

Husserl and Freud on the Psychic Body in Action:

A Comparative Analysis with a Reference to the Neurosciences\*

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Phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and the neurosciences have at least one thing in common. Each investigates phenomena articulated with everyday language—the language of our perceptions of the world, and of our selves—and each relies upon the access to phenomena that everyday language provides. Each discipline uses this implicit phenomenology to uncover the enigmas of things and to critique established theories, both theories arising from scientific research as well as those that humans construct spontaneously being theory-builders by nature. Philosophers, psychologists, and neuroscientists thus meet at a crossroads, where each stimulates the other to transcend the theoretical constructions that are always conditioned by historical preconceptions and return “to the things themselves.”<sup>1, 2</sup>

Human action is one of those “things in themselves” that is fundamental to anthropology and revelatory of human enigmas. Taking up the problem of action in his *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Wittgenstein notes that everyday language clearly expresses the difference between the movement of things and the action of a human being (Wittgenstein, 1953, Vol. 1, pp. 611-60). Let us recall and elaborate Wittgenstein’s own example. If one states that a gust of wind moves a window, or that a drug lowers a fever, it is understood that the wind or the drug is an impersonal force that acts upon an object to which it is externally related, an antecedent cause producing a consequent effect. Now suppose that one makes a statement depicting the action of a human being. Let us say, for example, that a person who finds a room to be “stuffy” moves towards the window and opens it in order to get some air. This characterization expresses the action as it actually transpires in a naive yet rigorously articulated language. The movement depicted is a series of unfolding moments unified by a dynamic center that is the ego of the actor. The intention of the actor—“in order to”—organizes and orients the bodily movements of which the action-sequence consists. The intention therefore operates at the interior of, and thus unites with the active force or “efficient cause”<sup>3</sup> producing change in the state of things. The unity of the action also resides in the unification of the ego and the acting body of the agent.

[Having drawn from everyday language this preliminary clarification of the problem of action,] how should we conceptualize the ego, consciousness, and the body, as well as the relations between them? A considerable portion of both Husserl and Freud’s thought was devoted to pondering such questions in an effort to comprehend human beings as both deploying and unifying their being in action.

*The Perceiving Body and the Psychological Unconscious*

In the year 1900, two books were published that were destined to inaugurate new forms of thought: *Logical Investigations* by Edmund Husserl and the *Interpretation of Dreams* by Sigmund Freud. Husserl's text opposes naturalism in the human sciences, philosophical theories founded on psychologies that regard psychological facts as facts of nature, and an epistemology that tries to base itself on biology and attempts to explain logical structures as if they were characteristics of the human organism. The "psychologism" and "biologism" that Husserl rejects both undermine the possibility of a genuine science defined by universality and objectivity. In so far as Husserl opposes naturalisms that transpose causal thinking into the human sciences, the concept of finality is of central importance to his account of perception as the fundamental form of knowing the world. In his subsequent work, however, he grapples with the problem of avoiding a simple identification of finality and intentional consciousness. To achieve his aim of eliminating physicalistic language from the account of perception and action, it was critical to avoid becoming trapped in a dichotomy of the physical world on the one hand and the finality of consciousness on the other. Such a dichotomy was presupposed by the classical critique of finality and then sustained to benefit the development of scientific thought. Modern critics thus dismiss as a form of "mentalism" all modes of thought that integrate teleology into their theory. They claim that teleological approaches only obfuscate the problem by trying to explain a process by the end at which it aims, and by conceiving that aim as if it preceded the process like an acting cause. [Although dismissed by teleologically-oriented thinkers for its empiricistic presuppositions, this critique still illumines a problematic that tends to arise when the concept of finality is employed.] That is to say, the appeal to finality often falls prey unwittingly to the anthropological dualism of its critics by failing to steer clear of a duality in which "mind," [now identified with the conscious subject], is subtly dissociated from the acting-force [with which it should in fact be united. It was precisely this problem that Husserl was attempting to avert by distinguishing, and clarifying the interrelationship of finality and conscious intentionality].

In a manner that is comparable to the efforts of Husserl, Freud also attempts to restore the integrity of psychic reality by affirming its unity and by rejecting dualisms and epiphenomenalisms. Freud's interest in comprehending diverse forms of psychopathology takes him beyond the dualistic conception of a mechanical body attached to a mind that chooses and executes its actions. In the last century, however, psychopathology has for the most part been approached in a manner that is practically the inverse of "mentalism." Psychiatrists and neurologists first observe that people suffering from "mental illnesses" (*Geisteskrankheit*) are consciously aware of, but lack freedom with respect to their own actions. This observation leads them to disassociate the concept of consciousness from that of freedom, and seek an explanation of the "mental illness" in a hypothesized, hereditary, cerebral degeneration. Finally, some psychiatrists and neurologists formulate a certain concept of the unconscious to address the underlying determinants of consciousness. These theorists comprehend the "unconscious" in neurological terms and view it as functioning in an automatic manner.<sup>4</sup> The mechanism of the reflex arc was the first model applied to this neural automatism.

Adherents of the theory of a neural unconscious soon raise the two following questions: (1) If action can occur with conscious awareness but without the free choice of the actor, perhaps

consciousness is always but a fortuitous accompaniment or pure reflection of the neurological substrate? (2) In that case, perhaps the very concepts of subject, of project, and of intention are only concessions to popular psychology? Ultimately, the theory of the neural unconscious inverts the locus of the action but sustains the dualism that arises when the conscious subject is placed at the center of the action. Now it is not the conscious subject but the neurological body that acts, organized and functioning according to the laws of linear causality.<sup>5</sup>

Initially a neurologist who did valuable research on aphasia, Freud recognized that many “mental” illnesses could not be explained by the theory of the neural unconscious because their symptoms have an obvious albeit disguised meaning. He concluded that these illnesses belong to the psychological order and must be explained by a psychological theory. After abandoning an initial project to construct a psychophysical theory “for the use of neurologists,” Freud rejects this provisional dualism by introducing and systematically elaborating his dynamic concept of the psychological unconscious. I will not here elaborate the components of Freud’s theory. Instead, let us only note that through clinical experience Freud came to recognize a psychic reality that is capable of making conscious subjects act in a manner that surprises them. In this way Freud discerns the *psychic body* situated between intentional consciousness and the neurological body as the [organized dynamism] that joins them together.<sup>6</sup> The unity of human action is realized in and through the psychic body because the psychic unconscious is constituted by *Triebwunschkonstruktionen*--representations of pulsional desire.<sup>7</sup> Now, the body’s power to act can be conceived as a psychological tendency possessing a teleology that is inherent to it. Freud shows that the unified fabric of a human being is so tightly woven that the symptoms of a neurosis still express the meaning of the wishes that have been disguised, and the impulses that have been inhibited. [In theoretically articulating this unity,] Freud posits psychological facts that are simultaneously both force-like and finalistically-oriented. This feature of Freud’s thought is troubling to phenomenologists, psychologists, and physicians alike because it blends two registers of reality—the order of causes and the order of meaning—usually understood to be structurally separate.<sup>8</sup> The hostility and suspicions that psychoanalysis has provoked in some of its opponents are less a response to its notorious pan-sexuality than to the challenge that it poses in thus melding and thereby undermining these categories of dualist thought.

Turning now to the phenomenology of Husserl, one of the important questions that it raises for Freud is the function of the conscious ego in acting. To conceive the conscious ego as externally appended to pulsional life like Plato’s “charioteer” is to reintroduce a dualism, albeit one that now inheres in the relations between the psychic body and consciousness. Such a dualism, however, tends to be excluded in advance both by Freud’s clinical observations as well as by his psychotherapy. The symptoms that analysts suffer are neither laid out before them like perceptual objects nor spoken about in a detached medical manner. It is only in the course of their treatment that patients become progressively able to articulate the desires and the counter-wills deployed in their symptoms without their being consciously aware of them.

Husserl and Freud developed theoretical concepts restoring the unity of human beings and grounding the possibility of a viable theory of action. Although the new neurosciences played no

role in the development of their theories, phenomenologists and psychoanalysts are nonetheless encouraged upon hearing that the findings emerging from this field corroborate their intuitions.<sup>9</sup> Researchers now view the neurological system as lending dynamic support to the personal body of the actor precisely as philosophical and analytic thought would have predicted. Berthoz (1997), for instance, proposes that the critical function of the neurological system is to elaborate “strategies of action.” He thereby rejects all physicalistic models, including that of the cybernetic system, and links causality and finality to each other. The same kind of progress is apparent in the work of Karli (1995, pp. 55-56) who states that neurological functioning governs action according to two principles: (1) “ascending causality” which flows from the elementary towards the complex, and (2) “descending causality” which organizes, validates, and adapts [on the basis of finality. Their merits notwithstanding,] studies of this type can never truly access the problem of the ego that acts. To leap from the anonymous cerebral strategy elaborated in an action to an utterance such as “I will go to open the window because I *feel* a lack of air” is only a theoretical short cut, a regression back to theories that treat consciousness as a mere reflection of the neural unconscious.

#### The Preconscious “Mineness” in Husserl

Freud’s research is based on clinical and psychological observations leading him to situate the psychic unconscious at the core of the person. Husserl works at a philosophical level and naturally begins by assuming the viewpoint of consciousness and of the ego. Husserl, however, shows that finality is already at work in perception itself. The finality involved in perception is not a matter of forming and perceiving mental images (*Bilder*) of the things. Rather, Husserl understands perception as a dynamic exploration which “goes out to” the things, and thereby animates and structures finality (Bernet, 1994, pp.118-196). In his 1913 work *Ideen I*, Husserl resolves the ambiguity that still surrounded this issue in the *Logical Investigations*. The telos of perception, he clarifies, is not itself a perceptual datum but rather a necessary regulating principle that functions prior to the person’s becoming aware of it. Husserl employs the expression “*fungierende Intentionalität*” to indicate that this teleology operates without consciousness in both the natural life of perception and in the psychological tendencies of an individual. Husserl further identifies this natural life as the “*animalische Natur*” of human beings. Placing this “animal nature” between material nature and the mental world, Husserl designates “*Leib*”—“lived body” as opposed to *Körper* or “organic body”—as the being whose living is characterized by “*animalische Natur*.” Husserl comprehends the mental world as both supported by and deeply rooted in *Leib*.

In his texts on phenomenological psychology, Husserl resists the positivistic disposition to fragment psychological life. He therefore emphasizes the *Ichlichkeit*, that is to say, the “egoity” of psychological life. “Egoic” consciousness, however, does not seem to be essential to the psychological life that is structured by this egoity. Here, Husserl once again evokes the idea of an operative and pre-conscious intentionality—“*fungierende Intentionalität*”—as the essential organizing factor that grants to the psychological processes the unity of intentional acts. Based upon these texts though exceeding their letter, I interpret Husserl’s *Ichlichkeit* as a dynamic center consisting of act-like processes that are neither inanimate nor merely juxtaposed facts.

Towards the end of Husserl's career, during the years 1930-1938, he explicitly revisits the problem of the presence of the ego in perceptual acts and psychological life. Husserl recognizes that the constitution of intentional life can develop without the intercession of an active ego, independent of the finalities that the ego consciously poses. [Responding to the problems that this observation raises, Husserl develops his theory of "passive constitution"] and recognizes the need to correct his prior conceptions accordingly. Despite those corrections, however, Husserl still insists on the continuous centering by the egoic pole of everything that is given in the archaic state of genesis (*die ständige Zentrierung durch den Ichpol jeder Primordialität.*) [In his theory of passive constitution, Husserl tried to resolve this ambiguity of an egoity without an ego by attributing a critical mediating role to affect.] "In passivity, the ego is implied (*beteiligt*) in the mode of being-affected (*Affektion*). It is [therefore] necessary to postulate the existence of accomplishments (*Leistungen*) that are passive, "unconscious" in the sense of that which is pre-affective (*vor-affektiv*), but which contain a tendency to awaken the ego" (Hohlenstein, 1972, p. 218).

Utilizing this phenomenology of passive constitutions, Husserl continues to excavate the basis for the unity of intentional acts, a unity that characterizes all of both psychological and mental life. In my view, however, his paradoxical idea of *passive* constitution ultimately retains too essential a reference to the paradigm of active constitution by ego consciousness. In an attempt to found the primary pre-egoic unity, Husserl introduces the idea of the ego as a pole to which the affections are directed and which they tend, for that reason, to "awaken." If this is the case, however, would not the preconscious ego be but the ego itself in a state of somnambulistic latency? When Husserl then speaks of continuous centering by the egoic pole, does not the ego actively accomplish this unity only as a pole of finality, an end to be produced? If not, how can we understand the idea of the affections being directed towards the ego in order to awaken it? These problems are not resolved in Husserl's own works. In what follows, I try to work towards a resolution by utilizing some of Freud's theoretical concepts to elaborate Husserl's concept of the *animalische Natur*.

#### Freud: The Egoic Unity of the Libidinal Body

Freud's method is that of a scientist. To understand what he was seeing and especially what he was hearing in his work with patients, Freud positions himself at the crossroads of the normal and the psychopathological. From this vantage point, he builds theoretical concepts to account for the phenomenologically describable formations and deformations of the psychological phenomena. Whereas phenomenology, through its "reductions," analyzes the constitution of phenomena, Freud theoretically re-constitutes the formation of psychological phenomena. In his vigilant attunement to the nexus where pathology exploits normal structures and processes, Freud obviously grants fundamental import to elements quite different from those to which Husserl was particularly attentive. Husserl's epistemological focus leads him from the analysis of perception to that of the body. Freud, on the other hand, approaches the problem not as a philosopher but as a clinician who must understand varied forms of psychopathology to facilitate their treatment. This tactical approach leads Freud from the outset to regard as primordial both the psychic body and the "egoic centering" that only subsequently become a theme of Husserl's

inquiries. The important communality in spirit between Husserl and Freud on which I have insisted thus goes hand in hand with essential differences of method, object, and principles of comprehension. These differences are apparent in the vexation expressed by phenomenologists regarding what they perceive as the persistent physicalism in Freud's thinking. For their part, psychoanalysts tend to have objected, for reasons with which I agree, to the attempts by phenomenologists to reformulate the theories of melancholia, hysteria, and schizophrenia utilizing their own concepts. In a famous retraction, Merleau-Ponty (1960, p. 5-10) acknowledged these errors of phenomenology.<sup>10</sup> It becomes apparent from Merleau-Ponty's posthumously published work that he learned from psychoanalysis a comprehension of the body that was not accessible through the phenomenological reduction. It is precisely this psychology of the body that, apart from any polemic confrontation, I would now like to discuss briefly.<sup>11</sup>

While he was still working as a neurologist, Freud makes observations of aphasia that lead him to propose a schema of connections between language and the brain that he supposes to be necessary for normal speech. Subsequently, the observation of psychopathology leads him to articulate the structure of the psychological functions that mediate the internal linkage between the body and consciousness and make it possible to live normally in a common world. For Freud, psychopathological suffering also illumines the psychic malformations that undermine fundamental human capacities to love, work, play, perceive things accurately, speak understandably, and relate to others. In the process of listening to and interpreting the symptoms of his patients, Freud comes to the conclusion that psychic function and dysfunction come about through a long history that is to an important extent prior to the use of language, and which thus belongs to the preconscious subject of the lived body.

The archaic psychic body is that of a "subject" still in a muddled unity. As such, the archaic psychic body entails (1) perceptual exploration of the enviroing world, (2) a nexus of emergent needs, experienced pleasures, and displeasures, and (3) a center of attachment seeking warmth and safety in the eyes, the body, and the voice of another human being.

In contrast to animals, human beings are not hereditarily pre-programmed to engage in activities that perpetuate the species. The human psychism is first of all structured and distinguished by this anthropological fact. Even more important than this biological pre-maturation and lack of natural adaptation, however, is the indetermination of the human sexual drive. This feature leads Freud to employ the term *Trieb* for the sexual drive of human beings and reserve the term "instinct" for animals.

A second essential characteristic of the human psychism is the capacity to experience the pleasure that arises from the vital functions and activities as a pleasure in its own right. By virtue of being predisposed to derive an autonomous pleasure from the pleasure experienced in satisfying vital needs, humans are freed from the enclosure that for animal species consists in the vital union of the individual with its milieu. These distinguishing features liberate human beings from the teleonomic constraints of animal psychological nature. To that extent, humans have to "make themselves"; they have to be "educated" to their own humanity. Because we are devoid of instinctual programming, the human psychism can produce both

creative works on the one hand, or perversions, neuroses, and self-destructive acts on the other.

A problem of particular interest to both the phenomenologist and to the neuroscientist of “strategies of action” is that of the advent of the ego. In keeping with the assertions of both philosophy and linguistics, Freud understands consciousness and language to be the locus of the ego. The need, however, to understand the deconstruction of the ego that he observed in schizophrenia, as well as the unconscious process of repression that occurs in neurosis, forced Freud to consider an egoic centering of the psychism that is prior to the entry into language. Here we encounter the same line of questioning that appears in the later works of Husserl even though each thinker arrives at very different answers. In drawing out the implications of his observations on the human capacity to derive from vital functioning a kind of pleasure that is sought for itself and on the human being’s lack of instinctual programming, Freud affirms that in its archaic phase, the psychic body already forms a certain unity precisely because the feeling of pleasure implies a center. Freud designates the archaic phase of the psychic body as that of “auto-eroticism,” a term that is ambiguous because it is also used in referring to a perversion presenting some similarity with this stage. What is most important at present, however, is the idea of “eroticism” in the sense of pleasure experienced in and through the body, determining the status of an *autos*, a pre-egoic self. I will not elaborate on the fractures of the psychic self that can result from an excess of pleasure or displeasure, or from a lack of pleasure; fractures that heal poorly such that, in the typical onset of schizophrenia, the ambivalent experiences reopen at the threshold of a new psychological life in adulthood.

Freud also asserts that the autoerotic psychic body at a certain moment explicitly takes itself as the object of its own love. Stimulated by the [loving] attentions of which the child is the subject in the archaic sense of this term, the experience of an autonomous pleasure turns back reflexively on itself. It is this new process that gives birth to the ego and to a certain consciousness of oneself, even before the child has the language to assert itself in its distinct egoity. In contrast to Husserl, Freud places the origin of the ego not in the “being-affected” of the individual who passively generates the datum in question, but in the centered activity of the psychic body. It is Freud, in my opinion, who more adequately accounts for the nature of the ego. The ego is always act—act of enunciation, act of decision, act of symbolic creation. How could the ego insofar as it is an act arise through a passive emotional experience? There is an additional advantage to Freud's formulation of the ego emerging in a body that is in the process of libidinally assembling itself. Freud's insight points to the importance of enjoyment (*jouissance*) in the auto-programming required by an individual that is not governed by the teleonomy proper to a sphere of life where the individual is tied to its milieu.

Each in their own way, Husserl’s phenomenology and Freud’s psychoanalysis, restore the unity—*mind and body*<sup>12</sup> of the human being, a unity that must be affirmed in order to conceptualize adequately human action. Both schools of thought liberate us from the dualistic opposition between “final cause” and “efficient cause” that the physicalistic model imposes on epistemology and psychology.<sup>13</sup> Their concepts of a dynamic unity enacted in an oriented

process between mind and the psychism are capable of accommodating the neurosciences of dynamic strategies, and could also raise some questions for the neurosciences to ponder. Because it descends from the transcendental reduction to the "ego-centered primitive experiences," phenomenological research encounters an internal and methodological limit in conceiving the unity of the human being. Its starting point in the life of consciousness does not, in my opinion, provide the kind of access to the unity of the psychism that is required to adequately account for the action amply achieved by a living and preconsciously intentional body.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the unity of human beings must be understood in a manner that permits comprehension of pathologies that are psychological in nature but to a greater or lesser extent disruptive of human action. Freud's theory formulates the concepts that are required to account for his clinical observations. In so doing, this theory provides to phenomenology what it lacks by virtue of the limitations that are inherent in its starting point. Phenomenology, for its part, is necessary for the theoretical development of psychoanalysis because it elaborates an idea of the human as an inter-subjective being who is capable of creating civilization, an anthropological reality that Freud recognizes but cannot adequately appreciate with the theoretical explanation that he proposes.

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#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Zu den Sachen selbst* (Husserl).

<sup>2</sup> Because they allude to some form of active collaboration between disciplines usually regarded as disparate if not incompatible, these opening remarks call for some clarification. To that end, it should suffice to note the context in which they were delivered and provide a gloss on research trends in branches of the neurosciences. Vergote's paper was delivered to neuroscientists, psychoanalysts, and philosophers at an interdisciplinary conference devoted to research on human action as a life world phenomenon. The neuroscientists in attendance were representatives of the "new cognitive neuroscience." No longer content with establishing the "neural correlates" of cognition (reason and mental representation), this new science first turned its attention to "bodily movement," but then critically shifted the focus of its research to "action." In so far as "action" connotes the conduct of a human subject, this shift stimulated active exchange between researchers and philosophers by producing empirical data concerning issues that had previously been investigated only by philosophy. Psychoanalysis enters into this exchange by virtue of its practical and theoretical access to a psychic corporeality situated

between the neurological body and conscious intentionality. A full report of these research trends and a valuable discussion of their significance are contained in Petit, J-L. (1997). "Introduction." In Jean-Luc Petit (Ed.), *Problemes & Controverses: Les neurosciences et al philosophie de l'action* (pp. 1-21). J. Vrin: Paris. Further discussion of these issues also appears in footnote nine of the present manuscript (Translator's note).

<sup>3</sup> The notion of "efficient cause" is drawn from Aristotle who mentions four types of causality: efficient, final, formal, and material. The efficient cause denotes the immediate force required to accomplish a specified end. In the context of the example under discussion, the efficient cause of the change in the temperature of the room would be the bodily actions involved in opening the window. It is important to note that *none* of Aristotle's forms of "causality" corresponds to the modern concept of linear causality and each, in different ways, is interwoven with what we now conceive as "motivation" (Translator's note).

<sup>4</sup> For more on the "neural unconscious" see Gauchet (1992).

<sup>5</sup> Since the theory of the neural unconscious is not widely known in the United States, it may be helpful to note that it is based upon the same presuppositions underlying the widely popularized notion of psychopathology as a "chemical imbalance in the brain." To the latter conception the author's critical comments concerning the neural unconscious can be applied without alteration (Translator's note).

<sup>6</sup> In this critical passage Vergote chooses the term "psychic body" to capture what he considers to be Freud's fundamental discovery. The term itself, however, is a theoretical neologism of Vergote's own making that never appears in Freud's own writings. Integrating Freud's "psyche" with Husserl's "lived body," the concept of the psychic body plays a pivotal role in Vergote's project to reappropriate fundamental psychoanalytic concepts. In a text devoted to this project, Vergote uses "psychic body" to clarify the phenomenon behind Freud's "psychic apparatus," and elaborates on psychic body as essentially "libidinal body." For the full discussion of these issues, see the author's "*Corps Libidinal et constitution de l'ego*." In Vergote, A. (1997). *La psychanalyse à l'épreuve de la sublimation* (pp. 99-107). Paris: Cerf. Additional comment on the "psychic body," including a discussion of its essentially relational structure, can be found in Vergote, A. (1996). *In Search of a Philosophical Anthropology: a compilation of essays by Antoine Vergote* (pp.32-33 & 82-5). (M. S. Muldoon, Trans.). Belgium: University of Leuven. (Translator's note).

<sup>7</sup> "Representations of pulsional desire" is Vergote's preferred translation for the German neologism *Triebwunschestellung*. A gloss on this choice of terms will clarify the author's understanding of Freud's concept.

Like the Lacanian school with which he was at one time associated, Vergote has generally translated Freud's *Trieb* as "pulsion" and *Wunsch* as "desire." More recently, however, Vergote (1997) suggests that the composite term "pulsional desire" (*Triebwunsch / désir pulsionnel*) most accurately captures what he believes to be the intended meaning of Freud's term *Trieb*. Vergote's

apparent appropriation of Lacanian terminology can therefore be misleading. In fact, both the terms "pulsion" and "desire" have a somewhat different meaning for each thinker. As for Vergote's use of the term "representation" (*vorstellung*), it signifies for him not so much an interior image as the interiorization of *experiences of contact* that both form and inform the psychism. "Representations of pulsional desire" thus denotes a structural unity integrating a quasi-natural necessity (pulsion) with an open finality (desire). For a complete discussion of these issues, see "Besoin, pulsion et l'inconscient originaire," in Vergote, A. (1997). *La psychanalyse à l'épreuve de la sublimation* (p. 79-89). Paris: Cerf. (Translator's note).

<sup>8</sup> In Vergote's opinion, Freud's articulation of psychic facts as simultaneously force-like and finalistically-oriented expresses a human reality that has relevance for philosophical anthropology and for a general psychology. Freud's "mixed discourse" renders patently dualistic the celebrated proposal of Dilthey that the natural sciences *explain* and the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) *interpret*. For this reason, Vergote rejects the exclusively hermeneutic model adopted by most, if not all, phenomenological, existential, and humanistic psychologies. He contends that psychology *as a human science* should both interpret and explain psychological phenomena. Discussion of his position appears in Vergote, A. (1996). *Religion, belief, and unbelief: A psychological study* (pp. 48-52). Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, and in Vergote, A. (1997) "Cause and Meaning, Explanation and Interpretation in the Psychology of Religion." In Belzen, J. A. (Ed.), *Hermeneutical Approaches in Psychology of Religion, International Series in the Psychology of Religion* (pp. 11-34). Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Neuroscience uncovers the role played by action in constituting both the subject and the environing world. These findings sparked the interest of phenomenologists and psychoanalysts because of their bearing on problems of mind-body unity, and because they validate their fundamental insights into the corporeal rootedness of human initiatives. A full discussion of these corroborating findings appears in Petit, J-L. (1997). "Introduction." In Jean-Luc Petit (Ed.), *Problems & Controversies: Les neurosciences et la philosophie de l'action* (pp. 1-21). J. Vrin: Paris (Translator's note).

<sup>10</sup> "The accord of phenomenology and psychoanalysis should not be understood to consist in phenomenology's saying clearly what psychoanalysis has said poorly." Merleau-Ponty, M. (1960). "Preface." In Hesnard, A., *L'oeuvre de Freud* (p. 8). Paris: Payot (Translator's note).

<sup>11</sup> I further develop these ideas concerning Freud in the following study: Vergote, A. (1994). "La constitution de l'ego dans le corps pulsionnel." In V. G. Florival (Ed.), *Dimensions de l'exister. Études d'anthropologie philosophique* (pp. 178-194). Peters: Louvain-Paris.

<sup>12</sup> The words "mind and body" appear in English in the original French text (Translator's note).

<sup>13</sup> Once again these references to "causality" are Aristotelian rather than linear. The "final cause" of an action is the *telos* towards which it is aimed. Please see footnote 3 for more on Aristotle's theory of causality and a definition of "efficient cause" (Translator's note).

<sup>14</sup> A full discussion of limitations inherent to phenomenological method is provided in Ver Eecke, W. (1974). Freedom, self-reflection and intersubjectivity or psychoanalysis and the limits of the phenomenological method. In Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Ed.), *Analecta Husserliana, yearbook of phenomenological research, Vol. III* (pp. 252-270). Boston: D. Reidel (Translator's note).

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