

IV - Spontaneity and the Embodiment of Meaning

An analysis of spontaneity is central to understanding the relation between mind and body; intelligibility, feeling, image and action. Once we have the basic terms and relations for understanding spontaneity, we can introduce the current basic explanatory models that apply to a full understanding of spontaneity. But first it is necessary to get a phenomenological “fix” on spontaneity and its general relations to meaning and freedom. The key to these is embodiment.

Actions are embodied not merely when they are reliant on the body, but when the enabling conditions are spontaneous. Conscious operations as spontaneous exhibit the dual characteristics of being partially controllable, but not fully chosen. A first approximation to the manner in which they are is to compare them with breathing. Breathing also is spontaneous. We have some control over breathing, but not total control. We can stop breathing, but only for short periods. Similarly, we spontaneously ask questions, understand, make judgments, decide and act. As one moves from questioning to free deliberate acting there is a wider range of effective choice. We have more control over ourselves in the sense that we can start or stop certain operations, enter meditative states where we do not question or choose to imagine particular things, for example. But as with breathing, we typically ask questions effortlessly and likewise orient ourselves to our surroundings intelligently and deliberately. The spontaneity of conscious operations lends them a certain inevitability. We cannot choose not to be free, though we can make choices, for example.

Within the spontaneity of consciousness we can distinguish freedom from the given. Our notion of the given is dynamic, since for the most part the given is mediated via the body and our capacity for the given is to some extent the mediated result of development. The given is in relation to freedom. In a sense it is given “for” freedom either as constituting part of the context of action or an object or element of action. Freedom is a quality of operations. In the performance of the operation we have some measure of control. But there also are elements we do not control. Those are the given. The given is what is embodied. That is, it is for us either as a direct effect of biological processes or as conditioned by them. In the latter case, if the conditions go away, that element of the given would go away. This distinction is important in understanding the learning and recovery of skills.

Freedom is most commonly associated with acts issuing from decisions, where the decisions are the results of a degree of rational deliberation on alternatives in terms of desires, preferences, or values. We also can act freely without deliberation. This basic freedom is found in many animals who also can act intelligently and at times deliberately within the context of their drives, interests, feelings patterned by biologically enabled behavioral systems. This independence of freedom from knowledge is the basis of the moral imperative in humans, where we experience an exigence to have our doing match our knowing. Acts, then, are free, but they can be chosen more or less responsibly.

By deliberative consciousness I mean the determination and evaluation of alternatives that precedes decision and action. By pre-deliberative actions I do not mean simply non-deliberative acts, but acts which typically precede deliberation and responsible actions or which are spontaneous actions within the process of arriving at a

decision and performing the chosen actions. The distinction between pre-deliberative and deliberative consciousness is not sharp, but fuzzy, since there can be some minor deliberation occurring in pre-deliberative consciousness. However, the deliberation is typically tacit and regards operational alternatives immediately present as the intimation or nascent emergence of an operation or set of operations.

Pre-deliberative freedom is associated with the directing of attention, the pursuit of understanding and judgment and the virtuosity of action. It also is manifest in inattentiveness, flight from understanding and reasonableness, inhibition of feelings, and indifference towards expression and performance.

Pre-deliberative freedom is similar, but distinct from, most free skillful acts. It is similar in that there is an inadequate distinction between the performance of the act and the choice of it. Though skillful acts can be chosen in the moment with little or no thought, they differ from spontaneous pre-deliberative acts in that the choice is the result of practice or training. Pre-deliberative freedom is more immediate and spontaneous. It occurs, for example, in impulsive behavior. As we noted it also accompanies the more inward operations of paying attention, understanding, judging, believing. Pre-deliberative freedom is the most fundamental freedom of consciousness.

We can understand degrees of spontaneity, then, by correlating the type of freedom with the actions that initiate and constitute a performance.

Participation and Skills

By being in a situation I am participating spontaneously in it. As conscious I am always in a situation so I am always participating. What is commonly considered to be non-

participation is a type of participation. Participation is involvement without full control. We are involved via our conscious operations, but the degree to which we are involved depends upon freedom. Just as I can choose to be more or less “involved” with my breathing, I can do the same with my conscious operations and other aspects of the situation.

Because the operational situation is constituted spontaneously via intentionality, it is not of our choosing though our past choices have contributed to it. This can best be understood by analogy with skills.

As learned, operations can become coordinated and performed relatively automatically. What once was performed singly and with effort becomes coordinated and performed effortlessly as an ensemble. Examples are learning a complex motor skill or a new language. Consider juggling again. Learning to juggle requires a kinesthetic insight. In learning how to juggle, one must make the transition from juggling two objects to juggling three. Juggling two objects is relatively easy since there is a hand to catch each of them. However, with three objects one must be in the air at all times. To do that requires a motor insight that yields the coordination of the catches and tosses.

Once we have had an insight, it is easier to have it again. In some cases, it appears to occur immediately. This is certainly the case when they become habitual. There is a coordination of sensitivity and the imagination in the kinesthetic insight which makes this possible. The occurrence of the motor operations in the right configuration can elicit the familiar “Aha! That’s it!” Usually we understand that we have gotten the point in two ways, by results and by “feel”. The results can be fairly obvious. For example, if we are trying to learn to hit a driver and we hit the golf ball straight and long down the fairway, we can be pretty sure we did something right. Usually, the shot will feel good

too. However, we can get the results without getting the motor insight. We may not know what we did and may not be able to duplicate it. Likewise, if we have bad habits, the correct form can feel awkward. In these cases, it takes a while to develop feel. So in learning skills, there also are a series of insights that steadily contribute to the repertoire of operations until we achieve our goal. However, along the way there will be clear instances of motor insights where feel, results, and recognition occur simultaneously as in the juggling example.

Once one has the key insight into the operation it can be varied. Variation hones our skills making them more economical. As we will discuss in more detail later, this has some similarities to conceptualization. Just as we refine our verbal expression, we refine our motor operations, the way we walk, the way we sit, the ways we hold things. Moreover, our gestures, poses and expressions can convey meaning. They express our self image and our self concept, for example. Variation also plays another role. It is a pathway to learning new operations.

Of course, operations also can be combined permitting us to develop our game of golf or tennis, for example, if we are athletically inclined. But the combination also occurs in the development of our daily routines. There are sets of flexible operations by which we get dressed, cook, drive and so on. We can vary the core of operations depending on the situation, what we want to wear or to eat, or where we want to go and the various changes we encounter in the course of our effort.

Trial and error exploits variation as we try to do new things. While learning to juggle may involve trial and error, the variation that hones performance is of the learned complex or pattern of operations that constitutes the performance. Once we have “got it”

we can play within the operational parameters or we can practice. Play has an experimental or “what if” element where the operations are varied to see what will happen. Practice is more results oriented in the sense of perfecting existing operations. To understand why practice works, we need to develop further the notion of skills.

In skills we attend from the body to the focal object, or what we want to accomplish. The best illustration of this subsidiary-focal relation is found in what Michael Polanyi terms indwelling. This process occurs whenever we learn to use a tool. For example, if I am using a probe to explore a cavity I will first notice the aspects of the probe itself. However, as I use the probe, I will begin to focus on the cavity in terms of the impacts made by the probe. As I accommodate to the use of the probe, it virtually becomes a part of me. The same thing happens in driving a car. We attend from the feel of the steering wheel, the feel of the tires on the road and so on to traveling down the highway. The impacts made by the probe, the feel of the steering wheel and so on are subsidiary elements we attend from. A similar process occurs in understanding another person. We assimilate their gestures, the tone of their voice, their spoken words, in understanding what they are communicating. We do not attend to this dwelling in the object or the other person explicitly. Rather, it is part of the process of their becoming for us. In a sense, we are that process, but we are not the focal object.

This process occurs in learning all skills. Using Piaget’s terms, we either assimilate a new activity to current operations, or we accommodate ourselves to a new activity. In accommodation we need to transform our operations or develop new ones. Assimilation is like getting an habitual insight. Accommodation requires new insights.

In fact, the line between the two is blurry since in assimilating some new minor insights may be required, but they are not transformative of the operational structure.

A key point is that in the learning of skills, there is a shift in attention. As one becomes more accomplished, the items to which we attend change just as we shift from attending to the impacts of a probe to the characteristics of the cavity. This shift is associated with operations becoming automatic. For example, in learning to ride a bicycle or how to skate we are initially concerned with keeping our balance. However, at a certain point this becomes automatic. Now, some situations may occur where maintaining our balance requires our explicit intervention, but these can be assimilated to the automatic process.

We can distinguish two levels in skills, acts and mere operations. What is merely an operation I do not need to attend to explicitly. In contrast, acts are operations I explicitly choose to do. The choice is in the context of performance. This means that it may involve very little deliberation. In fact, the more skilled we are, the less deliberation is required. The act can approach the efficiency of a “reflex”. These acts need to be distinguished from those instances where “reflexes” do take over. For example, there is a difference in tennis between placing a volley crosscourt and reacting to a hard hit shot and having the ball go cross court.

The deliberation in skills relies on the subsidiary elements, what we are attending from. For example, we are conscious of our body’s positions via kinesthetic sensing. We also have a background of visual and auditory sensations from which are selected cues and clues that can aid our performance. The sound of the ball coming off the tennis racket indicates the quality of the stroke. The spin on a baseball, the gestalt of the seams

rotating towards the batter, indicate what type of pitch it is: slider, fastball, curveball. Images play a key role. If you are very perceptive, sometimes you can attend to the image of the performance prior to the occurrence of the act. I have done this in catching items I have accidentally knocked off the kitchen counter. I also do it in playing tennis. The image is part of my intending to do something, for example, hitting the ball into a corner or down the line. Athletes exploit the role of the image in their preparation for play. They will imagine hitting the serve they want to hit prior to hitting it, for example. When they are not playing, they will mentally rehearse their play. There is evidence that mental rehearsal can improve ones skills even if they do not practice. If skills involve the integration of neural activity via insights, decisions and images, and if neural activity creates the integrations that permit acts to become operations that are performed automatically, then the evidence for the role of mental rehearsal is not surprising.

This leads us to another key point. The shift in attention that accompanies the development of skills is a change in our experience. Certainly it is a change in our self experience. We attend from changed subsidiaries and we perform different operations. However, commensurate with these changes are changes in the patterns of our experience of the situation. We attend to different aspects, for example. We see things that others do not see. In these cases, others could see them if we pointed them out to them, or if they could understand the situation. But they do not notice them because they are not in the same operational context as us. However, there are other instances where there are physiological changes that lead to a qualitatively different experience that others do not experience because their physiologies are different. The possibility for this is shown by

sensory deficits such as color blindness and in neural experiments that indicate that conscious activity is involved in the development of sensory capabilities.

This indicates that in human development, there is a conscious interest in performing the operations that will actualize our physiological potentials. The interest arises when the physiological conditions are in place for the operations. Examples include learning how to walk and talk. As the operations are performed our physiology changes, making other operations possible, and the process recurs. The change in our physiology is a change in our experience, as the experiments with the visual systems of monkeys clearly show. We can experience this process ourselves in learning any skill. The difference between us and the baby or the monkey is that we can more easily foresee the possibilities for development. However, knowledge of many of the details as well as the desire to try more advanced activities do not emerge until other conditioning operations have developed. Another difference is that we go through stages earlier in life where we are biologically primed to learn certain operations, like language. If we do not learn during those periods, it is extremely difficult to learn later. This indicates that there is a biological development occurring that requires conscious cooperation for its fulfillment. If that is not forthcoming, the development proceeds, but not to its potential. Since the development is not reversible, the “window of opportunity” is lost. A third difference is that our biology conditions the emergence of motivations for actions which will transform our physiology. In mature development, we perceive the possibilities for action and our physiology is transformed in the support of our freedom.

There is one more item to consider before we can understand the efficacy of practice and bring this section to a close. After I passed forty, I finally realized I needed

glasses. While driving home with my new glasses I noticed that I was focusing on things at a greater distance than I had been before, just as I had when my eyesight was 'normal'. I understood that a variation of the law of effect had been operative that partially accounted for my failure to recognize that I needed glasses earlier. I had unknowingly transformed my driving by focusing only on those items I could see clearly, which were closer to me. This is an example of the transformation of habits which was neither known or chosen. The transformation occurred within the context of a complex set of behaviors whose fundamental patterns, or relations, did not change.

In this case, the change was to sub-optimal performance compared to the prior performance. But it can also be the reverse. In fact, there was a spontaneous reorientation of visual experience in terms of what could be done effectively. It is here that practice plays a role. Practice hones the performance through transformation of the subsidiary operations in terms of the performance's goals. Similarly, the development of walking occurs within the performances of the toddler where walking is done within multiple goal directed contexts. In some cases it is done for the sheer fun of it and is play in the more general sense. So the striate nucleus develops to the point where we begin to see different patterns and develops to maturity via our focusing on them or the visual objects which incorporate them.

To summarize, kinesthetic development can occur within pre-existent, but sub-optimized performances. In the development of skills it also can occur via kinesthetic insights. In the former case, kinesthetic insights may be occurring, but they are not as profound as learning how to juggle, get the proper wrist flick in tossing a Frisbee or getting the sense of the proper rotation on the full golf swing.

The Athletic Pattern of Experience

In its pure form the athletic pattern of experience is aesthetic. It is done for its own sake and the doing is pleasurable where the pleasure is more than the winning or losing of a game or the pride in a good performance. The pattern is kinesthetic, and it is ordered remotely by the rules of a game, or the purpose and environment of a hike, kayaking or some other physical exercise done for its own sake. Though there are general types of performance associated with each type of activity, we all have our own style and particular aspects where we are more skilled than in others. In a game with an opponent there is an element of chance, be it the confluence of a set of factors, such as the wind, the position of the sun, the condition of the playing surface and the skill set of the opponent, or the roll of the dice or the deal of the cards. In this way games are analogous to situations in general, where how well we do is dependent both on the situation in which we find ourselves, over which we do not have full control, and what we can do in the situation. It requires the creative application of our skills and knowledge. In some cases we discover new ways to perform and our “game” develops. So basketball players discover new moves and golfers, pool players and tennis players discover how to control the ball via variations in strokes and imparting different spins to the ball.

In its highest form the athletic pattern is a type of peak performance. Peak performance requires concentration and single mindedness. There is a “loss of self” in the detachment from anything else. All conscious subsidiaries are integrated in terms of the performance. This degree of detachment and concentration can be learned. It also

can occur spontaneously as exemplified in the marvelous English phrase, “death concentrates the mind”.

Peak performance can be accompanied by peak experiences, positive or negative, pleasurable or not pleasurable. Normal performance has a similar structure, but there typically are other aspects of experience and concerns that are distracting. Performance is impaired if these concerns are so strong that we cannot concentrate sufficiently to accomplish our tasks. For example, we “fall to pieces” or “cannot get it together”. Sometimes this occurs because we have a values conflict where it is difficult to concentrate on the mundane because we have a larger concern. Other times it occurs and we do not know why. This is one symptom of neurosis or psychosis. Difficulty in concentrating is a symptom of depression. Illness or pain also can affect it. There is a spontaneous reorganization of consciousness to deal with them, but the reorganization does not permit peak performance. The whole person is affected by the inability to fully focus on the task at hand.

Performance includes an aesthetic appraisal. In a positive experience this can lead us to doing things for their own sake. Performance also involves meaningful evaluation. We evaluate how well we perform, understand the performance in terms of our self-meaning and so on. These constitute normative (only evaluative - how well did I do according to some standard), aesthetic, and valuative or moral appraisals. These typically are not differentiated, but are compact. They can be either explicit or tacit, that is, insights and judgments can be expressed in some form such that the person could provide an account of the process, or not. The evaluations can be emotional. These evaluations can be regular and recurrent in similar situations, or situations that are

perceived as similar. They can become automatic, just as skillful operations do. This is especially true in intersubjective situations.

In peak performance the athletic pattern is most clearly seen as a pattern of experience. Interests and concerns that are constituents of other patterns are not intruding or competing for attention. Our conscious activity is both patterned and patterning in a very focused manner.

I have concentrated on the athletic pattern because I wanted to emphasize the role the development of skills plays in consciousness. They enable our participation in situations and their development is a transformation of our participation. I have introduced the notion of peak performance as an instance of a pure pattern of experience to effect the transition to understanding the aesthetic pattern. In turn, understanding the aesthetic pattern will enable us to understand elemental meaning which in turn will round out our discussion of the embodiment of meaning.

The Aesthetic Pattern of Experience

The transition to the aesthetic pattern is made here by understanding that we can lose ourselves in peak performance. In watching a movie or play or reading a book, for example, we can lose ourselves in the sense that, though conscious, we focus only on the movie, play or story. There is a personal component involved since we get tense, scared, sad or relaxed in relation to what is occurring. But our focus is on the action, not our concomitant self experience, and it is on the action via that self experience. Just like the author, we bring something to the performance and what the performance is for us is

conditioned by our self development. There is an analogy between the athlete and the movie goer. We become skilled at watching movies. We implicitly assimilate common structures, meanings and conventions so we can anticipate as well as react.

The encounter with a work of art is participation that is patterned by the work and ourselves in relation to it. We have defined participation minimally as involvement without full control. The better the work of art and the more acculturated we are to the elements the artist exploits, the more spontaneous and rich our participation is. In reencounters with the same art our participation develops. The better the art, the richer and deeper our participation becomes.

Art is both artifice and meaningful. We need to distinguish within the artistic creation the meaning from the elements that condition the recognition of the meaning by us. The meaning, of course, is not explicit. It is not the type of meaning that is communicated via an explanation or understood in mathematics. Much of it is implicit and it is gradually understood through the repeated participation that is the aesthetic pattern of experience. We understood earlier that theoretically we can distinguish significance from the signifier, though the distinction is inadequate. That is, the signifier is a sign by virtue of being meaningful. And in some cases we only can attain the understanding we have by means of signifiers. This is certainly the case in understanding the unimaginable. But just as good graphic design utilizes techniques to focus our attention on what is considered most important and presents it in a way that is easily understandable with minimal questioning and interpretation, the artist evokes conscious states that facilitate the understanding of the character's situation or the significance of a

painting. This is easiest to illustrate in songs, movies and stories. We can become situated almost immediately within the artistic context.

One of my favorite examples is the song “For What It’s Worth” by the Buffalo Springfield written during the Sixties protest era in the United States. Opening with mystery-invoking crisp, but drawn out, guitar notes that meld with the mood of the lyrics “Something’s happening here, what it is ain’t exactly clear” this initial openness gets situated more specifically rather quickly. “There’s a man with a gun over there, telling me I got to beware”. It is ambiguous whose side this man is on and the mystery becomes one of danger. But the embodiment, in the most concrete sense of the term, via artifice comes with the lyrics, “I think its time we stop, **hey, what’s that sound**, everybody look what’s goin’ down.” Vicariously hearing the unknown sound concretely evokes the sense of danger that informs the meaning of the remainder of the song. Depending on how well one is listening, it transforms the time of the song to the here and now of the listener, which in turn mediates the more general mystery and meaning. The remainder of the song deals with protest, the cultural context specifying protest against the war in Viet Nam, but sides are never taken. Rather our natural responses to danger are exploited within the cultural context and in turn yield a transformation of that context via art, in this case the song.

Let us switch to a real life example of a similar situation. By contextualizing both of these, we can understand the difference between intelligibility and meaning and how, in general, artists utilize meaning to reveal intelligibility, and its subset, the pre-conceptual..

One day I decided to reroof my carport. I was walking on the carport tearing off shingles when I heard a few creaks. A vague fear stirred within me and I began to be more cautious. As I continued to work, the creaks became more frequent. The fear became less vague. It became more intense, focused on the creaks and what they may mean. I then heard the sound of wood splintering and the meaning of the creaks was clear. Some of the roof beams were breaking as I walked across them. I now had vivid images of falling through the roof to injury or death and these accelerated and intensified the feelings of fear. But I also had a cool appraisal of other alternatives. I knew, for example, that the roof was most solid where it was attached to the house or on its outer edges where there were fairly strong posts. I also surmised that the beams were cracking, not breaking all the way. With the fear helping focus my attention, I warily and as lightly as I could, picked my way to the edge of the carport attached to the house and made my way to the ladder and climbed down. When I looked at the carport from below, my suspicions were confirmed. Many of the beams were splintered more than halfway through. They would have given way with little more prompting if I had remained on the roof.

In this experience, emotion and intelligence intertwined to constitute the situation and to provide alternatives for handling it. Emotion focused my concern. Intelligence discovered the object of concern. Working symbiotically, both reinforced the other. Emotion provided motivation and was linked to images. Intelligence provided alternatives and decisions. They tempered one another. Intelligence provided a more precise focus for the emotion, while the emotion helped keep me (as intelligent) focused on the issue at hand. In this experience they were integrated into my orderly retreat from

danger. I did not experience panic and a blind flight from danger on the one hand, or a cool indifference to the danger. Either reaction could have had similar serious consequences.

Also, I did not choose to be fearful. The fear emerged on its own accord. I did not choose to be focused. I simply was. It would have been extremely difficult to ignore the fear once it had emerged. The alternatives came quickly to mind. The only prolonged process was determining that the beams actually were cracking and assessing the level of the danger.

Immanent in this experience were many of the relations between feelings and intelligence, reasonableness, motivations and actions in the normal emergence of action. We will return to this example as an illustration of these relationships. A fundamental point is that intelligence, though it may be unrestricted in intent, is often only as unrestricted operationally as our feelings permit us to be. Thus, if emotionally we do not want to know something, it is extremely difficult to know it. Feelings provide motivations for knowing. Likewise, they are motivators for action. We are much more familiar with that fact. Thus, if we are to be fully oriented to reality and to our possibilities, our feelings need to attain full expression and be oriented to the same possibilities. Later we will consider feelings in their roles in our development and action, both as facilitating and inhibiting our full self-expression and becoming. We will lay out the roles of feelings in "normal" activity as well as their role in dis-enabling activity. In the latter case, we will discuss the nature of therapeutic insights and decisions, those moments of liberation where we recover, or discover and accept, aspects of ourselves we

have struggled to avoid or not develop. However, our point here is that one way art situates us is via the evocation of feelings.

Art invokes via artifice and signs an understanding of intelligibility immanent in situations. In the aesthetic experience this occurs via participation and the situation is the participative one. Insofar as art is good, what is learned in the aesthetic experience applies to other situations. Thus one can express any number of insights via art. But more importantly, intelligibility can be expressed prior to being conceptualized. So we can have an understanding of what is occurring though we do not have the language to express it. We can get to the point of conceptualizing what we have understood, but that would be in a pattern different from the aesthetic where we got the original insights, most likely the intellectual pattern. This is one role of the critic, to make explicit the intelligibility immanent in the aesthetic experience. To do so means going beyond the work as such to the mind of the artist, the cultural context and perhaps some sciences like psychology, for example. But how are we to understand this type of intelligibility? We need to provide a model of intelligibility and meaning to do so. This will enable us to understand that participating in the aesthetic experience is not a “suspension of belief”, but is both less and more than that.

Intelligibility, Meaning and Sign

We will define intelligibility as the content of a direct insight. Meaning is what is understood via signs. Thus meaning is a type of intelligibility. Signs have reference. This does not mean that they “stand for” something, though some do. It means that they

need to be understood to be signs and that what is understood is not simply the sign but something else also. They have a reference, though it can be extremely nuanced. Thus ‘of’, as a preposition, is referential, but to understand how it is in general is to understand its grammatical relations as well as its particular use in a particular sentence.

Understanding its particular use would entail an understanding of what is being expressed in the sentence. There is a sense, then, in which meaning is meant and it is meant via signs. This notion of signs is general, encompassing both the objects of semiotics and linguistics. Thus, the notion of meaning is not confined to linguistic meaning. Nor is the notion of semiotics confined to the culturally conventional. It refers to any *meant* expression intended to convey a meaning beyond the expression itself. Thus, though the sign may not be conventional, just as Wittgenstein claims there are no private languages, the sign is meant to be understood by another, or at least minimally public. There can be secret signs for example.

Codes are subsets of signs. It is misleading to consider signs only on an analogy with codes. Like codes, there is a conventionality to them. They have reference beyond themselves. But a code can be decoded and there are rules for doing so. The meaning of the code is its standing in some direct relationship to another set of signs which express meaning. But the relationship between signs and meaning is not the same as the relationship between a code and the signs into which it can be transformed. In addition to signs being rule-governed, they also can be combined in innovative ways to express concepts as we saw in the last chapter. What is meant in the sign is the intelligibility grasped via insight.

Let us move to understanding the differences between the intelligibility and the meaning of a smile. I am using this example for two reasons. The primary one is to illustrate the difference between intelligibility and meaning in human subjectivity. The secondary one is because it is used by Lonergan to illustrate his notion of elemental meaning, which I find ambiguous. The ambiguity can be resolved via the distinction between intelligibility and meaning. More importantly, as we shall see at the conclusion of this chapter this distinction underlies the differences between the studies of human and animal behavior. However, since meaning can be embodied, informing our spontaneity, mere intelligibility and meaning can both be present in expression and performance making it all too easy to overlook the differences between the two.

A smile is an expression of the person. Expressions may or may not be meaningful. As meaningful, the expression is subsidiary to its meaning. That is, the expression is what it is due to the meaning it is meant to convey. Expressions can be genuine or disingenuous. As disingenuous they are akin to a lie or concealment. This is not to imply that it is good to be genuine all the time. We must be prudent. So it is generally in the company of our trusted friends that we feel we can most be ourselves. In most social situations, prudence takes the form of appropriateness. There are expectations associated with our jobs and roles and the expression that goes along with them. So it is not that our expression is disingenuous, it is that it is constrained. These constraints can be interpreted as limiting and misinterpreted as “false” as one learns to be polite in social situations and learns how to behave in a business role and so on. But it also is liberating. It provides a means for interacting with people who are quite different than we are, even those we may never be able to have as friends due to dispositional,

cultural or value differences for example. It also allows us to be effective in our roles without interference from other concerns. Thus, in business, law or other professions, one develops a professional attitude, not only so we can interact with others in ways that efficaciously permit us to accomplish complex tasks that require cooperation, but also so we can concentrate on what needs to be done with some independence of our health, our mood, and concerns in other areas of our life. Thus, the professional attitude is not false, it is stylized. There is an artistic element to it. There are similar developments in all roles, including being a friend, a parent, a spouse, or a child of a particular age. But the notion of constraint stems from the combination of freedom of expression in some areas with the development of the discipline to restrain expression in others. Note that in the aesthetic pattern this opposition can disappear.

The developing of these roles is the developing of patterns of experience. It is helpful to understand these patterns in terms of our earlier discussion of spontaneity and skills. Just as language development relies on a cross cultural learning period where a wide range of sounds can be both expressed and heard by the infant as it proceeds through the babbling stage, so there is a cross cultural capacity for facial expressions. Genuine and immediately expressed happiness, sorrow and anger are recognized cross-culturally via common facial features. Unlike in the babbling stage, where the range of sounds gets reduced, the capacity to express ourselves via physical expression does not contract based on cultural differences. Rather it becomes more nuanced and meaningful as we develop, where the meaning is culturally mediated. In discussing freedom and spontaneity we distinguished an immediate and a mediated freedom, where the mediated freedom is virtually immediate via the spontaneity that results from the development of

skills. The same is true of our expressions within patterns of experience. They become patterned in characteristic ways that are indicative of our personality, or our general and typical ways of going about things. In turn this occurs within the cultural context. The cultural context conditions the patterning via influences on the experiencing of time, the scheduling of tasks, the time it takes to respond to others emotional cues, the distances we stand from each other when talking and so on. Time, space and communication all are culturally conditioned. So it is to semiotics, sociology and anthropology that we have to turn to understand the embodiment of meaning in expression as evidenced in our manners and behavior. It is rare that we have an unmediated, or purely immediate, expression. Rather most expressions occur within a meaningful context and, though they can have an immediately spontaneous aspect or core, it is typically characterized by a mediated immediacy of meaning. Thus, one can have a ready, open smile upon entering a room full of acquaintances. While the person may be happy to see them, the expression may have a habitual character that conveys meaning independently of the true emotional state of the person. So in the expression, we can distinguish between what is meant and what is revealed about the person. When there is no distinction we can say that someone is expressing themselves genuinely. When there is a distinction they may be genuine, but the expression may not be about themselves or about themselves as they are at the time. Mendaciousness or disingenuousness would be marked by a difference in what the person is trying to communicate about their immediate state and the state itself, though it may not be apparent to the receiver of the meaning.

We need to distinguish between disingenuousness, genuineness and authenticity. Since we live in a world mediated by meaning there are times we need to convey

different meanings via our expressions that mask our true state. It may be good to conceal our immediate reactions. If genuineness is the admission of the tension between limitation and transcendence, we can be genuine though our expressions are “mannered”. Transcendence is not inhibited, it is controlled. Control in itself is not bad. It depends on the use to which it is put. (difference from neurotic where there is habitual concealment and avoidance which inhibits transcendence)

Actors work in the mediated immediacy of their craft. As such virtually everything they do embodies meaning since they are conveying moods, a particular historical period, sense of social rank and so on. Some of these are trappings into which we spontaneously grow in our particular cultures. As such they may convey more meaning to others than they do to us and we may convey more meaning to others than we ourselves understand. There can be a gap between what we mean and what is meant to the other, not because the other misunderstands, but because our actions are within a realm of meaning that we do not fully comprehend.

In addition, the origins of meanings still may be operational in their results, but implicit and not known. This is the case with many words where we understand their meaning via use. The meaning has developed from the original word usage and the original context, though operative via current use in some sense, is not known. One example is the word “scuttlebutt” which refers to gossip. Few know that its original reference is to the container of fresh water on sailing ships where the crew would go to quench their thirst. In essence, asking “What’s the scuttlebutt?” would be the equivalent today of asking “What’s the water cooler?”.

Living in a world mediated via signs in the broad sense of constructed or intended references, which we do not fully understand, we live in a world of potential meaning for us. The meaning of the work of art as utilizing signs has potential meaning that the creator may not understand. On the other hand, at its core there is an intended or expressed meaning, though that expression may not be available explicitly but only immanently in the interaction with the work of art. So we can distinguish four cases here. We can understand meaning that we cannot yet adequately conceptualize or make explicit. We also can know that something is meaningful though we do not know what it means. We also can know what something means and express it. Finally, we can fail to notice that there is any meaning at all to be understood. Thus, we can understand the plot of a movie, have some understanding of the metaphors embedded in the plot, know that there are some that we do not understand, and completely overlook other meanings that may only become apparent upon repeated viewings.

In expressions we have a natural component that enables the stylization of the expression. The degree it reveals our inner emotional state is inverse to the degree it is stylized. However, because it is stylized, it is able to convey meaning. The meaning is of two types. The first is the direct meaning we intend to convey via the expression. The second is the conventional or social meaning that is implicit in the way we convey it. This distinction is most apparent when someone is within a role. For example, we can distinguish the direct meaning of a lecture separately from the lecturer's style. The meaning also could be expressed via prose. However, it is less distinct when the conventional modes of meaning are used themselves to convey a message. The mode of meaning then approaches the role of Austin's speech act. For example, when a boss

upbraids an employee, the manner in which is done can convey much more significance than the direct content.

The work of art is patterned. Interacting with the work of art is a patterning of experience. It is within that patterning that meaning is both intended and discovered. But simply as an experience, there may be no explicit distinction between the pattern and the patterning. We focus on the pattern via the patterning; but in the basic experience there may be no explicit distinction between subject and object, meaning and meant. Rather there is, most fundamentally, the aesthetic experience.

In the aesthetic experience there is no suspension of belief or judgment. Rather belief or judgment in what is meant is not attained because we know the experience is not “real”. For example, we know that what is really happening is the play, not what is portrayed in the play. It is only a partially individuated person, such as a young child, who would confuse the portrayal with the “real”. If they do so and then realize that it is not “real” it is not a suspension of judgment or belief, but a new judgment which corrects the prior ones.

Meaning, Expression and Intersubjectivity

By understanding the distinction of meaning and intelligibility in expression and intersubjectivity we will have the basis for understanding the distinction of ethnology, or the study of animal behavior, from the human sciences. We also will have the basis for understanding the complementarity of ethnology for the understanding of the human

sciences. In general, this is the issue of nature versus nurture in the context of life within a world mediated by meaning.

Earlier we discussed the origins of semiology in the diagnosis of disease. It illustrates the two notions of sign. The first is sign as symptom and the second is sign as intentional in function via its meaning. As symptom a sign is akin to the appearance of dark clouds which are a sign of rain. Based on our distinction earlier, this notion of sign is of a sign as intelligible, but not meaningful. This differs from an icon, for example, that shows thunderbolts emerging from a dark cloud on a weather map which is a sign of thunder storms.

Expressions are instrumental to intersubjectivity. In intersubjective relationships there are complementary expressions and behaviors that call forth one another within a context of a complex set of structured interactions. Understanding the systematic elements of these led to the development of the notion of behavioral systems. We will critique the systems approach later. Expressions can be instrumental as meaningful in which case they are akin to speech acts or as cues or “signals”. In the latter case they tend to initiate, sustain or terminate performance. Cues or signals are not restricted to expressions. There are biochemical cues such as pheromones which evoke or condition behavior. In complex behaviors these are sometimes released in the behavioral context, for example in flirting by humans. In less complex behaviors such as insect mating they are released as a matter of course to attract sexual partners who may not be in the immediate area. Thus, in human and animal behavior it can be abstract to focus on expressions only since these can occur within a complex context and it would be a mistake to understand the behavior only in their terms. Yet the distinction between

merely intelligible and meaningful expressions is key to understanding different types of contexts.

We have noted that in contrast to the actor in a play or movie whose expression is fully meaningful, normal expressive adult human behavior is intelligible but not fully meaningful. That is, there is a “natural” or biological or psychological element that provides the conditions and part of the context for the meaningful aspects of expression. Thus, flirting behavior has cross-cultural elements in postures and looks along with the culturally specific meanings. Though animals can have rudimentary cultures where learning unique to a pride or pack is passed from generation to generation, their behavior in general is species specific because it relies on the biological and psychological conditions for types of performance. Thus, in some cases animals may get insights into each other’s behavior, but these are insights into the behavior’s intelligibility, since it has no meaning. It may be possible for animals to learn how to use signs by being taught by humans. There is as yet no evidence that they can do this autonomously. The learning of the use of signs may be an understanding of meaning. If it is, since they do not have a grammar, the understanding is not linguistic, but merely semiotic. The question that needs to be resolved then, is whether the understanding is an insight into signs as “symptoms” in which case it is not an insight into meaning, or if the referential nature of the sign is understood. That is a question for the linguistically expert ethnologist to answer.

In human intersubjectivity, then, two areas are revealed. The first is the “reference” or “object” or “matter” of the interaction. The second is the person. In some cases there may be some coincidence, as when I want something. In other cases there

will not be. In the latter I am revealed implicitly in the interchange. In the former I am revealed both implicitly and explicitly. But there also is a third possibility which is not so clear cut and occurs in typical conversations among friends. It has to do with the pragmatics of the conversation in the linguistic sense. My subjectivity is embedded both in the language I select as well as my tone, posture and so on. We can indicate our subjective state by the adjectives we select in giving an account of events. “It was a beautiful sunset”. “That rock barely missed me.” In some cases our implicit intent is to speak in terms that the other person understands that evoke an empathetic understanding. Among good friends or people who have had similar experiences (ie. Soldiers with combat experience) this can occur fairly easily. In other cases it is not but the use of terms is revealing de facto.

However, now we need to take care. There is the “revealing” of a person by themselves in their expression. This can be both deliberate and uninhibited. But there is also the revealing of the person to us. What is revealed for us is dependent on our ability to understand the other’s expression. Thus, there can be, and typically is, a gap in the revealing by the other and our understanding of it. Transposing the discussion from revealing to understanding allows us to introduce a couple of additional key points. First, the revealing of the other for us is not immediate. Minimally it is doubly mediated via their expression and our understanding of it. Second, more can be “revealed” in a broader sense of the term than the other intended. This is an understanding by us of the intelligibility of their expression which goes beyond its manifest content and intent. It takes us beyond their meaning in the situation to their intelligibility in the situation. As

we all know, words can have significance beyond their current context both in their origins and implications. The same is true of our meaningful performances.

Thus, we can reiterate the distinctions we made regarding meaning in art with respect to intersubjectivity, but within the broader context and additional permutations permitted by recognizing the distinction between intelligibility and meaning. So we can distinguish four additional cases here regarding intelligibility which is not meaning. We can understand intelligibility that we cannot yet adequately conceptualize or make explicit. We also can know that something is intelligible though we do not yet understand it. We also can know what something is and express it. Finally, we can fail to notice that there is any intelligibility at all to be understood. [Thus, we can understand the plot of a movie, have some understanding of the metaphors embedded in the plot, know that there are some that we do not understand, and completely overlook other meanings that may only become apparent upon repeated viewings.]

Above we noted some ambiguity with the notion of “reveal”. At this point we need to broaden our context by noting that we implicitly have confined ourselves to the immediate situation of being with someone expressing themselves or the immediate situation of ourselves expressing ourselves. However, once we start discussing the intelligibility of what is occurring in a situation we are taken beyond it, or we transcend it, and the notion of intelligibility that is immanent in the situation becomes ambiguous. For example, if someone who smokes says “I am beginning to worry about getting cancer later in life” we can ask if this means that they are thinking about giving up smoking. We situate the expression within a larger intelligible context. Returning to our two notions of sign as significance and sign as meaningful, or the distinction between intelligibility and

meaning, when we try to understand the roles, functions, significance of expressions we are taken beyond meaning to an explanation of it, though we can express our understanding meaningfully. Thus, to explain why someone said something requires two general sets of insights. The first is understanding what was said. This is a question of arriving at a correct interpretation of meaning. This is the role of hermeneutics. There is a hermeneutical element required in all the human sciences. The second is understanding it within an explanatory framework. Thus the stylized communications of politics and diplomacy engender endless analysis as to their meaning and explanation. The psychologist understands their client's meaning in the context of their psychological theory and therapeutic method. The hermeneutic process is not the key process. The explanatory process and its verification uses the results of the hermeneutic insights and judgments similar to the way natural science uses observations. We can incorporate the hermeneutic role into statistical analysis also. The simplest example is a poll which determines the state of public opinion with respect to some issues. There is no poll without meaning, but the significance of what people mean extends beyond what was said. We will suspend discussion of more complex examples until we have understood more about models of statistical explanation and structures.

In understanding the immediate context of the embodiment of meaning we encounter a similar ambiguity. We noted that in common sense expression there is a combination of meaning and intelligibility. For example, the content of the expression can be meaningful, but the expression itself has elements that are revelatory of the person and, as such, are merely intelligible (assuming they are understood). However, once we start to explain the embodiment of meaning we quickly transcend what is given

immediately and spontaneously in the situation. For example, if neural processes condition or enable conscious operations, the processes per se are not given, yet the explanation of the conscious operations, their intelligibility, is dependent on an understanding of them. What is required here is a hermeneutic phenomenology akin to Heidegger's approach to fundamental ontology. We will discuss this in more detail later when our model of mind is better able to situate a hermeneutic phenomenology's role in understanding mind. It will involve an understanding of the intention of meaning and its context as conscious, or in a broad sense, as experienced. I say experienced in a broad sense because the intention of meaning can situate the context for consciousness as beyond experience. Thus, the world of Heidegger's being-in-the-world does not appear, or is not experienced, yet is in some sense there. It's being there is for consciousness as the context for intentionality as we make our way in the world. In some sense it can be "described" or delimited which permits insights into its structure and role. Since understanding is conscious and can be of meaning, a phenomenology of understanding needs to lay out the operations and the contents or "objects". Since we can change depending on what we mean, there is a rich field for a hermeneutic phenomenology. In this case also, the phenomenology would provide the observations for explanation. In cases where the elements of the explanation incorporates only conscious operations or their immediate contents, then the intelligibility is immanent to consciousness itself. If these cases exist, then a science of consciousness has some autonomy from other sciences. However in other cases (I.e. the experience of images as spontaneous) other non-conscious processes need to be invoked to explain the occurrence.

Intentionality and the embodiment of meaning are in some sense part of lived experience and take us beyond it. This indicates that both, though understanding of them in some cases can be in terms of “lived experience” alone, need to be set within an explanatory context that transcends them. To do so requires a transformation of our orientation towards lived experience from participatory to an intellectually patterned experience of it. What does this mean? This can best be illustrated by contrasting science and common sense and two different notions of reality. The major issue is that most people think that when we shift from lived experience to the explanation of it we somehow lose the lived experience with the resulting explanation being unobjective, or abstract and unreal or some other mode of being out of touch and misleading. What we are really doing is exploring it within a different context, the context of determining what it is. Instead of simply living it, we are questioning it and trying to understand it. This does not make it “go away” but constitutes it as potentially intelligible. The shift to an explanatory orientation can make it intelligible in a different way than it is as lived. The prototypical example here is the difference between learning a skill and understanding what is occurring when you perform a skill. These are two different modes of consciousness and the latter can interfere with the former.

Piaget distinguishes between pre-operational and operational stages in child development. His notion of operations is Structuralist. Operations form groups where the groups are defined by the operations being complementary and reversible. The clearest example is mathematical, which is where the group analogy originated. For example, we can both add and subtract numbers where each operation can be considered as reversing the other. In motor skills an example of complementary and reversible

operations would be screwing a jar lid on and off. In arithmetic we have a group of operations, addition, subtraction, division and multiplication, that can be performed on integers. Likewise, we have a group of operations involved in handling jars and like objects.

The pre-operational stage is identified with the development of motor skills. Intelligence is involved, but it does not need to be explicit or conceptual, though the latter kind of intelligence can develop in conjunction with the development of motor skills concomitant with the development of language. The development of intelligence is subsidiary to the development of the skill. The child tries to do something and, in our terms, through a combination of kinesthetic and direct insights figures out how to do it. We can consider this as involving a strategy of trial and error, but that process does not explain why the process ends with successfully meeting the goal. For this to be recognized and for the successful process to be repeated without going through trial and error again requires the tacit integration of intelligence. The development and refinement of “action chains” (performances in our terms) by animals indicates that a similar intelligent development may occur in animals. Within the intersubjective situation the child is faced with the more critical challenge of getting his or her needs or wants met. This requires intelligent interaction with care givers to make ones needs manifest and to influence their actions towards meeting them.

This development initially occurs within the immediate situation accessible via our senses. Our initial notion of reality is of things we can touch, taste, smell, hear and see and of events which occur within our purview. The real becomes the already out there now world in which we find ourselves. It is only with the advent of the world

mediated by meaning that this notion begins to change explicitly. Traditionally we have recognized the age of seven as the age of reason where one functions operationally in a world mediated by meaning. But this does not mean that their explicit criteria for what is real conforms with the exigencies of knowing within a world mediated by meaning. This is a much more difficult process commensurate with the historical task of philosophy. We are not going to fully address the issue here. Our concern is the more modest one of recognizing that the intellectual pattern of experience transforms the context for consciousness with at least two pertinent implications for a science of consciousness. First, it is the pattern within which science develops. Second, it is the inadequate understanding of the scope of the intellectual pattern versus other patterns that has led to the notion that life in the intellectual pattern is somehow impoverishing.

For Piaget, the development of the operational stage is the development of groups of operations. This also occurs with intellectual operations. A prime example here is the development of logical thought which occurs via reflection on the prior operational stages. There are those who include logical consistency as a truth condition for a theory. Determining logical consistency is quite different from directly sensing something. So the criteria for what is real can develop. An issue arises when these are not explicitly recognized. In these cases one tends to apply the criteria developed earlier in their account of knowing and knowledge when the account itself is arrived at using quite different norms.

When doing science in the intellectual pattern I am aiming towards explanation via concepts or explicit knowledge. I may be seeking explicit knowledge of implicit knowledge so that I am able to understand how skills develop. Explaining a skill and

performing skillfully are two different things. As is commonly known, if I am performing a skill like playing the piano and then start thinking explicitly about what I am doing my performance usually suffers. But it does not follow that explaining a skill is somehow a devalued knowledge of skill. It is a different kind of knowledge of the skill. It does not make us more skillful, though it can be used to improve our technique, but it does make the skill exist for us in a more explicit way. So it does not follow that either knowledge is a more “privileged” knowledge of reality.

So no pattern of experience has a privileged access to reality. As Heidegger effectively points out, we always are oriented to being (for him, have some understanding of being) no matter what we do. The mode in which we are depends on what we want to do. If you want to get something done, you use your common sense to mediate between what you know and the concrete situation. If you want to understand what reality is you do metaphysics.

We have been approaching this issue phenomenologically and existentially because we are concerned with showing that there is no theoretical or performative contradiction in developing an existential explanation. While we would not claim that we have fully explained the cognitive situation existentially, we have made some distinctions and drawn some relations that permit us to show very sketchily that one can situate types of knowing within patterns of experience, explicit criteria of truth and for reality within stages of development, and adumbrate an experiential field within which one can arrive at explanations of conscious operations via direct insight into them and their relations to one another. Additional evidence is provided by the fact that existentialism is itself explanatory, though not explicitly so. The reason it is not is that it devalued scientific

knowledge as abstract and as less rich than lived experience. With the emphasis on experience, phenomenology and existentialism thought they were being descriptive when they were sometimes being explanatory. With Heidegger's introduction of a hermeneutical phenomenology the issue of understanding the world mediated by meaning comes to the fore. This involves immersion into the intellectual pattern of experience. Like the philosopher who emerges from Plato's cave and goes back to enlighten those left behind, scientists provide explanations that transform the meaning of everyday life, transforming the lived experience prized by the existentialist via the embodiment of richer meanings and transformed worlds.

Analogously, I have been concerned to show that our "experience" of the world involves intelligibility and meaning. This is neither surprising nor original. Reality is not lost, it is expanded to explicitly incorporate intelligibility and meaning – two different notions of reality based on understanding of operations.