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The Conception of Anthropological Complementarism. An Introduction

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Summary

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1. The aims of *Anthropological Complementarism* in a nutshell

The present collection of essays¹ (i.e., Hoche 2008a), most of which have been written within the very last years, aims at founding a novel stance concerning that aspect of the time-honoured ‘mind-body’ problem which has to do with the relationship between *subjectively experienced consciousness* and *objectively observable occurrences in the central nervous system* (‘consciousness-brain’ problem). Although, from the times of ancient Greek philosophy up to the fashionable though dubious ‘neurophilosophical’ approaches of our days, this problem has found innumerable answers, *most* of them – and, as far as I can see, *all* of them that are presently being discussed by mainstream philosophers, psychologists, physiologists, neurobiologists, and other empirical scientists – may be roughly subsumed under the well-known generic labels of either ‘*dualism*’ or ‘*monism*’.

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¹ Let me stress from the very beginning that the present booklet (i.e., Hoche 2008a) is intended to be, not a homogeneous monograph subdivided into a series of consecutive ‘chapters’, but a mere collection of ‘essays’ concerning related problems. This is to say, *inter alia*, that the single essays are as self-sufficient as possible, from which it follows that a small handful of passages will have to be repeated. In my eyes, this disadvantage is clearly outweighed by the advantage that they may be read in an arbitrary order. Cross-references will make it plain on every relevant occasion where to look for pertinent details and further information.

Objecting at the same time to *both* of these overall positions – all variants of which, I think, may gain whatever little appearance of acceptability they own at all mostly in the light of the obvious shortcomings of their respective opposites –, I am going to suggest trying out a *‘third way’ beyond monism and dualism*, which I propose to call *‘complementaristic’* in much the sense of Niels Bohr’s.²

2. Against a watered-down conception of psychophysical complementarity

To be sure, current *‘two-aspect theories’*, notably the one recently worked out by the London psychologist Max Velmans,³ often claim to be of a *‘complementaristic’* character, too. However, to the best of my knowledge all contemporary consciousness-brain theories posing as *‘complementaristic’* more or less silently assume the existence of some entity, say a *‘psychophysical mind’*,⁴ which, being *one and the same* *‘Je-ne-sais-quoi’* or, speaking more down-to-earth, *‘I dunno what’*, can be accessed in *two* *‘complementary’* modes which, though being in a way mutually exclusive, have to complement each other in order for there to be a comprehensive or all-around view of the matter in hand. So I take it that they are but variants or combinations of monistic and dualistic positions. This is testified conspicuously enough by Max Velmans himself, who characterises his *‘complementaristic’* two-aspect theory of consciousness as *‘a form of nonreductionist monism (ontological monism combined with epistemological dualism)’*.⁵

In the following essays, I am going to try and show, not only why I am loath to speak of *one and the same* psychophysical entity which is alleged to be accessible in *two* complementary ways, but also that we are not justified in believing that, with respect to any given subjective conscious

² In point of historical fact it ought to be noted that Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg seem to have elaborated the conception of complementarity in close co-operation. Let me summarise a passage, and translate a few sentences, from Heisenberg’s reminiscences of Bohr in the years 1922 to 1927. Near the end of February, 1927, after one of his frequent late evening discussions with Bohr, Heisenberg went for a lonely walk in the Fælledpark behind Bohr’s institute in Copenhagen. ‘On this walk under the starry sky of the night it occurred to me, plausibly enough, that perhaps one might simply postulate that nature admits of only such experimental situations that can also be described within the mathematical scheme of quantum mechanics. As one could infer from the mathematical formalism, this means that apparently *one cannot accurately know the position and the velocity of a particle at the same time.*’ But before Heisenberg could communicate this *indeterminacy principle* of his to Bohr, the latter left for a longer ski holiday to Norway, where he ‘seems to have sketched the *concept of complementarity*, which was to make it possible to *render the dualism between the wave and the particle images the point of departure of the interpretation.* This concept of complementarity agreed exactly with the basic philosophical attitude he had practically always adopted and in which the shortcomings of our means of expression are considered a central philosophical problem. So he was disturbed by the fact that I did not want to start from the dualism between waves and particles. But after some weeks of discussion, which were not altogether free from tensions, we soon realised, in particular also thanks to the co-operation of Oskar Klein, that *basically we meant the same thing* and that also *the indeterminacy relation was but a special case of that more general complementarity*’ (translated from Heisenberg 1964: pp. 66 f.; all italics mine). – It should be added that most of the important literature concerning Bohr’s concept of complementarity, as far as I have become acquainted with it, is of practically no relevance to the development of my conception of *psychophysical complementarity* in particular and *anthropological complementarity* in general. Hence I will abstain from quoting this or that well-known book or article from the fields of the history and the philosophy of science which some readers might miss.

³ See esp. Velmans 1990, 2000.

⁴ Velmans 2000: p. 251.

⁵ Ibid.: p. 281 n. 5; cf. pp. 233, 249, 254.

experience and any seemingly ‘corresponding’ or ‘correlated’ neural event, we have but the choice of taking them to be either *one and the same* entity or else *two numerically different* ones.

3. Linguistic and logical problems of identity and non-identity

Now at first sight this may seem strange indeed. For if we have an entity *a* and an entity *b*, and if *a* and *b* are not *one and the same* entity, mustn’t they needs be *two different* ones? But a closer look easily shows us that this is by no means invariably the case. For although it has been made evident by prominent possible-worlds theorists that we have to assume an ‘intermundane’ or ‘trans-word’ numerical identity or else numerical non-identity between any two ‘inhabitants’ of two ‘*counterfactually* possible worlds’ (variants of the real world, or of any world considered in a certain context to be real),⁶ this is certainly not true of the ‘inhabitants’ of any two disconnected ‘*fictionally* possible worlds’ (isolated worlds of fiction, say of novels or fairy tales). It is considerably less easy, however, to see that this somewhat trivial case is not the only example in which the supposedly exclusive alternative of being either *one and the same* thing or else *two different* things breaks down. Rather, in order to convince ourselves of the logical or ‘depth-grammatical’ fact that there are a great many other cases exemplifying this consequential phenomenon – for instance, that a person and a natural number, or a neural event and a conscious experience, cannot properly be said to coincide or differ *numerically* –, we have to unearth the hidden logical structure of ordinary-language identity statements and their denegations.

So the logico-linguistic propaedeutic offered in the first three of the following papers, written in 2005–2006, should be considered an integral part of the studies on consciousness presented in the present book. In the first essay – *Hare’s Two Definitions of ‘Entailment’ and the Generic Relation of ‘Linguistic Implication’* – I will gradually work out a fundamental relation which I take to be the basis of a sound and sober research into the multifarious ‘linguistic implications’ obtaining between fully interpreted sentences (or, in precisely this sense: ‘propositions’) of ordinary language. In the second essay – *Five Kinds of Linguistic Implication* – I will develop criteria for splitting up this highly generic relation into three subrelations (‘semantic implication’, ‘pragmatic implication’, and ‘catapragmatic implication’) and two sub-subrelations (‘semantic presupposition’ and ‘catapragmatic presupposition’). The application of some of these criteria I take to be highly effective tools for doing what has been called ‘linguistic analysis’, i.e., conceptual analysis carried out in a linguistic key. Whereas the concepts of semantic and pragmatic implication, and the criteria necessary for telling them apart, play a major role in, say, the development of analytical metaethics in the wake of Richard M. Hare’s ‘universal prescriptivism’,⁷ in our present context it is mainly *semantic presupposition* that we have to focus our interest upon. For in the third essay – *Identity Statements and Nonsense* – I will have to draw, inter alia, on Bertrand Russell’s analysis of ‘definite descriptions’ and identity statements containing such individual constants; and since Peter F. Strawson’s early writings it has been a frequently repeated objection against this analysis that it fails to do justice to the difference between entailment (‘logical implication’) and the intricate and multiform linguistic phenomenon commonly called ‘presupposition’. In fact I think we are justified in accepting Russell’s analysis only on condition we can prove that the relevant form of presupposition, which I suggest to call *semantic presupposition*, is but a special case – or a subrelation – of that particular form of

⁶ *Loci classici* are Kripke 1971, 1972.

⁷ See esp. Hare 1952, 1963, 1981; Hoche 1992, 1995a, 1995b, 2001, 2004; Dudda 1999.

entailment which I will call, not just *logical*, but *semantic* implication; and the first two of the following essays serve precisely the purpose of making this as plain as possible.

4. A ‘noematic’ approach to consciousness

Whereas the first three of the following essays, though admitting of an illuminating *application* to the consciousness-brain problem, in themselves are of a much wider philosophical interest, the fourth one – *Consciousness*, the first draft of which dates back to 1998 – addresses the central topic of the present book, ‘anthropological complementarism’, in a most straightforward way. Prompted by my having become acquainted with Max Velmans’s ‘reflexive model’ of consciousness, which at first sight looks highly promising indeed but on closer inspection loses its attractiveness rapidly, this paper tries to clarify the salient features of *subjectively experienced* consciousness – that is, of *my own* consciousness as it presents itself *to myself* in what nowadays is usually called the ‘first-person perspective’ – in a direct (though largely exemplary) way. For intrinsic reasons, the favourite among my examples is sense perception, especially *visual perception* or *seeing*. I will suggest that the alleged ‘psychical event’ of my seeing a given material object (say, a dog approaching me) should be considered to be, not some ‘process’ or ‘happening’ being performed on either a physiological or else a psychical ‘inner stage’,⁸ but what, for the sake of accuracy (though doubtless a bit circumstantially), might be called ‘the object (say, the dog) *as, qua, or in its capacity of, being seen by me at the given moment of time and in the given mode of visually appearing to me*’.

At first sight, this replacement may certainly seem to be a revealing specimen of a philosophical hair-splitting in general and an *obscurum per obscurius* in particular. I am confident, however, that at least the more benevolent among my readers will convince themselves in due course that it would be philosophically short-sighted to suppose so. Not the least advantage of this replacement seems to me to be the fact that attending to physical objects out in the world and attending to psychical events allegedly going on, in one way or another, ‘within’ myself cannot be shown once for all to be mutually exclusive. After all, if we can easily see a visual object and hear an auditory object at the same time, or can both see and hear a blackbird on the top of the roof simultaneously, why in the world shouldn’t we be able to perceive a bodily object and to experience a mental event at the same time, too? If we keep in mind, however, that we cannot simultaneously *perform* the abstraction leading us to physical objects *themselves* and *undo* this very same abstraction, which leads us to the objects *qua being given* to each of us⁹, the incompatibility between the physical world and my own consciousness as experienced by myself can hardly escape our attention.

Furthermore, suggesting a substitution of noematic phenomena for noetic ones may at first sight seem to be strikingly similar to Velmans’s claim that there is no ‘phenomenological difference’ between, say, ‘seeing the cat’ and ‘the cat seen [as seen; as-seen]’. In fact it was for precisely this reason that I found it worth while scrutinising the most pertinent of Velmans’s publications, and working out a detailed evaluation and criticism of his position.¹⁰ But in so doing I couldn’t fail to

⁸ Cf. Ryle 1949: *passim*.

⁹ See esp. sections 6 and 8, below.

¹⁰ See Essay V of the present collection (i.e., Hoche 2008a), and Hoche 2007. The latter is a considerably shortened and modified version of the former – in fact: a somewhat unsatisfying compromise between my intentions and the editor’s idiosyncratic wishes – and has been commented upon in Velmans 2007.

realise that Velmans's 'object (as) perceived' in a way may be well compared to *Kant*'s notion of a '(transcendental) phenomenon' – Velmans repeatedly points to this fact himself –, whereas my 'object *as [qua]* perceived by me' should be rather compared to a '(noematic) phenomenon' in very much the *Husserlian* sense – which is something completely different (though much less known, and hence much less esteemed, in contemporary philosophy).

5. A plea for a pure noematics

It should be noted, however, that Husserl's concept of a noematic phenomenon, which is embedded in the complicated framework of his 'transcendental phenomenology', is just as little the point of *departure* of my considerations as is Kant's concept of transcendental phenomena for Velmans's theory. Rather, it is the point of a remarkable *convergence*. Besides, there are at least the following two major differences between Husserl's noematic phenomenon and my object *as [qua; in its capacity of being]* perceived by, or otherwise given to, me.

First, whereas Husserl's conception of a noematic phenomenon is intimately connected with his fundamental and exacting method of 'transcendental reduction', the conception of an 'object *as [qua]* perceived by myself', which I will take pains to work out and defend in the fourth essay, is based on a set of relatively simple considerations. This is not to say, however, that I want to belittle transcendental reduction; on the contrary, unlike most contemporary philosophers, including many phenomenologists, I consider it one of the most important achievements of 20th century philosophical thinking. However, I take it that it is by far not as dark and enigmatic as it is mostly thought to be, but rather appears to be a matter of course if only we adopt an unbiased attitude towards what we use to call 'consciousness'.

Second, whereas for Husserl – arguably with the only exception of his latest work¹¹ – the 'noematic' phenomena are strictly paralleled with 'noetic' phenomena, I think we ought to be tough-minded enough to radically dispose of the latter once the former have been discovered, or brought into view. This discovery will, I think, always remain Husserl's greatest achievement. But, with the reservation just mentioned, he seems to have hesitated to decidedly give up the 'noetic' or, if you will, the *strictly 'processual'* side of my own conscious experiences. Methodologically, however, doing away with the latter would simply be an obvious application of the basic parsimony principle of shunning 'distinctions without a difference' ('Occam's Razor'), or of Frege's noteworthy admonition to *make* distinctions wherever there *are* differences and to be careful to *make none* where there *are none*.¹² To be sure, a dyed-in-the-wool phenomenologist may find it repugnant if not illogical to speak of a 'noema' unless it is thought to be the counterpart of a 'noesis'. But even if this were a cogent objection (which I think it is not) we would be free to give up the words 'noema' and 'noematical phenomenon' as technical terms. In any case these expressions seem to me to be useful by way of a Wittgensteinian 'ladder', which can and must be thrown away after it has served its heuristic purpose.¹³ Hence, in characterising *my own* conscious experiences, insofar as they present themselves to *myself*, as being through and through 'noematic', what I intend to convey is no more and no less than the idea that conscious 'events' in the 'first-person perspective' should be considered to be, not mysterious or hidden 'goings-on', 'events', or 'processes' taking place on an 'inner stage', but

¹¹ Husserl 1934–1937; see Hoche 1973: Part I.

¹² See Frege 1897: p. 154; 1899: pp. VI, 17.

¹³ See Wittgenstein 1922: 6.54.

incessantly changing and transient objects *qua being perceived* (or feared, desired, despised, acted upon, etc., as the case may be) *by myself* – objects which in a way are ‘out in the world’, though certainly not in the much better known, if not familiar, way *physical* objects are ‘out in the world’.

6. My own consciousness as experienced by myself is not a part of nature

Conscious phenomena in this sense cannot come into view unless we deliberately cancel or undo an involuntary abstraction which, since our earliest childhood, has become our second nature. There are compelling reasons for performing this abstraction; for unless we exclusively attended to the physical objects *themselves*, irrespective of their constantly varying modes of appearing or being given to myself and (I daresay) each of us, we couldn’t help being downright drowned in a chaos of ever-changing ‘phenomena’ which are not even capable of being neatly separated from one another, not to speak of being given discriminative names. The cancellation of that vital and most natural abstraction, which in my eyes is one of the main conditions for being able to cope with the world at all, has usually been interpreted as a ‘reflection’ – although the word ‘deflection’ might have been a better term for this change of attitude, which is a deviation from our normal way of looking on the world without, however, being something like a ‘bending back’. Nonetheless I think we may safely call it a ‘reflexive’ attitude provided we see to it that what we and our hearers have in mind is neither the ‘introspection’ or ‘inspection’ of many classical philosophers and psychologists nor Husserl’s ‘noetic reflection’ but rather something closely akin to what Husserl sometimes called ‘noematic reflection’.

In its capacity of being the deliberate cancellation of an habitual abstraction, this reflective or ‘deflective’ attitude may be aptly considered to be the uphill restitution of the full concreteness of what is originally given to each of us. So while adopting this attitude I cannot help losing sight of the physical *objects themselves* out in the world. Furthermore, whereas these *objects themselves* are given to me through the mediation of suitable continua of *objects qua being experienced* by myself, the latter are given to me in the most immediate way possible at all; for the existence of an object *qua being experienced* by myself may, and should, be taken to be nothing over and above its being experienced by myself.¹⁴ As these two ways of being ‘get-at-able’ not only *differ* from each other in the most profound way to be conceived of but, what is more, are strictly *incompatible* with each other, it would be a misguided and misleading though doubtless deeply ingrained and widespread prejudice to regard (the contents of) *my own consciousness*¹⁵ as part(s) of the ‘world’, or of ‘nature’. With much more justification, we may downright consider them the very ‘negative’ of nature.¹⁶

By the way: If consciousness as it is experienced by the conscious subject herself or himself were really a part of nature, then, I take it, we would be confronted with grave ontological and epistemological questions apt to open the floodgates to obscurantism. For instance, in this case we could hardly avoid asking ourselves at what moment in time during the development of the individual embryo or fetus subjective consciousness becomes part of the living organism –

¹⁴ In this restricted and well-defined sense we may exhume the slogan, dating from Berkeley, ‘esse est percipi’.

¹⁵ Unless otherwise indicated, by ‘consciousness’ I always understand, not the *objectified* consciousness of others as it presents itself to me, but *truly subjective* consciousness, i.e., *my* consciousness as it presents itself to *myself*, or as it is *experienced by myself* (‘consciousness in the first-person perspective’).

¹⁶ See Hoche 1986: esp. 1.3, 3.6, and Essay IV: esp. 3.11, 3.18, of the present collection (i.e., Hoche 2008a).

provided it is not part and parcel of organic, or even inorganic, matter from the outset; and suchlike questions have in fact been raised in discussions of the moral problems of abortion, pre-implantation diagnostics, or stem cell research. Furthermore, if subjective experience as such were also an appropriate topic of objective science, i.e., of research carried out in the third-person perspective, then not only biologists but even chemists and physicists engaged in basic research would be compelled either to take it into account explicitly or else to consciously and methodically suppress it. Hence I think we may conclude that, if contemporary mainstream philosophers of mind tend to consider ‘conscious events’ as properties of something material, preferably the brain (which in fact they do), and if they do not face the foregoing questions (which they do not even think of doing), then, unwittingly or not, as a matter of fact they ignore the central feature of subjective conscious experience, which amounts to denying, or at least gravely distorting, it. The same is true when ethologists and others assure us that, ‘with the utmost probability’, not only humans but also non-human primates, dogs, etc. are endowed with subjective experiences. For outside the field of what can be investigated from the third-person point of view, the conception of ‘probability’ (and the related conception of an empirical ‘hypothesis’) is certainly out of place.

7. The major ontological tenets of mine

To be sure, this view crucially depends on my personal ontological tenets, which therefore I ought to render as explicit as it is possible in a few words.

First, I cannot help following Kant and those post-Kantian philosophers who firmly believe that human philosophising – which is the only sort of philosophising we know of – must be done, not from some God’s point of view, but from a human point of view.

Second, I cannot help following Husserl who counts the essential mode of an object’s being *cognitively* accessible to us among the basic *ontological* features of an object of the sort in question; for simply abstracting from, or making light of, this inalienable way of coming to know an object of a given sort would surely amount to falling back behind Kantian standards. So I should like to suggest to follow Husserl in adopting a thoroughgoing parallelism between *types of objects* and *types of coming to know, or experiencing, objects*.¹⁷

Third, it should be added that, in the last resort, the cognitive access to an object is not some *human* access at large but *my own* particular access. For any mediated knowledge, useful and indispensable though it certainly is, would be null and void if I were *principally* deprived of the possibility of obtaining it myself in a direct way.

Hence I think it reasonable to believe that an object I can *possibly speak* about is *eo ipso* an object I can *in principle know about*, and that *the way I could possibly obtain immediate knowledge of an object of a given type belongs to the essential ontological properties of an object of this type, or to the essential characteristics of the corresponding concept*.

8. Complementarism proper

¹⁷ Cf. esp. Husserl 1913, tr. 1931: §§ 3, 138, 142.

So I take it that there is an unbridgeable gulf between *my own* conscious experience as it is given to *myself* on the one hand and everything else on the other, including the consciousness of my fellow-men (and other higher animals) as it is given to *me*, or my consciousness as it is given to *them*, or my body as it is given to *others*, or *someone else's* body as it is given to me; and since it is impossible to occupy both sides of this gulf at the same time, a specific form of an anthropological *complementarism* is the inevitable result of this view.

However, as either side of this unbridgeable gulf disappears as soon as the other one comes into view, we ought not to speak of *one and the same* object which is alleged to be given partly in the first-person and partly in the third-person perspective and which, in precisely this sense, has two sides or aspects. Remarkably enough, even such a keen thinker as Max Planck turned out to be quite inconsistent in this respect. On the one hand, he sharp-sightedly anticipated what I take to be the basic creed of *complementarism proper*: '[...] it is not possible to immediately overlook both the bodily and the mental occurrences from a unified point of view; and as we cannot come to a clear result unless we cling to the point of view we have chosen, which, however, is incompatible with the other one, *the question of how bodily and mental occurrences are connected to each other becomes meaningless*. If so, *there are either bodily occurrences or mental occurrences, but never both of them at the same time*.'¹⁸ For this reason' – and here, I think, Planck fell a victim to a consequential inconsistency; he seems to simply have been backsliding to an old-fashioned dual-aspect theory à la Spinoza – 'there is nothing in the way to saying: *Bodily and mental occurrences* do not at all differ from each other. *They are the very same occurrences, only looked at from two opposing sides*.'¹⁹

If we are intent on avoiding this inconsistency, we must be alive to the fact that, at any given moment in time, any conscious person whatsoever has to do with *either this side or that side* of the gulf that separates the 'objective' and the 'subjective' – i.e., with either 'objective' *objects themselves* or 'subjective' *objects qua being experienced* by the given cognitive subject in the given cognitive situation. Hence assuming a 'unity', a 'connection', or any other *real* (that is, neither intentional nor conceptual) relation between what belongs to nature and what belongs to consciousness presupposes adopting the – in my view: outdated and in fact untenable – position of philosophising, not from a *human* and, what is more, from *my own* point of view, but from a point of view allegedly outside the phenomenal world accessible to us, namely, from the point of view of an omniscient God. So I think it simply doesn't become a post-Kantian and post-Husserlian philosopher to assume a *real* relation between the subjective and the objective, between consciousness and the physical world. Some such real relation, however (say, 'connection', 'unity', 'identity', 'numerical difference', and so on), is required for all monistic as well as dualistic solutions to the mind-body problem – and likewise to the problem of how my consciousness *for myself* and my consciousness *for my fellow-men* are conceptually related to one another. Therefore I cannot see a truly respectable alternative for defending a *complementaristic solution* to these problems which – far from being a 'dual-aspect' theory in the sense of, say, Spinoza's or Velmans's, which would require the assumption of one and the same entity presenting two numerically different sides, faces, or aspects – assumes the existence of two

¹⁸ Perhaps, this wording reminds the reader, as it reminds me, of a famous dictum of Epicurus which in a way may be taken to foreshadow the fundamental conception of complementarism: 'Death is nothing to us, since *when we are, death has not come, and when death has come, we are not*' (Letter to Menoikeus, in: Diogenes Laertius, 2nd vol., X.125).

¹⁹ Translated from Planck 1946: sect. II, p. 357; my italics.

perspectives which nonetheless are perspectives on neither one and the same entity nor two numerically different entities.²⁰

9. Suitable and unsuitable methods in philosophy

Let me finally turn to the *methods* which I have tried to apply to the problems dealt with in the following essays. Since most of these problems are *genuine philosophical problems*, I have mostly used *genuine philosophical methods*. This might seem to be a matter of course, and my remark to be ‘not remarkable’ (Searle) and hence a speech-act theoretical ‘infelicity’ (Austin). However, a closer look at the contemporary mainstream research work on consciousness theory and the mind-body problem teaches us that this is by no means the case. For we may surely say that the bulk of what has been done by the leading research workers in these fields is characterised by the marked tendency to shy away from *genuine philosophical methods* and to adopt, adapt, and even imitate instead those methods they believe to have proven decisive for the striking success of modern science, which is concerned with the *objective world*.

In taking up this stance, however, they often seem to lose sight of the fact that the methods which, in the early 20th century, led to the development of the relativity theories, quantum and wave mechanics, etc., may in a way be taken to have given proper heed to the role of *subjectivity* in coming to know *objectivity*. Similarly, Jakob von Uexküll’s (1909) research into the *subjective* spatio-temporal worlds (German: ‘Umwelten’) of non-human animals, though it surely failed to bring about as much as a ‘paradigm shift’ in theoretical biology, at least opened up a rewarding pathway for novel research. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that modern science is doubtless a science of *objectivity* and that its methods are, and have to be, basically *objective*, i.e., adequate for research work done from the *third-person* perspective, this is not the whole story. As Heiner Schwenke, who formerly was himself engaged in biological research, convincingly worked out, ‘acceptance of some methodological principles which seem to be generally acknowledged among scientists is irreconcilable with naturalism, i.e. the view that science can in principle investigate all facts. [...] On the basis of these principles, [he argues] *ex suppositione* that both the scientific discourse and the testing of theories by data would be blocked if one tried to investigate all facts scientifically. [...] non-scientific knowledge is not only a precondition of gaining scientific knowledge but [...] also the building material of which scientific knowledge is constructed.’²¹ So in more than one respect subjective traits seem to me to make themselves felt within the objective sciences themselves; only they go often unheeded.

For these reasons we should not find it surprising that a methodologically reflected inquiry into consciousness has to be largely²² a study of *subjectivity* and hence as a rule must be carried out by means of methods suitable, not for the third-person, but for the *first-person* perspective. I think we cannot take seriously enough what Thomas Nagel once said in a slightly different connection: ‘It happens again and again that the methods of one subject are taken as a model of intellectual respectability or objective rationality, and are then applied to a quite different subject for which

²⁰ It is precisely because the latter claim is likely to seem most unintelligible at first sight that I thought it advisable to include in this booklet (i.e., Hoche 2008a) the logico-linguistic propaedeutic worked out in detail in the first three essays.

²¹ Schwenke 2005, from the English ‘Summary’; see also Schwenke 1992.

²² Only research into the consciousness of *others* has to be carried out in the *third-person* perspective and hence requires *objective* methods which can, and indeed should, heavily draw on the methods successful in modern science.

they were not developed and for which they are unsuited. The results are shallow questions, nonexplanatory theories, and the anathematization of important questions as meaningless.²³

It is true that inquiries into what is given to us from each one's personal *first*-person perspective, and hence also the methods pertaining to such inquiries, have lately fallen into deep disrepute. Not for the least part, I think, this has happened on the ground of what seems to me to be a misinterpretation of highly influential passages from Wittgenstein's and Ryle's.²⁴ Ironically, however, precisely the latter two philosophers have been leading figures in the development of quite novel and, if properly applied,²⁵ efficacious methods which in my eyes may be considered *genuine philosophical ones*. What I have in mind are, of course, the specific methods of *analytic* or *linguistic philosophy*.²⁶

10. How to determine the methods suitable for philosophical inquiries

That these methods are not particularistic or provincial but relevant to philosophy as such may be recognised if we ask ourselves what the defining characteristics of philosophy at bottom are. To be sure, the search for a state-of-the-art *definition* of philosophy has proven hopeless. However, I think we may safely say that in point of fact we tend to use the concept of philosophy as a mere 'residual concept', i.e., to regard as 'philosophical' all and only those problems which, in more than two millennia, haven't succeeded yet in being dealt with by one or other of the more or less well-defined humanities and sciences which have, as it were, successively crystallised out from the mother lye of what in Greek antiquity was called 'philosophía' in the very broad sense of a striving, not just for 'wisdom', but for knowledge of whatever kind.²⁷

With the remarkable exception of mathematics,²⁸ these departmentalised and by now well-established branches of human learning as a rule concern themselves (1) with 'factual', 'material-related', or 'matter of fact' questions rather than 'linguistic' ones – to wit, with the multifarious

²³ Nagel 1978: p. 145.

²⁴ See my criticism of this misinterpretation in Hoche & Strube 1985: A.V–VI.

²⁵ In fact, it strikes me that such methods, if used by present-day philosophers at all, are often applied suboptimally or worse. Obviously, putting them to philosophical work in an adequate and fruitful way is a skill that requires not only a fine linguistic sensitiveness but also intensive training.

²⁶ I am well aware of the fact that, in the presence of 'leading' younger consciousness theorists, analytic philosophers of my generation are expected to apologise for not having been able yet to overcome the 'linguistic phase' of 'analytic philosophy' (see, e.g., Bieri 1981: pp. 13, 17). I should like to counter the charge of such inability by essentially two arguments. First, if we are to consider philosophy done 'in a linguistic key' to be but an early and immature phase of 'analytic philosophy' proper, it is not at all evident to me how to characterise the latter methodologically in a way that would justify the label 'analytic' (cf. Hoche & Strube 1985: pp. 15, 99 f., 199 f.; Hoche 1990: passim). Second, it is a widespread tendency to measure the history of philosophical 'movements' rather in years than in decades or centuries. This tendency seems to me to be dictated by focussing one's interest on subtle differences rather than on basic common features. Furthermore, I think it is characteristic not so much of those interested in *themselves doing* – in a 'systematic' or, to be more precise, in a 'problem-oriented' way – philosophy proper as of those who prefer the attitude of the historically-minded *onlooker*. In fact, for the philosophical *actor* or *doer* 'linguistic philosophy' has a very long history, dating back to Plato and Aristotle; however, it has succeeded in ripening to a systematically elaborated shape and a keen awareness of its essential methods only within the last hundred and something years, and this process has, I do hope, by far not yet reached its end.

²⁷ For details, see Hoche 1990: ch. 1.

²⁸ It has often and, I think, rightly been claimed that, in the systematic or theoretical arrangement of the branches of human learning, mathematics, logic, and philosophy closely belong together and make up a third group besides the groups of the humanities and the sciences.

‘things themselves’ we encounter in the world rather than the way each of us uses to speak about these things in his or her personal idiolect –, (2) with ‘real’ rather than ‘possible’, ‘impossible’, and ‘necessary’ states of affairs, and (3) with ‘objectivity’, including what we may call the ‘objectified subjectivities’ of others as they are perceived by me, rather than ‘subjectivity proper’.

Some readers may miss here a fourth point, to wit, the contradistinction between research into what *is* and research into what *ought to be*. However, I think it is at least debatable, first, whether the uncontroversial ‘ought to *do*’ may be paralleled with an ‘ought to *be*’, and second, whether the research into what each of us ought to do – in the face of a given situation – is the domain of the philosopher as such or rather a task each of us, in his capacity of a human being, has to cope with. Without question *metaethics* (for instance, research into such questions as what exactly we want to convey to our hearers (and to ourselves) when we use propositions of the form, say, ‘So-and-so ought to perform such and such an action’) is a basic domain of philosophy. In the field of *normative ethics*, however, the philosopher seems to me at best to function, as it were, as the deputy of the man in the street – and this only in default of another methodologically skilled expert (provided we are not prepared to completely leave the field to priests, theologians, jurists, politicians, and the like).

From what I just said in the last but one paragraph we may conclude that the second members of those three pairs of concepts – that is, *idiolectal language usage* (with respect to highly general and other pivotal terms), *modalities*, and *subjectivity* – may be taken to be the central and genuine domain of philosophy.²⁹ If so, the *genuine philosophical methods* may be subdivided into *methods of linguistic analysis*, *methods of modal analysis*, and *methods of the analysis of subjectivity proper*.

11. Linguistic and phenomenological methods

By ‘subjectivity proper’ I understand my own consciousness as it presents itself in my own first-person perspective, that is, what Husserl made the central topic of his so-called ‘transcendental phenomenology’ and what contemporary psychologists and philosophers of mind increasingly use to designate by the distinctive term ‘phenomenal consciousness’.³⁰ Hence the *methods of the analysis of subjectivity proper* may also, and more conveniently, be called *phenomenological methods*.

Likewise *modal analysis* – in the form of a systematic research into the necessary and general structures which, as a limiting framework, govern whatever is real and hence possible – is an integral part of what has been done by phenomenologists. Such research into the pre-empirical or ‘a priori’ features of reality seems to me to be best carried out by means of the method of ‘free variation’, that is, the unrestricted variation of purely imagined examples. This method may aptly be characterised as a systematic probing of the *limits* of what I can possibly conceive of in a specific form of imagination, to wit, ‘pure’ or ‘eidetic’ imagination.³¹ Husserl always – that is to

²⁹ See Hoche 2002: sect. 4.

³⁰ See, for instance, Velmans 2000: passim; Windmann & Durstewitz 2000: pp. 76 f.; Metzinger 2006.

³¹ See esp. Husserl 1925: pp. 72–87 (§ 9: ‘Die Wesensschau als genuine Methode der Erfassung des Apriori [The intuition of essences as the genuine method of grasping apriority]’; 1948: §§ 86–93 (i.e., Part [Abschnitt] III, ch. II: ‘Die Gewinnung der reinen Allgemeinheiten durch die Methode der Wesensschauung [The acquisition of pure generalities by means of the method of intuiting essences]’). This method of ‘phenomenological variation’ may be

say: already in the years before what has been called his ‘transcendental turn’ in 1907 – insisted that phenomenological analysis ought to be ‘eidetic analysis’, that is, an analysis of whatever phenomenon in respect of its ‘essence’, and hence a form of modal analysis.³² But the same methodological attitude has been adopted, at least programmatically, by other members, ‘transcendentally’-minded or not, of the so-called ‘phenomenological movement’.³³ In this spirit, the editors of Volume 1 of *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* (1913) – Edmund Husserl, Moritz Geiger, Alexander Pfänder, Adolf Reinach, and Max Scheler – in their common *Announcement* stated that what united the contributors to this new journal was not a school or system but ‘the shared conviction that the concepts and problems of the great traditions of philosophy can only be evaluated by *going back to the originary sources of intuition [Anschauung] and the insight into essences [Wesenseinsichten] which is drawn from this intuition*’.³⁴ – For these reasons we may also count the *methods of modal analysis*, insofar as they are not strictly logical methods,³⁵ among the *phenomenological methods*.

If we do so, *genuine philosophical methods*, or at least the bulk of them, are partly *methods of phenomenology* (in a broader sense) and partly *methods of linguistic philosophy* (again in a broader sense, comprising ‘ordinary language philosophy’ or ‘informal logic’ on the one hand and ‘ideal language philosophy’ with its ramifications and formal foundations on the other).³⁶ Most of these methods are marked by a theoretical *egocentricity*. Whereas the phenomenologist has to research into his own consciousness as it is experienced – not really: perceived – by himself in his own first-person perspective, and to draw upon his personal imaginative competence when he inquires into problems of modality, the ordinary language philosopher – provided he is intent on reaching palpable and consequential results – in the last resort cannot but rely upon his own idiolect, and then leave it to his fellow-philosophers whether or not they think they can subscribe to the results he has reached in his ‘idiolectal loneliness’, that is to say, without resorting to an empirical, and perhaps statistical, inquiry into the pertinent linguistic habits of other native speakers.³⁷ It ought to be noted, however, that each of us from infancy has developed his or her personal idiolect in an incessant linguistic intercourse with his or her fellow-speakers, which sufficiently guarantees a far-reaching agreement among the idiolects of all members of a linguistic community with respect to all questions of practical life, especially of biological and social ‘survival’ – but not necessarily so with respect to subtle philosophical questions, which, most fortunately, do not have such a down-to-earth relevance.

compared to, and at the same time contrasted with, a method of ‘linguistic variation’ and the method of ‘combination tests’ often (if seldom satisfyingly) applied in ordinary language philosophy; see Hoche 1983; 1990: ch. 10.

³² See esp. Husserl 1913, tr. 1931: §§ 1–26.

³³ For a survey, see Sepp 1988: esp. pp. 61–75 (Eberhard Avé-Lallemant) and p. 458 (Bibliographie, III).

³⁴ Translated from the facsimile in Sepp 1988: pp. 258 f. (citation: p. 259); my italics. Cf. *ibid.*: p. 71.

³⁵ Nowadays, modal analysis mostly takes the shape of ‘possible worlds’ theories. A *locus classicus* is Kripke 1972. As far as I know, no one has ever tried to systematically discuss the intriguing question of whether this logical approach and Husserl’s (non-transcendental) phenomenological approach to modalities admit of some unification or mutual fecundating. See, however, Hoche 1990: chs. 9–10, where I discuss some basic problems of possibility, necessity, conceivability, and inconceivability.

³⁶ In Hoche & Strube 1985: Part A, I tried to work out a systematic taxonomy of some of the multifarious methods of linguistic philosophy.

³⁷ See Hoche & Strube 1985: A.IV.1.f, where I try to make it plain why conceptual analysis can be philosophically fertile only on condition that it is carried out, not as linguistic analysis performed in a philological key, but as strictly idiolectal analysis. It is imperative, however, not to mistake one’s personal idiolect for a ‘private language’ in the sense which Wittgenstein (1953: *passim*) has rightly discredited.

As to linguistic or idiolectal methods, some readers would like to know why on earth we don't content ourselves with 'material' or 'matter of fact' problems in the first place. In the present context I think it suffices to reply as follows. There are time-honoured and at least in this sense genuine philosophical questions which lack a 'fact of the matter'³⁸ simply because they do not immediately relate to, and hence can be neither posed nor answered by inquiring into, any entities we can possibly encounter in the (objective) physical universe, or the (subjective) 'universe' of consciousness proper, or one of the (formal) 'universes' of mathematics and logic. Prominent examples seem to me to be such questions as 'What is knowledge?', 'What is causation?', or 'What is a moral obligation?'. As far as I can see, there is no other way of seriously coping with such questions besides asking ourselves – and, in the last resort, asking myself in 'idiolectal loneliness' – how I, for one, *use linguistic expressions to the point*. For instance, I may ask myself in what situations I would normally say that somebody *knows*, or *does not know*, or *only believes he knows*, that something is the case; or in what situations I would normally say that an event *a* has been *caused* by an event *b* (or, more down-to-earth: '*a because b.*'); or in what situations I would normally say that a given person has a *moral obligation* (or again, more down-to-earth: [morally] *ought*) to act in such and such a way.³⁹

12. 'Linguistic phenomenology'

All of these examples are apt to show, furthermore, that linguistic (idiolectal) analyses often – if not always – have to take into account, and to vary in imagination, non-linguistic situations, too. Hence we may be well-advised if we count the linguistic methods among the phenomenological methods rather than juxtaposing them. In fact, John L. Austin had a perfectly good reason for recommending the term '*linguistic phenomenology*' as a preferable alternative for the terms "linguistic" or "analytic" philosophy or "the analysis of language". Let me quote:

When we examine what we should say when, what words we should use in what situations, we are looking [...] not *merely* at words (or 'meanings', whatever they may be) but also at the realities we use the words to talk about: we are using a sharpened awareness of words to sharpen our perception of, though not as the final arbiter of, the phenomena.⁴⁰

This insight has been impressively confirmed by Richard M. Hare in an essay which in my view is truly worth reading:

Philosophers are concerned with words as having meanings or uses; and these at any rate cannot be studied without seeing how words are used, in concrete situations, to say various things; and, of course, this involves (as is evident from our practice) a

³⁸ Here I take the liberty of *adopting* Quine's frequently used phrase 'there is no fact of the matter' – for sources and a discussion see Hoche & Strube 1985: pp. 83 f., 92, 94; Hoche 1990: 72–74, 76, 78 f., 80 – and at the same time *adapting* it to the problem at hand, which I think is rather foreign to Quine.

³⁹ These three questions have been dealt with, respectively, in Dudda 2007; Hoche 1977; and Hoche 1992; 1995a; 2001; cf. 2004. – Having finished this section, I came across a recent essay which, in my eyes, deserves criticism in many respects (see Hoche 2008b). For instance, in striking opposition to what I just said, the author – a renowned academic philosopher and novelist – of all philosophical problems chooses just 'mental causation', 'our will to morally restrict our freedom of action', 'rationality', and 'justice' as cases exemplifying 'questions in dealing with which you won't get far by doing linguistic analysis' (translated from Bieri 2007: 340).

⁴⁰ Austin 1956: p. 130; cf. p. 129.

careful study of the situations, in order to find out what is being said. [...] A full philosophical examination of language would involve a full examination of everything that can be talked about – and if there are things that cannot be talked about, they cannot in any case become the subject of a philosophical enquiry.⁴¹

In precisely this spirit I have insisted since many years that the linguistic philosopher's basic tool should be what I call *his or her quite personal* 'combined imaginative and linguistic (idiolectal) competence' ('sprachgefühl'),⁴² and in the following essays I will constantly have to draw upon *mine* – in the hope, of course, that my readers, after having carefully considered what is at issue in each particular case, will finally see themselves in a position to share the linguistico-phenomenological results I have reached in my 'idiolectal loneliness'.⁴³

13. A note on philosophical truth

In the last paragraph of section 11, above, I touched upon the question of how to deal with philosophical 'what is'-questions. One such question is, of course, the question 'What is truth?', which Austin enjoined us to replace with the question '[...] how does the phrase "is true" occur in English sentences?'.⁴⁴ To this I fully subscribe; for substituting, to the greatest possible extent, finite verb forms for non-finite verb forms and noun-phrases is in general, I take it, a simple and yet often highly effective means for enhancing philosophical clarity.⁴⁵ However, as ought to be obvious by now, I think it crucial to tighten Austin's postulation and to ask the reader how he or she, *for one*, uses the phrase in question – in this case: the phrase 'is true' – *in his or her personal idiolect*. Let me try and briefly outline the answer I myself tend to consider appropriate. In my view this is very much to the point; for my readers may justly ask themselves whether I take my complementaristic approach to the mind-body problem and related anthropological problems to be 'true', and especially so in contrast with its countless dualistic, monistic, and dual-aspect competitors.

Leaving aside the often discussed speech-act theoretical aspects of using the simple predicate 'is true', which include, for instance, the important part it plays in assenting to someone or something, I think that I am wont to apply it⁴⁶ in by far the most cases to verbally expressed, or at least expressible, propositions (beliefs, statements, assertions, etc.) insofar as I take them to be in accord with those experiences, perceptions, proofs, linguistic or emotional intuitions, etc., which I have learnt to consider the appropriate 'verifying evidence', or 'legal ground', for making an assertive use of these very propositions in the first place. At first sight, this may perhaps look like an exhumation of the time-honoured but nowadays disreputable 'correspondence theory of truth',

⁴¹ Hare 1959: p. 51; cf. pp. 50–52. For a discussion and further sources, see Hoche & Strube 1985: A.VI, esp. A.VI.1.

⁴² See, for instance, Hoche 1990: pp. 141, 146, 148, and Index of Subjects, entry 'competence, imaginative and linguistic', of the present collection (i.e., Hoche 2008a).

⁴³ See the third paragraph of section 11, above.

⁴⁴ Austin 1950: p. 19.

⁴⁵ The same is true, by the way, of substituting the active voice for the passive voice, which is likewise apt to suppress conceptual structure.

⁴⁶ Note that I am speaking of the *simple predicate* 'is true' and not, for instance, of *expanded predicates* such as 'true to nature' or the *attribute* 'true' as it occurs, for instance, in 'a true friend' or 'true love'.

which Frege, for one, claimed to have refuted.⁴⁷ But what I have in mind is solely the *correspondence of a given verbally expressed or expressible proposition with whatever experiences, perceptions, proofs, intuitions, etc., are acknowledged to give us the speech-act theoretical right to utter, use, or maintain that proposition with the illocutionary force of assertion ('assertive force')*.⁴⁸

Of course, as always the devil is in the details, into most of which this is not to place to delve. But let me say at least that much. According to the conception of truth just outlined, obviously a verbally expressed or expressible proposition – or a fully interpreted declarative sentence of, say, the English language – is ‘true’ or ‘false’ only on condition it is essentially related to an (at least potential) cognition of the relevant type. In this sense, my conception of truth is an ‘epistemic’ one. Since the ‘redundancy theory of truth’ is, of course, not touched by my stance on the problem of truth, the same holds true for my conception of a proposition. In other words: If a supposed proposition, be it of the simple form ‘p’ or the redundant form ‘p is true.’, *on principle* defies both a *preceding or simultaneous* speech-act theoretical justification and a verifying or falsifying check *ex post*⁴⁹ of the proper cognitive sort, then we should not hesitate to regard it, not as a (‘principally’ or ‘as yet’) indeterminate or undecidable proposition, but as a mere would-be or pseudo-proposition, which is strictly void of sound meaning, or ‘nonsensical’.⁵⁰

Now each of the statements I am going to make in the present collection of essays (i.e., Hoche 2008a) will hopefully meet the conditions of falling under the concept of a *genuine*, i.e., *true-or-false* proposition, and moreover, I do of course hope, more often than not even the conditions of being *true*. Predictably, this will not always be the case; for I don’t know of any work of philosophy that is free from flaws, errors, and other shortcomings. Nonetheless, what I am after is decidedly *philosophical truth* and not just the deliberation of more or less plausible genuine or even spurious possibilities, which in philosophy, as elsewhere, all-too often tend to be surreptitiously taken for probabilities, facts, or even necessities. Rather, in the following essays I will be intent on founding whatever I am going to state on the experiential and/or linguistic ‘evidence’ which, in each case at hand, seems to me to be appropriate. So I hope I will be able to make a few ‘steps in the right direction’ which, however, must doubtless be followed by a great many others and probably also adjusted in more than one respect. From this it follows that I should like to urge my readers to critically examine these essays in a productive and constructive rather than a merely receptive and historically-minded attitude, that is, in the spirit of issue-related collegiality, which is keen on improving, exploiting, and ‘exhausting’ rather than merely filing or rashly discarding what others have to say.

Let me conclude this introduction by quoting a dictum of Hare’s which seems to me to be utterly worth heeding:

⁴⁷ Frege 1918: pp. 59 f. It has often been said that Frege’s attempt was a flop, and even beginners’ mistakes have in effect been imputed to him; but Pardey (2004; 2006: ch. 8; 2007) took pains to rehabilitate Frege’s arguments at great length. However, I am afraid I can follow neither Frege nor Pardey in all respects.

⁴⁸ For the systematic and historical relation between Frege’s conception of ‘assertive force’ (‘behauptende Kraft’) and Austin’s conception of ‘illocutionary force’ see Hoche 1990: 6.2.

⁴⁹ For this difference, see Hoche 1990: 7.4.

⁵⁰ Hence among such pseudo-propositions I count, for instance, predictions *as such*, i.e., as taken to relate, not to relevant indications presently existing or having already existed (as is the case, e.g., in a professional weather-forecast), but to contingent states of affairs in the future (Aristotle’s ‘contingentia futura’, such as tomorrow’s naval battle). Other sorts of pseudo-propositions will come up, as the cases arise, in the following essays (i.e., of Hoche 2008a).

I shall be less disturbed if my readers disagree with me than if they fail to understand me. [...] I have therefore tried to adopt throughout as definite a standpoint as possible, in the belief that it is more important that there should be discussion of the points herein raised, than that I should survive it unscathed.⁵¹

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⁵¹ Hare 1952: Preface, p. III.

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Appendix: Analytical Table of Contents of Hoche 2008a

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