend the intentions of others' acts, even when such acts are incomplete or unsuccessful (Meltzoff and Brooks 2007, 159–163). It should hardly need to be spelled out that *intersubjectivity* presupposes *subjectivity*. There is a growing body of indisputable evidence demonstrating the sophisticated preverbal subjective intentional consciousness of infants. Nor is the evidence for preverbal subjectivity and intentionality restricted to human beings: it has been demonstrated, e.g., through so-called 'mirror self-recognition' experiments, in apes, chimpanzees, elephants, and even magpies.

Moreover, the phenomenological sense of 'subjectivity' can be indicated in language in many other ways than through the use of the term 'I'. Röska-Hardy, in distinguishing between what she calls 'the first person perspective', i.e., experiential subjectivity, and the function of the lexeme 'I', adduces the example of Schlick's *Konstatierungen*, which avoid the use of the term 'I', as 'attempts to cap-

sprechen kann'). Cf. also Kosowski 2008, 252. Husserl's favourite example of a countersense is the expression 'a round square' (*ein rundes Viereck*).

47. Zahavi 1999, 3. Similarly, Zahavi 2011, 60: 'When talking of first-personal self-givenness, one shouldn't think of self-reference by means of the first-person pronoun; in fact, one shouldn't think of a linguistically conditioned self-reference at all. ... [F]irst-personal self-givenness is meant to pinpoint the fact that (intransitively) conscious mental states are given in a distinct manner, with a distinct subjective presence, to the subject whose mental states they are'.

48. This ability of infants was first given serious scientific recognition in Meltzoff and Moore 1977.

ture immediate sensations, *die Erlebnisperspektive*, which qualifies as the first person perspective on anyone’s account’ (Röska-Hardy 1999, §18). A *Konstatierung*, such as ‘Here now yellow’, is essentially a present-tense indexical utterance whose function is to indicate a particular subjective experience occurring at a particular place, at a particular time. The sense of ‘Here now yellow’ can be more fully spelled out as ‘This yellow is here now’ (Oberdan 1993, 54). The non-demonstrative term, ‘yellow’, indicates the ‘content’ of the experience. But the indexical terms, ‘this’, ‘here’, and ‘now’ have no purely ‘objective’ sense. They are contingent indications or expressions of the first person perspective: i.e., they ‘mark’ and ‘announce’ the peculiar constitution of subjective experience; what Husserl calls ‘absolute subjectivity’, of whose structure he says: ‘For all of this, we lack names [*Für all das fehlen uns die Namen*]’.⁴⁹ It is precisely for these reasons that such statements ‘are virtually useless to science, and incapable of playing a permanent role in scientific justification’ (Oberdan 1993, 52). For the formal ‘positive sciences’ of the ‘natural attitude’, terms such as ‘this’, ‘here’, and ‘now’ have no fundamentally ‘objective’ reference. They are *essentially* ‘subjective’: only from the contingent first person perspective of subjective consciousness can these terms have any actual meaning and use.

The irreducibility of subjectivity as a unifying experiential structure is fundamentally and extensively presupposed in the EB *suttas*. Various kinds of examples will be presented throughout this essay, but here I shall cite one very interesting and telling example. SN 35.232 explains that the six sense faculties are not the ‘fetter’ (*saṃyojana*) of their corresponding six kinds of sense objects, nor are the sense objects the ‘fetter’ of their corresponding sense faculties; rather, ‘that desire and lust, there, that arise in dependence upon both — that is the fetter there’.⁵⁰ The *sutta* then implicitly illustrates the difference between the ordinary person and the Buddha, who is ‘well liberated in mind’ (*su-vimutta-citto*), and in whom there is no desire and lust: ‘There exists in the Blessed One the eye, the Blessed One sees a form with the eye, yet there is no desire and lust in the Blessed One; the Blessed One is well liberated in mind [*suvimuttacitto*]’.⁵¹ And so forth for each of the other five sense faculties, including the mental faculty (*mano*). From this sequence, we may extract the following parallel statements:

The Blessed One sees a form with the eye (*passati bhagavā cakkhunā rūpaṃ*)
 The Blessed One hears a sound with the ear (*suṇāti bhagavā sotena saddaṃ*)
 The Blessed One smells a scent with the nose (*ghāyati bhagavā ghānena gandhaṃ*)
 The Blessed One tastes a flavour with the tongue (*sāyati bhagavā jivhāya rasaṃ*)
 The Blessed One touches a tangible with the body (*phusati bhagavā kāyena phoṭṭhabbaṃ*)
 The Blessed One cognizes a mental phenomenon with the mental faculty (*vijānāti bhagavā manasā dhammaṃ*)

49. Husserl 1991, 79; 1966, 75. Carnap has related of Einstein that ‘the problem of the Now worried him seriously’ because Einstein was convinced that ‘there is something essential about the Now which is just outside the realm of science’ (Prigogine and Stengers 1984, 214, citing P. A. Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1963, 37–38).

50. SN 35.232 (at S IV 163): *yañca tattha tadubhayaṃ paṭicca uppajjati chandarāgo taṃ tattha saṃyojanaṃ*.

51. Bodhi 2000, 1231. SN 35.232 (at S IV 164–165).

We can certainly assume that these six acts of consciousness can, and normally do, occur concurrently,⁵² and are experienced as simultaneous and unified, even in the case of the Bhagavant. But I doubt that anyone would wish to claim that this description implies that there are six different Bhagavants present in dependence upon these six different acts of consciousness. Nor do I think that anyone could convincingly argue that the subject of these sentences, ‘the Blessed One’, could and should be deleted, because the seeing of a form with the eye, the hearing of a sound with the ear, etc., could occur independently of any subjective consciousness. Nor again could anyone seriously deny that the Bhagavant himself could just as well have spoken these same statements in the first person: for example, ‘I see a form with the eye [*ahaṃ passāmi cakkhunā rūpaṃ*]’. It matters not, in the final analysis, whether the description is third-, second- or first-personal: in every case, a unified structure of subjectivity has to be presupposed if statements and descriptions of this kind, which are certainly plentiful in the *suttas*, are to have any *sense* at all.

With this said, however, I would go on to suggest that it is precisely because of the irreducibility of (pre-verbal) subjectivity as a property and structure of intentional consciousness that the indexical term ‘I’ has a genuine meaning and usefulness for us as conscious beings. Yet, my perspective on the indexicality of the term ‘I’ is perhaps somewhat unusual; at least, it falls outside the main frames of reference that philosophical debate on this point tends to presuppose. Zahavi, at the end of his excellent ‘preliminary reflections’ on the term ‘I’, summarizes three possible options for what the term ‘I’ might refer to: (1) ‘I’ does not refer at all; (2) ‘I’ refers to an object; or (3) ‘I’ refers to a subject (Zahavi 1999, 10–13). Zahavi understandably favors the third option.

In addition to this fairly classical enumeration, I would suggest that Röska-Hardy’s account of the indexical ‘I’ in effect offers a *fourth* interpretation. From the fact that the meaning of the term ‘I’ is determined semantically, i.e., by the rule that specifies that ‘its reference is a function of the context of utterance, namely, who uses it’,⁵³ she argues that, in utterances with an explicit ‘I’, ‘there is an overt indexing of the utterance act with respect to the agent’. Thus, in her

52. The Pāli Abhidhamma tradition and its commentarial literature, which gradually developed a full-blown ‘momentary theory’ (*khaṇika-vāda*) of consciousness, would disagree on this point (cf. Harvey 1995, 145–148 for a brief summary of the later doctrine, and 252–258 for an analysis of its implicit seeds in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*). However, I would argue that the Abhidhamma doctrine/theory (and those subsequent developments that took it as their starting point) marks a radical (and quite anti-phenomenological) epistemological shift away from the (phenomenologically-grounded) doctrine/theory of EB; so radical, that the only way that the later paradigm could maintain a theoretical relation to the former one was by means of the dogmatic device of the ‘two truths’, according to which the *sutta* teachings are allegedly often expressed in accordance with ‘conventional truth’ (*voḥāra-* or *sammuti-sacca*), while the Abhidhamma doctrine is allegedly expressed exclusively according to ‘absolute truth’ (*paramattha-sacca*). In any event, this thematic is irrelevant to, and falls well outside of, the concerns of the present article.

53. Röska-Hardy 1999, §5. It is instructive to compare this semantic definition with Husserl’s early account of the term ‘I’ as belonging to a class of ‘essentially subjective and occasional expressions’ (*wesentlich subjektiven und okkasionellen Ausdrücke*) in Husserl 2008, 217–221; 1913, 80. Within this class of expressions, Husserl includes ‘the subject-bound determinations [*die auf das Subjekt bezogenen Bestimmungen*] “here”, “there”, “above”, “below”, “now”, “yesterday”, “tomorrow”, “later”, etc.’ (Husserl 2008, 220; 1913, 84).

view, the utterance of 'I' indexes *the act of utterance itself*, and in this way, 'the speaker presents herself as the author and agent of the linguistic act' (Röska-Hardy 1999, §22). I think this is an interesting and useful account (for reasons to be explained in §7.4 below); but I also think that, from a TP perspective, it clearly falls far short of providing a satisfactory explanation of the utterance of 'I' as a *meaningful* act, for either a speaker or a hearer. Rather, it implicitly presupposes much that TP explicitly problematizes and investigates.

Dummett captures well the essential problem, here, when he writes:

[T]he special way in which each of us is able to think about himself plays an essential role in our understanding of the utterances of sentences, whether by ourselves or others, involving the first-person pronoun; and this is not to be equated with a mastery of the semantic rule governing the first-person pronoun. The semantic rule that an utterance of 'I' refers to the speaker applies as much to a machine that says, 'I speak your weight', as to a human speaker: it has nothing to do with self-consciousness. The notion of sense has to do with the speaker's understanding of their language, that is, with their grasp of meaning. (Dummett 1991, 321)

It seems to me that the question of the 'meaning' of the term 'I' cannot be captured by framing that question purely or primarily in terms of the concept of 'reference'. The 'indication' of sense is not always (if ever) a 'simple' matter of 'referring' or 'pointing'; not even in deceptively 'simple' cases, as when one points to something 'white' and says, '*This is what I mean by "white"*'. If we could understand the very *possibility* of the *meaningfulness* of the term 'I', I think that we would be in a better position to understand the meaningfulness of all forms of sense and reference.

I do not claim that the term 'I' refers to 'some *thing*'; it need not refer to '*any thing*'. But I do argue that the term 'I' is genuinely *meaningful*, and that its meaning and function are only realized when the term is used *consciously* (i.e., '*self-consciously*', by a self-conscious being). When I say 'I', I 'express' the subjective *consciousness-of* that gives that expression itself its genuine and inherent phenomenological meaning. I need not (and indeed, I cannot) 'point' at 'some *thing*' with the term 'I': but to say that, in this very restricted sense, the term 'I' does not 'refer', is definitely *not* to imply that it 'therefore' gets its meaning only through its place and function within the grammatical and semantic rules of a natural language. Its actual (phenomenological) meaning is 'preverbal': 'I' *expresses*, and derives its fundamental sense and use from, the preverbal and transcendental phenomenological fact of intentional subjectivity. In this sense, the term 'I' could equally well be described as a *fundamentally 'empty'* linguistic gesture of 'pointing', or even simply even as a *non-indexical* expression; but however one wants to describe it, it is certainly not *meaningless*. Its *radical* meaningfulness — that is, the ultimate *experiential* source of its meaningfulness — is neither a linguistic nor a conceptual matter.⁵⁴

54. In a precisely relevant way, Heidegger speaks of the sense in which 'being' (*Sein*) 'is understood as yet pre-conceptually [*vorbegrifflich*], without a *logos*', and says that 'the understanding of being in general in the pre-conceptual sense [*im vorbegrifflichen Sinne*] is certainly the condition of possibility that being should be objectified, thematized at all' (Heidegger 1988, 281; 1975, 398); cf. the discussion of the 'mirror simile' in §7.1 below. This 'pre-conceptual' *Seinsverständnis* is always already implicit in, and necessary to, intentionality as such: it is

Subjectivity is a transcendental fact, a transcendental structure, a transcendental property intrinsic to the nature of actualized consciousness. Now, there is simply no *sense* in which one can ‘point’ to a transcendental fact. But one can certainly ‘express’ or ‘announce’ it, so to speak; one might even suggest that the term ‘I’, thought or uttered in any moment, actually ‘expresses’, or ‘instances’, an *entire subjectively-constituted situation* as it stands in that ‘flowing moment’: the phenomenological situation *par excellence*. And in this sense, at least, one can ‘indicate’ this transcendental fact by means of language — not by ‘pointing’ to it, which is a countersense, but simply by ‘pointing’ (metaphorically speaking) — precisely because, as transcendental, and as *constitutive* of the very *sense* of the ‘I’, it is an *intersubjective* fact; I would rather say, a *trans-subjective* fact. The very act of ‘indicating’ (i.e., of intending, meaning) itself announces that which makes it possible: subjective-intentional consciousness. Similarly, I cannot ‘indicate’ with language what *you* experience — that, too, is a countersense — but I *can* ‘indicate’ with language what *I* experience; and *you* can understand the sense of that ‘indicating’, because *your* experiencing and *mine* share a common *trans-subjective* structure, since both of us are *necessarily* constituted this way (and not by *my* or *your* individual doing or choice);⁵⁵ they are not two separate, isolated, ‘private’ facts. When I ‘indicate’ with language ‘*my* sensation’, *you* *immediately, pre-conceptually*, and *subjectively understand* the intentional structure and sense of my act of ‘indicating’ (which is why you were able to acquire ‘language’ in the first place⁵⁶). This is not ‘empathy’; still less is it an *effect* caused by so-called ‘mirror neurons’ (the firing of ‘mirror neurons’ is better conceived as a ‘*correlate*’, and not a ‘*cause*’, of trans-subjective intentional experience).

In other words, I can ‘indicate’ or ‘express’ to you what I understand the basis and possibility of the meaningfulness of the term ‘I’ to be, just because I know that, on TP grounds, *necessarily, apodictically*, the structure of your subjective intentional consciousness *must* be just the same as mine. If I can invite you to reflect on

‘beforehand’ (*vorgängig*) precisely in the sense of ‘logical priority’ (Heidegger 1988, 71; 1975, 100); cf. also fn. 138 below.

55. ‘Trans-subjectivity’ (or ‘metasubjectivity’) is not ‘empathy’: it is a far more basic and immediate structure (inherent in any actual form and mode of consciousness-of whatsoever) than either ‘empathy’ or even ‘intersubjectivity’; rather, the former is the possibility of the latter. Although, in EB, the individuated consciousness is ultimately responsible for its own destiny, the principles of ‘action’ (*kamma*) and ‘dependent co-arising’ (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) by which all individuals are bound and constituted are — from a TP perspective — *trans-subjective* principles. They make possible a unified universe in which *all* conscious beings without exception are subject, for example, to the four fundamental truths or realities (*saccāni*) delineated by the Buddha. But the perspective of these four truths is not a ‘third-personal’, ‘objective’ one: if one reflects upon their actual sense, one will see that they express a *subjective* understanding and application of fundamental *trans-subjective* principles. The point is that every ‘I’ is necessarily *subject* to and *constituted* in accordance with these (therefore ‘universal’) principles. Hence the truly deep importance of the well-known statement: ‘By *you* the effort must be made. The Tathāgatas are but teachers.’ (Dhp 276a: *tumhehi kiccamaṭappaṃ akkhātāro tathāgatā*).
56. Meltzoff and Brooks (2007, 160) touch on one aspect of this principle when they suggest: ‘Infants who understand adult gaze as an ostensive act are in a better position to use everyday interactions with adults to learn words as labels for external objects’. But this is because they ‘understand’ or ‘intuit’ (immediately, ‘pre-conceptually’, trans-subjectively) the ‘inner structure’ of the subjectivity of the other’s experience.

your own consciousness-of in a certain way, from a certain perspective,⁵⁷ I know that you will understand what I mean when I say that the actual meaning of the term 'I' is grounded in, and arises from, the preverbal transcendental fact of subjectivity. I also know that you would then see that the way in which the term 'I' derives its meaning from the fact of subjectivity actually *negates* and *excludes* the notion or assumption that the term 'I' might 'refer' to an independently-existing, and therefore essentially immutable, entity. Husserl actually touched upon the basic reason for this when he reflected:

[P]roperly speaking, neither the other 'I' himself [*das andere Ich selbst*], nor his subjective processes [*seine Erlebnisse*] or his appearances themselves [*seine Erscheinungen selbst*], nor anything else belonging to his own essence [*was seinem Eigenwesen selbst angehört*], becomes given in our experience originally [*zu ursprünglicher Gegebenheit komme*]. If it were, if what belongs to the other's own essence were directly accessible, it would be merely a moment of my own essence [*meines Eigenwesens*], and ultimately he himself [*er selbst*] and I myself [*ich selbst*] would be the same [*einerlei*].⁵⁸

To intuit what I believe to be the necessary truth of what Husserl has recognized and expressed in this passage,⁵⁹ is to see why it *must be the case* that subjective consciousness-of *cannot* in itself possess any essential, intrinsic substance or sense of 'identity', i.e., of substantial 'self'. Although Husserl refers, above, to the other's 'own-essence itself' (*Eigenwesen selbst*) and to 'my own-essence' (*meiner Eigenwesen*), what he has *actually* intuited here, and what he is *actually* asserting here, demonstrates that this very sense of 'own essence' is necessarily 'empty' and 'contingent': it refers precisely and only to the 'original givenness' (*ursprüngliche Gegebenheit*) of one's subjective *self-experience*. But this 'givenness' is a contingent one, a dependently co-arisen one: it is 'essential' only in the sense that it is 'given' *just as it is 'given'*, and not otherwise. My 'self-experience' is entirely dependent upon this absolute 'givenness' of experience, and is not, in the present moment of experiencing, 'my own present doing': it is not, in its givenness, an act effected by 'me'.⁶⁰ Indeed, the notion that 'I', as *conscious-of* 'myself' as an appearance to my

57. E.g., that of the TP *epokhā* and transcendental reduction; or, again, as I would argue, that of EB meditation, which similarly demonstrates a pattern and process of transcendental reduction: e.g., the progression of the standard sequence of the *rūpa* and *arūpa jhānas*; and other more specialized progressions, e.g., that described in MN 121 (M III 104), from objects and materiality to the higher *jhānas*, then to the 'signless concentration of mind' (*animitta cetosamādhī*), and hence to the reflexive deconstitution of the intentional and volitional constitutedness (*abhisankhatam abhisancetayitam*) of that *samādhī* itself, which liberates the mind (*cittam vimuccati*).

58. Husserl 1970a, 109 (translation modified); 1950, 139. (Note that, in all quotations from English translations of Husserl, wherever the term 'ego'/'the ego' occurs in the translation, I have modified it to 'I'/'the "I"', corresponding to '*Ich*'/'*das Ich*', wherever the latter occurs in Husserl's original German text. The term 'ego', which is of course just the first-personal pronoun in Latin and Greek (*egō*), in modern English connotes something 'objective', rather than 'subjective'; it does not really evoke a *first-personal* sense, as does the word 'I'. Moreover, the term 'ego' has attracted many connotations (e.g., from popular psychology and from psychoanalysis) that are quite irrelevant to TP).

59. This is not to say that Husserl himself necessarily drew from this intuition the same conclusion that I express here.

60. This can be taken as an explanation consonant with the argument of SN 22.59 (S III 66) that

own consciousness-of (cf. §8 and §11 below), could effect that very same givenness of ‘my appearing self’, is a sheer countersense: for, that appearance must first have appeared in order that ‘I’ should ‘do’ anything at all. What Husserl thus recognizes is that if this essential ‘original givenness’ of the other’s subjective experience were given in just that same original way to ‘my’ subjective experience, then it would simply and purely be nothing other than ‘my’ subjective experience: there would be no further basis of distinction between the other’s subjectivity (‘I’) and my subjectivity (‘I’). And this recognition thoroughly undermines all possibility that the ‘I’ of subjectivity has any further essential quality of ‘identity’ that would persist to distinguish between the givenness of the two respective experiences, i.e., that of the other and that which I call ‘my own’. So, we *can* indeed each speak of the ‘own-essence’ of ‘my’ distinct experiential situation: i.e., in its unique and present ‘original givenness’; but we need to recognize that this ‘givenness’ is not ‘mine’, but ‘gives’ the appearing of what I experience as ‘me’. Fundamentally, and indeed essentially, this ‘own-essence’ is an ‘empty essence’, a ‘dependently co-arisen essence’; and is thus ‘impermanent, painful, subject to change’ (*aniccam dukkham vipariṇāmadhammaṃ*), despite my ‘wish’ and my ‘will’.

Therefore, we can understand that subjectivity, or consciousness-of, in its very nature, is quite essentially and fundamentally *non-self* (*anattā*). What, in the ‘natural attitude’, we assume to be ‘self’, is never and *can* never be constituted out of anything other than what we experience in and through our consciousness-of: our bodies; our sensations; our feelings; our perceptions; our instincts, habits, and intentions; our thoughts and ideas; all of which appear as a network of ever-shifting, ever-appearing and disappearing phenomena in the kaleidoscope of six-sensory consciousness. Although we seem to be *born* to feel that all of this is profoundly and indubitably ‘mine’, that ‘I’ just *am* this, that this is surely ‘my self’, the EB *suttas* — and, perhaps to a less radical degree, the TP perspective — assert the contrary: no, there is, in truth, no ultimate sense in which all of this is ‘mine’, or that ‘I’ *am* this, or that this is ‘my self’. And the *suttas* go on to claim that if — in our intentions and intendings, in our desirings and wantings — we could fully and finally ‘abandon’ all of this, we would be free of its inherent, and otherwise inescapable, painfulness. There is no paradox in the idea of this act of ‘abandoning’, because consciousness-of is now, has always been, and will always be, the purest instance of *non-self* that we will ever find.

7. AHAṂ, ‘ASMĪ’TI, AND SOME RELATED TERMS

I shall now turn to just a few observations on the doctrinal and theoretical import of the terms *ahaṃ*, ‘I’, and ‘*asmī’ti*, “I am”, in the Pāli *suttas*. Both of these terms are obviously closely related to a number of expressions that are of great importance within the EB doctrine/theory; but unfortunately it is simply not possible to discuss all of these in a single essay.

the five clung-to aggregates are non-self because we cannot, in the present givenness of our experience, will them to be otherwise.

7.1 ‘asmī’ti

Since the term *asmi* is the first person singular (present indicative) form of the verb ‘to be’, i.e., ‘I am’, the first person singular subjective sense ‘I’ is implied by the very form of the verb. In Pāli, as in Sanskrit, Greek and Latin, person and number are indicated by verb form; strictly speaking, a pronoun or a noun is not required as a subject. Thus, *asmi* implicitly means, and is grammatically equivalent to, *aham asmi*, just as, in Greek, we may have either εἶμι or ἐγὼ εἶμι, and in Latin, *sum* or *ego sum*.⁶¹ It seems in general true to say that in the Pāli prose of the *suttas*, the subject pronoun is more frequently omitted with the third person singular verb-form than it is with either the second or the first person singular verb-forms. Indeed, the presence of the first person singular pronoun *aham* seems to be virtually obligatory with the first person singular (active present indicative) verb (even in the collocation *aham asmi*), even though, purely grammatically, it is unnecessary.⁶² This would make the occurrence of *asmi* on its own quite unusual: in fact, it never occurs thus, except in this ‘quotational’ form, *asmīti*.⁶³ Moreover, although the collocation *aham asmi* does occur copulatively in *sutta* prose, the quotational (and existential) form ‘*aham-asmī’ti*’ never seems to occur by itself; but it does occur quotationally (but copulatively) as a component of the important triadic formulae, the first of which is always denied, the second of which is always affirmed: (1) *etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā*, ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self’ (i.e., in *eso aham asmi*, ‘this I am’); and (2) *netam mama, nesohamasmi, neso me attā*, ‘This is not mine, not this am I, this is not my self’ (i.e., in *na eso aham asmi*, ‘not this am I’).

The expression ‘*asmī’ti*, “‘I am’”, occurs in many contexts, and always with the same negative value. Its significance and importance cannot be overestimated in the context of EB doctrine/theory. For example, as we shall see below with reference to SN 22.89, the sense of ‘I am’ is considered to be the final, most subtle, and most tenacious obstacle to the attainment of complete liberation (*vimutti*), the condition of the Arahant. Correlatively, as SN 22.47 (at S III 46) informs us, when the sense of ‘I am’ has not vanished, there occurs a renewed ‘descent’ (*avakkanti*) of the sense-powers (*indriyas*) of consciousness; in other words, a ‘becoming-again’ (*punabbhava*). Clearly, then, the sense of ‘*asmī’ti*, and its removal, are of fundamental importance in EB. As to how it arises, and what it really signifies, one of the most profound and suggestive explanations is found in SN 22.83 (at S III 105):

Just as, friend Ānanda, a young woman — or man — a youth by nature fond of adornments, looking upon her own face-image [*sakaṃ mukha-nimittam*] in a mirror or in a bowl of pure, clean, clear water, would see it with clinging [*upādāya*],

61. This is another way in which the first person perspective can be expressed without the presence of the first person pronoun (zero pronominalization); cf. Röska-Hardy 1999, §3. In some contexts, therefore, despite purely grammatical equality, the addition of the first person pronoun to the corresponding verb-form may add semantic emphasis.

62. These remarks are based on search engine results (utilizing *Digital Pāli Reader* 3.8) for searches through the *Suttanta Piṭaka* for various commonly occurring verbs inflected in the active present indicative according to the three singular categories of person.

63. The indeclinable particle *ti* (*iti*) placed after a word or passage effectively functions as a ‘quotational’ device, much like the use of ‘quotation marks’ in English (cf. Warder 2010, 35–36). Note that *ti* is also frequently used to indicate something that is *thought*, without any explicit verb of cognition; instead, the verb *hoti*, ‘it is, there is’, is used.

not without clinging [*anupādāya*]; even so, friend Ānanda, by clinging to material form is there ‘I am’, not without clinging’ [*rūpaṃ upādāya asmīti hoti, no anupādāya*]; by clinging to feeling is there ‘I am’, not without clinging; by clinging to perception is there ‘I am’, not without clinging; by clinging to constitutive processes is there ‘I am’, not without clinging; by clinging to sense-consciousness [*viññāṇaṃ*] is there ‘I am’, not without clinging.

Two terms in this passage are especially significant: *nimitta*, in *mukha-nimitta*, and *upādāya*. *Mukha-nimitta* obviously refers to the reflected image (perhaps, more literally, the ‘sign’) of the face in the mirror, and the commentary tersely glosses it as such.⁶⁴ But the term *nimitta*, on its own, has other uses in the *suttas*, with deep connections to some of the most important EB concepts and practices. Here, however, this intricate theme, which demands a detailed study of its own, must be laid aside.⁶⁵ It is very probable that the occurrence of the term *nimitta* in this simile is deliberately intended to invoke those other deep connections. The term *upādāya* is an absolutive (from *upādiyati*), most literally, ‘having clung to’, but with a range of senses that include: ‘taking for oneself, taking as one’s own, adopting; making; making use of, having as material support or cause; being evolved or deriving from’ (Cone 2001, 483a). As Bodhi points out, in this simile and explanation, the term seems ambivalent between two senses: the literal sense of ‘clinging’, and the idiomatic sense of ‘derived from, dependent on’.⁶⁶ Bodhi, I think rightly, supposes that both senses are intended: ‘in dependence’ on the mirror, and ‘clinging’ to the image; and ‘in dependence’ on the five aggregates, and ‘by clinging’ to them.⁶⁷

What is most important about this simile as an explanation of how the sense of ‘I am’ arises in dependence upon, and through grasping on to and appropriating, the five aggregates, is the phenomenological logic of the analogy itself. Seeing one’s face in a mirror represents the phenomenological situation of experiencing the physical body; sensations; perceptions of things; constitutive instinctual, habitual, and volitional reactions, actions, and intentions; and the whole spectrum of sensory consciousness; and identifying with all of this, appropriating it and clinging to it not only as one’s own (*attaniya*) but as one’s self (*attā*); all of which, of course, are precisely *intentional acts* of subjective consciousness.⁶⁸

64. Spk II 308: *mukhanimittanti mukhapaṭibimbaṃ*.

65. A good deal of groundwork has already been done towards this end in Harvey 1986.

66. As in the phrase *catunnañ ca mahābhūtānaṃ upādāyaṃ rūpaṃ*, ‘the form derived from the four great elements’ (M I 185). The commentary prefers the idiomatic sense of ‘by means of, referring to, connected with, on account of’ (Spk II 308: *upādāyāti āgamma ārabha sandhāya paṭicca*).

67. Bodhi 2000, 1077–1078, n. 146. Thānissaro 2012, SN 22.83, translates *upādāya* as ‘with possessiveness’, like Bodhi emphasizing the *intentional* connotation of the term. Nānananda 2010, 272–273, translates ‘with dependence’.

68. In §8 below, I explain that in the context of the sequential or nodal formula of dependent co-arising, *viññāṇa* is quite specifically defined in terms of the six sense-modes of sense-consciousness; i.e., precisely according to the concept of *viññāṇa-kkhandha*. If we consider that most of the other nodes of this sequence (e.g., ignorance, constitutive processes, ‘name-and-form’, the six sense bases, contact, craving, clinging, not to mention ‘the whole ensemble of painfulness’ itself) presuppose — and are what I would call, variously, states, modes, functions, or acts of — intentional consciousness in a wider and more basic sense, we can see that the concept of *viññāṇa* must also have just such a wider and more basic sense, underpinning the entire nodal formula of dependent co-arising. I would even suggest, therefore, that in this

The key, here, is this very *act of experiencing* the psychophysical ensemble, this ‘world-embodiment’, this ‘All’ (*sabbam*);⁶⁹ or, more precisely, what is *prerequisite* for this act of experiencing ‘ourselves’ and ‘our world’: its actual nature, and what makes it possible.

When I look into a mirror, I see before me a face, a head, a body: in the ‘natural attitude’, I identify with it: I ‘take’ it to be ‘me’, I ‘grasp’ it as ‘myself’. But while I see *it*, I do not see *my seeing of it*: that is, I do not, and cannot, see the ‘point of origin’, so to speak, of my subjective perspective, of my *consciousness-of* that sensory experience: what is *not* reflected in the mirror is the *seeing* of the reflection itself. And of course, even in the ‘natural attitude’, we do not *expect* to see that: even pre-reflectively, pre-theoretically, we instinctively and intuitively ‘know’ that our *seeing* and *what is seen* are *fundamentally unlike*. Of course, this description may well evoke associations with the notion of the ‘unseen seer’ (*adr̥ṣṭo dr̥ṣṭā*) of the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*;⁷⁰ in a Buddhist context, such an implication would by some be deemed ‘anathema’. But perhaps it is quite obvious, from a TP perspective, how and why the authors of the *Bṛhadāranyaka* arrived at the concept of the ‘unseen seer’: phenomenologically, the essential description of transcendental subjectivity is perfectly valid; it is not that description that would conflict with the EB perspective, but its reified ontological interpretation in terms of a substantial, immortal and all-powerful *entity*, as it were ‘standing behind’ that subjectivity, called *ātman*.

As we shall see below, the mirror analogy expresses quite vividly the ‘two-foldness’ or ‘dyadic’ nature of consciousness: the intimate yet irreducible relation between subjective consciousness-of and that of which it is conscious. For just that same reason, though, it also draws attention to an essential *difference* between consciousness and that of which it is conscious: unlike the reflection in the physical mirror, which reflects the ‘real physical face’ that cannot be seen directly, the five clung-to aggregates are not the ‘reflection’ of a ‘real but unseen self’ appearing in the ‘mirror of consciousness’; rather, the aggregates fully exhaust the sense of the ‘presence’ of the ‘person’ (*puggala*) or ‘being’ (*satta*). Moreover, one simply cannot even form any concept of ‘self’ that does not in some way derive or abstract from and rely upon one’s experience of the five clung-to aggregates themselves.⁷¹

context, the concept of *viññāna* has both a ‘horizontal’ application (connected with the process of continuous becoming), and a ‘vertical’ application (connected with subjectivity and intentionality as *a priori* requirements for that horizontal process to occur, and which cannot be reduced to or explained in terms of the horizontal ‘causality’ of that process, but must be presupposed as the *a priori* possibility of its each and every ‘node’).

69. Cf. SN 35.23 (S IV 15).

70. Cf., e.g., *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* III.vii.23: ‘He [*eṣa*] is the unseen seer [*adr̥ṣṭo dr̥ṣṭā*], the unheard hearer [*aśrutaḥ śrotā*], the unthought thinker [*amato mantā*], the misunderstood understander [*avijñāto vijñātā*]. No other seer than He is there, no other hearer than He, no other thinker than He, no other understander than He: He is the Self [*ātmā*] within you, the Inner Controller [*antaryāmi*], the Immortal [*amṛto*]. What is other than He suffers [*ārtam*]’ (Goodall 1996, 76).

71. Cf. the reference to SN 22.47 (S III 46) at §2.1 above.

7.2 *asmi-māna*: the concept/conceit ‘I am’

The term *māna* is formed from the root *man*, ‘to think, believe, imagine, suppose, conjecture’,⁷² from which, e.g., is formed the verb *maññati*, ‘to think, opine, imagine, deem’;⁷³ and the noun *manas*, which, in the EB context of the six sense bases (*saḷāyatana*), I often translate as ‘mental faculty’ or ‘noetic faculty’. In Pāli, as in Sanskrit, *māna* has the twofold primary senses of ‘opinion, notion, conception, idea; conceit, arrogance, pride’.⁷⁴ Both senses are no doubt intended in the expression *asmi-māna*; hence the translation ‘the concept/conceit “I am”’. Consequently, this expression gives us a further important clue as to how and why ‘*asmi*’*ti* is considered so problematic.

7.3 ‘*ayam-aham-asmi*’*ti*: ‘this I am’, ‘I am this’

The relationship between ‘*asmi*’*ti* and ‘*ayam-aham-asmi*’*ti* is interesting at several levels. From a grammatical and logical point of view, the verb *asmi* is a predicate of existence: *aham asmi*, ‘I am, I exist’. In *ayam aham asmi*, ‘I am this’, it functions as a copula, and the predicate is the demonstrative pronoun, ‘this’ (*ayam*), which typically refers to one or all of the five clung-to aggregates. In SN 22.89, as we shall see below, not-yet-Arahant Khemaka says: ‘With respect to these five clung-to aggregates, “I am” is found in me, but I do not regard (them as) “I am this”’.⁷⁵ It is only when this residual sense of ‘I am’ disappears that Khemaka attains Arahantship. Evidently, then, the sense ‘I am’ is deeper than and logically prior to the sense ‘I am this’. Nevertheless, as we have seen SN 22.83 explain, the sense ‘I am’ arises in dependence upon, and by clinging to, the five aggregates; i.e., ‘I am’, too, must be based on an act of identification with and appropriation of the aggregates. Thus, the sense of ‘*asmi*’*ti* and ‘*ayam-aham-asmi*’*ti* both arise in dependence upon the same basis, and, in essence, in the same way. Perhaps the difference between them (which is reflected in the grammar of the two expressions), is that between a more subjective (and metaphysical) sense of ‘being’, on the one hand, and, on the other, a more objectified (and ontological) sense of ‘being *this*’.

7.4 *ahaṃkāra-mamaṃkāra-māna-anusaya*: I-making, mine-making, and the underlying tendency to conceit/conceiving

From its most common and formulaic collocation, the above compound is evidently a coordinative (*dvanda*) compound.⁷⁶ The basic (as it were, idiomatic) *sutta* sense of *ahaṃkāra* and *mamaṃkāra* is probably fairly straightforward, and probably the dictionaries are correct to gloss these as follows: *ahaṃkāra*, ‘the

72. Monier-Williams 1993, 783a; Whitney 2000, 118, ‘think’.

73. Cf. Rhys Davids and Stede 1998, 515b.

74. Monier-Williams 1993, 809a.

75. SN 22.89 (at S III 128): *api ca me, āvuso, pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu ‘asmi’ti adhigataṃ ‘ayamahamasmi’ti na ca samanupassāmi*.

76. Cf., e.g., Bodhi 2000, 698; SN 18.21 (at S II 252): ‘When one knows and sees thus, Rāhula, then in regard to this body with consciousness [*saviññāṇake kāye*] and in regard to all external signs [*bahiddhā ca sabbanimittesu*], I-making, mine-making, and the underlying tendency to conceit [*ahaṃkāramamaṃkāramānānusayā*] no longer occur [*na honti*] within’.

(false) conception of one's individuality; pride, conceit';⁷⁷ 'selfishness, egotism, arrogance';⁷⁸ *mamaṅkāra*, 'selfish attachment, self-interest, selfishness'.⁷⁹ The term *māna* in *māna-anusaya* (which is listed as one of seven *anusayas* in AN 7.11 (A IV 9)), given its formulaic collocation with 'I-making' and 'mine-making', on the one hand, and with 'I am' (in *asmi-māna*), on the other, suggests that the senses of 'conceit' and 'conceiving' are connected not merely to the simple term 'I' (*ahaṃ*), but imply *constituting* the 'I' in a certain (erroneous) way: here, the radical sense of *māna*, as 'opinion, notion, conception',⁸⁰ i.e., 'something *thought*' (from the root *man*, 'think') and of *-kāra* as 'making', are surely parallel. Collins (1982, 100–101) discusses three possible (grammatical and philosophical) senses for the dependent term *-kāra* (cf. Warder 2010, 92) in *ahaṃ-kāra*: as in *kumbha-kāra*, 'pot-maker' (which is the usual Indian interpretation); as in *puruṣa-kāra*, 'the action of a person'; or as in *oṃ-kāra* and *svāhā-kāra*, 'the utterance of "oṃ", "svāhā"'. On this third reading, *ahaṃkāra* would mean 'the utterance of "I"'. Collins draws this interpretation from van Buitenen (1957), who provides a detailed and quite persuasive account of the metaphysical and cosmological implications of the primordial utterance 'I' in the *Upaniṣads*, and the history of the term *ahaṃkāra* itself in Indian thought.⁸¹ Collins goes on to suggest a brief and quite unsatisfactory 'quasi-phenomenological' interpretation of the possible EB sense of *ahaṃkāra* as 'the uttering of "I"' (Collins 1982, 102).

Here, I will only very briefly suggest a closely related way of thinking about the possible phenomenological implications of *ahaṃkāra* as 'the uttering of "I"'; and also, thereby, as 'the making or constituting of "I"' (thus retaining the more usual reading, too). The *uttering* of the term 'I' is *itself* a *making*, a *constituting* of the 'I': namely, in the sense 'I am'. A useful paradigm, here, is Röska-Hardy's interpretation, discussed earlier (cf. §6), of the function of the indexical term 'I' as doing *something more* than just expressing the first person perspective; namely, as she puts it, it functions as 'an overt indexing of the utterance act with respect to the agent' who utters it; it thus presents the speaker as 'the author and agent of the linguistic act' (Röska-Hardy 1999, §22). It is interesting that this definition links the utterance of 'I' also to the second sense of *-kāra* noted above: *-kāra* as in 'agent'. To say 'I' in an utterance-act not only presents 'me' as the *agent* of the utterance-act, however; it also expresses or announces my 'being' and my 'presence' in and through that same act. Moreover, in using the term 'I', I claim 'ownership' of that utterance, as its source and agent. The implication, here, is that my utterance of 'I' can be construed as itself the *immediate evidence* of the 'I am'. All of this is strikingly reminiscent of Descartes' intuition: '[T]his proposition "I am, I exist" is necessarily true whenever it is stated by me or conceived in my mind'.⁸²

77. Cone 2001, 272a–b.

78. Rhys Davids and Stede 1998, 91b.

79. Rhys Davids and Stede 1998, 523 b.

80. Monier-Williams 1993, 809a.

81. Burley (2007, 70) further notes that in Sāṃkhya *ahaṃkāra* is defined as *abhimāna*, 'the thought of oneself': 'this can refer both to the moral defect of pride or conceit and to the mere thought of one's being a self'. In Yoga is found the similar concept of *asmitā*, 'I-am-ness' (Burley 2007, 70; 192, n. 25).

82. Descartes 2003, 24; 1904, 25: *hoc pronuntiatum, Ego sum, ego existo, quoties a me profertur, vel mente concipitur, necessario esse verum.*

The proper first question here, however, is what this term ‘I’ necessarily *means* (since it is indubitably meaningful); only *then* can the question of the relationship between the existence of the utterance and the being of the utterer be properly examined. On the other hand, according to the arguments of EB, we know what it *cannot* mean: in principle, it *cannot* refer to a substantial, independently-existing ‘self’. But it is precisely this latter sense which the expression *ahaṃkāra* clearly implies, whether we understand it in the sense of ‘I-making’, of ‘I-uttering’, of ‘I-doing’, or all three at once. In other words, I believe that the real intent of the term *ahaṃkāra* in the EB context is ‘making the “I am”’, i.e., ‘asserting the existence of *attā*’, in the decisively non-Buddhist sense of that term. This would make sense of these parallel collocations with *māna*, i.e., *asmi-māna* and *ahaṃkāra-mamaṃkāra-māna-anusaya*: *māna-anusaya* is best understood in the sense of *asmi-māna*, thus forming a typical EB triad with *ahaṃkāra* and *mamaṃkāra*.⁸³

One further implication of the term *ahaṃkāra* needs to be mentioned, here. In Ud 6.6 (Ud 70), we encounter a very interesting and apparently unusual usage of the term: *ahaṃkāra* is contrasted directly against *paraṃkāra*, and the contrasting terms are unambiguously identified with the notions “‘I am making/doing’” [*ahaṃ karomī’ti*]’ and “‘Another is making/doing’” [*para karotī’ti*]. The context makes it clear that these are references to the views of certain recluses and brahmins, either that the ‘self’ and the ‘world’ are ‘self-created’ (*sayamkato attā ca loka ca*), or that they are ‘other-created’ (*paraṃkato attā ca loka ca*), or both, or neither. But one who has seen (*passato*) the ‘dart’ (*salla*) of attachment to the notions of *ahaṃkāra* and *paraṃkāra*, is said to be free of the notions of ‘I am the one who is doing/making’ and ‘The other is the one who is doing/making’. In this context, then, the sense of *ahaṃkāra* seems much closer to the agentive sense, cited earlier, of the example *puruṣa-kāra*, ‘personal effort or action’. This in turn links back to the combined agentive and existential interpretation of *ahaṃkāra* as ‘I-uttering’ that has just been outlined, above.

For all of the preceding reasons, therefore, I find unsatisfactory Wynne’s interpretation of *ahaṃkāra-mamaṃkāra-mānānusaya* as ‘the underlying tendency towards conceit with regard to the notions “I” and “mine”’ (2010, 114); so, too, Collins’s ‘the underlying tendency to the conceits “I” and “mine”’ (1982, 101). Wynne’s interpretation is made still more problematic because he implies that ‘the notion “I” (*ahan ti*)’ is itself one among those virtually technical terms that EB views so negatively: Wynne in fact places *ahan ti* first in his list of negative EB terms, followed by *asmi ti*, *asmimāna*, *ahaṃkāramamaṃkāra-mānānusaya*.⁸⁴ Thus, Wynne’s entire ensuing discussion turns on what, from my perspective, is simply an incorrect view of the meaning and function of the term ‘I’ and of the problem of ‘subjectivity’ within EB doctrine/theory.

83. In fact, Bodhi draws essentially this same conclusion, commenting on Spk II 215 and SN 18.21 (at S II 252): “‘I-making’ is regarded as the function of wrong view (the view of self), “mine-making” of craving. The root conceit is the conceit “I am” (*asmimāna*), so conceit is also responsible for “I-making” (Bodhi 2000, 814, n. 340).

84. Wynne 2010, 114. The whole argument is set further askew by his reliance on a profoundly unsatisfactory and superficial definition of ‘self-consciousness’ borrowed from the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

7.5 ‘ahan’ti

All of the expressions discussed above occur frequently in the *suttas*, and in contexts which unambiguously demonstrate their fundamental importance within EB doctrine/theory. However, a quotational form for *aham*, i.e., ‘ahan’ti, is very rare, and amongst the *suttas* proper, it occurs only in two, in both of which we find ‘ahan’ti in the conjunction *ahanti vā mamanti vā asmīti vā*, “I” or “mine” or “I am”. The two *sutta* contexts in which this unusual triadic formulation occurs make it evident that it has a sense and function parallel to the primary triadic *netam mama* formula. This is very clear from its application in MN 28. Just before each of the passages represented in the following elided quotation, we also find the negative form of the triadic formula *netam mama, nesoham asmi, neso me attā*, ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self’, applied to each of the four elements, both external and internal. Then follows:

When even this external earth element [*bāhirāya pathaviḍhātuyā*] ... When even this external water element ... When even this external fire element ... When even this external air element, great as it is, is seen to be impermanent, subject to destruction, disappearance, and change, what of this body, which is clung to by craving [*kāyassa taṇhupādinnassa*] and lasts but a while? There can be no considering that as ‘I’ or ‘mine’ or ‘I am’ [*ahanti vā mamanti vā asmīti*].⁸⁵

It seems evident to me that ‘*ahanti vā mamanti vā asmīti vā*’ serves here as a variation upon the *netam mama* formula: ‘*mamanti vā*’ clearly corresponds with *na etaṃ mama*; and I would suggest that ‘*ahanti vā*’ corresponds with *na eso aham asmi*, and ‘*asmīti vā*’ with *na eso me attā*. (I would further suggest a similar parallelism with the triad *ahaṃkāra, mamaṃkāra*, and (*asmi-*)*mānānusaṃsāra*, as discussed in the preceding section.)

Apart from the fairly obvious sense of the passage itself, some further indirect support for my contention that these two formulae are to all intents and purposes virtually synonymous in sense and purpose, is provided by the commentary. For, Ps explains this formula as implying the ‘threefold possession by craving, conceit, and views’⁸⁶ If we compare this explanation with Ps’s explanation of the *etaṃ mama* formula in its first occurrence in MN 8, it is obvious that Ps reads both formulae in exactly the same way: “‘This is mine’: possessed by craving... ‘This I am’: possessed by conceit... ‘This is my self’: possessed by views’.⁸⁷

In SN 35.246 (at S IV 197–188), the same triadic formulation is applied more generally to the five clung-to aggregates, with the same sense and function as the triadic *netam mama* formula:

While examining form as far as there is an extent of form [*rūpaṃ samanvesato yāvatā rūpassa gati*], examining feeling as far as there is an extent of feeling, examining perception as far as there is an extent of perception, examining constitutive processes as far as there is an extent of constitutive processes, examining sense-consciousness as far as there is an extent of sense-consciousness, whatever there

85. Nāṇamoli and Bodhi 2009, 279–82. MN 28 (at M I 185–189).

86. Ps II 225: *ahanti vātiādi tividho taṇhāmānadiṭṭhigāho*.

87. Ps I 183 (on MN 8 at M I 40): *etaṃ mamāti taṇhāgāho ... esohamasmi mānagāh o... eso me attādi diṭṭhigāho ...*

is (of) 'I' or 'mine' or 'I am', there is not that for him [*yampissa taṃ hoti ahanti vā mamanti vā asmīti vā tampi tassa na hotī ti*].

The syntax is more awkward than that of MN 28, but the sense is still quite clear. Bodhi (2000, 1254–1255) renders the last sentence thus: 'whatever notions of 'I' or 'mine' or 'I am' had occurred to him before no longer occur to him'. In context, it is obvious that this means whatever notions of 'I' or 'mine' or 'I am' that the *bhikkhu* might formerly have held *with respect to the five clung-to aggregates*. It clearly does *not* mean that he no longer has subjective experiences and a subjective intentional consciousness. Bodhi adds to this the explanation of the commentary: '[T]he meditator, exploring the five aggregates, does not see any graspable "I" or "mine" and therefore loses interest in the aggregates'.⁸⁸ And again, Spk sees in the triadic formula a description of being possessed by views, craving, and conceit.⁸⁹ From all of this, we can see that, here too, the point of this triadic formula is equivalent to the *netam mama* formula: there is no 'I' or 'mine' or 'I am' (i.e., *attā*) to be found in the five aggregates.

As far as I can determine, these are the only two instances within the *suttas* in which we find *aham* in quotational form; and what is striking about both instances is that there is no pejorative reference to the quotational '*ahan'ti*', any more than there is in the expression *na eso aham asmi* (where *asmi*, it should be noted, is *copulative*, not *existential*). Rather, it is just the identification of *aham* with the aggregates that is denied. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that these formulae would be utterly useless for the vital purpose of the abandoning (*pahāna*) of attachment to the aggregates, if we were not capable of perceiving and understanding the distinction entailed by the judgment, *na eso aham asmi*, 'not this am I'. Subjectivity is itself the fulcrum, the transcendental 'Archimedean point' — a point of pure 'emptiness'⁹⁰ — by means of which consciousness-of can prise itself free of its own clinging to its objects, and its own clinging to the sense of 'existence' arising through its 'reflection' in its objects, precisely because, through its own intrinsic subjectivity, actualized consciousness-of can recognize: *na eso aham asmi*. But note well: an 'I' for which there can be no valid *phenomenal* predicates whatsoever is an 'I' for which the *ontological* predicate (*asmi*) is also invalid.⁹¹ This,

88. Bodhi 2000, 1430, n. 217 (citing Spk III 67: *evaṃ yogāvacarō pañcakkhandhe sammasanto ahanti vā mamanti vā gahetabbaṃ apassanto khandhehi anattiko hoti*.)

89. Spk III 68: *ahanti vā mamanti vā asmīti vā evaṃ niddiṭṭhaṃ diṭṭhitaṃhāmānaggāhattayaṃ*.

90. Perhaps the sense, here, is echoed in Laozi, *Dao De Jing* §11: 三十輻共一轂，當其無，有車之用。 'Thirty wheel-spokes together on one hub: its empty place is the wheel's usefulness.'

91. Earlier (cf. fn. 7), I empathized with Husserl's description of transcendental consciousness as the 'primal region' or 'dimension' of 'being' (*Sein*). What I have said here does not conflict with that description. The 'concept/conceit "I am"' is an 'existential' or 'ontological' assertion; but to speak of transcendental consciousness as a 'dimension of being' is *not* an 'existential' or 'ontological' assertion. That sense of 'being' is *logically prior to* and transcends 'duality-dependence' (*dvaya-nissita*) thinking in terms of 'it-is-ness and it-is-not-ness' (*atthitañceva natthitañca*), or 'existence' and 'non-existence' (cf. SN 12.15, at S II 17). We could usefully compare this distinction not only to Husserl's radical *Seinsunterscheidung* between 'transcendental being as consciousness' and 'transcendent being as phenomenon manifesting itself in consciousness', but similarly to Heidegger's 'ontological Difference' (*ontologische Differenz*) between 'being' (*Sein*) and 'beings' (*Seiendes*), a difference 'which is *pre-ontologically* there, without an explicit concept of being [*Seinsbegriff*], latent in the *Dasein's* existence [*Existenz*]' (Heidegger 1988, 319; 1975, 454). Note that for Heidegger, the *Existenz* of *Dasein* is different from

in other words, is the conclusion of the arguments against ways of regarding ‘self’ (*atta-samanupassanā*) of DN 15 (D II 67): where nothing whatsoever is felt, there can be no sense of ‘I am this’ or of ‘I am’ (cf. §12 below).

8. THE INTRINSIC ‘TWOFOLDNESS’ OF *VIÑÑĀṆA*

8.1 ‘Abandoning’ and ‘clinging’

One of the most soteriologically important *intentional* concepts of EB is that of *pahāna*, ‘abandoning’.⁹² What is to be abandoned? In a word: ‘everything’. In the ‘technical’ vocabulary of EB: ‘the All’ (*sabbam*). SN 35.23–24 (S IV 15–16) teach, respectively, ‘the All’ and the ‘Dhamma for abandoning All’ (*sabba-pahānāya dhamma*), where ‘the All’ is specifically defined in terms of the six sense spheres. SN 22.33 (S III 33) and SN 35.101 (S IV 81) also teach exactly this same Dhamma in terms of the five clung-to aggregates and the six sense spheres, respectively. The former *sutta* says:

Monks, what is not yours [*na tumhākaṃ*], abandon that [*taṃ pajahatha*]. When you have abandoned that, it will be for your benefit and happiness. And what, monks, is not yours? Form ... feeling ... perception ... constitutive processes ... sense-consciousness is not yours; abandon that. When you have abandoned that, it will be for your benefit [*hitāya*] and happiness [*sukhāya*].’

The latter *sutta* says:

Monks, what is not yours, abandon that. When you have abandoned that, it will be for your benefit and happiness. And what, monks, is not yours? Eye ... visual forms ... visual consciousness ... eye-contact ... whatever feeling arises with eye-contact as condition, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant: that, too, is not yours. Abandon that. When you have abandoned that, it will be for your benefit and happiness.

And so also for ear, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty. The quality of this ‘abandoning’ is vividly expressed by means of the following analogy in MN 22 (at M I 141):

‘Bhikkhus, what do you think? If people carried off the grass, sticks, branches, and leaves in this Jeta Grove, or burned them, or did what they liked with them, would you think: “People are carrying us off or burning us or doing what they like with us”?’

the ‘being-at-hand’ (*Vorhandensein*) or ‘extantness’ (*Vorhandenheit*) of things (Heidegger 1988, 28; 1975, 36–7) precisely because *Dasein* is *conscious*: Heidegger explicitly acknowledges the significance of Husserl’s *Seinsunterscheidung*, and says that ‘if the being of the subject should reveal itself as other than extantness, then a *fundamental limit* [*grundsätzliche Grenze*] would be set to the hitherto prevailing equation of being [*Sein*] with actuality [*Wirklichkeit*], or extantness [*Vorhandenheit*].’ (Heidegger 1988, 125 (my italics); 1975, 176).

92. *Pahāna*, ‘giving up, leaving, abandoning, rejection’ (Rhys Davids and Stede 1998, 448b); Skt. *prahāna*, ‘relinquishing, abandoning, avoiding; abstraction, speculation, meditation’ (Monier-Williams 1993, 700c); from *pra + hā, jahāti*, ‘to leave, abandon, forsake, relinquish; put away, take off, remove, lay aside, renounce, avoid, abstain or refrain from; disregard; get rid or escape from’ (cf. Monier-Williams 1993, 1296b).

'No, venerable sir. Why not? Because that is neither our self nor what belongs to our self [*na hi no etaṃ ... attā vā attaniyaṃ vā*].

'So too, bhikkhus, whatever is not yours [i.e., the five aggregates], abandon it; when you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time'.⁹³

The commentary explains that the imperative 'Abandon...' should be understood to mean: 'Abandon by means of the abandoning of desire and lust'.⁹⁴ SN 22.112 (S III 161) supports this, but is also more exhaustive:

With respect to form ... feeling ... perception ... constitutive processes ... sense-consciousness: whatever desire, lust, delight, craving, taking up and clinging, stand-points, adherences and underlying tendencies of the mind there are [*yo chando yo rāgo yā nandī yā taṇhā ye upayupādānā cetaso adhiṭṭhānābhinivesānusayā*]: abandon these. Thus that form ... feeling ... perception ... constitutive processes ... sense-consciousness will be abandoned, with root cut, made like a palm-tree stump, made to have no becoming, not subject to arising in the future.

What should be clear from these descriptions is that abandoning is a unique and all-encompassing intentional act, modality, attitude or comportment directed towards the totality of the phenomenal contents of one's experience. We could also say that 'abandoning', most essentially, is the negation, reversal, dissolution, or cutting-off of 'craving' (*taṇhā*) and 'clinging' (*upādāna*). Craving and clinging are themselves fundamental intentional modalities, acts, attitudes, or comportments, with clinging arising in dependence on craving according to the sequential formula of dependent co-arising. So, we have here two important and inter-related questions of phenomenological constitution. If craving and clinging are directed towards the five aggregates and the six sense spheres — which, as we have seen above, are defined as 'the All'; and which, as SN 2.26 (at S I 62) and SN 35.116 (at S IV 95) further explain, constitute the sense of 'world' (*loka*) in EB — then, as intentional comportments towards the 'All', the 'world', i.e., the phenomenal totality of the experienced, craving and clinging are not (essentially, in themselves) 'phenomena' to be found as extant components within that 'All' or 'world'.⁹⁵ Craving and clinging are qualitative modes of subjective intentionality:

93. Nāṇamoli and Bodhi 2009, 234–235.

94. Spk II 265: *pajajahathāti chandarāgappahānena pajajahatha*.

95. It might be useful to clarify why I say that 'clinging', as an intentional act and mode of comportment, is not a 'phenomenon', and thus 'transcendental'. Any intentional act is an act of consciousness; and acts of consciousness, in principle, cannot 'appear' in the phenomenal world directly, i.e., as phenomena (whether 'real' or 'ideal'); although the effects of such acts are everywhere evident. The concept of 'justice', when I *think about* it, is for me, as a concept, a phenomenon. But the concept of 'justice' is thereby the 'object' or 'matter' of my thinking about it; my *thinking about* 'justice' is the *actual intentional act* in this instance. When, however, I *think or act justly*, this thinking or acting is a genuine intentional act of consciousness. 'Justice' is not, in this case, the 'object' of an intentional act, but rather the 'quality' or 'mode' of an intentional act. Similarly, when I think about the concept of 'clinging', 'clinging' is a conceptual phenomenon, the 'object' or 'matter' of the intentional act of thinking-about it. But when I *actually cling* to something, that clinging is in itself a *genuine intentional act of consciousness*, whether or not it has a physical correlate. I can cling to something mentally, or mentally *and* physically: but the physical expression of clinging cannot be distinguished, purely physically, from any other kind of merely physical 'holding'. I don't have to 'squeeze harder'

they belong, intrinsically and necessarily, to the nature of subjective-intentional consciousness. In that sense, they are transcendental modes or compartments of consciousness-of: they do not belong most essentially to the nature of ‘that which appears’, but to the nature of consciousness-of. I find the following statement, occurring in both MN 44 and MN 109, to be in harmony with this TP understanding. In reply to the question whether clinging is just (the same as) these five clung-to aggregates, or apart (i.e., separate) from them, the *suttas* state:

That clinging is not just these five clung-to aggregates, nor is clinging apart [aññatra⁹⁶] from the five clung-to aggregates. That which is desire and lust towards the five clung-to aggregates, that is the clinging there.⁹⁷

The commentary’s explanation — which has become the received traditional explanation — of this interesting statement is as follows:

Because clinging is one portion [*eka-desa*] of the aggregate of constitutive processes [*saṅkhāra-kkhandha*], it is not just the five clung-to aggregates; nor is clinging apart [aññatra] from the five clung-to aggregates. (Ps II 359)

So, on this view, the statement of the *suttas* is simply supposed to mean that, because clinging is *just one component part of just one khandha*, it is not just the same as the five clung-to aggregates, nor is it apart from or different from them. In one sense, we might say that this is quite obvious and unproblematic. Since people ‘cling’ to things, clinging is obviously a part of what persons are and do; and since, for EB, a person cannot be described in any way other than in terms of the five clung-to aggregates, there are no other categories of personhood under which to categorize clinging than these. The category of the *saṅkhāras* is the only one of the five aggregates that is conveniently plural and ambiguous, although it is definitely associated with *cetanā*, ‘intention, volition; volitional intentionality’.⁹⁸ It would thus seem to be the only logically suitable category in which to fit the

in order to ‘cling’ to it; in fact, I don’t even have to ‘touch’ something physically in order to ‘cling’ to it. Many of the things that we cling to are not even ‘physical’, in any case. The difference between ‘holding’ and ‘clinging’ is purely intentional: two individuals might be holding on to the same cliff-face, but one of them might be just ‘holding on’, while the other might be ‘clinging’. The difference would be purely *intentional*, i.e., a quality of the respective compartments of subjective intentional consciousness. There might well be measurable symptoms differentiating the physiological states of these two individuals (in one of them, e.g., a high level of adrenalin in the blood, rapid heartbeat, rapid breathing, perspiration, etc.); but these, I would argue, would be precisely *symptoms*, not *causes*, of the difference between them: a difference rooted in their respective subjective intentional states and acts.

96. *Aññatra* (Skt. *anyatra*): ‘1. elsewhere, somewhere else; in another place; 2. but for, besides, except, apart from; without (with abl. or instr.)’ (Cone 2001, 46b). In this passage, the compound ‘five clung-to aggregates’ is in the ablative form (*aññatra pañcahupādānakkhandhehi*). In both Pāli and Sanskrit, the primary sense of *aññatra* is ‘locative’, i.e., ‘in another place’ (cf. also Monier-Williams 1993, 45c).

97. MN 44 (at M I 299–300) and MN 109 (at M III 16): ‘*na kho ... taññeva upādānaṃ te pañcupādānakkhandhā, nāpi aññatra pañcahupādānakkhandhehi upādānaṃ. yo kho ... pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu chandarāgo tam tatha upādānaṃ’ti*.

98. Cf. SN 22.56 (at S III 60): *katame ca, bhikkhave, saṅkhārā? chayime, bhikkhave, cetanākāyā — rūpasācetanā, saddasācetanā... [etc.]* ‘And what, bhikkhus, are constitutive processes? These six classes of intention [*cetanā-kāyā*]: intention with respect to visual form, intention with respect to sounds ... [etc.]’.

concept of ‘clinging’; here, too, we could also place ‘craving’. All of this makes sense; but it does not seem to be the actual point either of the question or of the answer cited above from MN 44 and MN 109. In fact, as I shall indicate below, *in principle*, the same question could just as well have been asked not only about craving, or desire and lust, but also about feeling, perception, the constitutive processes, or consciousness; and in each case, the appropriate answer, I would argue, ought to have just the same form as the first part of the answer given above with respect to clinging: there is a sense in which all of these kinds of mental acts are *not just the same as, nor apart from*, the five clung-to aggregates — even though these mental acts themselves give their names to four of the clung-to aggregates. (This point will be explained in more detail below.)

It seems odd to me that, if what the *suttas* actually meant was just what the commentary says they meant, i.e., that clinging is just one component part of one *khandha*, that they did not simply say so — after all, the commentary manages to express the essential point unambiguously in six words (*upādānassa saṅkhārakkhandhekadesabhāvato* [Ps II 359]) — rather than presenting a statement that has something of the quality of an obscure riddle; just as if its *actual* meaning were not, after all, quite so prosaic and so reductively straightforward as the commentary makes out. In fact, it is interesting to note what the commentary says next:

Indeed, if it [clinging] were just that [the five clung-to aggregates], then the essence [*sabhāvaṃ*] of material form [*rūpa*] and so on would be clinging. If it were apart [*aññatva*], then, at another time, it would be like a latent tendency [*anusaya*] separated from mind [*citta-vippayutto*], like a concept [*paññatti*], like *nibbāna*, and freed from the *khandhas*; or else it might be that a sixth *khandha* should be designated [*chaṭṭho vā khandho paññapetabbo*]! (Ps II 359)

This reasoning suggests to me the reason why the commentator (Buddhaghosa) arrived at the reductive and ‘harmless’ interpretation (i.e., ‘harmless’ from the viewpoint of a commentator loyal to the Abhidhamma paradigm) just cited above: he would evidently have been faced with a very peculiar dilemma if he were to take the *suttas*’ statement ‘literally’. What Buddhaghosa, as a student of the Abhidhamma, could not in this context accommodate, is what we would call a more essentially phenomenological understanding of the act of clinging; such an understanding would arguably have defused his apparent dilemma. That Buddhaghosa was actually capable of such an understanding is in fact already evident in the dilemma that he describes in the above passage; and it can in principle be demonstrated by other examples in other contexts. There is, e.g., his well-known (etymologically incorrect, but phenomenologically astute) explanation of the term *nāma*, literally ‘name’, in the compound *nāmarūpa*, ‘name-and-form’, as though it were derived from the verb *namati*, ‘to bend, to direct’: ‘Here, feeling and the other three *khandhas* are called “*nāma*” [‘name’, ‘mentality’] because of bending [*namana*], facing towards the object [*ārammaṇa-abhimukhaṃ*]’. (Vism 558, cf. 587).⁹⁹ Here, Buddhaghosa is clearly thinking of what we would call the

99. Although Buddhaghosa includes *viññāṇa-kkhandha* under *nāma*, the *suttas* do not include *viññāṇa* in their definition of *nāma*. Cf., e.g., SN 12.2 (at S II 3): *katamañca ... nāmarūpaṃ? vedanā, saññā, cetanā, phasso, manasikāro — idaṃ vuccati nāmaṃ*. ‘And what is name-and-form? Feeling, perception, volitional intent, contact, attention (mental activation): this is called name’.

intentionality of the mental acts of feeling, perceiving, intending, cognizing: here, his use of the term *namana* could legitimately be translated as 'intending' in the phenomenological sense of that term.

There can be no intentional act without an 'object' of that act. One cannot, for example, feel, perceive, desire, hope, fear, or think, without feeling, perceiving, desiring, hoping for, fearing, or thinking *something*. Naturally, the same is true of clinging: one cannot cling without clinging to *something*. Quite essentially and irreducibly, the intentional act comprises consciousness-of, and that intentional object of which one is conscious. Moreover, with respect to the intended object of that act, we can distinguish between '*the object as it is intended*, and the *object*, as such, *which is intended*'.¹⁰⁰ It is on the basis of this concept of the intentional act that we can comprehend the nature of clinging and abandoning; and why, in the context of EB, it should be possible and meaningful — and not paradoxical — to *intentionally* 'abandon' the totality of our 'world' of experience; in other words, to thoroughly uproot 'clinging' and 'craving' for that 'world'. 'To abandon' is an intentional act that is the contrary of the intentional act 'to cling'. The 'object' of both acts may effectively be the same. What differs is the 'quality', the 'character', of the two acts. But there is more to the nature and structure of the intentional act than its quality and its object: there is also the actual *subjective consciousness-of* the object, without which, of course, there would be no act.

With this in mind, we can reconsider the sense of the question of whether clinging is just the five clung-to aggregates, or apart from them: if the aggregates are the *object* of the act of clinging (*upādāna*), then how are we to understand the *subjective consciousness-of* this object, which has that act-quality or act-character of clinging? Now, if the commentator were to tell us that this *subjective consciousness-of* should be included under the category of *saṅkhāra-kkhandha*, we would have to inform him that he had misunderstood the sense of our question. Subjective consciousness-of must equally also be presupposed for feeling, for perception, for constitutional processes, and for sense-consciousness: none of these would be logically possible unless they were modes and acts of such a subjective consciousness-of. We might concur that the *quality* of 'clinging' that characterizes the particular mental act in question could be classified amongst the *saṅkhāras*, understood as the 'constitutive processes' that inform intentional acts with their various intentional act-characters (and can also inform intentional objects with what we might call 'object-qualities', such as *subha-nimitta* and *asubha-nimitta*¹⁰¹). But this was not the point of our question: rather, we were asking about *that intentional consciousness-of* itself, which is conscious-of its object, and characterized according to its particular quality (e.g., of clinging, or abandoning, as the case may be). We are puzzled by the implication that, in one respect, the five clung-to aggregates are the 'object' of clinging; yet, in another respect, clinging presupposes a subjective, intentional consciousness-of that is conscious of this 'object' in the mode or quality of 'clinging'. Our question was whether this clinging *consciousness-of* is nothing other than the aggregates themselves,

100. Husserl 2006, 113 (trans. modified); 1913, 400: 'der *Gegenstand*, so wie er *intendiert* ist, und schlechthin der *Gegenstand*, welcher *intendiert* ist'. In *Logical Investigations*, Husserl theorizes this distinction in terms of the 'act-character' or 'quality' (*Qualität*) of the act, and its content or 'matter' (*Materie*) (cf. 2006, 119–122; 1913, 411–416).

101. I.e., 'the sign of the beautiful' and 'the sign of the unbeautiful': cf. SN 46.51 (S V 102).

or whether it is somehow ‘apart from’ them; ‘not in the same place’ (*aññatra*) as they are, so to speak. And the answer we received was twofold: (1) Clinging is *neither* just the aggregates, *nor* is it apart from them (*na kho ... taññeva upādānaṃ te pañcupādānakkhandhā, nāpi aññatra pañcahupādānakkhandhehi upādānaṃ*); (2) ‘That desire and lust with respect to the five clung-to aggregates, that, there, is the clinging’ (*yo kho ... pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu chandarāgo taṃ tattha upādānaṃ*’*ti*). The first part of this answer is, in fact, from a TP perspective, very informative (not least because it is clearly not *reductive*), and actually tells us what we wanted to know, although rather too enigmatically. The second part is only *partly* informative: it tells us that clinging comprises, or is identical with, desire and lust. But it begs the question: ‘And what of desire and lust, then: are they just the aggregates, or are they apart from them?’ The point of the question is the same as before: desiring and lusting are intentional acts, just like clinging: they have an object, and presuppose a subjective consciousness-of characterized by the qualities of ‘desiring’ and ‘lusting’. But for this same reason, the answer, at least in part, must be of the same form: ‘*neither* just the aggregates, *nor* apart from them’.

8.2 *Viññāṇa* is not ‘one-dimensional’

The preceding section has set the scene for a more specific — and apparently even more puzzling — version of the same question and problem that has been discussed therein. As we saw above, the Buddha admonished *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunīs* thus: ‘Abandon that which is not yours’ (*yaṃ, bhikkhave, na tumhākaṃ, taṃ pajahatha*). As we would expect, ‘What is not yours’ is defined comprehensively in two ways: in terms of the five clung-to aggregates, and in terms of the six sense spheres. Consequently, *viññāṇa* itself is repeatedly described as an object of clinging, desire, and lust; and thus also as an object for abandoning. The following are two of several variations on this basic theme (with *viññāṇa* following, of course, after *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, and the *saṅkhāras* as an object of abandoning):

Consciousness [*viññāṇaṃ*] is not yours: abandon that. When you have abandoned that, it will be for your benefit and happiness.¹⁰²

That which is lust and desire [*chandarāgo*] with respect to consciousness, abandon that. Thus [*evaṃ*] that consciousness will be abandoned, with root cut, made like a palm-tree stump, made to have no becoming, not subject to arising in the future.¹⁰³

The first passage makes *viññāṇa* the direct object of abandoning; the second makes *chanda-rāga* the object, but then goes on to say that, because of the abandoning of *chanda-rāga*, *viññāṇa* will also be abandoned; and in this case, the act of abandoning is evidently supposed to have a profound and radical ontological consequence; namely, the ultimate cessation of the process of *viññāṇa*’s arising. This, of course, refers to the ‘*nibbāna*-state without fuel remaining’ (*an-upādi-sesā nibbāna-dhātu*).

The intentional act of abandoning, as we have seen, necessarily comprises a subjective consciousness-of in an intentional relation to an intentional object,

102. SN 22.33 (at S III 34): ‘*viññāṇaṃ na tumhākaṃ, taṃ pajahatha. taṃ vo pahīnaṃ hitāya sukhāya bhavissatī*’*ti*.

103. SN 22.25 (at S III 27): ‘*yo viññānasmim chandarāgo taṃ pajahatha. evaṃ taṃ viññānaṃ pahīnaṃ bhavissati ucchinnaṃulāṃ tālavatthukataṃ anabhāvaṃkatakaṃ āyatim anuppadadhaman*’*ti*.

where the quality of that act is precisely that of ‘abandoning’. The specific question that we are now considering is how, from both an EB and TP perspective, we can comprehend the sense in which *viññāṇa* should itself be the intentional object of an abandoning consciousness-of. At the outset, though, I would like to dispel yet another possible commentarial-style evasion of the actual sense of this question, with respect to the case of *viññāṇa*. SN 22.3 (at S III 9–10) says:

The material form element is the home [oko] of *viññāṇa*. When *viññāṇa* is in bondage through lust to the material form element [rūpadhāturāgavinibandhaṅga], it is called a ‘home-frequenter’ [‘okasārīti]. The feeling element ... The perception element ... The constitutive process element is the home of *viññāṇa*. When *viññāṇa* is in bondage through lust to the constitutive process element, it is called a ‘home-frequenter’.

The commentary asks an obvious but very pertinent question: ‘But why is it not said, here, “The *viññāṇa* element is the home of *viññāṇa*”?’ (Spk II 259) The commentary’s explanation is as follows:

To avoid confusion, for ‘home’ is here spoken of in the sense of a condition [pacaya]. An earlier kammic consciousness [purejātaṅga kammaviññāṇaṃ] is a condition for both a later kammic consciousness and a resultant consciousness [pacchājātassa vipākaviññāṇassa], and an (earlier) resultant consciousness for both a (later) resultant consciousness and a (later) kammic consciousness. Therefore, the confusion would arise: ‘What kind of consciousness is intended here?’ To avoid such confusion, consciousness is not included, and the teaching is expressed without disorder.¹⁰⁴

We see here that the author of the commentary (again, Buddhaghosa) thinks that confusion would arise due to the problem of the conditionality and temporality of consciousness: i.e., on the basis of ‘before’ and ‘after’, ‘condition’ and ‘result’. The question of ‘which consciousness’ is intended as the ‘home’ and which as the ‘home-frequenter’ would be a question about an earlier or later condition or result; i.e., of *differing moments* of consciousness as either a kammic ‘agent’ or a kammic ‘patient’. Which of these different moments is to be defined as the ‘home of consciousness’ (*viññāṇassa oka*), and which of them is to be defined as ‘frequenting a home’ (*okasārin*)? Indeed, formulated this way, the concept does seem confusing (or perhaps just confused). For example, should an ‘earlier kammic consciousness’ be defined as the ‘home’, and a ‘later resultant consciousness’ as ‘the one who frequents a home’, in the sense that earlier actions have constituted the later resultant situations and experiences?

Yet even *this* reading (which seems the most logically plausible one) requires some kind of distinction or division in the notion of the *present* ‘consciousness’: i.e., a ‘*present* consciousness-of’ must be *presently* conscious-of the ‘*presently* arising consciousness-results’ of ‘*past* consciousness-actions’, if indeed consciousness is to be conceived of as ‘frequenting consciousness as a home’. (It makes little sense to say that a house is presently ‘frequenting itself’; nor even to say that a later moment in the history of a house’s existence frequents an earlier moment of that house’s existence.) The real confusion, here, arises from taking consciousness to be nothing but a one-dimensional causal-temporal stream; and then trying to relate an earlier moment in the stream to another later moment by way of a

104. Bodhi 2000, 1047, n. 19; Spk II 259.

relation (the *intentional relationship* between *consciousness-of* and *object of consciousness*) that is just not appropriate to a one-dimensional causal-temporal process. It is to conflate the conditioned ‘contents’ or ‘affections’ of consciousness with the *subjective consciousness-of* those ‘contents’ or ‘affections’. The intentional relation between consciousness-of and its objects requires, so to speak, ‘two dimensions’: the ‘horizontal’ dimension of the causal-temporal stream, and the ‘vertical’ dimension of the subjective *consciousness-of* that stream *as a stream*; i.e., as constituted horizontally through the inter-relatedness of its past, present and future phases. But the *consciousness-of* that relatedness — and, indeed, the constitution of that relatedness — requires that temporal stream of experience (*Erlebnisstrom*) to be an immanent ‘object’ of subjective consciousness-of; and thus, the vertical or perspectival dimension is necessary, if there is to be a *consciousness-of* at all.

We might agree, then, that the commentator is right to say that *viññāṇa-kkhandha* could, in principle, also be described as a ‘home of *viññāṇa*’; but *not* in the problematic one-dimensional sense that he supposes. I have pre-empted and dispelled, here, the possible *misapplication* of the commentarial type of ‘one-dimensional’ causal-temporal view of *viññāṇa* to the different, though related, class of arguments that will be presented in the next section. In particular, it should now be clear that a concept such as ‘the *present consciousness-of* consciousness’ cannot be coherently reduced to a one-dimensional explanation: e.g., the *present* consciousness (recollection) of a *past* moment of consciousness.

8.3 The intrinsic ‘twofoldness’ of *viññāṇa*

The term *viññāṇa* is usually translated as ‘consciousness’;¹⁰⁵ but this term is no less ambiguous and problematic in English (or any equivalent in any other language) than is the term *viññāṇa* in Pāli. In fact, just because the term ‘consciousness’ seems such an obvious and natural choice as a translation of *viññāṇa*, it can just as readily cloud matters as illuminate them: if one does not understand what ‘consciousness’ ‘means’, how is that translation going to clarify or illuminate the term *viññāṇa*? In fact, the ‘meaning’ that is actually required here is not any merely verbal definition, but the self-understanding that results from the transcendental reduction (whether in its TP or in its EB form).

There are two distinct issues here, with respect to the term *viññāṇa* within the context of the EB *suttas*. First, the term *viññāṇa* is not strictly univocal in meaning, and does not serve a singular doctrinal or theoretical function. Rather, the term has a spectrum or continuum of inter-connected senses and applications. Second, in sense and application, the term *viññāṇa* conceals within itself an important ambiguity; indeed, a kind of doubleness. But this is so not only for the term *viññāṇa*, but also for the terms *vedanā*, *saññā*, and *saṅkhāra*.

With respect to the first issue, for example, Hamilton, who in her earlier work (1996, 82–120) devotes an entire chapter to the concept of *viññāṇa* as a *khandha*, admits to necessarily omitting ‘many of the numerous contexts’ in which the term occurs, and that ‘a thorough analysis of them all would constitute a book in itself’. She specifically focuses upon ‘the meaning and function of *viññāṇa* as a *khandha*’, although she also admits that some of the contexts on which she draws ‘do not explicitly identify *viññāṇa* as a *khandha*’ (Hamilton 1996, 83). Even under

105. Harvey’s translation, ‘discernment’, is a notable exception (cf. Harvey 1995).

the concept of *khandha*, she distinguishes five different senses for *viññāṇa*: as impermanent, as ‘consciousness of’, as a factor of cognition, as providing continuity, and as evolving (1996, 83). In her later work (2000, 75), she somewhat broadens her concept of *viññāṇa*:

Consciousness, then, is the awareness that accompanies the operation of the *khandhas* as a whole. At its most basic, one does not see, hear, and so on, if one is not aware of it ... By definition, then, seeing only is seeing if one knows one is seeing.

Indeed, this is surely correct: if *viññāṇa* as ‘consciousness-of’ were neatly packaged into a separate ‘bundle’ alongside the four other *khandhas*, it would be a mystery how those other ‘bundles’ called, e.g., ‘feeling’, ‘perception’, and ‘constitutive processes’, could possibly function. But, as one might expect, the *suttas* do not assert such an incoherent notion.

MN 43, for example, explains three of the four ‘mental’ (or, as the commentaries put it, ‘immaterial’ (*arūpa*)¹⁰⁶) *khandhas* in the following interesting way.¹⁰⁷ *Viññāṇa-kkhandha* is so-called because ‘*vijānāti vijānāti*’ (from *vi + jñā*) which we might gloss as ‘one knows or is conscious of by discerning, discriminating, or distinguishing’: the example is ‘one is conscious of “pleasant”, or one is conscious of “painful”, or one is conscious of “neither painful nor pleasant”’.¹⁰⁸ *Vedanā-kkhandha* is so-called because ‘*vedeti vedeti*’ (from *vid*), which we might gloss as ‘one senses, feels, experiences, knows’: ‘one feels pleasure, or one feels pain, or one feels neither pain nor pleasure’.¹⁰⁹ *Sañjānāti sañjānāti*’ (from *sañ + jñā*), which we might gloss as ‘one recognizes, perceives, identifies’: the example (which is arbitrary, as any sense-modality might have been used) is: ‘one perceives blue, or one perceives yellow, or one perceives red, or one perceives white’.¹¹⁰ Moreover, the *sutta* goes on to say:

Feeling, perception, and consciousness — these things are conjoined, not disjoined, and it is not possible to separate these things out in order to make known the difference between them. What one feels, that one perceives; what one perceives,

106. E.g., Ps I 73 (on MN 2 at M I 9): *cattāro arūpakkhandhāti*.

107. Here, I read the three verbs in this sequence — *vijānāti, vedeti, sañjānāti* — as implying one and the same personal subject; just as the preceding verbs — *nappajānāti* and *paṇānāti* (from *pa + jñā*) — each correspond to a personal subject, namely, *duppañño*, ‘a foolish one’, and *paññavā*, ‘one possessed of wisdom’, respectively. Nāṇamoli and Bodhi (2009, 388–89), as also Ṭhānissaro 2012, MN 43, translate ‘It cognizes’, ‘It feels’, and ‘It perceives’, as though it is each of the separate *khandhas* that performs the action of each of the respective verbs (although Bodhi does admit that ‘One cognizes’ is an equally valid alternative [Nāṇamoli and Bodhi 2009, 1237, n. 430]). In particular, cf. the concluding statement of this passage, which cannot be translated otherwise than as: ‘What one feels, that one perceives; what one perceives, that one is conscious of [*yaṃ ... vedeti taṃ sañjānāti, yaṃ sañjānāti taṃ vijānāti*]’ (M I 293). However, in the parallel, but not identical, context of SN 22.79 (S III 86), which also provides a description of the *saṅkhāra-kkhandha*, the impersonal reading seems to be required.

108. MN 43 (at M I 292): *sukhantipi vijānāti, dukkhantipi vijānāti, adukkhamasukhantipi vijānāti*. Note the quotational forms (with *ti*). The example is more or less arbitrary, since in SN 22.79 (at S III 87), a different example is given (without quotational form): ‘It is conscious of sour [*ambilampi vijānāti*], ... bitter, ... pungent, ... sweet, ... acrid, ... not acrid, ... salty, ... not salty’.

109. MN 43 (at M I 293): *sukhampi vedeti, dukkhampi vedeti, adukkhamasukhampi vedeti*.

110. MN 43 (at M I 293): *nilakampi sañjānāti, pītakampi sañjānāti, lohitaṅkampi sañjānāti, odātampi sañjānāti*.

that one is conscious of. Therefore, these things are conjoined, not disjoined.¹¹¹

This now brings us to the second issue previously mentioned. From the above and many other passages in the *suttas*, we can discern that *vedanā*, *saññā*, and *viññāṇa*, whether as *khandhas* or in any other sense or aspect, evidently possess a somewhat complex structure.¹¹² In particular, as the above examples from MN 43 make clear, these terms combine within their concepts two distinct yet interdependent and inseparable aspects. These aspects are strikingly indicated by the pairing together of verb of cognition and object of cognition under the relevant concept: thus, e.g., under *viññāṇa* we have ‘one is conscious of “pleasure”...’; under *vedanā* we have ‘one feels pleasure...’; and under *saññā* we have ‘one perceives blue ...’, etc. This very deliberate architecture should alert us to the fact that each of these concepts has an implicit dyadic structure, comprising a mental act and the correlate of that act.¹¹³

Here, however, I want to focus on *viññāṇa*. What I want to show is that *viññāṇa-kkhandha* is but a special instance and set of modalities of *viññāṇa* in a wider, deeper, and more encompassing sense. As we have just seen, even *viññāṇa-kkhandha* has an inner dyadic structure in which mental act and correlate are fused together, yet necessarily discernible from and irreducible to one another. I say ‘necessarily’, because if they were *indiscernible* and *inter-reducible*, there could be no actual consciousness-of an object. ‘Consciousness-of’ is precisely the *tension* between *intentio* (or *intendere*) and *intantum*, between ‘intending’ and ‘the intended’ (in the strictly TP sense of these terms).¹¹⁴ But we need to see more clearly how and why *viññāṇa-kkhandha* is specifically theorized as a *khandha*, where the term ‘*khandha*’ is traditionally understood in the sense of ‘a mass, body, collection, agglomeration, complex, group, aggregate’.¹¹⁵ The standard definition of *viññāṇa-kkhandha* is as follows:

And what, monks, is consciousness [as *khandha*]? There are these six classes of consciousness [*viññāṇa-kāyā*]: visual consciousness [*cakkhu-viññāṇaṃ*], auditory con-

111. MN 43 (at M I 293): *yā ca ... vedanā yā ca saññā yañca viññāṇaṃ — ime dhammā saṃsaṭṭhā, no visamsaṭṭhā. na ca labbhā imesaṃ dhammānaṃ vinibbhujitvā vinibbhujitvā nānākaṛaṇaṃ paññāpetuṃ. yaṃ ... vedeti taṃ sañjānāti, yaṃ sañjānāti taṃ vijānāti. tasmā ime dhammā saṃsaṭṭhā no visamsaṭṭhā.*

112. With one important exception in the case of *viññāṇa*: i.e., *viññāṇa anidassana*.

113. Hamilton, in her later work, emphasizes a very similar conclusion: ‘[T]here is no such thing as knowledge without both a knowing subject and a known object ... [T]he entire world of experience is one which is *comprised of* the polarity between subjectivity and objectivity. A more Buddhist way of putting it would be that subjectivity and objectivity are mutually dependently originated’ (Hamilton 2000, 127–128). If this is so, then the actual ‘subjectivity’ of consciousness cannot be *derived from*, or *reduced to*, that of which it is subjectively conscious. Although, as we shall see below, it arises in connection with contact (*phassa*), it cannot be *produced by* its ‘object’, since, correlatively, its ‘object’ can only appear in dependence upon consciousness.

114. Cf. Heidegger 1988, 58; 1975, 81–82.

115. Cf. Cone 2001, 750b–751a; Rhys Davids and Stede 1998, 232b–234a; Edgerton 1993, 607b; Monier-Williams 1993, 1256b–c (from *skandh*, ‘to collect’, or *skand*, ‘to rise’ (?)); Böhtlingk and Roth 1990, VII, 1239 (*skandh*, *skandhayati* = *samāhṛta* (*sam-ā-hṛ*), i.e., ‘brought together, collected; taken together, contracted, combined’ (Monier-Williams 1993, 1163c). Cf. also DN 22 (at D II 305) in the definition of *jāti*, ‘birth’: *sañjāti okkanti abhinibbatti khandhānaṃ pātubhāvo āyatanānaṃ paṭilābho*, ‘taking birth, descent, coming-forth (into being), manifestation of the *khandhas*, acquisition of the (sense) bases’.

sciousness [sota-viññāṇaṃ], olfactory consciousness [ghāna-viññāṇaṃ], gustatory consciousness [jivhā-viññāṇaṃ], tactile consciousness [kāya-viññāṇaṃ], ideational consciousness [mano-viññāṇaṃ]. (SN 22.56, at S III 61)

Note the description ‘these six kinds or classes [kāyā] of consciousness’: kāya here has the sense of ‘a collection, assemblage, group’.¹¹⁶ I shall come back to this point again farther on in this section. Exactly the same definition is given of viññāṇa within the context of the analysis of the twelve nodes (nidānas) of dependent co-arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*),¹¹⁷ which makes it clear that in the latter context, too, what is intended is viññāṇa-kkhandha understood as the ensemble of the six kinds of sense-consciousness. We might conclude, then, that viññāṇa as a khandha is in effect a collection or ensemble (khandha) of six classes or kinds (kāyas, samūhas) of sense-consciousness. These six classes or kinds are all kinds of consciousness: what differentiates them is their sensory modality; and so we might also refer to them as six different modes of consciousness.

The above rendering of the literal Pāli expressions, ‘eye-consciousness’, ‘ear-consciousness’, etc., is not controversial. Buddhaghosa plainly understands ‘eye-consciousness’ as a synecdochal expression, so-called on account of its instrument (*kāraṇa-vasena*), the eye (*cakkhu*), and referring to the ability or power of consciousness, in connection with the eye faculty, to see forms (*rūpa-dassana-samattha*). He illustrates this explanation with a fascinating quotation from ‘the Ancients’ (*porāṇā*):

The eye does not see a visible form because it is mindless [*acittakattā*]; the mind does not see, because it is eyeless [*acakkhukattā*]. But in the striking together [*saṅghaṭṭe*] of a (sense) door [*dvāra*] and a (sense) support [*ārammaṇa*], one sees [*passati*] by means of the eye-sensitivity-grounded mind [*cakkhu-pasāda-vatthukena citta*].¹¹⁸

Staying within the field of the *suttas*, however, we can further elucidate the ‘inner structure’ of the concept of viññāṇa-kkhandha as ‘sense-consciousness’, if we include, as EB does, *manas*, the mental/noetic faculty, as a ‘sense’. Thus, MN 18 states:

Dependent [*paṭicca*] on the eye [*cakkhu*] and visible forms [*rūpe*], visual consciousness [*cakkhu-viññāṇa*] arises. The meeting of the three is contact [*tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso*]. With contact as condition [*paccayā*], there is feeling [*vedanā*]. What one feels [*vedeti*], that one perceives [*sañjānāti*].¹¹⁹

And so forth, of course, for the other five senses. Also essential, here, is the account of MN 28 (at M I 190):

116. Cf. Cone 2001, 670b, df. 3. The commentaries define it thus: cf., e.g., Sv III 1034 *viññāṇakāyāti viññāṇasamūhā*, where *samūha* has the sense of ‘multitude, mass, aggregation’ (cf. Rhys Davids and Stede 1998, 689a). Bodhi also translates *kāya* in this context as ‘class’ (cf. Bodhi 2000, 896).

117. Cf., e.g., SN 12.2 (at II 4).

118. Vism 1.53 (at Vism 20). Here, Buddhaghosa has perhaps pre-empted Hamilton’s certainly correct elucidation of the meaning of *cakkhu-viññāṇa*, etc., as ‘visual awareness’ or, even better, ‘awareness of sight or seeing’, etc. (Hamilton 1996, 88). The same explanation and quotation from the *porāṇas* occurs also at As 399–400.

119. MN 18 (at M I 111): *cakkuhuñcāvuso, paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuvīññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, yaṃ vedeti taṃ sañjānāti*.

If, friends, internally [*ajjhatikaṃ*] the eye is intact [*aparibhinnaṃ*] but no external forms [*bāhirā rūpā*] come into range [*na āpāthaṃ āgacchanti*], and there is no corresponding [conscious] engagement [*tajjo samannāhāro*], then there is no manifestation [*pātubhāvo*] of the corresponding [*tajjassa*] section of consciousness [*viññāna-bhāgassa*]. If internally the eye is intact and external forms come into range, but there is no corresponding [conscious] engagement, then there is no manifestation of the corresponding section of consciousness. But when internally the eye is intact and external forms come into its range and there is the corresponding [conscious] engagement, then there is the manifestation of the corresponding section of consciousness.¹²⁰

Two significant and relevant points about this analysis are the notion of *tajja samannāhāra*, literally, ‘the appropriate or corresponding bringing-together [*sam + anu + āhāra*]’; and the reference to *tajja viññāna-bhāga*,¹²¹ ‘the appropriate or corresponding part or portion of consciousness’. Nāṇamoli’s and Bodhi’s translation (which I have used above) glosses *tajja samannāhāra* as ‘corresponding (conscious) engagement’, i.e., an appropriate engagement of consciousness with respect to the purely material conjunction (i.e., *paṭigha*) of eye and visible form. Jayatilake similarly glosses it as ‘an appropriate act of attention on the part of the mind’ (1963, 433). Both of these glosses are (no doubt quite consciously) in accord with the commentary’s (post-Abhidhamma *khaṇika-vāda*) gloss, which interprets *tajja samannāhāra* in terms of *manasikāra*,¹²² i.e., as ‘the arising mental attention, when *bhavaṅga* [the ‘resting state of mind (*citta*)’]¹²³ has adverted or turned [*āvattetvā*] in dependence on the eye and visual forms’.¹²⁴ While I do not accept the decidedly unphenomenological post-Abhidhamma *khaṇika-vāda*, the theory of consciousness as a stream of momentary events, whether in its own right, or still less as a valid interpretation of the teaching of the *suttas*,¹²⁵ it is clear that the phrase *tajja samannāhāra* implies a ‘bringing-together’ or engagement of consciousness with the ‘meeting’ (*saṅgati*) that is occurring between the physical eye (*cakkhu*) and visible forms (*rūpe*).

So, while MN 18 informs us that ‘the meeting of these three is touch or contact’ (*tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso*), MN 28 further qualifies the sense in which *viññāna* participates in this ‘meeting’: it must be ‘brought together’ with the other two

120. Nāṇamoli and Bodhi 2009, 283. The interpolation ‘conscious’ has been inserted by these translators. Bodhi refers to the commentary’s interpretation of *tajjo samannāhāro* as ‘attention [*manasikāro*] arising in dependence on the eye and forms’ (Nāṇamoli and Bodhi 2009, 1223, n. 339).

121. The commentary (Ps II 229) glosses: *viññānabhāgassāti viññānakotṭhāsassa. Kotṭhāsa (kotṭha, ‘enclosure’ + āsa [= contraction of *aṃsa*, ‘share, portion, part’]) has the sense ‘a share, a portion, a division; a group’ (cf. Cone 2001, 734a [here *āsa*⁴ is an error which should read *āsa*²]; Rhys Davids and Stede 1998, 228a).*

122. *Manasikāra* is usually translated as ‘attention’; and literally means ‘a making or doing (*-kāra*) in the mental or noetic faculty (*manasi*)’, thus suggesting a noetic act or activity. Harvey (1995, 130) also identifies *sammannāhāra* with *manasikāra*.

123. Cf. Harvey 1995, 145–146.

124. Ps II 229: *tajjo samannāhāroti taṃ cakkhuṅca rūpe ca paṭicca bhavaṅgaṃ āvattetvā uppajjanamanasikāro*.

125. A minor indication of my reasons for rejecting post-Abhidhamma *khaṇika-vāda* should be evident from §8.2 above. Cf. also my brief remarks in fn. 52 above.

factors in an appropriate (*tajja*) way. The ‘meeting’ or ‘coming-together’ (*saṅgati*) of these three factors is ‘contact’ (*phassa*); which, in turn, is a necessary condition for the arising of ‘feeling’ (*vedanā*). But, as the condition of *vedanā*, MN 18 and MN 28 tell us that *phassa* already comprises the ‘meeting’ of eye, visible form, and consciousness; moreover, MN 28 tells us that, through an ‘appropriate bringing-together’ of consciousness with the (obviously physical) conjunction (*saṅgati*) of eye and visible form, ‘there is thus the manifestation of the appropriate or corresponding part or portion [*bhāga*¹²⁶] of consciousness’ (*evaṃ tajjassa viññāṇabhāgassa pātubhāvo hoti*). That relevant ‘part’ or ‘portion’ of consciousness is precisely what is called, in this context, *cakkhu-viññāṇa*, ‘eye-consciousness’ or ‘visual consciousness’, since, specifically as *visual* consciousness, it arises in dependence upon the conjunction of the eye and visible forms. The important question, here, is just what is supposed to be the ‘appropriate bringing-together’ of consciousness with the conjunction of eye and visible form, which results in the arising of that ‘appropriate part or portion’ of consciousness. MN 28 does not explain this; but I believe that it is actually (even eminently) possible to reconstruct the implicit theory underlying this statement by piecing together the many pertinent clues that are scattered throughout the *suttas* as the surviving tokens of a coherent underlying theory of consciousness which, I firmly believe, was familiar to and presupposed by the earliest compositors of the *suttas*.¹²⁷

However, with respect to the idea of differing kinds or classes (*kāyā* = *samūhā*), or parts or portions (*bhāgā* = *koṭṭhāsā*), of consciousness, it is well worth recollecting here the striking simile of MN 38 (at M I 259–260):

Whatever condition, *bhikkhus*, consciousness arises in dependence upon, in accordance with each such (condition), ‘consciousness’ goes into (the respective) classification [*yaṃ yadeva, bhikkhave, paccayaṃ paṭicca uppajjati viññāṇaṃ, tena teneva viññāṇaṃtveva saṅkhyāṃ gacchati*]. When consciousness arises in dependence on eye and visible forms, it goes into the classification ‘visual consciousness’. ... on ear and auditory forms (sounds), ... ‘auditory consciousness’. ... on nose and olfactory forms (odours), ... ‘olfactory consciousness’. ... on tongue and gustatory forms (flavours), ... ‘gustatory consciousness’. ... on body and tactile forms (tangibles), ... ‘tactile consciousness’. ... on the noetic faculty and ideational forms [*dhamme*], ... ‘noetic consciousness’.

Just as, *bhikkhus*, whatever condition fire burns in dependence upon, in accordance with each such (condition), it goes into that classification. When fire burns in dependence on firewood, it goes into the classification ‘firewood fire’; ... on splin-

126. *Bhāga*: ‘part, portion, fraction, share’ (Rhys Davids and Stede 1998, 501a; cf. Monier-Williams 1993, 751b). Harvey (1995, 129–132) translates *viññāṇa-bhāga* as ‘share of discernment’, based partly on his interpretation of the passage that follows the one cited above, which lists each of the five *khandhas* as within the *viññāṇa-bhāga*. Thus, he says that *rūpa* being within the ‘share of discernment’ means that ‘the body, at any point in time, is sensitized and enlivened by the discernment [*viññāṇa*] occurring at that time’ (1995, 131). I have followed the narrower reading of the term, here, in order to focus more efficiently upon the text’s description of the essential ‘structural mechanism’ characterizing sense-consciousness, as such.

127. A TP perspective upon the *suttas* makes these ‘clues’, and their logical interconnections, far more discernible and comprehensible than they might otherwise be. In other words, I hold that TP provides a paradigm of interpretation that is exceptionally in harmony with the ‘inner sense’ of the EB *suttas*. Obviously, though, not every aspect of such an inquiry can be included in one article.

ters, ... 'splinter fire'; ... on grass, ... 'grass fire'; ... on cow-dung, ... 'cow-dung fire'; ... on chaff, ... 'chaff fire'; ... on rubbish, ... 'rubbish fire'. Just so, *bhikkhus*, whatever condition consciousness arises in dependence upon, in accordance with each such (condition), 'consciousness' goes into (the respective) classification.

The 'arising of consciousness' referred to in this passage is the arising of each of the six kinds of sensory consciousness; in other words, the arising of *viññāna-kkhandha*. It should not be misinterpreted as implying that consciousness exists only in conjunction with 'eye and visible forms', 'ear and sounds', etc. The accounts of *phassa* in MN 18 and MN 28 make it clear that consciousness must not only already be present prior to such a conjunction, but that it must also engage with that conjunction in an appropriate way. It is through that engagement with 'eye and visible forms', etc., that the corresponding aspect or mode of consciousness arises: visual consciousness, auditory consciousness, etc. It is *viññāna-kkhandha* as *sensory consciousness* that is likened to fire that burns in dependence upon some specific type of fuel; and the classification of each kind or aspect of consciousness depends upon the type of 'fuel' in dependence upon which it 'burns' or arises; namely, the specific sensory faculty or organ in conjunction with the respective kind of sense-correlate or 'object'. Each of these six classes of 'fire', i.e., of sense-consciousness, is, at basis, a specific kind, class, portion, or aspect of consciousness. SN 35.28 (S IV 19) informs of still deeper depths of meaning of this trope of fire:

All [*sabbam*], monks, is burning [*ādittam*]. And what, monks, is the All that is burning? The eye, monks, is burning; visual form is burning; visual consciousness is burning; visual contact is burning. That feeling that arises with eye-contact as condition, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, that, too, is burning. Burning, by means of what? Burning by means of the fire of lust, hatred, and delusion; burning by means of birth, old age, death, sorrow, grief, pain, distress, and despair, I say.

SN 44.9 (at S IV 399–400) says that 'when ... a flame is flung by the wind and goes some distance ... it is fuelled by the wind [*vātūpādānaṃ*]'; so, similarly, 'when a being has laid down this body but has not yet been reborn in another body ... it is fuelled by craving [*taṇhūpādānaṃ*]' (Bodhi 2000, 1393). The point is that if craving is eliminated, then the flame cannot continue to burn once its fuel is spent. The Arahants, by definition, have eliminated craving; but they still continue to experience the six sense spheres. The reason why is explained, e.g., in MN 121, which describes the experience of the meditator who enters and abides in 'the pure, perfect, ultimate emptiness' (*parisuddha paramānuttara suññatā*), and attains liberation therein. While in that highest meditative state, the meditator directly knows (*pājānati*):

Whatever *darathas* there might be dependent on the unconscious influence of sensual desire [*kāmāsavaṃ*], they do not exist here; whatever *darathas* there might be dependent on the unconscious influence of being [*bhavāsavaṃ*], they do not exist here; whatever *darathas* there might be dependent on the unconscious influence of ignorance [*avijjāsavaṃ*], they do not exist here; there is only this measure of *daratha*, that is: due to the condition of the life-span [*jīvita-paccayā*] dependent on just this body having the nature of the six sense spheres [*imateva kāyaṃ paṭicca*

saḷāyatānikam].¹²⁸

Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi (2009, 969), and Ṭhānissaro (2012) both translate the term *daratha* with ‘disturbance’, a suitably neutral rendering of its idiomatic meaning, which Cone glosses as ‘distress, exhaustion’;¹²⁹ the latter sense would obviously be inappropriate in the present context. But the radical sense of *daratha* is ‘being hot or inflamed’, from *dara*, ‘being hot’, hence also ‘fever’.¹³⁰ The kind of ‘disturbance’ in question, then, has the quality of ‘heat’ or ‘burning’, which, for the Arahant, is dependent only upon the living physical body as the basis of the six sense spheres. The Arahant’s final cessation, then, is described, e.g., as follows:

The body having broken, perception having ceased, all feelings having cooled down [*sītibhaviṃsu*], constitutive processes having become completely calmed, consciousness is setting (coming home) [*viññāṇaṃ atthamāgama*].¹³¹

In all of these descriptions (and others like them in the *suttas*), an intimate and intricate cross-weaving of the sense-consciousnesses and the three ‘mental’ *khandhas* is evident. It is also significant that, on this account, *viññāṇa* is clearly indicated to be a necessary precondition for contact (*phassa*). The profound implications of this point of EB doctrine/theory have been debated by Jayatilleke *contra* an interpretation of Sarathchandra;¹³² and that debate has received further comment from Johansson (1965, 205–206). Sarathchandra thought that in this context, *viññāṇa* must mean ‘not full cognition, but bare sensation, a sort of anoetic sentience’,¹³³ given that, as a condition of contact, it must be present prior to feeling and perception. Jayatilleke takes issue with this, denying Sarathchandra’s assumption of a ‘temporal succession’, in which ‘*viññāṇa* — is assumed to be a state occurring earlier than even *vedanā* or *saññā*’ (Jayatilleke

128. MN 121 (at M III 108): ‘*ye assu darathā kāmāsavaṃ paṭicca tedha na santi, ye assu darathā bhavāsavaṃ paṭicca tedha na santi, ye assu darathā avijjāsavaṃ paṭicca tedha na santi, atthi cevāyaṃ darathamattā yadidaṃ — imameva kāyaṃ paṭicca saḷāyatānikam jīvitapaccayā’ti.*

129. Cone 2010, 375a.

130. Cone 2010, 374b, s.v. *dara*¹. Cone compares *dara* to Skt *jvara*. According to Whitney (2000, 57), the root *jvar*, ‘to be hot’, and the root *jval*, ‘to burn, flame’, are alternative forms of each other (cf. also Monier-Williams 1993, 428a–b).

131. Ud 8.9 (at Ud 93): *abhedī kāyo nirodhi saññā, vedanā sītibhaviṃsu sabbā. | vūpasamiṃsu saṅkhārā, | viññāṇaṃ atthamāgamaṃ ti. ||* The form *attham-āgama* ‘coming home’ is unusual (and may have been used here for metrical reasons): the typical form is *atthaṃgama*, ‘going home’, *atthaṃgata*, ‘gone home’, etc.; in Skt. and BHS *astamgamana*, where *asta* means ‘home; setting (of the sun, etc.); figuratively, ‘end, death’; western mountain (behind which the sun sets)’ (cf. Monier-Williams 1993, 122a–b; Edgerton 1993, 84b). Thus the original sense of the phrase is ‘the setting (going home)’ of the sun, moon, or stars. In EB, *atthaṃgama*, which might be glossed as ‘disappearing’, is used as a synonym of *nirodha*, ‘cessation’. Cone (2001, 76b–77a), admits two senses, i.e., ‘set (of the sun)’ and ‘disappeared, destroyed’, for *atthaṃgata* and *atthaṃgamana*, but restricts the sense of *atthaṃgama* to that of ‘annihilation, disappearance’ (no doubt motivated by the use of the term as a synonym of *nirodha*, which latter, I would argue, is wrongly interpreted by some scholars as ‘annihilation’). It is cogently arguable that the original sense of *atthaṃgama* remains figuratively active in the EB use of the word; for a parallel with the trope of ‘fire’, cf. Ṭhānissaro 2010.

132. Jayatilleke 1963, 432–436 (referring to E. R. Sarathchandra, *Buddhist Psychology of Perception*, Ceylon University Press, Colombo 1958).

133. As cited in Jayatilleke 1963, 434 (from E. R. Sarathchandra, *Buddhist Psychology of Perception*, Ceylon University Press, Colombo 1958, 4).

1963, 435–456). Jayatilleke thinks ‘this interpretation is arbitrary since it is possible to argue that sensation (*vedanā*) and the rest arise simultaneously along with contact (*phassa*) and not in temporal succession’ (Jayatilleke 1963, 436). He appeals to the commentary, which takes *vedanā*, etc., to arise in a ‘co-nascent manner’ (*sahajātādivasena*) in dependence on contact (*phassaṃ paṭicca*).¹³⁴ But this argument does not really answer the original problem: i.e., that *viññāṇa* is indeed described as a necessary condition for *phassa*. Johansson allows that Jayatilleke may be right, but in doing so, he contradicts his own hypothetical interpretation of the relationships holding between *saññā*, *vedanā*, and *viññāṇa*, which does presuppose a temporal ordering:

Saññā and *vedanā* could perhaps be called part-functions of *viññāṇa*, although by *viññāṇa* is understood mainly the end-product of the perceptual process... It is therefore further removed from the real objects than the other two functions.

(Johansson 1965, 205)

He supports this view with reference to DN 33 (at D III 228), which enumerates four supports for *viññāṇa* (*catasso viññāṇa-tṭhitiyo*): i.e., *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, and *saṅkhārā*. Similarly, SN 22.3 describes *rūpa-dhātu*, *vedanā-dhātu*, *saññā-dhātu*, and *saṅkhāra-dhātu* as ‘the home of *viññāṇa*’ (*viññāṇassa oko*).¹³⁵

All three scholars presume that if MN 18 (but this applies also to MN 28, cited above) is taken literally, it might seem either that *viññāṇa* precedes *vedanā* and *saññā* in time, and that this idea must contradict other statements in the *suttas* that imply that *viññāṇa* is conditioned by *vedanā* and *saññā*; or, that *viññāṇa*, perhaps in two different senses or modes, must both precede and follow after *vedanā* and *saññā*. This, in fact, is the account that Harvey (1995, 138–141) provides: by comparing a number of *sutta* descriptions (some of which are discussed below) presenting the phases of contact, feeling, perception, and various stages and modes of cognition, in sequential form, he shows that *viññāṇa* is clearly posited as present and involved at two different phases of the sequential description: as a prior condition for contact, which involves an act of attention or engagement, and as later act of conceptual engagement: thus, ‘each type of sense-object is worked over by both an appropriate kind of sense-discernment and also by conceptual discernment’ (1995, 140).

In contrast, Jayatilleke’s solution of ‘simultaneity’ does not answer the problem of how *viññāṇa* can be a condition of contact (*phassa*), without which latter, there can be no *vedanā*: if all of these factors appear *simultaneously*, then they might as well just appear *spontaneously*, without any cause at all (*ahetuka*). On the other hand, while Sarathchandra has noticed a deep problem, here, I think his notion of an underlying *viññāṇa* that is nothing more than ‘bare sensation’ or ‘anoetic sentience’ is fundamentally mistaken (and, indeed, a countersense): an ‘anoetic sentience’, if there could even be such a thing, would have no intrinsic basis — i.e., no inherent intentional structure — with which to differentiate or react or respond or attend to a ‘sensory stimulus’ (cf. §4 above).¹³⁶ Moreover, the

134. Jayatilleke 1963, 436, referring to Ps II 77: *taṃ phassaṃ paṭicca saḥajātādivasena phassapaccayā vedanā uppajjati*.

135. SN 22.3 (at S III 9–10): *rūpadhātu kho ... viññāṇassa oko ... vedanādhātu kho ... viññāṇassa oko ... saññādhātu kho ... viññāṇassa oko ... saṅkhāradhātu kho ... viññāṇassa oko*.

136. In essence, Harvey (1995, 148–149) arrives at a similar conclusion, pointing out that, e.g., *rūpa-*

entire problematic of temporal ordering *versus* simultaneity, here, is a red herring; at least, within the frame of reference within which it is posited.

Since, on the one hand, the relevant *suttas* do indeed state that *viññāṇa* is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for the arising of ‘contact’; and since, on the other hand, other relevant *suttas* state that *viññāṇa* (and also *vedanā* and *saññā*) are intrinsically ‘dyadic’, i.e., comprise a relation between an act of consciousness-of, and a correlate or ‘object’ of that consciousness-of; and since, moreover, we have seen (in MN 43) that these three aspects of consciousness (i.e., *vedanā*, *saññā*, and *viññāṇa*) cannot in actuality be ‘separated out’; we have good reason to conclude that *viññāṇa* does indeed ‘encompass’ or ‘assimilate’ within itself *all* of the factors that we have been discussing. The problematic of ‘temporal ordering’ is a red herring because the axis of ‘temporality’ has no reference point other than the causal processes through which *phassa* occurs.¹³⁷ *Viññāṇa* is a precondition of *phassa* not in a ‘temporal’ sense, but in the sense of ‘logical priority’.¹³⁸ Temporality, which is effectively synonymous with actualization, phenomenality, dependent co-arising, and impermanence, does not pertain to *viññāṇa* as a precondition of *phassa*. But *viññāṇa*, as such a condition in this ‘logically prior’ sense, cannot be a mere ‘anoetic sentience’ or ‘bare sensation’; rather, it must be such a condition in the sense of a fully and inherently intentional and subjective consciousness-of, although inherently and fundamentally ‘empty’ of all (sensory) ‘content’ (and, therefore, let me reiterate, *not* a ‘substance’, *not* an ‘entity’, and certainly, for this reason, a pure ‘non-self’ (*anattā*)). In this sense, *viññāṇa* is a pure ‘latency’, a ‘potentiality’; as an ‘emptiness’, then, we might venture to

saññā, ‘visual-object-cognition’, could not function to recognize and classify its objects unless *cakkhu-viññāṇa*, on which *rūpa-saññā* depends, and which is one of the three conditions of contact, can already ‘seize’ and ‘discerningly discriminate, distinguish, and separate out’ the visual components of which it is conscious. This is certainly a valid, and technically correct, argument; but even so, the phenomenologically important statement of MN 43 (at M I 293), cited earlier, concerning the indiscernibility of these phases or aspects of ‘consciousness’ (in an all-embracing sense), must also be borne in mind, here. The sequential description of the processes of sense-consciousness (which includes the unifying activity of *manas*, described (at M I 295) as the *paṭisarāṇa* of the five physical senses, i.e., ‘the refuge to which they go back or return’), is a valid and useful analytical and explanatory device; but the phenomenological actuality from which that analysis is abstracted demands also a recognition and accommodation of the *transcendental* dimension of every actual consciousness, whether ‘actional’ or ‘non-actional’: i.e., the dimension of subjectivity and intentionality, of the irreducibility of the structure of consciousness-of as an *a priori* requirement of all kinds, modes, and contents of experience.

137. This principle is clearly articulated in SN 22.62 (S III 71), which explains that the three aspects of time, expressed grammatically by the terms ‘was’ (*‘ahosi’ti*), ‘will be’ (*‘bhavissatī’ti*), and ‘is’ (*‘atthī’ti*), can refer to nothing other than the ‘five aggregates’, insofar as these have either ‘passed, ceased, changed’ (*‘atītaṃ niruddhaṃ vipariṇataṃ*), or ‘have not been born, have not become manifest’ (*‘ajātaṃ apātubhūtaṃ*), or ‘have been born, have become manifest’ (*‘jātaṃ pātubhūtaṃ*). In the final analysis, the basis of these distinctions can be nothing other than ‘contact’ (*phassa*).

138. I use the expression ‘logical priority’, or ‘logical precedence’, here, in the sense that Augustine (whose theism is quite irrelevant to his analysis on this point) nicely illustrates when he says that ‘the sound precedes the song’, by which he means: ‘The song ... happens in its sound, and this sound is the matter of the song. This very sound is what is formed so as to become song’ (Augustine 1999, XII.29 (40), 338–339). Augustine’s definition is clearly ‘hylomorphic’: irreducibility without separability. But note that while a song cannot arise without sound, sound need not take the form of song.

say that it is an *intentionally replete* emptiness, although it is *logically prior* to all 'process', all 'flow' (*sota*); and therefore always-already has the intrinsic nature of 'cessation' (*nirodha*).

In brief, my argument is that the whole structure of the EB analysis of consciousness (in the most embracing sense of this term, not merely in the technically specific sense of *viññāṇa-kkhandha*) is founded upon the presupposition of the inherent intentionality of *viññāṇa*, whether 'purely' latent and potential, or 'impurely' actualized, temporalized, i.e., dependently co-arisen. In other words, in its most encompassing sense, the concept of *viññāṇa* contains within itself this sense of 'intentional relation', of *consciousness-of*, whether latent or actualized. And this is why *viññāṇa-kkhandha*, which is unambiguously defined in the *suttas* in terms of the six sense spheres (*saḷāyatana*), can *itself* be an 'object', an *experience*, of *viññāṇa*; and therefore, an 'object' that can, and according to EB doctrine/theory, *should*, be 'abandoned'. There are many striking examples in the *suttas* of this intentional 'doubleness' of *viññāṇa*, wherein *viññāṇa* might seem, *prima facie*, to be taking itself 'reflexively' as 'its own object', as though it were somehow 'separated' from itself: but, according to the analysis that I am proposing here, this would not be a correct account of what is going on in such situations. Rather, it is (as we might put it, for the sake of expression) the transcendental, subjective 'pole' of *viññāṇa* that reflects upon its own 'objective' pole: i.e., upon the dependently co-arisen streaming of the immanent and transcendent phenomenal 'content' of its experiencing (in Husserl's vocabulary, we might speak of its *Erlebnisstrom*).

To put this differently (and perhaps more accessibly): phenomenologists unanimously agree that intentional experience, in being the consciousness-of an intentional object, is also a prereflective and immediate self-awareness. As Thompson puts it: 'every transitive consciousness of an object is pre-reflectively and intransitively self-conscious' (2011, 159). This intransitive, *prereflective* 'self-awareness' or 'self-consciousness' (which means, of course, not the awareness of a 'self', but simply and purely the immediate awareness of present awareness) is a prerequisite for the function of what Husserl calls 'primary memory' (retention) and secondary memory (recollection).¹³⁹ It is also the prerequisite for acts of *reflective* self-consciousness: a *consciousness-of* in which I consciously, actively, reflect upon my own present being-conscious, and all that it comprises and entails. I must already be *prereflectively* aware of being aware, in order to be able to become *reflectively* aware of my own present awareness. As Zahavi puts it: 'Reflection is characterized by disclosing, not by producing its theme' (Zahavi 2005, 54). Phenomenological reflection entails a certain 'shift' or 'modification' of awareness, i.e., of consciousness-of: a shift or modification that is arguably also characteristic of all forms of EB meditation, in spite of other differences. Husserl observes:

When I say 'I', I grasp myself in a simple reflection. But this self-experience [*Selbsterfahrung*] is like every experience [*Erfahrung*], and in particular every perception, a mere directing myself towards something that was already there for

139. Cf. Husserl 1991; 1966. Thompson 2011 provides a detailed argumentation in support both of the phenomenological thesis of reflexive awareness and of a phenomenological account of memory on the basis of that thesis.

me, that was already conscious, but not thematically experienced, not noticed.¹⁴⁰

Whenever I reflect, I find myself ‘in relation’ to something, as affected or active. That which I am related to is experientially conscious — it is already there for me as a ‘lived-experience’ in order for me to relate myself to it.¹⁴¹

I shall now provide, here, a few unambiguous examples from the *suttas* in support of the preceding analysis. The first is from SN 22.7 (at S III 18, with an identical passage occurring also in MN 138):

He does not regard consciousness [*viññānaṃ*] as self, or self as possessing consciousness [*viññānavantī*], or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. That consciousness of his changes [*vipariṇamati*] and alters [*aññathā hoti*]. Despite the change and alteration of consciousness, his consciousness [*viññānaṃ*] does not become preoccupied with the change of consciousness [*na viññānavipariṇāmānuparivatti viññānaṃ hoti*]. No agitation [*paritassanā*] and constellation of mental states [*dhammasamuppādā*] born of preoccupation with the change of consciousness remain obsessing [*pariyādāya*] his mind [*cittaṃ*]. Because his mind [*cetaso*] is not obsessed, he is not frightened, distressed, or anxious, and through nonclinging [*anupādāya*] he does not become agitated. It is in such a way, bhikkhus, that there is nonagitation through nonclinging. (Bodhi 2000, 866)

This passage may be compared with an almost parallel one from SN 22.1 (at S III 5), which presents the same argument, but more economically, by means of elision. This comparison between the fully spelled out version and the elided version has a hermeneutic importance because it reminds us of the fact that there are many instances in the *suttas* where teachings given in brief (*saṅkhittena*) need to be extracted, expanded, or ‘filled in’ (*vithārena*), in order to be fully and properly understood.¹⁴² It may also be of relevance, here, that the former discourse is spoken to *bhikkhus*, the latter to a householder:

He does not regard consciousness as self, or self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. He does not live obsessed by the notions: ‘I am consciousness, consciousness is mine.’ As he lives unobsessed by these notions, that consciousness of his changes and alters. With the change and alteration of consciousness, there do not arise in him sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair. It is in such a way, householder, that one is afflicted in body but not afflicted in mind. (Bodhi 2000, 856)

In MN 143 (at M III 261), Ven. Sāriputta, instructing the dying Anāthapiṇḍika, actually tells him: ‘Such talk on the Dhamma, householder, is not made apparent [*na paṭibhāti*] to lay people clothed in white. Such talk on the Dhamma is made apparent to those who have gone forth’. The instructions, which I present here

140. As translated and cited in Zahavi 2005, 54, from E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. Dritter Teil: 1929–1935* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 492–493.

141. As translated and cited in Zahavi 2005, 54, from E. Husserl, Ms C 10, 13a (unpublished manuscript of 1931).

142. Cf. also the much-disputed distinction between ‘a discourse whose meaning requires to be drawn out’ (*neyattha suttanta*) and ‘a discourse whose meaning has already been fully drawn out’ (*nītattha suttanta*), in AN 2.25–26 (at A I 60).

with elision, but with all categories and terms included, are as follows:

Therefore, householder, in this situation you should train thus: 'I will not cling to the eye, and my consciousness will not be dependent on the eye [*'na cakkhum upādiyissāmi, na ca me cakkhunissitaṃ viññāṇaṃ bhavissati'*ti]. ... I will not cling to the ear ... the nose ... the tongue ... the body ... the noetic faculty [*mano*], and my consciousness will not be dependent on the noetic faculty. ... I will not cling to visual forms ... sounds ... odours ... flavours ... tangibles ... noetic objects [*dhammā*], and my consciousness will not be dependent on noetic objects. ... I will not cling to visual consciousness ... noetic consciousness, and my consciousness will not be dependent on noetic consciousness. ... I will not cling to visual touch [*cakkhu-samphassaṃ*] ... noetic touch, and my mind will not be dependent on noetic touch. ... I will not cling to feeling born of visual touch ... feeling born of noetic touch, and my consciousness will not be dependent on feeling born of noetic touch. ... I will not cling to the earth support [*paṭhavī-dhātu*¹⁴³] ... water support ... fire support ... air support ... space support ... consciousness support, and my consciousness will not be dependent on the consciousness support. ... I will not cling to material form ... feeling ... perception ... constitutive processes ... consciousness, and my consciousness will not be dependent on consciousness. ... I will not cling to the base of infinite space ... the base of infinite consciousness ... the base of nothingness ... the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, and my consciousness will not be dependent on the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. ... I will not cling to this world ... the world beyond ... to what is seen, heard, sensed, cognised, attained, sought, traversed in thought by the noetic faculty, and my consciousness will not be dependent on what is seen, heard, sensed, cognised, attained, sought, traversed in thought by the noetic faculty. Thus should you train. (M III 259–261)

The following passage from SN 22.53 (at S III 53–54) is a typical *sutta* description of how 'abandoning' leads to the detachment, release and stilling of consciousness:

If, *bhikkhus*, a *bhikkhu*'s passion for the material-form-support is abandoned [*rūpadhātuyā ce ... rāgo pahīno hoti*] ... passion for the feeling-support is abandoned ... passion for the perception-support is abandoned ... passion for the constitutive-

143. *Dhātu*: in Sanskrit, 'layer, stratum; constituent part, ingredient; element, primitive matter; element of words, i.e., grammatical or verbal root or stem'; from the root *dhā*, 'to put, place, set, lay; to make, produce, generate, create, cause; seize, take hold of, hold, bear, support' (cf. Monier-Williams 1993, 513b–c; Whitney 2000, 82). In Pāli, 'primary element; principle; constituent element of sensory experience; domain of experience or existence; psychological element, disposition, constitution; constituent part' (cf. Cone 2010, 480b–481b). In the present context, I have translated *dhātu* as 'support', i.e., 'bearer', 'substrate', 'supporting element of experience'. *Dhātu* is very often translated as 'element', but 'property' and 'principle' are also possible. Thus, for example, Nānamoli and Bodhi (2009, 1087) translate *dhātu-vibhaṅga* as 'exposition of the elements', while Ṭhānissaro (2012, MN 140) translates as 'analysis of the properties'. MN 140 is an important case in point: it deals with six *dhātus*, i.e., earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness (*viññāṇa*), in a sequence and procedure that I believe is nothing less than a heightened EB version of TP transcendental reduction; but the reduction does not stop with *viññāṇa-dhātu*, 'purified and bright' (*parisuddham pariyoḍātam*): it continues through 'equanimity', or, more literally, 'looking upon' (*upekkhā*, from *upa + iks*), described as 'purified, bright, pliant, ready, and radiant' (*parisuddhā pariyoḍātā mudu ca kammaññā ca pabhassarā ca*), to the *deconstitution* (*na abhisankharoti, na abhisancetayati*) of all meditative states, and thus to the 'personal or individual attainment of *nibbāna*' (*paccattam parinibbāyati*).

processes-support is abandoned ... passion for the sensory-consciousness-support is abandoned, then, with the abandoning of passion, the supporting condition [ārammaṇa] is completely cut off, and there is no establishment [patiṭṭhā] of consciousness. That unestablished consciousness [appatiṭṭhitam viññāṇam], not sprouting or burgeoning [avirūlham], not intentionally constituted [anabhisankhacca], is liberated. Because of its liberatedness, it stands still [thitam]. Because of its stillness [thitattā], it is fulfilled [santusitam]. Because of its fulfilment, it is not disturbed. Undisturbed, he personally attains nibbāna.

I will close this group of examples with the following passage from MN 148 (at M III 282–284):

If one were to say, ‘The eye is self’, that is not tenable. The arising and passing away of the eye are directly known [paññāyati]; but since its arising and passing away are directly known, it would follow that ‘My self arises and passes away’. Therefore, that is not tenable, if one were to say, ‘The eye is self’. Thus, the eye is non-self. If one were to say, ‘Visual forms are self’... If one were to say, ‘Visual consciousness is self’... If one were to say, ‘Visual contact is self’... If one were to say ‘Feeling is self’... If one were to say, ‘Craving is self’, that is not tenable. The arising and passing away of craving are directly known; but since its arising and passing away are directly known, it would follow that ‘My self arises and passes away’. Therefore, that is not tenable, if one were to say, ‘Craving is self’. Thus eye is non-self, visual forms are non-self, visual consciousness is non-self, visual contact is non-self, feeling is non-self, craving is non-self.

This same pattern is then repeated for each of the other five senses, each with the inclusion of feeling and craving. This particular argument is intended to demonstrate that the six sense spheres, and the feeling and craving associated with them, are non-self, precisely because they are impermanent. The pivotal point of the argument is the verb *paññāyati* (the passive form of *pajānāti*¹⁴⁴): ‘well, clearly, or directly known, perceived, discerned, understood’. Here, too, as in the preceding examples, the argument presupposes the subjective position of being conscious-of, and indeed of deliberately observing, the impermanence of (one’s own) senses, sensations, and negative intentional affects (craving). In other words, this description, or analysis, is essentially a kind of transcendental reduction: we are invited, directly and clearly, to perceive and understand the impermanent nature of the whole field of our experience, ‘inner’ and ‘outer’. This is precisely the perspective of transcendental subjectivity. Moreover, we are invited to discern the apodictic truth of fundamental impermanence from this meditative observation of and reflection upon the entire contents of our subjective experience. Hence, we can understand that all of this is necessarily non-self. But this recognition by no means entails that *something else* must therefore be self.¹⁴⁵ Correlatively, it also by no means entails that my subjectivity, my subjective intentional consciousness, in and through which I intuit this apodictic truth of impermanence, is itself an illusion, or a ‘non-being’. If it were, of what value would the intuition of a fundamental truth be? Is it not the subjective apodicticity of the Buddha’s

144. *Pa* (Skt. *pra*) + *jānāti* (root *jñā*, ‘know’); from which also *paññā* (Skt. *prajñā*).

145. This being the conclusion that, in quite different ways, Grimm 1999 and Pérez-Remón 1980 pursued.

ultimate insight — and its trans-subjective availability to all other subjectivities — that validates the entirety of the Buddhadhamma?

9. 'SUBJECTIVITY' WITHOUT A 'SUBJECT'

For TP, then, consciousness is inherently and fundamentally *consciousness-of* [*Bewußtsein von*]. This quality of being *conscious-of* is called 'intentionality'.¹⁴⁶ The ordinary sense of the word 'intend', i.e., 'to have a purpose in mind',¹⁴⁷ is included within the wider and deeper phenomenological sense of 'intentionality', but only as one possible kind of 'intentional' mode or act. The essential sense of phenomenological 'intending', of intentionality as such, refers to the way in which consciousness is 'inflected' or 'directed' towards what it is conscious-of; and, moreover, the way in which consciousness thereby gives 'sense' or 'meaning' (*Sinn*) to all that it is conscious-of, even purely through the act of being conscious-of it.

Consciousness-of is fundamentally characterized by 'subjectivity'. The fact that 'consciousness-of' is consciousness directing — metaphorically 'stretching' or 'extending' — itself towards its object means that it is *not* its 'object'; that it is, in a certain sense, *relating itself* to its 'object' from 'within itself'; i.e., from within its own nature, which is precisely *to be conscious-of*.¹⁴⁸ This inherent inflection of consciousness-of towards phenomena is precisely that property of consciousness-of to which the term 'subjectivity' implicitly refers. But subjectivity is not a property belonging to some further entity called a 'subject': rather, I would argue that the idea of a 'subject' as an entity standing, as it were, behind consciousness, an entity in whom consciousness inheres, is an idea derived from the fact of subjectivity, not the other way around. Subjectivity is just the inherent structure of intentional consciousness; in the final analysis, it is just another way of describing the intrinsic intentionality of consciousness.

To put it another way: the subjectivity of consciousness is itself the only 'subject' that there is or can be: there is no possible distinction between 'subject' and 'subjectivity'; there is no such 'substance' and 'property' relation here. The 'difference' between 'my subjectivity' and 'your subjectivity' is not that we are two different 'substances', two different 'subjects', each of us standing behind our experiences, and separable from them. If that were the case, then, in theory at least, my 'subject-substance' and yours could switch places, and I could experience 'your' psychophysical constitution, and you 'mine', and yet each of us would

146. From the Latin *intendere*, 'to stretch forth, give one's attention to', from *tendere*, 'to stretch'.

147. This is very close in meaning to *ceteti*, 'forms an idea in the mind; thinks about, is intent upon; has in mind (to); forms an intention (to); strives mentally for' (Cone 2010, 167b); and hence to *cetanā*, which could be translated as 'volitional intent' or 'intention' (cf. also Cone 2010, 164b, 1.[ii]).

148. Husserl does use the term 'subject' (*Subjekt*) in its relation to the 'object' (*Objekt; Gegenstand*); and sometimes speaks of intentionality in terms of the 'I-pole' (*Ichpol*) in its relation to the 'object-pole' (*Gegenstandspol*) or 'counter-pole' (*Gegenpol*). (Cf., e.g., Husserl 1970b, 170–171; 1954, 173–174; Husserl 1989, 111–114; 1952a, 105–107). The image of a 'pole' or 'ray' is significant, because it presupposes that the two ends of the 'pole' are inseparable from the 'pole' itself; and this is an important aspect of the concept of intentionality of which Husserl was well aware. In any event, I consistently avoid the term 'subject' in these reflections, for reasons that should be obvious; and focus, instead, upon the concept of 'subjectivity'.

simply not the nature of transcendental consciousness-of; in principle, ‘emptiness’ cannot ‘transmigrate’; it can neither come nor go, neither be born nor die. It is simply ‘unborn, unbecome, uncreated, unconstituted’.¹⁵⁵ And that is why *viññāṇa* can ultimately liberate, unbind, release itself, from all that of which it is conscious and, through that consciousness-of, all that to which it is attached.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, neither does the ‘person’ (*puggala*), the ‘burden-bearer’ (*bhārahāra*) who ‘takes up’ and ‘puts down’ the ‘burden’ of the five-clung-to aggregates, ‘transmigrate’.¹⁵⁷ The ‘person’ is simply the living synthesis of consciousness-of and the experiential stream of the psychophysical constitutions. It is not a separable entity.

‘Venerable One, who feels?’ [*ko nu kho, bhante, vedayati’ti?*]

‘Not a valid question,’ the Blessed One said. ‘I do not say, “One feels” [*“vedayati”’ti*]. If I were to say, “One feels”, in that case, “Who feels?” would be a valid question. But I do not speak thus. Not speaking thus, you should question me thus: “From what as a condition, Venerable One, (is there) feeling?” [*“kimpaccayā nu kho, bhante, vedanā”’ti*] That is a valid question. In that case, the valid explanation is: “From contact as condition, (there is) feeling; from feeling as condition, (there is) craving”’. (SN 12.12, at S II 13)

‘Who feels?’ is not a valid question because it presupposes a separate ‘feeler’ who experiences the feeling; i.e., the feeling arises in dependence on that ‘feeler’. But according to the EB analysis, the sense of being a ‘who’, of being the ‘feeler’, arises in dependence on ‘feeling’. This is again just the argument of DN 15 (at D II 67–69): no sense of ‘I am’ or ‘I am this’ can arise independently of the presence of feeling. On the other hand, no feeling can arise except as a subjective, intentional, conscious experience; all feeling is subjectively experienced feeling, or is not at all. The EB analysis does not preclude or deny this necessary condition of subjectivity: it unproblematically admits it, even in the ultimate moment of enlightenment and liberation.¹⁵⁸ What it denies is that the subjectivity of experience is a property belonging to a separable, independently-existing, and thus permanent individual entity.

So, in actuality, nothing transmigrates: neither consciousness-of, nor the aggregates, nor the ‘person’ who is the ‘living form’ of this irreducible dyadic unity. But, on this account, it is also evident how, in principle, it is logically conceivable that the process of death and birth, of ‘becoming again’ (*punabbhava*) can be a singular continuum, running through the birth, life and death of one person to the birth, life and death of the next, with the *formal* continuity of that

155. Ud 8.3 (Ud 80): *atthi, bhikkhave, ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkataṃ*. Cf. also It 2.43 (It 37).

156. Ud 8.3 (at Ud 81): *tasmā jātassa bhūtaṃ katassa saṅkhatassa nissaraṇaṃ paññāyatīti*. ‘Therefore, an escape [*nissaraṇaṃ*] is directly perceived [*paññāyatīti*] from the born, the become, the created, the constituted’.

157. SN 22.22 (at S III 25): *katamo ca, bhikkhave, bhārahāro? puggalo tissa vacaniyaṃ. yvāyaṃ āyasmā evaṃnāmo evaṃgotto; ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, bhārahāro*. ‘And which, monks, is the burden-bearer? That of which it should be said: “the individual person [*puggalo*]”, who is this venerable one, of such a name, of such ancestry. This, monks, is called the burden-bearer.’ Cf. Nizamis 2011, SN 22.22.

158. As pointed out earlier, with the example of the Buddha’s own first-personal statement: *yathābhūtaṃ abhāññāsim*, ‘I directly knew, just as it really is’. (MN 4 at M I 23).

causal continuum sustained precisely through the purely formal transcendental structure of subjectivity; its *functional* continuity, however, is sustained by the intentional mode of that subjectivity: i.e., through ignorance, craving, and clinging. Each such continuum is a causally distinct line of subjective continuity; there is no reason why the subjective-intentional structure of consciousness-of should not be actualized in multiple instances (both synchronically, in multiple beings living at one time, as well as diachronically, in the sequence of 'rebirths' that each such being is subject to, according to EB). As has already been emphasized, 'subjectivity' *per se* is not a 'thing' or a 'self'; it is perhaps better conceived as a purely empty, formal and impersonal 'potentiality' intrinsic in the very nature of consciousness.

9.1 The 'split brain'

Let me suggest a reflective 'thought experiment' that, I think, very effectively illustrates some of the key points I have argued concerning the nature of subjectivity as the basis of the sense of 'I', and quite dramatically demonstrates why the sense of 'I' is inherently exempt from any definition in terms of a separable, substantial 'self'.

I shall assume that the reader is more or less familiar with the concept of 'split-brain' patients: people in whom the *corpus callosum*, the 'thick communicating sheet of neurons' (Churchland 1990, 174) connecting the left and right cerebral hemispheres, has been surgically severed (cf. Churchland 1990, 174–193; Carter 2003, 62–77). There are other communicating commissures that remain intact, while the midbrain and brain stem, which are 'shared' by both hemispheres, remain undivided. Many of these patients have volunteered for a variety of psychological tests, with surprising, deeply interesting, and highly controversial and inconclusive results.

The point of the following 'thought experiment' is a very simple question. The information gained from the study of split-brain patients seems to suggest that the two hemispheres of these people's brains can display partially autonomous processes of feeling, perception, judgment and volition. Some theorists have even taken these results to imply that, in a certain sense, split-brain patients may have 'two minds' inhabiting the one body. The remarkable example of Gazzaniga's and LeDoux's separate 'interviews' with the left and the right hemispheres of a young male split-brain patient seems to suggest that each cerebral hemisphere had its own personality, judgments, and ambitions.¹⁵⁹ Quite unusually, this young man had sufficient language capacity in his right hemisphere for that hemisphere to be able to provide simple independent linguistic answers to the interviewers' questions. It is believed that in most people the right hemisphere is more or less 'linguistically mute': it does not itself process thoughts and feelings primarily through 'language'; but it certainly does think and feel.

It seems natural to suppose that, when the brain of Gazzaniga's and LeDoux's subject was previously 'wired together' as a functional whole, it was correlated with only one overall or predominant sense of 'I': one mind, one person, at least

159. The experiment is described in sufficient detail for our purpose in Carter 2003, 74–77. The original source of the information is J. LeDoux, D. H. Wilson and M. Gazzaniga, 1977, 'A Divided Mind', *Annals of Neurology*, Vol. 2, 417–421.

at the conscious level, with many different aspects to his personality, some of them perhaps in states of unresolved conflict.¹⁶⁰ After the severing of the two cerebral hemispheres, it seems at least logically possible that the two halves of the cortex became relatively independent and autonomous, and that each one now ‘thought and spoke for itself’, as it were.

Taking the concept of split-brain surgery to its logical extreme, let’s suppose that it is possible to split the *entire* brain into two independently surviving and functioning halves, and to place the left half of the brain into the skull of another body, which happens to lack a brain, connecting it ‘as usual’ to the right-side sensory and motor organs of that body. The right half of the brain could remain at home in its original skull, but, of course, it would only be connected to the left-side sensory and motor organs. The ‘simple question’ is this: will each of these two half-brains experience itself as an individual mind? Will each be a subjective intentional consciousness, with its own sense of ‘I’? The experimental evidence from split-brain patient studies could be taken to suggest that this might indeed be the case.

But it is much more interesting, and more relevant to this discussion, to run this thought experiment phenomenologically in the first person. Imagine that this brain-splitting experiment is being performed on *you* (with your consent, of course). What would ‘you’ experience? It seems to me that the continuity of my subjectivity would not feel interrupted to ‘me’: my sense of ‘I’ would continue, and I would not feel that my subjectivity, my sense of ‘I’, had in any sense ‘changed’ or diminished; only that I had lost sensation and control of half of my body, and that some of my mental functions had become either impaired or permanently destroyed; or that I had woken up in a different body, through which I had sensation and control only in one half of it. Actually, *both* of these experiences would occur, and *each one* would be the continuation of my original subjectivity; and each one would remain uninterruptedly singular unto itself. However, the fact of the matter would be that this uninterrupted sense of ‘I’ would actually have continued along two divergent and now quite separate causal pathways. And each ‘I’, through its one eye (or, more precisely, through its two half-eyes), could observe the body of the *other* ‘I’, which would now, for all intents and purposes, be another person. But which one is ‘I’? It ought to be obvious that this question is ill-conceived. In a sense, *both* of them are ‘I’; and yet, with respect to one another, each one experiences *itself alone* as being the original ‘I’.¹⁶¹

160. In such a case, I would argue, even ‘unconscious’ aspects of the mind are actually correlated with the actionally conscious ‘I’, and not aspects belonging to a separate ‘self’ or ‘selves’. Cf. the expression in MN 75 (at M I 511): *dīgharattaṃ vata, bho, ahaṃ iminā cittaṇa nikato vañcito paluddho*, ‘for a long time I [ahaṃ] have been cheated, deceived, seduced by this mind [citta]’. As a functional aspect and structure of consciousness, and very much implicated with the sense of ‘self’ through volition, *citta* has a close relationship with the *saṅkhāras* (cf. MN 44, at M I 301; and SN 12.25, at S II 39–40).

161. Fasching (2009, 136–137) describes and discusses Parfit’s ‘teletransportation’ thought-experiments, which are conceived from the perspective of Parfit’s reductionist view of ‘personal identity’ (2009, 134). (He also flags, in passing, ‘split-brain cases’ (137), but I would like to point out that I conceived the above account long before reading Fasching’s article.) Fasching (in my view, rightly) takes issue with Parfit’s arguments. There is a fundamental and important difference between Parfit’s ‘teletransportation’ concept (and how Parfit utilizes it to support his argument that the ‘I’ is not some kind of essential ‘identity’) and the ‘split-brain’ concept that I have described here. The difference lies in our differing metaphysical assump-

One of the points of this bizarre thought experiment is to illustrate the idea that, while subjectivity might be described as a unifying principle of intentional consciousness, or as the reflex of the unifying function of intentional consciousness, and as the necessary and inevitable 'form' of intentionally-constituted experience, it is not itself some kind of unified substance or entity; it is not a separable ontological 'self' or a 'subject'. Up to a point, I empathize with Fasching's suggestion¹⁶² that "'the I" has to be conceived of as having the character of a *dimension* with regard to its experience'; i.e., as he adds, 'rather like *space*' (or, as I would put it, rather like '*emptiness*'): as the dimension of 'the presence of [experiential] contents in their *streaming*', which 'does not itself change with the contents' (but I would add: precisely because it is a *transcendental* 'emptiness', 'untouched by time', to which neither the concept of 'change' nor of 'non-change' applies). I also empathize with his conclusion that this so-called 'dimension' is 'nothing but subjectivity itself which constitutes the "subjective character" of conscious experience'. I would even suggest two possible equivalent EB terms for this (transcendental) sense of 'dimension': i.e., in some contexts, *dhātu* would be relevant, and in others *āyatana*. As examples of the former sense, there are the compounds *nibbāna-dhātu*¹⁶³ and *viññāṇa-dhātu*.¹⁶⁴ A good example of the latter sense (also

tions concerning the relationship between consciousness and the physical body. For Parfit, it is enough to reproduce, in all its details, some particular physical body *and its brain*, in order to have, to all intents and purposes, the 'same person'. Parfit reduces the indistinguishability of (the absence of essential identity in) the 'I' to a fact about the particular constitution of the brain. Neither EB nor TP would agree with this assumption, which is obviously a philosophically materialist one. Parfit's argument seems oblivious to, and completely bypasses, the TP recognition of the much deeper transcendental problems that subjectivity reveals. Contrary to the radical *discontinuity* that Parfit proposes in his 'teletransportation' scenario, in which a purely physical body is reproduced in all details in another location (and along with it, Parfit supposes, 'the same mind'), the 'split-brain' concept described above is based on the condition of a *continuity* holding between transcendental subjectivity and the physical brain (a continuity that is in fact *required* by the EB principles of dependent co-arising, *kamma* and, indeed, *punabbhava*). The only point of agreement between Parfit's concept and mine is that the 'I' of subjectivity is not *in itself* an essential 'identity'; but whereas Parfit would seem to derive the 'I' from the physical brain, I would argue that the *actual function* of the brain as (what we today conceive of as the) 'brain' requires, as an *a priori* condition for its possibility and functionality, the structure of subjectivity and intentionality inherent in that 'region' or 'dimension of being' called 'transcendental consciousness'. From a TP perspective (and *contra* Parfit), then, the transcendental intentional structure of subjectivity is a *necessary a priori condition* for psychophysical continuity, not an *effect* of it.

162. Fasching 2009, 146. Zahavi (1999, 199) arrives at a similar view: 'Prereflective self-awareness does not share the ordinary dyadic structure of appearance, for it is not at all a particular act but a dimension of pervasive self-manifestation'. Yet, awareness *qua* awareness must be awareness-of, or not at all; and therefore, even pre-reflective awareness is by nature, and essentially, intentionally relational in this quite immediate respect.

163. E.g., DN 16 (at D II 109); It 2.44 (It 38).

164. E.g., MN 140 (at M III 239) says *chadhāturo ayam ... puriso*, 'This person consists of six *dhātus*', i.e., earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness; *dhātu*, here, implies something that 'supports, bears, provides a substrate for'. However, at M III 242, *viññāṇa-dhātu* receives a very different kind of exegesis from that provided for the previous five *dhātus* (the first four of which are also regularly classified as the four *mahābhūtas*, and as the basis of *rūpa*, 'material form'). On the basis of that exegesis, it would be quite reasonable to describe *viññāṇa-dhātu* as the 'dimension of consciousness-of', i.e., 'of experience'; this being a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for the coming-into-being of the *purisa*.

referring to the experience of *nibbāna*) is this beautiful passage from SN 35.117 (at S IV 98):

That dimension should be experienced: where vision ceases and the perception of visual form fades away [*se āyatane veditabbe yattha cakkhu ca nirujjhati, rūpasaññā ca virajjati*]; ... where hearing ceases and the perception of sound fades away; ... where smelling ceases and the perception of odour fades away; ... where tasting ceases and the perception of flavour fades away; ... where touching ceases and the perception of tangibility fades away; ... where thinking ceases and the perception of thoughts fades away; that dimension should be experienced.

But I would not agree with Fasching that the ‘I’ is not in *any* sense ‘constituted by the experiential contents and their relations’, or that the ‘dimension of first personal presentation ... has no other essential property than being me’ (Fasching 2009, 146). ‘Being me’ has no independent sense, because, as a so-called pure ‘dimension’, subjectivity — or what is the same fact, consciousness-of — is not an ‘entity’, and has no intrinsic ‘identity’. The sense of ‘being me’ can only be constituted in dependence on experiential content, which is what the EB concept of the five clung-to aggregates provides. Moreover, subjectivity (i.e., intentional consciousness-of) necessarily has certain transcendental ‘properties’, a certain transcendental ‘structure’; I say ‘necessarily’, because it ought to be logically obvious that if consciousness-of did not possess an intrinsic intentional structure, it could never be conscious-of. The ‘I-ness’ (i.e., subjectivity) of actual experience is an *a priori* possibility inherent in and essential to the very nature of consciousness-of; but that property of ‘I-ness’, as an intrinsic, inherent property of consciousness, can have no *actualization* independently of the actualization of the consciousness-of experiential content. Moreover, there is, in principle, only one fundamental (and I would say, universal) kind of possible experiential content, which the *suttas* describe thus:

Just in this very fathom-long carcase, percipient and endowed with mind [*sasaññimhi samanake*], I make known the world, and the arising of the world, and the cessation of the world, and the path leading to the cessation of the world.

(SN 2.26, at S I 62)

That by which, friends, in the world, one is percipient of the world, one is cognizant of the world — that is called ‘world’ in the discipline of the Noble One [*yena kho, āvuso, lokasmiṃ lokasaññī hoti lokamānī — ayam vuccati ariyassa vinaye loko*]. And by what, friends, in the world, is one percipient of the world, cognizant of the world? By seeing, friends, in the world, one is percipient of the world, cognizant of the world. By hearing, ... by smelling, ... by tasting, ... by touching, ... by thinking, friends, in the world, one is percipient of the world, cognizant of the world.

(SN 35.116, at S IV 95)

It seems to me that this account of subjectivity or the experiential sense of the ‘I’ is evidently, even fundamentally, consonant with the EB axiom of *anattā* and the EB doctrine/theory of consciousness. Moreover, it is also conceptually illuminating for reflection upon EB concepts such as *punabbhava*.

10. THE POSSIBILITY OF ‘I’ WITHOUT ‘I AM’

In SN 22.89 (at S III 128), Ven. Khemaka says:

Venerable friends, I [*ahaṃ*] do not say ‘I am’ [*asmī’ti*] of material form, and I do not say ‘I am’ apart from material form. I do not say ‘I am’ of feeling, and I do not say ‘I am’ apart from feeling; I do not say ‘I am’ of perception, and I do not say ‘I am’ apart from perception; I do not say ‘I am’ of constitutive processes, and I do not say ‘I am’ apart from constitutive processes; I do not say ‘I am’ of sense-consciousness, and I do not say ‘I am’ apart from sense-consciousness. Nevertheless, with respect to these five clung-to aggregates, ‘I am’ is found in me [*api ca me ... ‘asmī’ti adhiḡataṃ*], but I do not regard (them as) ‘I am this’ [*‘ayamaḡamaṃsmī’ti*].¹⁶⁵

He explains that, even though the five lower fetters may have been abandoned by a noble disciple (*ariya-sāvaka*), ‘with respect to the five clung-to aggregates, he has a residual “I am” concept/conceit, an “I am” desire, an “I am” underlying tendency not yet removed’.¹⁶⁶ Khemaka likens this lingering sense of ‘I am’ to the scent of a lotus: one can’t say that the scent belongs to any particular part of the flower; rather, it belongs to the flower as a whole.¹⁶⁷ However, when the disciple dwells constantly contemplating the growth and decay of the five aggregates, this residual sense of ‘I am’ is eventually uprooted.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, at the end of the *sutta* we are told that Khemaka’s mind was freed from the ‘unconscious influences’ (*āsava*s) through non-clinging (*anupādāya*).¹⁶⁹

Once again, we see here the same apparently ‘paradoxical’ mode of expression that was discussed above: Khemaka says “‘I am’ is found in me’ (*api ca me ‘asmī’ti adhiḡataṃ*), and ‘but I do not regard’ (*na ca samanupassāmi*) the clung-to aggregates as what ‘I am’. Note this telling distinction between *not* regarding the five clung-to aggregates as ‘I am this’, but still experiencing a sense of ‘I am’. In other words, Khemaka has abandoned the sense of ‘I am this’ — i.e., the sense that ‘I am the aggregates’ — but has not yet abandoned the sense of ‘I am’. Is, then, the next stage of his analytical and meditative progress the liberation of the pure and empty ‘I’ of subjectivity, of pure *consciousness-of*, from its residual clinging to the (metaphysical) sense of ‘I am’? Finally, as noted above, the *sutta* states that ‘through non-clinging *his mind was liberated*’ (*anupādāya cittaṃ vimucci*).

Khemaka is clearly *conscious of* the presence of the sense ‘I am’ in his mind or consciousness; and once that sense had vanished, Khemaka would have been *conscious of* its vanishing; just as the Buddha says ‘my mind was liberated’, and, ‘when it was

165. SN 22.89 (at S III 128): *na khvāhaṃ, āvuso, rūpaṃ ‘asmī’ti vadāmi; napi aññatra rūpā ‘asmī’ti vadāmi. na vedanaṃ ... na saññaṃ ... na sañkhāre ... na viññānaṃ ‘asmī’ti vadāmi; napi aññatra viññānā ‘asmī’ti vadāmi. api ca me, āvuso, pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu ‘asmī’ti adhiḡataṃ ‘ayamaḡamaṃsmī’ti na ca samanupassāmi.* (I actually prefer Bodhi’s reading, *avigataṃ*, ‘not vanished’, in place of *adhiḡataṃ*, ‘found’, in this passage: cf. Bodhi 2000, 1082–1083, n. 176, and 1057, n. 61.)

166. SN 22.89 (at S III 130): *yo ca pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu anusahagato asmīti māno, asmīti chando, asmīti anusayo asamūhato.*

167. SN 22.89 (at S III 130): *‘pupphassa gandho’ti.*

168. SN 22.89 (at S III 131): *sopi samuḡhataṃ gacchati.*

169. Along with the minds of sixty other elder monks: SN 22.89 (at S III 132): *saṭṭhimattānaṃ therānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ anupādāya āsavehi cittāni vimuccisū, āyasmato khemakassa cāti.*

liberated, there came the knowledge, “It is liberated”. I directly knew...’.¹⁷⁰ If the sense of ‘I am’ were essentially synonymous with ‘I’, i.e., with *subjective consciousness-of*, then, with the elimination of the sense ‘I am’, the Arahant would no longer be conscious at all. But this would be an absurd conclusion, and would certainly contradict all that the *suttas* tell us about Arahants. Hamilton puts it well when she says that ‘the goal of Buddhism is ... insight of the Truth and not some kind of trance. ... [K]nowledge of absence is not absence of knowledge’ (2000, 75). Similarly, she observes: ‘[T]he point is not that on Enlightenment one becomes unconscious but that in attaining insight bondage to continuity has been overcome’ (2000, 154).

Now, if we had the good fortune to meet with the Ven. Khemaka after his residual sense of ‘I am’ had once and for all vanished, and assuming that we could speak the same natural language that he spoke, we certainly could converse with him, and he with us. We could quite legitimately and meaningfully ask him what it is like to be an Arahant; and it is not at all out of the question, given what has been examined so far, that, as part of his description of his state of consciousness, he might say: ‘I no longer cling to a sense of “I am”. The sense of “I am” has completely vanished in me’. We can support the possibility of such a reply with numerous references from the *suttas*. Thus, for example:

The five [sense] faculties [*pañcendriyāni*] remain right there, bhikkhus, but in regard to them the instructed noble disciple abandons ignorance and arouses true knowledge. With the fading away of ignorance and the arising of true knowledge, ‘I am’ does not occur to him; ‘I am this’ does not occur to him [*‘asmi’tipissa na hoti; ‘ayamahasmī’tipissa na hoti*] ... (Bodhi 2000, 886. SN 22.47, at S III 47)

From a slightly different angle:

[W]hen a bhikkhu is thus perfectly liberated in mind, even if powerful forms cognizable by the eye come into range of the eye, they do not obsess his mind [*nevassa cittaṃ pariyādiyanti*]; his mind is not at all affected. It remains steady, attained to imperturbability, and he observes its vanishing. (Bodhi 2012, 935. AN 6.55, at A III 377)

It should be clear that all such statements can just as well be expressed in the first person, as we have already seen in the quotation from MN 4. Here is yet another type of example:

I have developed the perception of non-self in what is suffering [*dukkhe anattasaññā*]; there is a distinction between my earlier condition and my present one; I have attained the fruit of development [*pattaṃ me bhāvanābalan’ti*].

(Bodhi 2012, 1037. AN 7.49, at A IV 53)

As a final example, there is Sāriputta’s answer, when asked ‘through what kind of deliverance have you declared final knowledge [*aññā*]’ (SN 12.32, at S II 53):

Friends, through an internal deliverance [*ajjhataṃ vimokkhā*], through the destruction of all clinging, I [*ahaṃ*] dwell mindfully [*sato*] in such a way that the taints [*āsavā*] do not flow [*nānussavanti*] within me and I do not despise [*nāvajānāmi*] myself [*attānaṃ*]. (Bodhi 2000, 570. SN 12.32, at S II 54)

170. Nāṇamoli and Bodhi 2009, 106. MN 4 (at M I 23): *tassa me ... cittaṃ vimuccittha. vimuttasmiṃ vimuttamīti nāṇaṃ ahoṣi. ... abbhāñāsīm*. (The final verb quoted here is the 1st sg. aorist of *abhijānāti*, ‘to know by experience, to know fully or thoroughly, to recognise, know of, to be conscious or aware of’ (Rhys Davids and Stede, 63a); ‘recognises, knows, understands; is aware of, acknowledges, remembers’ (Cone 2001, 193a–b).)

Consequently, we might well ask the Arahant what exactly he means when he says 'I', 'me' and 'myself' in such statements. Has he not now thoroughly uprooted and abandoned the sense of 'I am this' and of 'I am' *with respect to the five clung-to aggregates*? And does this not entail that, when, as an Arahant, he says 'I' in a *subjective* sense, as does Sāriputta in the above statement, with reference to 'his own liberated mind', he cannot be referring to those same aggregates, which, as intentional 'objects' of clinging, and as intentional 'objects' of abandoning, are still, at basis, *just the same intentional objects*? What has changed, *most essentially*, in the Arahant, is not the 'object', but the fundamental *quality* of his or her own subjective *intentionality*. The Arahant *still perceives the aggregates as 'objects'*: but the *quality*, the 'act-character', of that intentional act has been thoroughly purified of craving and clinging. Thus, it is not only beside the point, but also a countersense, to claim that the 'aggregates' are enlightened and liberated: the aggregates are at all times described as 'objects' of clinging (*upādāna-kkhandhā*) and for abandoning. If one can still insist that, even so, *viññāna* is clearly classified as an aggregate, then one is simply obscuring, beneath the obstacle of a 'mere word', the phenomenological (and experientially apodictic) 'twofoldness' of *viññāna* — i.e., the fact that it *cannot occur except* in the form of the intentional relation, the relation between subjectivity and 'object'.

11. 'I AS SUBJECT' AND 'I AS OBJECT'

In a much-discussed passage of *The Blue Book*, Wittgenstein (1969, 66–67) points out a distinction between 'two different cases in the use of the word "I" (or "my")', namely, what he calls 'the use as object' and 'the use as subject':

Examples of the first kind of use are these: 'My arm is broken', 'I have grown six inches', 'I have a bump on my forehead', 'The wind blows my hair about'. Examples of the second kind are: 'I see so-and-so', 'I hear so-and-so', 'I try to lift my arm', 'I think it will rain', 'I have a toothache'.

Wittgenstein takes the 'object sense' of the word 'I' to refer to the body: that particular body that each of us calls 'my body', and which other people can also see, hear, and touch, for example. He goes on to say that this 'object sense' of 'I' is fallible: it is quite conceivable, for example, that I could, under some peculiar circumstance, visually mistake someone else's arm for my own. In this way, he illustrates a distinction between the 'object' and the 'subject' sense of 'I'. For, it seems nonsensical to suppose that I could mistake a feeling of pain in my arm to be *someone else's* pain; or for someone to ask me, 'Are you sure it's *you* who feels the pain, and not someone else?' (Cf. 1969, 67.) But what does this distinction really imply? For, even though Wittgenstein says (correctly) that it is conceivable that I could mistake an objectively appearing part of someone else's body as my own, one must point out that it would be just as nonsensical to doubt that it is *I who see* that body — whosoever it might be, or even if it happens to be a hallucination — as it would be to doubt that it is *I who feel* a pain.

I shall return to Wittgenstein's discussion of this distinction in a moment. First, it is important to note that Wittgenstein was far from the first Western philosopher to recognize, or attempt to understand, it. Moreover, most of Wittgenstein's

philosophical predecessors who *did* recognize it inquired into its structure far more deeply than Wittgenstein did in *The Blue Book*.¹⁷¹

It is perhaps not widely enough understood, or appreciated, that Descartes was in fact already aware of this distinction, and that it is essential to his understanding of the *cogito* and what he perceived as its metaphysical implications. Thus, e.g., he writes:

By the word ‘thought’ [*cogitationis*] I understand all the things that we are aware of [*consciis*] as occurring in us, insofar as we are aware [*conscientia*] of them [in us]. Thus not only understanding [*intelligere*], willing [*velle*] and imagining [*imaginari*] but even sensing [*sentire*] is the same as thinking [*cogitare*] in this context. For if I say ‘I see or I walk, therefore I exist [*sum*]’, and if I understand this as referring to the seeing or walking that is done by the body, the conclusion is not absolutely certain because, as often happens during sleep, I can think I see or walk even if I do not open my eyes and do not move from where I am and even if, perhaps, I had no body. But if I understand it as the sensation [*sensu*] or awareness [*conscientiâ*] of seeing or walking, since it then refers to the mind [*ad mentem*] which alone senses or thinks that it sees or walks [*quae sola sentit sive cogitât se videre aut ambulare*], it is obviously certain [*certa*].¹⁷²

Here, Descartes has clearly distinguished, on the one hand, between all that he can be conscious-of, in any sense whatsoever, and which he can doubt, which he calls *cogitationis*; and, on the other, the fact of being conscious or aware, which here he calls *sensu* and *conscientia*, and which he refers to the nature of ‘mind’ (*mens*): and this is the actual sense of his use of the term *cogito*. Thus, the *ergo sum* does not refer in a superficial or facile way to ‘thinking’ in the common, narrow sense: nor does it refer merely to the ‘contents’ of consciousness. Rather, it refers to the indubitable fact of *being-conscious-of*, no matter what one happens to be conscious-of. Husserl was well aware of the deeply phenomenological nature of Descartes’ intuition, and often commented on it; thus, e.g., he writes:

[O]ne finds, as even Descartes did ..., the *cogito*, *intentionality*, in those familiar forms which, like everything actual in the world, find their expression in language: ‘I see a tree which is green; I hear the rustling of its leaves, I smell its blossoms,’ etc.; or ‘I remember my schooldays,’ ‘I am saddened by the sickness of a friend,’ etc. Here we find nothing other than ‘consciousness of...’ [*“Bewußtsein von...”*] — consciousness in the broadest sense.¹⁷³

And in this sense, Descartes’ intuition concerning the ‘self-evident being’ of the *cogito*, understood in a deeper sense as ‘I am *conscious-of*’, arguably has a certain

171. In fact, Wittgenstein is much nearer, in the *Notebooks* (where he exclaims: ‘The I, the I is what is deeply mysterious! [*Das Ich, das Ich ist das tief Geheimnisvolle!*]’ (Wittgenstein 1961, 80) and the *Tractatus* (where he asserts, ‘The subject does not belong to the world: rather it is a limit of the world [*Das Subjekt gehört nicht zur Welt, sondern es ist eine Grenze der Welt*]’ (Wittgenstein 1974, 117, §5.632), to the intuitions of his more phenomenologically-sensitive predecessors and contemporaries, than he is in *The Blue Book* and the *Philosophical Investigations*.

172. Descartes 2003, *The Principles of Philosophy*, I.9, 114; 1905, 7–8. Elsewhere, Descartes says: ‘The substance in which thought inheres immediately is called ‘mind’ [*Mens*]; I speak here of a mind [*de mente*] rather than a soul [*de animâ*], because the term ‘soul’ is equivocal and is often used in reference to a physical thing [*re corporeâ*]’ (Descartes 2003, *Meditations on Philosophy*, ‘Second Objections and Replies’, 86; 1904, 161).

173. Husserl 1970b, 233; 1954, 236.

validity. The profound problem here, however, is once again the question of how exactly we are to understand the 'I' of the 'I am conscious-of'.

Kant, in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, has no doubt analysed this twofold nature of the 'I' more deeply and thoroughly than any Western philosopher before him, and many who have come after him. To cite but one example from the *Critique*:

[I]n the synthetic original unity of apperception, I am conscious of myself not as I appear [*erscheine*] to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only *that* I am. This representation [*Vorstellung*] is a *thinking* [*Denken*], not an *intuiting* [*Anschau*en]. Now since for the *cognition* [*Erkenntnis*] of ourselves, in addition to the action of thinking that brings the manifold of every possible intuition to the unity of apperception, a determinate sort of intuition through which this manifold is given, is also required, my own existence is not indeed appearance (let alone mere illusion), but the determination of my existence [*Dasein*] can only occur in correspondence with the form of inner sense, according to the particular way in which the manifold that I combine is given in inner intuition, and I therefore have *no cognition* of myself as *I am*, but only as I *appear* to myself.¹⁷⁴

By this, Kant means that the 'I' of the 'I am' cannot be 'perceived' or 'cognized' (i.e., 'intuited') in any sense, and thus has no phenomenal content. He calls this the 'transcendental I of apperception' (*das transzendente Ich der Apperzeption*), the 'pure I of self-consciousness' (*das reine Ich des Selbstbewußtseins*), the 'subject-I' (*Ich-Subjekt*): this is the 'I' of 'I experience' ("Ich erfahre"). It is known only immediately, as a 'pure thought'. Correlated with this is the 'I of apprehension' (*das Ich der Apprehension*), the 'object-I' (*Ich-Objekt*), of which Kant says: 'This object-I, the empirical I, is a thing [*Sache*]'. Heidegger cites this statement from a late essay by Kant, written in 1791, a decade after the publication of the second edition of *The Critique*; in the same place, in contrast, Kant says of the transcendental 'I of apperception': 'it is, as it were, like the substance [that is, like the *hupokeimenon*] which remains over when I have abstracted all the accidents inhering in it'.¹⁷⁵ Here, Kant is no doubt alluding to Aristotle's intuitive 'thought-experiment' (in *Metaphysics* VII.iii, 1029a10–26): if we try to arrive at the 'ultimate substrate' (*eskhaton hupokeimenon*) that 'supports' all substances and properties by progressively removing all qualities and quantities, we will find that 'the ultimate substrate is in itself neither a quality nor a quantity nor anything else; nor, indeed, is it the negations of these'. Again, in the same work, Kant writes:

'I am conscious of myself' [*Ich bin mir meiner selbst bewußt*] is a thought that already contains a twofold 'I' [*zweifaches Ich*], the 'I' as subject and the 'I' as object [*das Ich als Subjekt, und das Ich als Objekt*]. Although it is an indubitable fact, it is simply impossible to explain how it is possible that I who am thinking myself can be my own object (of intuition) and thus can differentiate myself from myself. However it points to a faculty elevated so far above all sense intuitions that, as the ground of possibility of an understanding, ... it looks beyond to an infinity of self-made

174. Kant 2000, 259–260; 1889, 158–159 (B157–158).

175. Heidegger 1988, 130; 1975, 184 (citing Kant, 'Fortschritte der Metaphysik', in Kant, *Immanuel Kants Werke*, ed. E. Cassirer et al., Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1923, Bd. 8, 249): 'es ist gleichsam, wie das Substantiale [d. h. wie das ὑποκείμενον], was übrigbleibt, wenn ich alle Accidenzen, die ihm inhärieren, weggelassen habe'. (The gloss is Heidegger's.)

representations and concepts [the ontological ones]. What is intended by this, however, is not a double personality [*eine doppelte Persönlichkeit*]; only I [*nur Ich*] who think and intuit [*der ich denke und anschau*] am the person, whereas the 'I' of the object [*das Ich des Objektes*] that is intuited by me [*von mir angeschaut wird*] is, like other objects [*Gegenständen*] outside me, the thing [*Sache*].¹⁷⁶

Again, William James's entire chapter on 'The Self' in *Psychology: Briefer Course* is structured upon the distinction (but not the separation) of what he calls 'the Me and the I', also 'the self as known' and 'the self as knower'. Thus, he writes (1892, 176):

Whatever I may be thinking of, I am always at the same time more or less aware of *myself*, of my *personal existence*. At the same time it is *I* who am aware; so that the total self of me, being as it were duplex, partly known and partly knower, partly object and partly subject, must have two aspects discriminated in it, of which for shortness we may call one the *Me* and the other the *I*.

Other cogent examples are available;¹⁷⁷ and this theme of course runs through the whole of Husserl's philosophical thought and work. But I shall take up the question of the 'I' in Husserl, from a slightly different vantage point, in §12 below.

Returning, now, to Wittgenstein's take on the problem of the 'I' in *The Blue Book*: Wittgenstein's argument tends to the conclusion that the term 'I' in its 'use as subject', while it clearly does not refer to the body, or to sensations and thoughts as contents of consciousness, also does not refer to 'something bodiless' that 'has its seat in our body', something that merely 'seems to be the real ego', and that is commonly called 'the mind' (Wittgenstein 1969, 69). He says: 'The word "mind" has meaning, i.e., it has a use in our language' (1969, 69–70). For Wittgenstein, 'meaning' is not only equated with, but even explained by, 'use' in a 'language game'.¹⁷⁸ Thus, he argues that 'to say the ego is mental is like saying that the numeral "3" is of a mental or immaterial nature, when we recognize that the numeral "3" isn't used as a sign for a physical object' (Wittgenstein 1969, 73). Hence he arrives at his conclusion:

The kernel of our proposition that that which has pains or sees or thinks is of a mental nature is only, that the word "I" in "I have pains" does not denote a particular body, for we can't substitute for "I" a description of a body.

(Wittgenstein 1969, 74)

Anscombe subsequently tried to dissolve the philosophical problems associated with the term 'I' by arguing that "'I" is neither a name nor another kind of expression whose logical role is to make a reference *at all*" (Anscombe 1975, 60). For her, the 'I as subject' is not an indexical term; it does not point to any kind of 'object' at all: 'With "I" there is only the use' (1975, 59). Here, she precisely echoes

176. Heidegger 1988, 130–131 (translation modified), citing Kant, 'Fortschritte der Metaphysik', in Kant, *Immanuel Kants Werke*, ed. E. Cassirer *et al.*, Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1923, Bd. 8, 248–249; 1975, 184–185.

177. Including Frege 1956, 305–307 (1918, 72–73).

178. Cf. the well-known passage in Wittgenstein 1998, 128, §432 (translation modified): 'Every sign *by itself* seems dead. *What gives it life?* In use it *lives*. Has it, there, its living breath in itself? — Or is its *use* its breath?' (Jedes Zeichen scheint *allein* tot. *Was gibt ihm Leben?* — Im Gebrauch *lebt* es. Hat es da den lebenden Atem in sich? — Oder ist der *Gebrauch* sein Atem?)

Wittgenstein's identification of 'meaning' with 'use': on this basis, she can claim that it is an error to suppose that the term 'I' must refer to 'the mind', 'the self', 'the subject', merely because it plainly does not refer to 'the body' or any other 'object'. If the purely grammatical 'use' of the term 'I' in our language is all the 'meaning' that it has, or needs to have, then there is nothing further to 'explain'. Anscombe's 'solution' might seem attractive to those who would like to interpret EB in a more or less Humean way,¹⁷⁹ i.e., as a kind of 'bundle-theory reductionism', as Albahari puts it.¹⁸⁰ Again, Zahavi points out that Anscombe's position 'has a certain affinity to the so-called *no ownership* view according to which experiences are subjectless or egoless' (Zahavi 1999, 11).

The basic problem with this 'grammatical/pragmatic' reductionism — which, by the very fact that it claims to be able to dispense with 'metaphysical' problems by treating them as mere artefacts of grammar, itself merely assumes an unvalidated metaphysical stance — is what one can only describe as its astonishing 'phenomenological blindness'. For anyone with even the slightest phenomenological sensibility or sensitivity, it would be blindingly obvious that to claim that 'use is meaning', i.e., that 'meaning' can be *explained* by 'use' — whether the notion of 'use' be glossed as 'grammatical', 'pragmatic', or both — is a flagrant begging of the question: for, *'use' itself is meaning*. 'Use' presupposes the *meaningfulness* of various kinds of subjective and intersubjective relationships and acts. 'To use' is a meaningful act, and 'to find useful' is a meaningful value, which are only possible (only 'meaningful') for intentionally-conscious beings. To claim that the 'meaning' of a word is defined and explained by its 'use' is no explanation of its meaning; or, at best, only a very incomplete one; because the *use* of words is itself always already a meaningful act, i.e., an act of meaning. The philosophically relevant and correct answer to Wittgenstein's question about the 'sign' that '*by itself* seems dead', the question, '*What gives it life?*',¹⁸¹ is the phenomenological answer: namely, subjective intentional consciousness. Consequently, Wittgenstein's and Anscombe's claim that the meaningfulness of the term 'I' is merely a grammatical illusion, and not a genuine philosophical problem, might be described as a 'two-dimensional' solution to what is unambiguously a 'three-dimensional' problem.

12. A LONG AND GRADUAL APPROACH TO CESSATION

'Subjectivity' is the very form in which consciousness is a consciousness-of; it is the very form of all 'appearing' as the 'content' or 'object' of consciousness-of. In this sense, by definition, 'subjectivity' is properly 'transcendental': i.e., it is not

179. Cf. the very famous passage in Hume 1985, 300. A less often cited parallel passage from Hume's 'Appendix' to the same work reads: 'When I turn my reflection on *myself*, I never can perceive this *self* without some one or more perceptions; nor can I ever perceive any thing but the perceptions. 'Tis the composition of these, therefore, which forms the self' (1985, 676). Here, again, we may note the irony of Hume's description: '*I* turn *my* reflection on *myself*', '*I* perceive'. Hume seems to be unaware of his own *awareness* of the phenomena of which he is aware. Husserl diagnoses this irony thus: 'the contrast between psychological and transcendental subjectivity remained unclarified', and so Hume and other British naturalists 'could not make the constitution of the real understandable as an intentional accomplishment producing sense and true being for transcendental subjectivity' (Husserl 1989, 421; 1952b, 154).

180. Cf. Albahari 2011, 81, where Albahari further asserts that 'a bundle theory of no-self is not supported by specific *suttas* in the Pali Canon'.

181. Cf. fn. 178 above.

anything phenomenal, something that could *itself* ‘appear’, whether to me or to others; rather, it is the way in which phenomena must inevitably ‘appear’, if they are to ‘appear’ at all. What ‘appears’ is just what ‘manifests’ itself, what we are conscious-of as a ‘phenomenon’ in any of the modes of the ‘six sense spheres’ constituting the field of *viññāna-kkhandha*.¹⁸² On the other hand, we cannot doubt that we *are* subjectively *conscious-of*; transcendental *consciousness-of* is something that we just *know*, immediately and apodictically, because, in any final analysis, when it comes to our own consciousness-of, *what* we know is just the fact *that* we know. This is the one thing about which, in principle, no conscious being could possibly be mistaken.¹⁸³

Husserl (like Descartes, Kant, Frege, James, and Heidegger) recognizes that this pure subjectivity is *transcendentally* distinguishable from all that it is conscious-of: the latter includes, of course, the body, but also all sensations, thoughts, and emotions that appear as phenomena or experiences of that consciousness-of. For this reason, he distinguishes between what he calls the ‘empirical I’ and this pure, transcendental subjectivity. The ‘empirical I’ is that ‘objective’ or ‘phenomenal’ self constituted out of the appearances of ‘my own body’, ‘my thoughts’, ‘my feelings’, and so on, which, as a complex psychophysical ‘entity’, belongs within, and is an inextricable part of, the ‘objective’ and intersubjective ‘world’. We can see, then, that Husserl’s concept of the ‘empirical I’ is similar to Wittgenstein’s ‘object sense’ of the ‘I’, but it is much more inclusive: it includes *all* those phenomena, ‘physical’ or ‘mental’, which are taken to constitute the psychophysical person who lives and acts within, and as part of, the ‘world’. Of course, what Husserl has distinguished in this way is, in fact, the five clung-to aggregates, which the ‘spiritually-unlearned’ ‘ordinary person’ (*assutavā puthujjana*),¹⁸⁴ the person in the ‘natural attitude’, assumes to be their ‘self’ (*attā*).

Correlatively, Husserl also recognizes that the pure subjectivity of consciousness-of is utterly *non-phenomenal*: there is *nothing* about it that could possibly ‘appear’.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, it is not a ‘thing’, nor even remotely *like* any ‘thing’. It is

182. As is perhaps well known, in its Greek philosophical origins, the *phainomenon* is that which is caused to appear or which reveals itself (*phainesthai*) in the light (*phaos*); and this means, fundamentally, that which appears ‘in the light of the mind’. (Cf., e.g., Heidegger 2001, ¶7, 49–63 (1993, 27–39) for a thoughtful account.) The common Indo-European root of these Greek terms is *bhā* (cf., e.g., Hofmann 1994, 464–465, 467), a root which appears also in Sanskrit and Pāli (as both *bhā* and *bhās*), with the same meaning: ‘to shine, be bright; shine forth, appear’, etc. (cf. Monier-Williams 1993, 750c–751a and 755c–756a). This root is evident in EB descriptions of *citta*, ‘mind’, as *pabhassara*, ‘brightly shining’ (e.g., *pabhassaram idaṃ ... cittam* (A I 10)); and in the descriptions of *viññāna anidassana*, ‘non-manifestive consciousness’, as *sabbato pabham*, ‘shining or luminous all round (in all directions)’ (D I 223; M II 329); but cf. Norman 2012, 36–37 and fn. 17. (For more details on *pabhassara citta*, cf. Harvey 1995, 166–170, 173–176; on *viññāna anidassana*, cf. *ibid.*, 198ff.)

183. For Husserl’s lucid and important exposition of why Descartes came so close to, yet failed to recognize, the properly phenomenological meaning and implications of the *cogito*, cf. Husserl 1970b, 75–81; 1954, 76–83.

184. For an explanation of the terms occurring in the expression *assutavā puthujjana*, cf. Nizamis 2011, SN 12.61, nn. 1–2.

185. Husserl 1980, 111 (1952a, 104–105): ‘Everything which ‘appears’ [“*Erscheinende*”], everything which, in whatever way, presents [“*Darstellende*”] and manifests [“*Bekundende*”] itself can also not be; I can be deceived by these things. The ‘I’ [“*das Ich*”], however, does not appear [“*erscheint nicht*”], does not present itself [“*stellt sich nicht*”] merely from a side, does not manifest itself

more like a 'no-thing', a 'nothing'. Indeed, it really is like a kind of 'emptiness'¹⁸⁶ — except that it is evidently a consciousness-of, and therefore also a basis of mental acts. It is for this reason that Husserl calls it the 'transcendental' or 'pure I' (*das reine Ich*). In German orthography, the ordinary first-person pronoun *ich* is clearly distinguishable from the noun-form *Ich*; and Husserl virtually makes a technical term of the noun, *das (reine) Ich*, to name the fact of the pure subjectivity of consciousness-of. But Husserl is aware of a difficulty here, when he writes:

The 'I' [*das Ich*] that I [*ich*] attain in the *epokhē* ... is actually called 'I' ["*Ich*"] only by equivocation — though it is an essential equivocation since, when I [*ich*] name it in reflection, I can say nothing other than: it is I [*ich*] who practice the *epokhē*, I who interrogate, as phenomenon, the world ...¹⁸⁷

This 'essential equivocation' is in fact an essential *indication* pointing towards what is truly at the basis of the problem of the 'I'.

On the one hand, pure subjectivity — which Husserl calls, by way of a certain inevitable equivocation, the 'pure I', also 'the experiencing I'¹⁸⁸ — apart from its nature as consciousness-of, and as a basis of acts, 'is completely empty of essence-components, has no explicable content, is undescrivable in and for itself; it is pure "I" and nothing more'.¹⁸⁹ As pure, subjective consciousness-of, it is phenomenologically quite distinct from all phenomena of which it is conscious, including those constituting the 'phenomenal person' through which it 'lives and experiences' (*erlebt*). On the other hand, if it were somehow possible to bring to an end the apparently inseparable unity of this subjective consciousness-of and the phenomena of which it is conscious, that consciousness-of would lose all possible definition; so, too, correlatively, would the phenomena, because a phenomenon is, by definition, what appears to consciousness-of, in the way that it appears.

In DN 15, the Buddha provides a neat refutation of the notion of a permanent, substantial 'self' (*attā*) as relative to the experiencing of 'sensation' or 'feeling' (*vedanā*). Three ways of 'regarding self' (*atta-samanupassanā*) are defined; but, for our purposes, we can legitimately reduce these down to two mutually exclusive ideas: (1) feeling is the self (the self is identical with feeling); (2) feeling is not the self (the self is separate from and independent of feeling). The first notion is denied on the basis that all feeling is 'impermanent, constituted, dependently co-arisen, subject to destruction, decay, fading away, and cessation'.¹⁹⁰ The con-

[*bekundet sich nicht*] merely according to discrete determinations, aspects, and moments ... As pure 'I' [*reines Ich*] it does not harbor any hidden inner richness; it is absolutely simple [*absolut einfach*] and it lies there absolutely clear [*absolut zutage*].

186. Cf., e.g., Husserl 1982, 191; 132–133 (where he likens the phenomenological 'I' to 'a transcendental nothing [*einem transzendentalen Nichts*]'); Husserl 1989, 110, 111; Husserl 1970b, 155; 187.

187. Husserl 1970b, 184; 1954, 188: 'Das Ich, das ich in der Epoché erreiche ... heißt eigentlich nur durch Äquivokation "Ich", obschon es eine wesensmäßige Äquivokation ist, da, wenn ich es reflektierend benenne, ich nicht anders sagen kann als: ich bin es, ich der Epoché-Übende, ich, der die Welt ... als Phänomen befrage ...'.

188. Husserl 1976, 179: 'das erlebende Ich'.

189. Husserl 1982, 191; 1976a 179: 'ist es völlig leer an Wesenskomponenten, es hat gar keinen explikablen Inhalt, es ist an und für sich unbeschreiblich: reines Ich und nichts weiter'.

190. DN 15 (at D II 66–67): ... *aniccā saṅkhatā paṭiccasamuppannā khayadhammā vayadhammā virāgadhammā nirodhadhammā*.

clusion is: ‘Therefore, here, because of this, it is not acceptable to consider: “Feeling is my self”’.¹⁹¹ The second notion is denied by means of two expressions of the same argument, framed as rhetorical questions: ‘Where feeling altogether is not, could there be, there, (the thought) “I am”?’ Of course, the answer is: ‘Certainly not, Venerable Sir’.¹⁹² And again: ‘If all feeling were to cease completely in every way, without remainder, then with the complete non-being of feeling, because of the cessation of feeling, could there be, there, (the thought) “I am this”?’ Again, of course, the answer must be: ‘Certainly not, Venerable Sir’.¹⁹³ These refutations of both (1) and (2) constitute an exhaustive dilemmatic refutation of a permanent, independently existing ‘self’ (*attā*), given that such a ‘self’ cannot be identified with (contingent and impermanent) feeling, but nor can it be identified with anything other than feeling. The Buddha concludes with the following deeply significant statement:

[W]hen a bhikkhu does not consider feeling as self [*neva vedanaṃ attānaṃ samanupassati*], and does not consider self as without experience of feeling [*nopi appaṭisaṃvedanaṃ attānaṃ samanupassati*] and does not consider: ‘My self feels, for my self is subject to feeling’ [*nopi ‘attā me vediyati, vedanāḍhammo hi me attā’ti samanupassati*] — then, being without such considerations he does not cling to anything in the world. Not clinging, he is not agitated. Not being agitated, he personally attains *nibbāna*. (Bodhi 2010, 70. DN 15, at D II 68)

It is perfectly understandable that, in the ‘natural attitude’, one might want to ask: ‘But *who* does not cling, *who* attains this *nibbāna*?’ And we know that the EB response would be: ‘Not a valid question’ (*‘no kallo pañho’ti*).¹⁹⁴ There can be no sense of ‘whoness’ *apart from* the six senses and what is sensed by the six senses. I have argued that clinging cannot be understood as anything other than an intentional act of subjective intentional consciousness; and in this sense, we would indeed have to say that ‘*subjective intentional consciousness* [*viññāṇa*] clings’, just as we would correlatively have to say that ‘*subjective intentional consciousness* [*viññāṇa*] abandons’. Speaking more concisely, we could say, e.g., ‘I cling’ or ‘you cling’; and ‘I abandon’ or ‘you abandon’: these expressions genuinely and legitimately indicate the nature and structure of the acts and experiences of clinging and abandoning. But I hope that I have also made it clear why these expressions, ‘I’, or ‘you’, or ‘subjective intentional consciousness’, are not simply equivalent to the notion of a ‘who’: the notion of a ‘who’ implies the notion of a ‘someone’: i.e., in the final analysis, the notion of a ‘self’ (in any sense of that term). Thus, to ask ‘*Who* clings?’ or ‘*Who* abandons?’ is indeed paradoxical (a countersense): because, in that case, one is supposing that there is an ‘objective’ someone or something that clings or abandons. But subjective intentional consciousness is not an ‘objective’ someone or a something; rather, it is like the ‘limit’ of ‘the world’, of ‘the All’, the whole field of experiencing and what is experienced; like the periphery of the

191. DN 15 (at D II 67): *tasmātiha ... etena petaṃ nakkhamati ‘vedanā me attā’ti samanupassitum*.

192. DN 15 (at D II 67): *‘yattha pana ... sabbaso vedayitaṃ natthi api nu kho, tattha ‘asmi’ti siyā’ti? ‘no hetam, bhante’*.

193. DN 15 (at D II 67): *‘vedanā ca hi ... sabbena sabbaṃ sabbathā sabbaṃ aparisesā nirujjheyum, sabbaso vedanāya asati vedanānirodhā api nu kho tattha ‘ayamahasmī’ti siyā’ti? ‘no hetam, bhante’*.

194. Cf. §9 above.

circle that defines the circle, and the space that it encloses, and yet, precisely for that reason, is neither 'inside' nor 'outside' of the circle. The 'limit' or 'boundary' of the circle is precisely what 'constitutes' it; but, an enigmatic principle of the mathematicians lends itself to this analogy: 'the boundary of a boundary is zero', and thus, 'almost everything ... lets itself be deduced from almost nothing' (Kheyfets and Wheeler 1986, 573). The notion of a 'who' requires the presence and content of the 'circle': but the presence of the 'circle' requires a 'limit' that is itself 'zero', 'not part of the world', i.e., 'transcendental'. While for the 'natural sciences' of the 'natural attitude', consciousness 'in itself' is virtually 'nothing' — as Lanier (1997, 181) puts it, it is like the pea hidden beneath twenty mattresses and twenty feather beds that kept the princess (science) awake all night: 'To consider consciousness by itself is entirely undemanding. ... There is nothing to describe' — for TP (and, as I hope that I have made evident, for EB) consciousness is the irreducible and indubitable possibility of 'everything' — including, of course, even that 'natural science' that pretends that consciousness does not exist, or wishes that it would just go away and stop interfering with the 'self-given objectivity' of the 'physical world'.

Like the boundary of the circle, the *phenomenological* 'I' (or, perhaps better expressed, phenomenological 'I-ness'), i.e., the pure irreducible subjectivity of actualized intentional consciousness, 'does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world'.¹⁹⁵ But what happens if I erase the circle? Of course, this can mean nothing other than erasing or dissolving its boundary; but the 'boundary of its boundary', according to our mathematical analogy, is already 'zero'. The erasure of the circle can make no 'difference' to what is already 'zero'. Nevertheless, there definitely is a difference between the presence and the absence of the circle; that is to say, from the first personal perspective, the perspective of subjective intentional consciousness, the absence of 'the All', of 'the world', which in the final analysis must result from the cessation of 'contact', implies the absence of 'I' as the 'limit' of 'the All', of 'the world'. But the 'limit' of the 'limit' — that which is the *prior possibility* of actualized 'I-ness' — is always-already 'zero'; i.e., it is always-already 'emptiness': 'unborn, unbecome, uncreated, unconstituted'.¹⁹⁶

The six modes of sense-consciousness arise in dependence upon 'contact'; and in the final analysis, this can only mean the 'contact' between intentional consciousness and that of which it is conscious. In other words, the notion of 'contact' stands for the intentional relation between 'subjectivity' and the 'objective'; or, perhaps more precisely, for the 'contact' between subjective intentional consciousness and its objects, a 'contact' that can have no other form than that of the intentional relation. Put simply, it is just the *consciousness-of* objects. In SN 12.24 (at S II 36), 'the whole meaning is expressed with a single phrase [*ekena padena sabbo attho vutto*]: 'I have said that pain [*dukkham*] is dependently arisen.

195. Wittgenstein 1974, 116–117: Wittgenstein is speaking here of what he calls the 'metaphysical' or 'philosophical' subject, but he clarifies and defines what he means by this when he says, 'What brings the "I" [*das Ich*] into philosophy is the fact that "the world is my world". The philosophical "I" [*das philosophische Ich*] is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, ... but rather ... the limit [*die Grenze*] of the world — not a part of it' (1974, 116–118 (trans. modified). 'The world' is an experience of which 'I' am subjectively, intentionally conscious.

196. Cf. Ud 8.3 (Ud 80): *atthi, bhikkhave, ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhatam*. Cf. also It 2.43 (It 37).

Dependent on what? Dependent on contact [*phassa*]. And as we have seen, ‘contact’ has, as a necessary prior condition, the appropriate intentional engagement of consciousness.

‘Clinging’ (*upādāna*) is a mode of intentional consciousness towards what is sensed, and ‘non-clinging’ (*anupādāna*) is a mode of intentional consciousness towards what is sensed. ‘Bondage of mind’ (*cetaso vinibandha*)¹⁹⁷ is the clinging of intentional consciousness; and ‘the unshakeable liberation of mind’ (*akuppā cetovimutti*)¹⁹⁸ is the non-clinging of intentional consciousness.

When the gods, along with Indra, Brahmā, and Pajāpati, seek out [*anvesaṃ*] a *bhikkhu* who is thus liberated in mind [*vimuttacittaṃ*], they do not find [*nādhigacchanti*]: ‘The consciousness [*viññāṇaṃ*] of one thus gone [*tathāgatassa*] is supported [*nissitaṃ*] by this’. What is the reason? Right here and now, one thus gone cannot be known [*ananuvejjo*]¹⁹⁹ I say. Asserting thus, *bhikkhus*, teaching thus, some recluses and brahmins, without grounds, emptily, wrongly, and falsely slander me: ‘The recluse Gotama is one who leads astray: he teaches the annihilation, the destruction, the loss of existence of an existing being [*sato sattassa ucchedaṃ vināsaṃ vibhavaṃ*]!’ But I am not such, *bhikkhus*, and I do not speak that way ... Both before and now, *bhikkhus*, I just make known pain and the cessation of pain. (MN 22, at M I 140)

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197. Cf., e.g., AN 5.206 (A III 249).

198. Cf., e.g., MN 29 (M I 197).

199. *Ananuvejja* (Ce, Ee; var. *ananuvijjo* Be; *ananuvajjo* Se): negative future passive participle, ‘not to be known’. I read *anuvejja* (*anuvedya*) as formed from *anu* + *vid*, ‘to know’ (Skt. *vetti*, pass. *vidyate*, with derivatives *vedya*, *-vidya*), rather than *vid*, ‘to find’ (Skt. *vindati*, pass. *vidyate*, also with derivatives *vedya*, *vidya*). Cf. Whitney 2000, 159–160; Monier-Williams 1993, 38.3, 1017b; Cone 2001, 99b (who reads *anu* + *vindati*; hence, ‘not to be found’). Ultimately, though, the essential sense is the same. Cf. SN 22.85 (at S III 112) and SN 22.86 (at S III 118): *dittheva dhamme saccato thetato tathāgate anupalabbhiyamāne*, ‘when, right here and now, the Tathāgata is not truly and firmly apprehended (understood)’; MN 72 (at M I 488): *-saṅkhayavimutto ... tathāgato gambhīro appameyyo duppariyogālho seyyathāpi mahāsamuddo*, ‘the Tathāgata is liberated from categorisation, is profound, immeasurable, difficult to fathom, like the great ocean’.

ABBREVIATIONS

A / AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
As	<i>Atthasālinī</i> (Commentary to <i>Dhammasaṅgani</i>)
D / DN	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>
It	<i>Itivuttaka</i>
It-a	<i>Itivuttaka-aṭṭhakathā</i> (Commentary to <i>Itivuttaka</i>)
M / MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Mil	<i>Milindapañho</i>
Mp	<i>Manorathapūraṇī</i> (Commentary to <i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>)
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i> (Commentary to <i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>)
S / SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
Sn	<i>Sutta-nipāta</i>
Spk	<i>Sāratthappakāsinī</i> (Commentary to <i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>)
Sv	<i>Sumaṅgalavilāsinī</i> (Commentary to <i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>)
Ud	<i>Udāna</i>
Vism	<i>Visuddhimagga</i>

The abbreviations DN, MN, SN, and AN are used to refer to *sutta* numbers, while D, M, S, and A refer to Pali Text Society volume and page numbers.

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