

## Chapter 6

### Introduction

I have attributed to phenomenologists the view that the conception of reality we take from naturalism will prove incomplete by failing to include subjective facts. My aim in this chapter will be to argue that the phenomenologist is wrong to claim that a naturalist conception of reality couldn't include subjective facts. I argued in chapter 3 that it is the existence of subjective facts which is responsible for the gap in our scientific explanations of the conscious mind. Supposing this is right, it follows that what the naturalist must do to close the gap is to show how subjective facts can be assimilated into a scientific account of the mind. In the final chapter I shall sketch an account of the conscious mind which attempts to do just that. There I will argue that the naturalist can bridge the gap by developing an account of the conscious mind which takes its lead from phenomenological description.

So far the phenomenologist's case against naturalism has rested on the assertion that naturalists can include in their account of what is real only those facts that can be represented from no particular point of view. Since subjective facts are facts that can only be represented from a particular point of view, the phenomenologist concludes that any naturalistic conception of reality must fail to include subjective facts.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> My definition of "subjective facts" as facts that can only be represented from a particular subject's point of view may look confused at first glance. It might be objected that when we talk about representations that can only be produced from a point of view we are talking about our mode of epistemic access to a fact. It may be true that there are certain modes of access to the world that are essentially tied to a point of view. It certainly doesn't follow that there are any facts which are dependent on our taking up a point of view. (Nagel's discussion of what it is like to be a bat and Jackson's knowledge argument are often accused of making this kind of error. See for instance Mellor (1991a); Moore (1997, ch.3); Peacocke (1989); Van Gulick (1993/1997)). I have responded to this kind of worry in chapter 3. Phenomenologists claim that the world we experience is literally shaped by our ways of representing it. On this view our ways of representing things do not just constitute our mode of epistemic access to the world. They can also play a role in constituting the objects we

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I shall argue that the tension that seems to exist between a commitment to subjective facts and a naturalist conception of reality is only apparent. The argument I have just sketched rests on an assumption I shall label “the independence assumption”. It claims that a complete and exhaustive conception of reality will be composed of representations that can be produced independent of any particular point of view. Thus a naturalist who is committed to the independence assumption will indeed endorse a conception of reality that has no room in it for subjective facts.

In chapter 1 I identified two naturalising strategies: naturalisation by assimilation and naturalisation by elimination. A naturalist who endorses the independence assumption must adopt the latter strategy; he must seek the elimination of subjective facts. However, it is generally the case that the naturalist will seek to eliminate some property or entity only when that entity or property ceases to serve any explanatory purpose. Thus a naturalist would seek to eliminate subjective facts only if he could identify a set of facts represented from no particular point of view which perform all of the explanatory work of subjective facts. I shall argue that there is no such set of facts. It follows that the independence assumption must be rejected. Without the independence assumption the argument the phenomenologist has given against naturalism fails. So we can conclude that a naturalist could, in principle, make room for subjective facts. The work of showing that a naturalist can, in fact, accept a commitment to subjective facts will be carried out in my final chapter.

In section 1 I outline two arguments given in previous chapters for believing in the existence of subjective facts. I show how these arguments

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experience. The extent to which one finds this persuasive will of course all depend on the considerations phenomenologists advance in favour of this claim. See chapters 2 and 4 for discussion of these considerations.

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proceed from claims about the kind of representation characteristic of conscious experience. Section 2 reconstructs the argument the phenomenologists give for the conclusion that a commitment to subjective facts is incompatible with naturalism. In Section 3 I outline my strategy for refuting this argument. This strategy involves first showing how subjective facts can be assimilated and then developing an argument for the conclusion that they cannot be eliminated.

Both the arguments that I have given for saying that there are subjective facts proceed from a claim about the kind of representation characteristic of conscious experience. One way to show that subjective facts can be assimilated would be to show that the kinds of representations to which appeal has been made in arguing for subjective facts can be assimilated. Section 4 describes more precisely this class of representations. I show how representations of this kind can meet the requirements for assimilation. Section 5 argues that representations of this kind play an essential role in explaining behaviour. I will take this result to establish the ineliminability of subjective facts. If subjective facts are ineliminable, the independence assumption must be false. It cannot be the case that a complete and exhaustive conception of reality will be composed of representations from no particular point of view. Without this assumption the argument against naturalism fails. We will no longer have any grounds for thinking that there is an incompatibility between naturalism and a commitment to subjective facts. I will have shown that room can be found within naturalism for a commitment to subjective facts.

### 1. Two Arguments for Subjective Facts

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In the previous chapters I have given two apparently independent arguments in defence of the claim that there are subjective facts. The first argument was given in the course of developing an answer to the question why our experiences should feel or seem a particular way to us. I shall call it “the argument from the contents of experience”. The answer I returned to this question identified phenomenal properties with representational properties: an experience seems or feels a certain way, I said, in virtue of its representational content. Phenomenologists make a general claim about how our thoughts and experience get their representational content. They claim that our intentional states have representational content before we take up any relation to the world. I have interpreted this idea as claiming that our thoughts and experiences have a representational content which originates in our operative and cognitive modes of understanding. These modes of understanding literally shape or constitute the kinds of situations we can represent.

How does the argument from the contents of experience get from this claim to the conclusion that there are subjective facts? Suppose we agree with the phenomenologist that our operative and reflective modes of understanding constitute the situations we can represent. A creature could share a world with us – it could represent what we represent – only by coming to share our ways of understanding the world. Facts that can be represented only by coming to share our modes of understanding are facts that can only be represented from a point of view – the point of view of creatures who share our modes of understanding. It follows that the facts we can represent are subjective facts. The argument from the contents of experiences gives us a reason for believing in subjective facts by appealing

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to the role our modes of understanding play in constituting the world we think about and experience.

The second argument for subjective facts was sketched at the end of the previous chapter. I shall label it “the argument from the experience of content”. This argument was developed in the course of returning an answer to the question of what it is for an experience to seem or feel a certain way to its subject. I claimed that an experience seems or feels a certain way to a subject when it is knowable in a first-person way. I proceeded to argue that an experience can be known in this way only if it is also already pre-reflectively self-conscious (henceforth “PRSC”), which is to say that an experience can be known in a first-person way only if I am aware of myself *qua* subject of this thought or experience.

We saw Sartre assert that the awareness I have of myself *qua* subject is different in kind from the awareness I have of myself *qua* object. To be aware of oneself *qua* subject is, Sartre thinks, to be aware of oneself in a way that no one else can be aware of you. It is this point that will form the basis for the argument from the experience of content. Before we can see how we must unpack what Sartre has in mind.

In chapter 5 I characterised PRSC in terms of two types of properties which I shall refer to as “P<sub>1</sub>” and “P<sub>2</sub>” respectively. Whenever a subject is PRSC properties of these two types will be instantiated. The first property, P<sub>1</sub>, we can characterise as the property of representing some object or state of affairs. The second property, P<sub>2</sub>, is a property of P<sub>1</sub> which modifies the way in which the subject is representing an object or state of affairs. P<sub>2</sub> makes the subject simultaneously aware of herself undergoing an experience and of the object she is experiencing.

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This characterisation of PRSC can help us to explain the sense in which to be aware of oneself *qua* subject is to be aware of oneself in a way that no one else can be aware of you. Only I can instantiate  $P_2$  and in the process be aware of *myself* instantiating property  $P_1$  – the property which consists of being in a representational state which purports to represent an object  $x$ . If anyone else instantiates this property  $P_2$ , they will be aware of themselves being in a state which instantiates  $P_1$ . Instantiating  $P_2$  will not suffice to make them aware of me undergoing an experience purporting to represent some object  $x$ . It follows that I have a way of being aware of myself that is available only to me and to no one else but me.

The latter conclusion forms the basis for the argument from the experience of content. Suppose there is a fact which holds when a subject is undergoing a conscious experience as of  $x$ . According to the above characterisation of PRSC, this fact will obtain only if two representational properties are instantiated,  $P_1$  and  $P_2$ . When  $P_2$  obtains the subject will be aware of herself being in a state which instantiates  $P_1$ . The way that  $S$  will thereby represent herself is a way in which no one else can represent her. When  $S$  represents herself in this way, she represents a fact that can only be represented from her point of view. If anyone else were to instantiate  $P_2$  they wouldn't represent  $S$  undergoing an experience as of  $x$ , but would instead represent themselves. Thus the fact that obtains when a subject undergoes a conscious experience as of  $x$  will, on this account of conscious experience, be a subjective fact. It will be a fact that can only be represented from a subject's point of view.

The argument from the contents of experience, and the argument from the experience of content seem to take very different routes to the conclusion that there are subjective facts. There is however an important connection

between them. Each argues from a different feature of the structure of conscious experience. The first argument proceeds from a claim about how our perceptual experiences get their intentional contents. The second argues from a claim about the modes of representation characteristic of our conscious experience. In both cases it is claimed that there is something about the intentional structure of consciousness that warrants an appeal to subjective facts.

There is a further connection between the two arguments worth mentioning before I turn to the main concern of this chapter, the anti-naturalist conclusion phenomenologists draw from the existence of subjective facts. In chapter 2 I explained how our operative understanding shapes the contents of our experience when we are skilfully dealing with things. This account was based on a description of our existence as persons skilfully acting in pursuit of some project or goal. I will argue that the descriptions Sartre and Merleau-Ponty give of PRSC also derive from descriptions of our existence as persons acting in the world. What these descriptions highlight is an aspect of our existence as persons neglected by Heidegger, namely our embodiment.<sup>2</sup>

Heidegger as I have been interpreting him describes our being-in-the-world as consisting of our knowledge of how to find our way about in the world. The understanding I have of myself and my own existence is shaped by the activities in which I engage, and the public understanding of those activities.<sup>3</sup> Merleau-Ponty and Sartre in no way wish to contradict this description of our existence. Instead they wish to supplement it. What their

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<sup>2</sup> For a critique of Heidegger along these lines see Alweiss (2003)

<sup>3</sup> Here I am drawing on Division 1 of *Being and Time*. In Division 2 Heidegger will describe the understanding we have ourselves derived from others as “inauthentic”. He will explain how an individual can take up an authentic relation to herself. The existential concerns of Division 2 however do nothing to remedy Heidegger’s neglect of the body.

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notion of PRSC adds to Heidegger's account of being-in-the-world is an emphasis on the role embodiment plays in shaping our operative understanding.

Merleau-Ponty describes how each of us experiences the world through his or her body. He identifies what I have been calling "operative understanding" with this understanding I have of things through my body. One of the ways in which I can perceive a thing's spatial properties, for instance, is by being prepared to act on that thing in appropriate ways.<sup>4</sup> In advance of taking hold of an object, I will for instance scale my grip in way that is appropriate to the object I am reaching for. In directing my behaviour appropriately towards a thing, I manifest a peculiar kind of bodily understanding of that thing. In order to perceive a thing as requiring certain movements of me, I must have some sense of which movements of my body will be appropriate to that thing and which will not, as well as of the possible movements open to me more generally. This selection from the possible repertoire of behaviours involves some understanding on my part; it involves an understanding of which movements will be appropriate for grasping the object of my perception. This understanding forms an important part of what I have been calling "operative understanding". It forms a part of the body of knowledge I put to use in successfully negotiating the world while going about my day to day business.

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<sup>4</sup> In fact Merleau-Ponty will describe two senses we have of a thing's spatial properties, "spatiality of position" and "spatiality of situation" (1945/1962: 100). This is a central theme in his discussion of Goldstein's patient Schneider in Book 1, ch.3. For further discussion of this distinction see Kelly (2002). Kelly explains how Merleau-Ponty's distinction fits with a hypothesis that the neuroscientists Milner and Goodale (1995) make about the workings of the visual system. Based partly on their work with a patient suffering from Carbon Monoxide poisoning, Milner and Goodale hypothesise two distinct streams of visual information flow in the brain, the ventral and dorsal stream. Kelly argues that this finding fits with Merleau-Ponty's claim that there are two distinct ways of understanding a thing's spatial properties. The first is essentially bodily and is drawn on in reaching and grasping for a thing. The second is cognitive and is drawn on in making reports and judgements about a thing's spatial properties.

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This construal of our embodiment as shaping our understanding of entities and their properties helps us to make sense of the peculiar claim Merleau-Ponty and Sartre make repeatedly that our bodies shouldn't just be understood as physical objects.<sup>5</sup> What Merleau-Ponty and Sartre are denying here is that our bodies are simply empirical items in the world with the same status as any other empirical item. My body isn't simply an empirical item in the world for it is the condition of the possibility of my understanding. It gives form to my perceptual experiences.

Merleau-Ponty and Sartre share in common an account of the subject according to which 'the body is the subject of perception' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 206). We have just seen Merleau-Ponty claim that it is through our bodies that we experience a thing's spatial properties. It is my body that experiences, and understands a thing's spatial properties as I reach and grasp for a thing. If it is my body that is the subject of my experiences, we can say that I am aware of myself *qua* subject by being aware of things through my body. To say that the body *is* the subject of conscious experience is to say that it is a subject's body that is aware of the objects of her experience. The body isn't just the means by which a subject experiences objects: it isn't merely an instrument which affords access to the things in a subject's environment. A subject's experiences literally belong to her body; it is a subject's body that undergoes those experiences.

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<sup>5</sup> Recall Sartre's claim that either my body 'is a thing among other things, or else it is that by which things are revealed to me. But it can not be both at the same time.' (1943/2000: 304) Merleau-Ponty famously rejects the distinction Sartre is insisting on here between what we might call the "lived body" and the "perceived body". He points out that when one hand touches the other the body is perceiver and perceived at one and the same time. (See the discussion of so-called "double sensations", (1962: Part 1, ch.2, pp.93). For Merleau-Ponty this kind of experience highlights a more general truth, that the body can be both the subject and the object of our experiences. My embodied existence transcends the distinction between subject and object insofar as it contains elements of both.

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This account of subjectivity as embodied tells us what it is for an experience to be PRSC. We can say that a subject S is PRSC when S is conscious of her own body undergoing an experience at the same time as she is aware of the object or state of affairs her experience purports to represent.<sup>6</sup> On this understanding of PRSC to be aware of oneself *qua* subject is to be aware of one's own body undergoing an experience.<sup>7</sup>

The two arguments I have given for subjective facts converge in Merleau-Ponty's conception of our subjectivity as essentially embodied. Both arguments for subjective facts turn out to be grounded in an appeal to our being-in-the-world. The sense I have of my embodiment forms a central part of the knowledge I draw on in successfully going about my day to day business. It is a core part of my being-in-the-world which, I have argued, forms the background that makes possible a subject's operative and reflective understanding. We have just seen that this sense I have of embodiment consists in the awareness I have of my body undergoing my experiences. It is this bodily form of awareness that I have been calling PRSC. It follows that for Merleau-Ponty PRSC is a core aspect of a subject's being-in-the-world.

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<sup>6</sup> This is an idea that will be taken up in much more detail in the next chapter, where I will present empirical work which strongly supports this characterisation of conscious experience.

<sup>7</sup> Sartre has a different take on PRSC to the one I have just presented. For Sartre the kind of self-consciousness I have when I am PRSC is purely negative. In order to be presented with an object in experience Sartre claims I must be conscious of myself as *not* being the object of my experience. See the discussion of "presence" in Part 2, chapter 3 (1943/2000). There Sartre will tell us at length how "The thing...is that which is present to consciousness as not being consciousness." (*op cit*: 174) Sartre denies that it is possible for me to be aware of an object X without also being aware that I am not X. All there is to a subject's PRSC for Sartre is awareness that the object of his awareness is something other than himself. To be aware of this fact Sartre thinks requires that the subject also be aware of himself. Merleau-Ponty is deeply critical of this view of PRSC. Indeed it forms the basis for a more general disagreement between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty about the nature of the relation between mind and world. Where Sartre conceives of this relation as holding between two radically different kinds of entity – being-in-itself and being-for-itself, Merleau-Ponty will insist in keeping with his view of PRSC, that the human body is both a being-in-itself and a being-for-itself.

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Drawing on Merleau-Ponty's description of our embodiment we can say that the two arguments for subjective facts are related in the following way. The first argument takes our operative understanding in general and makes an argument for subjective facts based on this phenomenon. It is our being-in-the-world that makes possible our operative understanding. The second takes a specific aspect of our operative understanding, namely the sense we have of our embodiment, and argues for subjective facts from this feature. Now we have reminded ourselves of the reasons that have been given for subjective facts let us consider once again how these considerations are employed by the phenomenologist to arrive at their anti-naturalist conclusion.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> I have been arguing that PRSC should be understood as the mode of representation characteristic of conscious experience. Kelly (2002) argues that we should think of the distinction between attitude or mode of representation and content as breaking down in the case of behaviours that draw on what I have been calling "operative intentionality" (and Kelly following Merleau-Ponty calls 'motor intentionality'). One reason Kelly think this distinction breaks down is because he thinks that states with operative intentionality do not have propositional content. The skilful activity just is the representation in the case of states that have operative intentionality. In discussing Milner and Goodale's patient D.F. he tells us 'she seems...not to be able to represent the orientation of the slot at all except by means of posting the card through it' (*op cit* p.388). Simplifying Kelly's reasoning somewhat, the idea seems to be that there will only be room for making a distinction between a representation's mode and content in cases where representational content is propositional. States that have operative intentionality have non-conceptual content and non-conceptual content is non-propositional. Therefore the traditional distinction between mode and content doesn't hold for operative intentional states.

My characterisation of PRSC seems to conflict with Kelly's conclusion. I think the existence of PRSC may give us a way of making the traditional distinction between mode and content without treating operative intentional content as a variety of propositional content. Unfortunately I cannot argue for this claim here. This point to one side, what Kelly has done is give us a further way of making precise the connection between the two arguments I have given for subjective facts. What his argument highlights is the way in which the activity we are engaged in shapes operative intentional content at the same time as it shapes our modes of representing. To be aware of oneself *qua* subject is to experience the world through one's body. To understand an object operatively in terms of one's dealings with it is likewise to experience that thing through one's body. Kelly shows us how PRSC and operative understanding can be understood as one and the same phenomenon.

### 2. The Anti-Naturalist Argument

Merleau-Ponty presents his version of phenomenology as uncovering a sphere of our existence which remains hidden so long as we continue to think about the world in naturalistic or scientific terms. He describes phenomenology as a 'return to that world which precedes' scientific theorising and 'to which every scientific schematisation is an abstract and derivative sign-language, as is geography in relation to the countryside in which we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie or a river is.' (1962: ix)

Merleau-Ponty seems to be saying here that there is something phenomenology can uncover which we can never come to know through our scientific modes of theorising. What he seems to have in mind is the thought that there are certain unreflective modes of understanding (which I have characterised as operative modes of understanding) that we abstract away from when we take up the standpoint of the scientist. Science only ever gives us an abstract form of knowledge, the kind of knowledge we can attain by adopting the detached impersonal method of inquiry characteristic of the natural sciences. What we leave behind are our concrete, engaged ways of understanding the world. According to the existential phenomenologists it is these modes of understanding which are basic or fundamental. Indeed we saw back in chapter 2 how the existential phenomenologist will try to argue that our reflective modes of understanding depend on our pre-reflective modes of understanding, in the sense that the former couldn't exist without the latter.

At the end of chapter 2 I explained how Heidegger thought of being-in-the-world as something like a transcendental condition which makes possible both reflective and operative intentionality. What exactly are "transcendental

conditions”? In Kant’s philosophy transcendental conditions define the limits or the boundaries of our knowledge. According to Kant we can have knowledge of an objective world only insofar as our experiences have the form of space and time imposed upon them, and only insofar as we can think in accordance with the pure concepts of the understanding. What these phenomenologists share in common with Kant is the idea that our experience and thought must be *conditioned* in certain ways.<sup>9</sup>

Heidegger’s claim that an entity’s being depends upon our modes of understanding is intended to be a transcendental claim. The idea is that our practices, concerns and interests which taken together comprise our being-in-the-world, constitute the condition of the possibility of *understanding* something as something. For Heidegger it is our *understanding* of something as something that is necessarily conditioned. Our operative and reflective modes of understanding must of necessity conform to certain conditions, and it is these conditions I am calling “transcendental”.

Doesn’t a claim along these lines commit existential phenomenology to a variety of transcendental idealism? I don’t think so.<sup>10</sup> Heidegger tells us in his 1927 lectures on Kant:

‘Physical nature can only occur as intraworldly when world, i.e. Dasein, exists. Nature can, however, very well be in its own way without occurring as intraworldly, without human Dasein, and hence a world,

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<sup>9</sup> They depart from Kant in rejecting his idea of a necessarily unknowable, thing in itself. This is just as well, for there is a long tradition extending back to Hegel which argues that to say we cannot know the thing in itself is to say something self-stultifying. See Moore (1997: ch.6) for a recent, characteristically clear formulation of this objection.

Heidegger insists that there is no sense in which a thing has being or an identity of its own independent of our modes of understanding. Our understanding of being shapes both what an entity is, as well as determining whether it is. Thus there would seem to be no room in Heidegger’s ontology for the existence of something – a thing in itself – that is not subject to our modes of understanding.

<sup>10</sup> Blattner (1994) argues for a reading of Heidegger as a transcendental idealist. See chapter 2, §5 for a fuller defence of the position I take in this section. I discuss Blattner’s reading briefly in footnote 24 of that chapter.

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existing; and it is only because nature is by itself occurrent that it can also confront Dasein within a world.’ (Heidegger (1997: 19) quoted by Carman (2003: 157))

Heidegger is conceiving of the “world” in this quotation as the place in which we perceive and act. He is claiming that the world understood in this way couldn’t exist without us and our modes of understanding, but nature certainly could, and would. Heidegger is making a distinction between the “world” understood as a totality of ready-to-hand things, and “nature” understood as a totality of present-at-hand things. Now of course entities only exist as present-at-hand or as ready-to-hand when we understand them as such. However we can understand Heidegger as claiming that the entities which we understand as present-at-hand are the very same entities which exist independently of us and our modes of understanding. Thus there will be no room for an unknowable thing-in-itself which is a defining feature of any form of transcendental idealism.

Central to the existential phenomenologist’s anti-naturalism is the denial that the *only* sense in which an entity can truly be said to exist is as something present-at-hand, existing independently of us. Naturalists say that science provides a complete and exhaustive account of what exists, but science gives us descriptions of entities as they exist independently of us. Thus the entities and properties which will appear on the naturalist’s list of what there is are those properties and entities that exist independently of us. The existential phenomenologist complains that this is to level-off all the others ways in which an entity can be said to exist. In particular it ignores all of the entities and properties the existence of which essentially involves us.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Sellars (1963) can profitably be read as grappling with a version of this problem. Sellars sides with the naturalist in this debate.

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Why agree that the only entities and properties naturalists admit into their ontology are entities and properties which exist independent of us? The idea I take it is that scientific theories aim to represent the world independent of any particular point of view. It is assumed that in doing so they aim to represent a reality that is there anyway, existing independently of us. The scientist will detach herself as much as possible from her own personal perspective on this reality in order to achieve a view of reality as it exists independent of her perspective.<sup>12</sup> The reason why the scientist attempts to describe the world from no point of view is so that she can describe the world as it exists independently of us and the peculiar interests and concerns which characterise our point of view on reality.

What the phenomenologist objects to in naturalism is the idea that to form a true conception of reality we must abandon our ordinary modes of understanding and represent the world from no point of view. I shall label this the “independence assumption”. The independence assumption says that a true conception of reality will be composed of representations from no particular point of view.

Existential phenomenology diagnoses two errors inherent in the independence assumption. First of all, as already mentioned, naturalists are charged with mistakenly supposing that an entity’s being is exhausted by what can be discovered by the natural sciences. The existential phenomenologist will insist that science only ever accounts for the existence an entity has independently of us. In the process, it overlooks all the ways in which an entity’s existence is dependent on us.

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<sup>12</sup> This is the conception of scientific practice employed by Nagel in his (1986) and elsewhere. A similar idea is found in Williams’ idea of an absolute conception, see Williams (1978: 64-8). For a recent defence of the possibility of achieving an absolute conception see Moore (1997, ch.4).

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The first objection rests on the idea that our modes of understanding literally shape an entity's being. To understand an entity as something it has been claimed that we must represent that entity from a particular point of view, the point of view constituted by our being-in-the-world. Entities are understood as having a particular identity which marks them out from other entities only in virtue of the practices, concerns and interests definitive of our being-in-the-world. It follows that there are ways in which entities exist which essentially involve us and our being-in-the-world. This contradicts the naturalist's claim that the only entities and properties which truly exist are those described by the natural science whose existence in no way involves us.

Second, it is argued that the naturalist forgets how all of our understanding, including the reflective understanding which the naturalist prioritises, is dependent on us and our being-in-the-world. It is the second objection that all of our modes of understanding are conditioned by our being-in-the-world that is doing much of the work in the case the existential phenomenologist presents against naturalism. The naturalist, it is claimed, forms a conception of reality composed of representations produced independently of any particular point of view.<sup>13</sup> It has been argued that every representation we can produce independent of a particular point of view will in fact presuppose the point of view constitutive of our being-in-the-world. Thus there is something which cannot be represented by theories formed from no particular point of view, and that is our being-in-the-world.

We can reconstruct the anti-naturalistic argument as follows:

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<sup>13</sup> I gave an account of how this is possible in chapter 2. The idea was that in taking up a reflective standpoint we first decontextualise entities and their properties and then recontextualise them using the models and theories of the natural sciences. This process of recontextualising gives us knowledge of entities as they are independent of us, I suggested.

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(1) Let us assume for a reductio the independence assumption – the claim that a complete and exhaustive conception of reality will be composed of representations formed independently of any particular point of view.

(2) There exists a point of view on reality, such that any representation we produce can only be produced from this point of view. The existential phenomenologist calls this point of view “being-in-the-world”.

(3) Any conception of reality, including that which we form from the natural sciences, will derive its intelligibility from the point of view characterised by our being-in-the-world.

(4) There is something that cannot be represented independent of any particular point of view, and that is our being-in-the-world.

(5) Hence there is something that a conception of reality formed from no point of view can never include but must always presuppose.

Premise (5) contradicts premise (1)

(6) The independence assumption is false.

(7) Naturalists are committed to the independence assumption.

Conclusion: Naturalism must fail to provide a complete and exhaustive conception of reality.

I will argue that premise (7) is mistaken – the naturalist needn't endorse the independence assumption. Without the independence assumption the phenomenologist has no argument for the conclusion that naturalism is incompatible with a commitment to subjective facts. A naturalism that accepts the existence of subjective facts is a naturalism that can accept much of what is important in phenomenology.

### 3. Making Room for Subjective Facts

In chapter 1, we saw that there are two ways to naturalise an entity or property. I labelled these two strategies for naturalisation “elimination” and “assimilation” respectively. I will begin with a reminder of the difference between the two strategies for naturalising a putative property or entity.

The first strategy we can call “Naturalisation by Assimilation” (NBA for short). In chapter 1 I took a proponent of NBA to be committed to showing the following:

(NBA): For any putative natural phenomenon P there is (1) a set of conditions  $[c_1, c_2, c_3 \dots c_n]$  specifiable without reference to P, and (2) P is realised by this set of conditions.

What is the nature of the realisation relation which NBA seeks to identify? The notion of realisation is intended to characterise the relation between P and the set of physical conditions the presence of which is sufficient for P. In particular realisation talk is introduced to accommodate the possibility of P being realised by a variety of distinct physical conditions. If P can be realised by distinct physical conditions, we cannot take P to be type identical with any of its realisers. For it will always be possible for P to occur in the absence of any one of its particular realisers.<sup>14</sup>

The notion of P standing in a relation of realisation to physical conditions buys a degree of autonomy for our non-physical descriptions of P. The realisers of P might form such a heterogeneous class that we make no explanatory gain by describing P at the level of the conditions that realise P. Where this is not true and we can replace P with a description of the physical

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<sup>14</sup> Indeed it may even be possible for P to occur in the absence of any of the realisers we have identified thus far. Of course if materialism is true, there must be some physical conditions which P is realised by. However it may well be that we can never exhaustively specify P's class of possible realisers.

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conditions that realise P without any explanatory loss, the appropriate naturalising strategy to adopt is that of naturalisation by elimination (“NBE” for short). A proponent of NBE is committed to the following claim:

(NBE): For any explanation in which P occurs, the set of physical conditions  $[c_1, c_2, c_3 \dots c_n]$  that realise P can be substituted for P without any explanatory loss.

The independence assumption requires the naturalist to seek the elimination of subjective facts. It says that a complete and exhaustive conception of reality can be formed from representations that are from no particular point of view. This is to say that a complete and exhaustive account of reality will *not* include a commitment to facts that can only be represented from a subject’s point of view. A naturalist who accepts the independence assumption cannot allow for the existence of subjective facts. S/he must attempt to eliminate subjective facts.

Generally naturalists only adopt NBE when appeal to some putative natural phenomenon P can be shown to serve no explanatory purpose. If the appeal to subjective facts can be shown to do genuine explanatory work, there will be no need for the naturalist to eliminate them. Of course I will only be able to demonstrate the real explanatory work subjective facts can do by demonstrating concretely how a naturalist could assimilate facts of this kind. This is something I won’t attempt in the remainder of this chapter. It is a challenge I shall take up in my final chapter. The remainder of this chapter will explain how NBA is consistent with a rejection of the independence assumption. I will begin by arguing that naturalists could assimilate

subjective facts. Having done so, I will offer a reason for thinking that subjective facts cannot be eliminated.<sup>15</sup>

### 4. Location Dependent Representation

The two arguments I have given for subjective facts – the arguments from the content of experience, and the experience of content – have both proceeded from claims about the kind of representational states characteristic of conscious experience. I am going to concentrate on the argument from the experience of content for the remainder of this chapter. My first aim will be to characterise a kind of representational state that might make a subject aware of herself at the same time as it makes the subject aware of something in the world. I appealed to representational states of this kind in explaining what it is for a state to be phenomenally conscious. Suppose I can show that representations of this kind can be assimilated by naturalism. Then I will have demonstrated that at least one of the reasons I have given for believing in subjective facts is consistent with naturalism. This will still leave us needing to show that a naturalist pursuing assimilation can accept the argument from the contents of experience. I will make such an argument in the first part of my final chapter.

The argument from the experience of content says I have a way of representing myself which is available only to me and to no one else. Any

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<sup>15</sup> This argument will however rely on the account I have given of conscious experiences as PRSC. On the assumption that this theory of consciousness is correct, I will have given an argument for the conclusion that subjective facts can earn their explanatory keep. However it remains to be shown that this account of consciousness can really earn its explanatory keep. Since my aim is solely to refute the anti-naturalist argument this assumption is harmless. I am assuming the phenomenological account of conscious experience solely in order to show the naturalist need not accept the independence assumption. My aim is to show that *pace* the anti-naturalist argument, a naturalist could and should accept the existence of subjective facts. The work of describing what a naturalistic theory of subjective facts might look like must wait till my final chapter.

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account of the type of representation characteristic of conscious experience must accommodate this feature. It must explain how my experiences represent me in a way that no one else can represent me.

Our theory of representation for conscious experience must also capture the difference between experiences that are PRSC and experiences that are made to be RSC (reflectively self-conscious) through an act of introspection. Introspection on an experience of the blue sky for example, will make a subject conscious that she herself is experiencing the blue sky. Through her act of introspection the subject will become explicitly conscious that she herself is undergoing an experience of this kind. Reflective self-consciousness is however no part of an ordinary conscious experience. The subject won't normally be explicitly conscious of herself when she is undergoing a conscious experience. Nevertheless I have claimed that there is a kind of self-consciousness that normally accompanies our ordinary conscious experiences. I have claimed that a subject is always implicitly or peripherally conscious of herself at the same time as she is explicitly conscious of what she is experiencing. An account of the type of representation characteristic of conscious experience must in addition identify a type of state that can make the subject explicitly conscious of something in the world and implicitly conscious of herself.

The type of representation we are attempting to describe has content essentially tied to a subject's point of view. Let us begin by considering the more general phenomenon of representations that are essentially tied to a point of view. I shall call this class of representations "location dependent representations" ("LDRs" for short). Having identified how LDRs work, we can then apply what we have learned to the case of representations whose contents are essentially tied to a *subject's* point of view.

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A representation R is “location dependent” if there can be no difference in the location from which R was produced without there also being a difference in R’s content. Photographic representations qualify as LDRs. There can be no difference in the location from which the photograph was produced – the time and place at which it was taken – without there also being a difference in what the photograph depicts. Taking the photograph from a particular place (a particular location) will capture one part of a scene that will be captured in a different way, or perhaps not at all, if one varies the place from which the picture is taken. Taking the photograph at a particular time will determine the kind of light that is captured in the photograph.

LDRs represent in two kinds of way. They have contents which purport to represent some object or state of affairs *explicitly*. I shall argue that an LDR also *implicitly* represents the location from which it has been produced. Consider by way of illustration the following example. Scattered around town in Edinburgh are brass plaques placed in the pavement which represent to tourists the best places for taking photographs of the city.<sup>16</sup> All the photographs taken from one of these plaques, will share a similar content, they will depict similar scenes. Indeed it is not too misleading to say that the fact that a photograph’s depicts a particular view of the castle is dependent on the photograph’s having been taken from one of Edinburgh’s recommended vantage points. Now I want to say that the location from which a photograph is taken is implicitly represented in the photograph. It is implicitly represented because taking a photograph with a particular content depends on the photograph being taken from a particular location. Taking a picture from a brass plaque facing Edinburgh’s castle will entail (other things being equal) a picture of a particular view of the castle.

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<sup>16</sup> Thanks to Denis Walsh for the nice example.

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Clearly a photograph does not represent the location from which it was taken in the same way as it represents a view of the castle. The brass plaque a tourist stood on to get his picture of the castle does not figure in what we see when we look at the resulting photograph of the castle. The location from which the photograph was taken does not itself form a part of the scene the photograph depicts.

Still I want to say that the brass plaque is implicitly represented in the resulting photograph of the castle. The scene a photograph explicitly represents is one that belongs to the location from which it is taken. If I want to take a photograph which is roughly of the same view, I will be able to produce one (other things being equal) by finding the brass plaque from which this photo was taken. I will thereby be able to produce a photograph of roughly the same type.

One way to think about what I am calling implicit representation is to think of LDR's as having a content which include what Perry (1986) has described as "unarticulated constituents". An unarticulated constituent forms a part of the content of a thought or utterance even though there is no part of the thought or utterance which designates this constituent. The example Perry gives to illustrate this phenomenon, is the statement 'it is raining'. This statement conveys information about the place at which the utterance is made. Yet there is no expression or component of this utterance, which designates or stands for this place. Somehow the statement conveys information about a place without this place forming a part of what is represented.<sup>17</sup> Perry says this is possible because the representation has as a part of its content, an unarticulated constituent.<sup>18</sup> I say this is possible

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<sup>17</sup> At least this will follow if we suppose that what is represented is a function of a sentence's component words and what those words stand for.

<sup>18</sup> See for instance Perry (1986/2000: 172).

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because the location from which this utterance is produced is implicitly represented by the utterance.

Location dependent representations form an interesting class of representations insofar as they demonstrate how a single representational state can represent in two distinct ways. An LDR represents an object or state of affairs explicitly, and the location from which it has been produced implicitly. In this respect LDRs are just like conscious experiences which I have claimed also represent in two ways. A conscious experience explicitly represents some object or state of affairs, and implicitly represents the subject undergoing this very experience.

There is however an important difference between LDR's and conscious experiences. The location from which the representation is produced in the case of conscious experiences will be the location of the subject's body. Following Merleau-Ponty and Sartre I have claimed that a subject just is his or her body. Our subjectivity is constituted through the sense we have of our embodiment. It follows that what conscious experiences implicitly represent isn't merely the location from which the experience is had. Conscious experiences implicitly represent a *subject*.

What we need if we are to give a representational account of PRSC is a way of capturing the difference between implicitly representing a *location* and implicitly representing a *subject*. My experiences cannot carry this information in the same way that a photograph can carry the information that it was taken from a particular location. I said that a photograph carries this information insofar as what is depicted in the photograph entails that it was taken from a particular location. Certainly it is going to be true that what my conscious experiences represent entails that these experiences have been produced from a particular location, the location of my body. This fact about

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my experiences only suffices to show that they implicitly represent a location. It doesn't establish the sense in which they carry information about me *qua* subject of an experience.

According to Merleau-Ponty to represent oneself *qua* subject is to represent one's body undergoing an experience. It is to represent one's body as the owner of an experience. That my body is undergoing an experience isn't among the things my experiences explicitly represent. If my experiences explicitly represented that my body was undergoing an experience, I would be introspectively aware of my experiences the whole time, which I am patently not. Somehow then my experience must carry the information that my body is undergoing an experience without this being among the facts my experience explicitly represents.

I mentioned above how we might think of my being implicitly represented in experience by analogy with Perry's notion of an unarticulated constituent (see Perry (1986/2000)). Pursuing this analogy we might say that a subject represents his body as the owner of his experiences when a subject's body forms a part of the contents of one's experiences as an unarticulated constituent. Perry's example is the utterance 'it is raining' which contains the indexical expression 'here' as an unarticulated constituent. Towards the end of his paper Perry suggests that we might understand perception as carrying information about ourselves in a similar way. He suggests that a subject could figure among the things that this subject is experiencing on a given occasion, but as an unarticulated constituent.<sup>19</sup> When a ball is coming towards me, for instance, I duck. How do I know to duck – because my experience carries information that the ball is approaching my head!

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<sup>19</sup> Perry (1986/2000: 182)

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While this seems promising enough, it cannot be the whole story about what it is for me to implicitly represent that my body is undergoing an experience. Thinking of my body as forming a part of what I experience as an unarticulated constituent only captures the sense in which my body could be among the objects of my experience on any given occasion. In order to account for PRSC we must explain what it is for me to implicitly represent my body *qua* subject. To do this we must account for the ways in which by implicitly representing my body in every experience I thereby give form to the objects of my experience. Recall my earlier example of how I understand a thing's spatial properties – a thing's having a particular shape say – through the sense I have of my embodiment. If we are to account for my implicitly representing my body in experience, we must explain the ways in which my implicitly representing my body plays an active role in shaping the experiences I undergo.

This is one of the remaining questions that will be taken up in the final chapter. In particular we will need to say much more about how one gains a sense of subjectivity by being in a state which implicitly carries information about one's own body. I have said enough for now for us to see how, on the view of conscious experience I have been arguing for, a theory of representation for conscious experience must go.

Consider the two requirements I laid down at the beginning of this section. The first said that a satisfactory theory of representation for conscious experience must recognise the sense in which my experiences represent me in a way that no one else can represent me. On the account of representation just sketched this is true because only my experiences implicitly represent my own body. Anyone else will have experiences that

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represent their own body. They will not have experiences that implicitly represent my body.

The second requirement called for us to develop an account of representation which registers the significant differences between being PRSC and being RSC. Again the notion of implicit representation can help us to meet this requirement. A subject will be RSC through an act of introspection. Through this act of introspection, the subject will come to explicitly represent that she herself is undergoing a particular experience. When an experience is PRSC, the subject doesn't explicitly represent that she is undergoing an experience. She nevertheless enjoys an experience that carries this information. She does so because she is in a state which implicitly represents that her body is in a state explicitly representing some object or state of affairs.

Among the tasks facing a naturalist who seeks to assimilate subjective facts is the development of an account of what it is for a subject to be implicitly represented in experience. If we can explain in naturalistic terms what it is for an experience to represent a subject's point of view we will be on our way to giving an account of subjective facts in naturalistic terms.<sup>20</sup> The remainder of this chapter has the goal of showing that such an account could in principle be given, pace the phenomenologist's anti-naturalist argument. In the remainder of this chapter I will employ the technical machinery I have just introduced to explain how we can at last set aside the phenomenologist's doubts about naturalism.

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<sup>20</sup> Of course, giving an account of implicit self-representation will form only one strand in a naturalistic account of subjective facts. We will also need to tell a naturalistic story about being-in-the-world more generally and about how our existence as persons can shape the kind of world we live in. I will attempt to outline the beginnings of such a theory in the next chapter.

5. Refuting the Independence Assumption

The reconstruction I have given of the phenomenologist's Anti-Naturalist argument derives its force from the premise which claims that the naturalist is committed to "the independence assumption". I take the motivation for this premise to be a view of science as describing a reality as it exists independently of us.<sup>21</sup> To describe such a reality it is assumed that the scientist must detach herself as much as possible from her particular subjective take on the world. She must try to produce representations that are objective – representations whose contents do not vary from location to location.<sup>22</sup>

In the remainder of the chapter I shall assume that it is right to think of the naturalist as offering a conception of reality where this conception is composed of objective representations. Now consider NBA once again which says that for every putative natural phenomenon P there is a set of conditions which can be described without reference to P which realise P. I take the proponent of NBA to be committed to the view that wherever we have a subjective fact there will be (1) some set of conditions which realise this fact, and (2) these conditions can be given an objective representation.

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<sup>21</sup> Of course this is a controversial view of science. It is one that will for instance be rejected by anti-realists. One response to the anti-naturalist argument as it has been presented above would be to reject the independence assumption by arguing for an anti-realist conception of scientific practice. However, I have been arguing that existential phenomenologists can be read as committed to some form of realism. Thus I am reluctant to pursue this line of response. Instead I shall be arguing that contrary to appearances the independence assumption is quite compatible with a commitment to subjective facts.

<sup>22</sup> Moore (1997: ch.2) has characterised the kinds of representations in terms of two features, which he labels "comprehensiveness of coverage" (henceforth "CC") and "comprehensiveness of appeal" (CA). A representation has CC when it combines 'various things that are known into a single representation' (Moore, 1997: 21). Such a representation tells us how distinct representations can be true. Moore persuasively argues that this is amongst the fundamental goals of science. A representation has CA the less it relies on any particular point of view. Representations of scientific laws are a central example of representations that have CA. Representations of this kind are examples of shared conceptions of the world which anyone can come to participate in just by acquiring mastery of the necessary concepts.

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When I say that every subjective fact is realised by a set of conditions that can be given an objective representation, I mean the following. A subjective fact is a fact that can only be represented from a subject's point of view. Take a fact that meets this description, for instance the fact that I am undergoing a conscious experience. A proponent of NBA is committed to the claim that this fact – the fact that I am undergoing a conscious experience – is realised by a set of conditions that can be objectively represented.<sup>23</sup>

Suppose something along these lines can be shown for the class of representations in terms of which I have characterised conscious experience. Then we will have shown that subjective facts can be assimilated. To refute the independence assumption all we will need to do is show that subjective facts cannot be eliminated.

Let us begin by considering the case of LDRs that are not conscious experiences. At least some of our indexical thoughts and utterances – thoughts and utterances expressed using expressions like “I”, “here” or “now” – will fit this description.<sup>24</sup> These thoughts and utterances have contents that vary depending on when, where, and by whom they are produced.<sup>25</sup> There is however every reason to believe that the facts our indexical thoughts and utterances represent can meet the two conditions for assimilation set out

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<sup>23</sup> Notice that this is not to say the fact that I am undergoing a conscious experience is itself a fact that can be given an objective representation. There may well be explanatory gains to be made from appealing to subjective facts that are lost one we appeal to the facts that can be given an objective representation. Indeed this is exactly what I shall argue when I attack the independence assumption later in this chapter.

<sup>24</sup> Some of our indexical thoughts and utterances will be about conscious experiences, in which case they will be LDRs in which the location that is implicitly represented is a subject.

<sup>25</sup> When I say that “I am happy”, for instance, I utter a sentence whose content purports to refer to me, and the way I feel at the time I utter this sentence. An utterance of this sentence is true if the speaker of this very sentence is happy. This sentence as uttered by me may express a truth, while the very same sentence “I am happy” may be used by someone else to say something false. If we are to establish whether the sentence is true or not we must establish who has uttered the sentence. The truth of this utterance depends in part on facts about its speaker. It is in this sense that indexical representations can be said to have contents that depend on a location or point of view.

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above. The facts our indexical thoughts and utterances represent will generally be facts that can be given an objective representation.

To see this we need to first make a type-token distinction for indexicals. This distinction corresponds to a distinction Kaplan makes between content and character. What Kaplan calls “character” attaches to types of indexical thoughts and utterances, and what he calls “content” applies to tokens of those types. A sentence’s character is, according to Kaplan, a function from the context in which the sentence is used (“the occasion of use”) to truth conditions which specify a token sentence’s content.<sup>26</sup> If for instance, I say that I am sitting, the character of the sentence I have uttered will enable us to determine that what I have said is that <JK is sitting>. The character of this sentence tells us that sentences of this type represent whoever it is that has produced them at a particular time. Since I am the speaker of this sentence, this particular token represents me.

Is the situation that obtains when JK is sitting, a situation realised by conditions which can be given an objective representation? To this question we can surely return a positive answer. The situation in this case consists of a certain person JK standing in a relation of sitting to some object, say a chair, at the time of this utterance. Is this situation realised by conditions that can be given an objective representation? There is nothing about the description I have just given of this situation which requires one to take up a

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<sup>26</sup> Kaplan describes ‘character’ as a function from an occasion of use to a singular proposition. A proposition is “singular” when among the constituents of which the proposition is composed is the referent of a singular term. According to Kaplan, singular terms do not pick out their referents via the propositions of which they are part but instead refer directly to the individuals they designate. However, it should be noted that singular terms are only able to refer directly to the individuals they designate because of their character. It is in virtue of its character that a singular term refers to the particular individual it does on each occasion that it is used. I can remain neutral as to whether we should understand representational content in terms of singular propositions or not.

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particular location. We can safely say that for this indexical representation the fact that is represented is one which can be assimilated by the naturalist.

What about conscious experiences? Is the fact that I am undergoing a conscious experience a fact which is realised by a set of conditions that can be given an objective representation? Certainly there is nothing in the phenomenologist's anti-naturalist argument to suggest that this is not the case. However we will not really be in a position to assess this question adequately until we have some substantive proposal before us about the conditions that realise subjective facts. I conclude for now that the phenomenologist has given no reason for thinking that the following is not the case. Wherever there is some subjective fact, there is a set of natural conditions that realise this fact which can be given an objective representation.

Of course the naturalist won't seek assimilation if subjective facts do no explanatory work. I will finish up by arguing that subjective facts play an essential role in explaining behaviour.

It is something of a commonplace nowadays that indexical representations play an essential role in explaining behaviour. To see this consider again Perry's familiar example of following a leaking bag of sugar. It is only when I realise that it is me that is making a mess that I am caused to stop and rummage through my shopping basket. No objective representation or location independent representation I can produce will suffice to cause this action on my part – only the representation that it is *me* who is making the mess will motivate me to act in this way.<sup>27</sup> An objective representation will

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<sup>27</sup> The role that location dependent representations play in motivating action isn't peculiar to what we might call first-person representations, representations the contents of which purport to refer in the first-person. Say I want to watch something on television at 8pm, but I also want to get some reading done before it starts. The belief that causes me to stop reading and turn on the television is the belief that it is *now* 8pm. This belief differs in

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only suffice to cause me to act in this way if it is combined with a belief that I am the person that this representation purports to refer to.

Perry's point (following Castañeda) is that the content of any indexical representation will be such that I do not need to form this further belief that I am the person this representation has as its referent. This is something I already realise just by representing myself in the first person. Thus my representation that I am making a mess represents something different from the representation that the shopper with a torn bag of sugar is making a mess even though I am the shopper with the torn bag. The representation that I am making a mess suffices on its own to pick me out whereas the representation that the shopper with the torn bag of sugar is making a mess won't suffice to pick me out until I know that I am this shopper.<sup>28</sup>

Now consider the theory of conscious experience I have endorsed. According to this theory conscious experiences are a variety of LDR, in which the subject is implicitly represented. Indexical representations just are LDRs. Perry has given us an argument for the conclusion that LDRs play an essential role in explaining behaviour, a role that cannot be played by any objective representation. Assuming that conscious experiences are LDRs,

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content from the belief that the program starts at 8pm. Having the latter belief doesn't make me stop reading; I have this belief all the while that I am reading. It is only when I believe that it is now 8pm that I act. The same conclusion applies to the indexical "here". Suppose I am lost but I have a map which tells me how to get to the university. The map will not help me unless I know where I am; once I know that I am here where "here" picks out a particular location on the map, then I can use the map to plot a route to the university. The map is useless to me in planning a course of action until I know my own location on it. These kinds of examples and many others are explored by Perry in his classic (1979) paper and more recently in his (2000: ch.'s 5 &6)

<sup>28</sup> This was something we saw in chapter 5 when we discussed first-person thought. There it was argued that when I ascribe some property to myself in the first-person, I do not first ascribe this property to an individual and then establish that this individual is me. The judgement I form in thinking about myself is to borrow Evan's terms "identification free" (see Evans 1982: ch.7, pp.181). For further discussion see my discussion of reflective self-consciousness in chapter 5, pp.17-18.

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we can say the same of conscious experience. We can say that conscious experiences also play an essential role in explaining behaviour.

If this is right then subjective facts cannot be eliminated. The argument from the experience of content sought to establish the existence of subjective facts based on considerations to do with the mode of representation characteristic of conscious experience. Perry has shown that representations of this type (LDRs) play an ineliminable role in explaining behaviour. It follows that subjective facts cannot be eliminated. If subjective facts cannot be eliminated, the independence assumption is false. For the independence assumption requires the naturalist to eliminate subjective facts. Without the independence assumption, the anti-naturalist argument set out above fails.

I shall argue in the next chapter that there are certain conditions which can be described in the terms of the natural sciences which make possible our being-in-the-world. I shall call these conditions “enabling conditions” for without these conditions our existence wouldn’t be possible. Suppose that these enabling conditions exist, does it follow that our being-in-the-world is something that can be described independently of any point of view? No. All that follows is that our being-in-the-world is realised by conditions that can be described independently of any point of view.

NBA doesn’t require us to say that every fact obtains independently of us. The first worry behind the anti-naturalist argument was that a naturalist conception of reality will include only those entities and properties that can be described from no particular point of view. NBA allows for the existence of entities and properties that depend on us so long as the existence of these entities and properties is entailed by the existence of other entities and properties described by the natural sciences. NBA can thus allow the

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conclusion that the entities and properties which populate our world can be understood in many ways, some of which contribute towards shaping the existence of those entities and properties.

All that needs to be the case is the ways we have of existing which in turn shape the reality we inhabit are entailed by the kinds of conditions that can be described by the natural sciences. If this can be shown, the naturalist can allow that there are many ways in which entities exist some of which depend on us. She can accept this as a truth about us and the world we live in without giving up on the idea that there are conditions which make all of this possible which can be represented objectively.<sup>29</sup>

The project of naturalising phenomenology which I will take up in the next chapter recognises that our ways of representing the world originate in our ways of existing as persons. It attempts to identify what the conditions are that enable us to exist as we do, where these conditions are understood as forming a part of a single objective reality, the natural world. A naturalised phenomenology will agree that our being-in-the-world makes possible our ways of representing reality, which in turn shape many of the objects of our experience. However, a naturalised phenomenology will also insist that our existence is that of an animal, and that *qua* animals we form a part of the natural world. Hence there are conditions which underlie our existence and make it possible which can be described in the terms of the natural sciences.

A conclusion to this effect requires concessions from both the naturalist and the existential phenomenologist. It requires the naturalist to concede that our ways of representing the world originate with our being-in-the-world.

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<sup>29</sup> With the added qualification, of course, that the latter representations are produced against the background of our being-in-the-world.

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Moreover the naturalist must recognise that these ways of representing the world can literally shape the objects we experience.

The existential phenomenologist must likewise make concessions. He must recognise that there are certain conditions that must be in place if we are to exist as we do, and these are conditions that can be described by the natural sciences. While it is true that without our being-in-the-world there could be no intelligible representation whatsoever, it is also true that in the absence of certain conditions describable by science there could be no being-in-the-world. This in no way denies that entities can exist in many ways, some of which depend on our modes of understanding. It is to insist that in the absence of certain conditions we couldn't exist, and nor could we understand anything, and that these conditions are ones that can be described by doing science.