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EMOTION AND AFFECTION BETWEEN PHENOMENOLOGY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS: BEHAVIOR, BODY, MEMORY

1. *Phenomenology of emotional states*

In Husserl's phenomenology the description of the emotions hinges on two characteristics of the experience: its intentional content and its hyletic dimension. The first, as is well known, is what enables the experience to be directed towards something; the second integrates intentionality and feeling, offering a pathic character and fullness to the experience. If we use the intentional content as a descriptive parameter, it is permissible to distinguish between intentional emotions (eg. admiration for somebody, desire for something) and non-intentional emotions – or, if we prefer, between representational and non-representational emotions. For example, it seems plausible to treat anxiety or even panic as non-intentional, and to describe fear as endowed with intentionality; to consider depression, anxiety, distress, discouragement, joy, bad moods, or shame as non-intentional; but think of devotion, hatred, scorn, guilt, surprise and astonishment as intentional. If we look at the emotions using the parameter of their hyletic content, all emotions incorporate a hyletic or qualitative dimension. In other words, when offering an analysis of the emotional state, it is impossible to eliminate *what it is like* (Nagel 1974) to feel a certain emotion. Short of bringing about its own dissolution, the emotion cannot dispense with intuitive fullness. In addition, it is possible to interpret the notion of “non-intentional state” in two ways (Lanfredini 2014). The first, which refers to the notion of non-intentional *content*, depends on being put into intentional form, and therefore on the constitution of objects to which intentionality aims. Thus, the sensation of colour is transformed into seeing a colour, aural sensation into listening to a sound, olfactory sensation into a smell. For Husserl indeed, putting a hyletic content into intentional form has the objective of making a property or attribute of the object emerge. The standard distinction between intentional and non-intentional states, or between representational and sensible or hyletic components, serves in this case to signal the impossibility of the sensation surviving alone, without being given a form by means of an apprehensional structure. In this case, the relationship between non-intentional and intentional content is outlined for constitutive and apprehensional purposes; that is to say, hyletic content and intentional form cooperate in order to direct themselves towards (in the sense of intentional

direction) objects of experience. The relationship between sensation and representation can in this case be read as one of unilateral foundation, in which sensation is found to be a non-independent part relative to intentional form. The latter, which is found in turn to be an independent part, has the aim of shaping, animating and interpreting the sensation.

However, there is a second way in which the notion of non-intentional state can be interpreted, a way which refers to the emotional sensation more properly so called. In fact, emotional sensation is centred on the notion of *affection* rather than on the notion of *constitution*. It turns out to be non-intentional and at the same time independent and autonomous since it does not need to be put into intentional form. Hence, emotional sensation does not identify with feeling (eg. desire for something or admiration for somebody), nor with sensation understood as hyletic content (eg. sensation of a colour or hearing a sound). And yet, even though not intentional, it is still in a certain sense “directed” towards something: except that this directing of itself towards something no longer has the features of an intentional direction, but rather indicates the intertwining with that something which enables the sensation to be situated. On this point, in the Fifth of his *Logical Investigations*, Husserl makes a significant anticipation of the famous paradigm of Merleau-Ponty’s hand touching-being touched. Husserl asserts that

tactual sensations are referred in just this manner to the bodily member which touches, and to the external body which is touched (Husserl 1900-1: 109)

The distinction between emotional and apperceptual sensations takes account of the descriptive difference between sensation understood as non-intentional in the sense of non-independent part and sensation as non-intentional in the sense of integration or intertwining. As we have seen, this difference expresses two ways of understanding the expression “non-intentionality.” The former, which is identified with the content of the action, refers to sensation as formless sensory material, hyletic material. The latter identifies non-intentionality with affectivity: a notion which, in this case, turns out to be detached from intentional activity by having as its objective the localization, rather than the constitution, of sensations. In other words, the non-intentionality of emotional sensation should be understood not in relation to the *intention towards something*, but in relation to the *integration or intertwining with something*.

Lastly, non-intentional qualitative states can be understood in a dual manner: 1) as states that *per se* lack the morphological framework which characterizes intentional states and which nevertheless require the intervention of such a structure in order to be given intentional form; 2) as states that *per se* are not endowed with intentionality and which nevertheless do *not* require the intervention of an intentional structure because their objective is not the constitution or the determination, but the *localization* of the sensation, or if we prefer, its *value*.

Mais l'intentionnalité des émotions a pour caractère très particulier de ne pouvoir être exprimée en significations intellectuelles. Les contenus vers lesquels elles tendent ne peuvent être déterminés par l'intelligence que secondairement. Leur essence est donc "alogique": c'est ce qu'on exprime en les appelant des valeurs (Merleau-Ponty 1997 : 19).

In what sense does emotion entail a *reference back to values*? This is the question I shall try to answer.

2. Behavior

In our opinion, the claim that the essence of emotional sensation expresses itself by referring back to values implies three theses:

1. Emotion is not private, but public, expressive, behavioral;
2. Emotion is corporeal and, as such, demands not an analysis of consciousness, but an analysis of matter, understood as living matter;
3. The structure of emotion is essentially temporal.

The first thesis is endorsed by authors from widely differing schools of thought such as Darwin, James, Freud, Bergson and, more recently, Damasio. These authors intend a clear distinction between *emotion* and *consciousness*. Philosophers and neuroscientists who point out the *public* nature of emotion, rather than its interior, private, strictly subjective aspects, agree in emphasizing the interactive, environmental, expressive aspect of emotion. In this connection, Damasio revives the conception of homeostasis, a concept which refers to "physical reactions that are coordinated, to a large extent automatic, and indispensable for maintaining the stability of a living organism's internal states such as temperature regulation, oxygen levels and pH" (Damasio 1999: 56). While it is only through the onset of a sense of self that the person comes to be conscious of the feelings he has, this does not occur in emotion, which may arise without the organism being conscious of it. When, in a given situation, we feel uneasy or anxious, satisfied or relaxed, these states do not originate in consciousness. This is confirmed by the fact that, in the moment at which we become conscious of an emotional state, we at the same time also become conscious that the state subsisted before we became aware of it. Hence there is a condition antecedent to *feeling* and *knowing that one is feeling*. This emotional state coincides with bodily movement: that is, with behavior. The term "behavior" usually provokes much puzzlement because of the excessive tendency to reduce it to the "exterior." But this interpretation only makes sense if we assume a certain idea (a rather dried out and stripped-down one) of "behavior" as a response to an external stimulus (à la Quine, for example). There is, however, a fuller conception of the notion of behaviour, and it is not by chance that the first important work by Merleau-Ponty addresses the structure

of behavior (Merleau-Ponty 1942). On this basis, behavior is not so much a response to a stimulus as a bodily expression, a manifestation, *movement*, the same movement that causes Bergson to say that “the growing intensity of the state itself is nothing more than the ever deeper vibration of the organism, a vibration which consciousness measures without difficulty through the number and extension of the surfaces that are affected” (Bergson 1888: 22). Similarly for Darwin, in rage “the action of the heart is much accelerated, or it may be much disturbed. The face reddens, or it becomes purple from the impeded return of the blood, or may turn deadly pale. The respiration is laboured, the chest heaves, and the dilated nostrils quiver” (1872: 74), while “when lovers meet, we know that their hearts beat quickly, their breathing is hurried, and their faces flush” (*ibid.*: 78-9); aversion is manifested by certain movements of disgust which we repeat without noticing them when we think about the hated object and “we blush and involuntarily clench the fingers when we feel shame, even if it be retrospective” (Bergson 1888: 31). If for James the emotion of rage is precisely the array of organic sensations by means of which it is expressed (James 1884), for Bergson

Fear when strong (...) expresses itself in cries, in efforts to escape, in palpitations, in tremblings. We go further, and maintain that these movements form part of the terror itself: by their means the terror becomes an emotion capable of passing through different degrees of intensity. Suppress them entirely, and the more or less intense state of terror will be succeeded by an idea of terror, the wholly intellectual representation of a danger which it concerns us to avoid (1888: 30).

So emotions seem to come “from outside” and not “from within;” rather than being produced, they take hold of us, assuming the nature of extrospective states. The, so to speak, *external* character of emotion is the object of an important phenomenological current: the so-called new phenomenology (Schmitz 2003, 2009, 2011). The basic idea is that emotions are substantially environmental, or atmospheric, and that they are experienced through a “synesthetic resonance with one’s own body” (Fuchs 2000: 214). Based on this interpretation, atmospheres (and hence emotions) would have to be considered quasi-objective (walking with head held high is not caused by pride, but is pride). The spatialization of the affective (a topological conception of emotion) refers not to a dimensional or site-specific space, but a more primary space (Griffero 2010, 2013); not geometric but “functional.”

All this converges once again on the thesis which addresses the objective, external, non-introspective nature of emotions; that same nature which, according to Schmitz, enables the distinction between feelings and emotions: “without courageous people there is no courage, while melancholy can certainly exist in the absence of a melancholy person” (Schmitz 1969:148). Based on this interpretation, emotions would coincide with the background atmosphere and with the value which connotes it, as a sort of environment of condensation (Husserl himself referred in his *Investigations* to a “colouring of sadness;” Husserl 1900-1: 183), which in turn refers back to an *impersonal* dimension.

The subject of sensation is neither a thinker who takes note of a quality, nor an inert setting, which is affected or changed by it, it is a power, which is born into, and simultaneously with, a certain existential environment, or is synchronized with it. (Merleau-Ponty 1945: 245)

The constant use of the impersonal form (“is thought in me,” “is perceived in me,” etc.) indicates a new openness of phenomenology to an ontology of the trans-individual or of the inter-corporeal. Every one of our perceptions, thoughts or movements in the world is grafted onto a net of relationships which come together in constructing a sort of “*sensus communis*.”¹ And this has sensation as its starting point: “I am no more aware of being the true subject of my sensation, than of my birth;” indeed, sensation “its origin is anterior to myself, it arises from *sensibility* which has preceded it and will outlive it, just as my birth and death belong to a natality and a mortality which are anonymous” (*ibid.*: 250-1). Our whole experience is inserted therefore into a general flux which flows inside me without my being the cause of it: I am nothing but a stopping point.

By means of sensation I am able to grasp, on the fringe of my own personal life and acts, a life of given consciousness from which these latter emerge... Each time I experience a sensation, I feel that it concerns not my own being, the one for which I am responsible and for which I make decisions, but another self (*ibid.*: 251).

Conceiving of perception not as a personal act but as an impersonal fabric in which other beings are no more than “variations of ourselves,” radically changes the phenomenological perspective. From being personal, this perspective makes itself impersonal, from solipsistic it becomes relational: all beings are reciprocally constituted out of a common flesh, out of matter which is *in itself* expressive. The relationship between living body and world is not therefore one of mere proximity, but of *implication* – in the sense that the former lives in a, so to speak, oriented space – or of situation: “bodily space can be distinguished from external space and envelop its parts instead of spreading them out” (*ibid.*: 115); the “body is the potentiality of a certain world” (*ibid.*: 122), in the sense that its movement does not place the world, but *crosses it*.

Therefore, according to Merleau-Ponty, the theme of the impersonal involves not only emotional life, but the life of consciousness in general.

If I wanted to render precisely the perceptual experience, I ought to say that *one* perceives in me, and not that I perceive. Between my sensation and myself there stands always the thickness of some *primal acquisition* which prevents my experience from being clear of itself. I experience the sensation as a modality of a general existence, one already destined for a physical world and which runs through me without my being the cause of it (*ibid.*: 250-1).

So there are two ways of interpreting the impersonality of emotional consciousness: the first refers to the environment, the background, the

atmosphere, pointing to a characterisation of emotion as quasi-thing (Griffero 2013); the second refers to living matter. Impersonality understood in the first sense maintains itself within a spatial paradigm in which, in a move like a Gestalt switch, the background is privileged over attention, the inactual over the actual, horizon over presence. The impersonality addressed in the second case is quite different in nature. Indeed, in this latter the referential paradigm is no longer spatial, centered on the (epistemological) dynamic of presence/background, but temporal, centered on the (ontological) dynamic that we could call flesh/individuation. This second impersonality seems also to be decisive for a certain type of psychoanalytic reflection. A certain orientation in psychoanalysis – claims André Green – shares with structuralism a conception of the subject as no longer assimilated to the one who speaks. The subject, as Lacan says, *is spoken* (Green 2000b). Freud himself intended to show the inadequacy of an individual developmental perspective with an exclusively ontogenetic character. He is far from conceiving the subject as an absolute and independent center, an autonomous pole which pulls the strings of desire to achieve its own ends: “the individual is doubly subjugated, by the very nature of sexuality, which he undergoes more than he enacts it in his own right, and because he preserves the species – he ‘who places his own forces in exchange for a reward of pleasure’ – as a vehicle, host or receiver whose function is to knit the suture of the generations” (*ibid.*: XX). This once again underlines the rooting in the world, situated existence, *être au monde*. From this perspective, I find sense in the world, not so much through an operation of constitution, as by virtue of a primordial contact, pre-reflexive and pre-cognitive. And precisely because of this primary pact, it is the case that emotion *is given* in me, that perception *is made* in me, even before I am its motor. As has been observed in connection with this:

Merleau-Ponty has reoriented phenomenology from a “philosophy of sense” toward an “ontology of sense.” This “ontology of sense” may be accurately characterized as a “bipolarity” or bilateral relationship between self and world, a relationship revealed by phenomenology but obscured by classical reflective philosophies in their emphasis on subjectivity (Toadvine 2002: 80).

3. *Embodiment: the “Skin-Ego”*

“There is always some degree of depersonalization at the heart of consciousness” (1945: 158) and this depersonalization is embodied in *sensation* (“the sensory and perceptual functions... are pre-personal” (*ibid.*: 405), in the body (“I *have* the world as an incomplete individual through the agency of my body as the potentiality of this world” (*ibid.*: 408) and lastly, in *movement* (“in the action of the hand which is raised towards an object is contained a reference to the object, not as an object represented, but as that highly specific thing towards which we project ourselves, near which we are, in anticipation,

and which we haunt” (*ibid.*: 159). Through sensation, the body and movement set up that “taking up of external by internal and of internal by external” (*ibid.*: 153): ie. that circularity, inherence, reversibility between internal and external, which is able to extend and open the subjective dimension to what was, until that moment, simply considered as other than oneself.

Hence sensations are not sensory contents, but “a change permeating my whole body” (*ibid.*: 264), ie. symbioses, ways of being penetrated by the external environment, which underlie a “‘primary layer’ of sense experience which precedes its division among the separate senses” (*ibid.*): “sensation is a literally a form of communion” (*ibid.*: 246). Consciousness, again before representing the world to itself, *makes itself world* and does so through the body; body understood not so much as kinesthetic body with essentially constitutive tasks, nor even as corporeal schema; but as a dimension which is to a large extent anonymous, bearer of a latent and not explicit consciousness. Flesh is not corporeal extension endowed with kinesthetic movement, but primary experience of immersion in the world. It is founded on the reversibility between sentience and the sensible – that is, on grasping that which we consider “external” as the reverse of that which we consider “internal;” exactly “as if space were beginning to know itself internally” (*ibid.*, 111). By means of this reversibility we do not intend something, but something “is intended in me.”

Therefore, although is not intentional, sensation it is a complex phenomenon not a simple one, since it turns out to be constituted by a state of consciousness and by a bodily modification which expresses it, transforming it from a private or internal fact to a public or “external” one. Should a state of mind not be manifested externally, and instead remain confined within the subject, it cannot authentically be called an emotion; in the same way as a mere bodily expression without a feeling (in a simple reflex) could not be called an emotion. In other words, there can be no emotion without a body able to express it. As is well known, phenomenology distinguishes between inanimate body (*Körper*) and animate body (*Leib*). The *Leib*, however, is in turn a composite entity, in that it refers to the distinction between the kinesthetic body and the genuinely affective body. Emotion engages the affective body in particular: it has the scope of decentering, materializing, embodying, and extending the mind until it is incorporated into something else. The theme of touch, which is clearly in play here, intersects with the philosophically and psychoanalytically relevant theme of the Skin-Ego.

Le toucher est également impliqué dans les premières frustrations dont résultent les premières colères : tendre sa main vers ce que l’œil voit et ne peut pas obtenir ; tendre les bras vers la mère pour être pris, alors qu’elle en a décidé autrement et laisse le bébé au lit. L’expérience du désir inassouvi se joue d’abord, la faim mise à part, dans le registre tactile (Coulmas 2012: 19).

So it is from touch, and hence from corporeality, that the notions of “internal” and “external,” “surface” and “depth,” soma and psyche emerge genetically.

Il y a dans la pensée occidentale, une obsession de la profondeur. Depuis longtemps, nous vivons avec un schéma épistémologique où connaître signifie dépasser les apparences pour plonger dans l'intérieur, briser l'écorce pour atteindre le noyau. [...] La valorisation de l'*intérieur*, du dedans, du cœur, du centre, du fruit (la liste des associations est longue) est universelle et reflète le vieux partage de l'espace entre *sacré* et *profane* (*ibid.*: 20)

The notion of skin, as it is addressed by certain psychoanalysts (eg. Anzieu and, before him, Winnicott), serves to indicate an overcoming of this frontality and separation, precisely because it is a boundary between what is *mine* and what is *other*. The skin in fact represents a sort of indistinctness between the subject and the object with which it comes into contact. Rather than being a dual relationship, it is once again an intertwining, interconnection, adjacency, proximity. It is precisely in this more primary relationship that affection resides, rather than in that of distance and frontality (the *subiectum* placing itself in front of the *obiectum*). The "fantasy of the skin," common to mother and baby, makes itself available to contain this very confusion between orders of reality which renders the relationship between the two bodies symbiotic and almost indistinct. On the other hand, the appearance of those cutaneous fantasies is necessary for building up "a fundamental certainty of the integrity of its bodily wrapping" (Anzieu 1985: 42), and hence for the development of a healthy and positive image of its own self. The skin also plays a fundamental role in the constitution of the psychic ego, in that it "transforms the organism into a sensitive system capable of experiencing other kinds of sensation (the function of initiative), either connecting them to sensations of the skin (the associative function) or differentiating and localising them as figures emerging against the backcloth of an overall body surface (the screen function)" (Anzieu 1985: 15-16), thus performing "a series of other tasks that are essential to the living body, considered now as a whole individual, continuous in space and time" (*ibid.*: 16). Thus, for Anzieu:

every psychical activity leans anacritically on a biological function. The Skin-ego is supported by the various functions of the skin. (...) The first function of the skin is to be the sac that contains and retains inside itself all the good, full material that has accumulated through breastfeeding, everyday care, and the experience of being bathed in words. Its second function is to be the interface that marks the border with the external world, which it keeps on the outside, the barrier that protects one against being penetrated by the aggression (...) of others (...) The third function of the skin (...) is to be a site and primary mode of communication with other people, to establish meaningful relations. From this epidermal, proprioceptive origin, the Ego inherits the double faculty of setting up barriers (which become psychological defence mechanisms) and filtering exchanges (*ibid.*: 44).

The skin, as interface between internal and external, functions therefore as a contact-barrier: "contact-barriers serve a triple function of separation: they keep the unconscious from the conscious, memory from perception, and

quantity from quality. Their topography is that of a dissymmetrical, double-faced wrapping [...] with a surface turned towards external excitations [...] and an inner surface turned towards ‘the internal periphery of the body’ (*Körperinnenperipherie*)” (*ibid.*: 86). According to Anzieu, the Freudian ego in its primary phase can easily be equated with the I-skin. And indeed

Freud alludes to the fact that I feel an object touching my skin at the same time as I feel my skin touched by the object. (...) The baby soon begins to explore this bipolarity actively: it deliberately touches parts of its body with its finger (...) thus testing out simultaneously the complementary experiences of being object and subject (*ibid.*: 90-91).

Touch is the only one of the five external senses to possess a reflexive, auto-affective, structure, and it is on the model of tactile reflexivity that the other sensory reflexivities are constructed (hearing oneself emit sounds, smelling one’s own smell, looking at oneself in the mirror), until we arrive at the reflexivity of thought, ensuring the unity and identity of consciousness and the perception of the self.

What has been said thus far fits perfectly into Merleau-Ponty’s conception of the infant’s affective experience. Indeed, infantile perception does not by any means manifest itself as “a simple reflection of external phenomena within the child or of a simple sorting of data resulting from the activity of the senses,” but as “an actual ‘informing’ (*Gestaltung*) of experience in the child” (1968: 98). The imagination itself is by no means attributable to a degraded or weakened copy of previous perceptions, but to an “emotional conduct” which reflects “a primordial operation by which the child organizes the imaginary, just as he organizes the perceived” (*ibid.*).

What is thus overcome is the classical paradigm according to which “the psychic is *what is given to only one person*” (*ibid.*: 114). In place of the traditional thesis of the inaccessibility of my consciousness and the impenetrability of my body, Merleau-Ponty presents an alternative conception, according to which the infant, as a spectator of gestures and words coming from the body of the other, does not consider those gestures and expressions as opportunities for a sort of deciphering or a projection into the other of data belonging to his own intimate experience. On the contrary, the child’s experience of the other is early and even primary. The sensitivity to certain physiognomic expressions such as the smile is independent of the establishment of a comparison between the other’s body, as it is seen in the first person, and the felt body. For Merleau-Ponty, what takes place is a genuine transfer of the other’s conduct into the first person: “we do not at first imitate others, but rather the actions of others, and we find others at the point of origin of these actions. At first the child imitates not persons but conducts” (*ibid.*: 117). But as Merleau-Ponty himself recognizes, doing this requires the notion of psyche to be re-shaped, directing it more towards that of behaviour.

If my body is to appropriate the conducts given to me visually and make them its own, it must itself be given to me not a mass of utterly private sensations but instead by what has been called a 'postural' or 'corporeal schema' (...) my body is no agglomeration of sensations (visual, tactile, "tenesthetic," or "cenesthetic"). It is first and foremost a *system* whose different introceptive and extroceptive aspects express each other reciprocally, including even the roughest relations with surrounding space and its principal directions (*ibid.*: 117).

The various sensory domains involved in the perception of my body, far from being (as Husserl thought) regions extraneous to each other, in reality share a certain "style of action" or a certain "gestural meaning" (*ibid.*: 118) which finally makes them into an organized whole, indeed a system. In this way, the experience I have of my body would be transferred onto the other much more easily than by kinesthesia or proprioception, giving rise to a sort of "phenomenon of coupling" (*ibid.*) between my body and the behaviors of which I am a witness.

4. Time

The individuation of "one system with two terms" composed of my behavior and the behavior of the other, which functions as a whole, leads us to consider the third and final aspect: the essentially temporal nature of affection. The experience of my body and that of the other form a totality: that is, they constitute a "form" (and it is in exactly this doubleness, within one and the same system, that "being incarnate" consists (*ibid.*: 140)). On the other hand, "the consciousness of one's own body is thus fragmentary [*lacunaire*] at first and gradually becomes integrated" and "this entire placement of the corporeal schema is at the same time a placing of the perception of others" (*ibid.*: 123). This means that the notion of form, like that of system, has a temporal connotation. After all, the crying of a very young baby is not caused by the awareness that somebody is going away, but a sort of "impression of incompleteness" (*ibid.*: 124); and similarly he has the "perception of a look as of something that makes him complete" (*ibid.*).

Any form (eg. those we perceive in space – coloured forms) is actually subject to a play of forces from different directions. The imbalance can be infinitesimal at first and give rise to no appreciable change. Then, when it passes a certain threshold, a change occurs (...) The notion of form is essentially dynamic (Teodvine, Lawlor 2007: 151)

After all, in that it has a *story*, the living body is inscribed in time. Into it are conveyed, via a process of differentiation, the natural temporal horizons which constitute its genesis, both phylo- and ontogenetic. From this point of view, consciousness belongs to the individual insofar as it belongs to the world around him, and not only to that specifically human part of it, but also

to the animal, vegetable and even mineral parts. For Merleau-Ponty, all beings are “variants of ourselves” since they emerge from that ground in relation to which the familiar lines emerge as *nodes*, *junctures*, *nerves*. Moreover, this rootedness in the past takes account of the impersonal character of emotion and of its being to some degree detached from consciousness. As Damasio himself recognizes, “we do not need to be conscious of the inducer of an emotion and often are not, and we cannot control emotions wilfully” (1999: 47). Emotion is impersonal precisely because it is the expression of a sub-personal past.

According to Green, the predominant tendency in contemporary psychoanalysis (above all, in that of an Anglo-Saxon stamp) is to stick firmly to a single viewpoint, that of development, reducing even Freud’s complex temporal model to a single genetic viewpoint.² We should challenge this by bringing attention back to the link between psychic life and its primary temporality. Time, as Bergson claims, is efficacious. This efficacy is detectable at many points in Freud: we need only think of the phenomenon of “*après-coup*” (*Nachträglichkeit*), which as has been emphasized (Green 2000a), entails a profound rethinking of the true nature of psychic causality in psychoanalysis. Emphasizing how past events are managed by the subject *après-coup*³ and how it may be exactly this reorganization and psychic rewriting of the mnestic traces which offer them meaning and efficacy and also their possible pathogenic dimension, is nothing more than a way of showing the efficacy of time in events.

Il n’y a pas de circonstance où le déchirement interne à la temporalité est plus sensible que durant la séance d’analyse où le propos est toujours déphasé, forcément déjà en retard ou *déjà en avance* sur l’expérience de la conscience; pas de circonstance où le discours ne sente plus travaillé de l’intérieur par autre chose qui le détermine (...). Une telle réaction n’est peut-être pas sans rapport avec l’idée que nous sentons que notre vie commence bien avant le moment où notre mémoire la fait débiter. S’il y a une inconscience de la mort pour l’inconscient, il y a aussi l’intuition que la vie ne coïncide pas avec la conscience et la mémoire que nous avons gardées du début de notre existence. Il serait presque plus juste de dire que, *pour l’inconscient, l’existence n’a pas plus de fin qu’il ne peut lui assigner un début* (Green 2000a: 168-170).

Let us add two observations. The first concerns the enormous importance which the temporal rhythm of experience attains for psychic life. The differences within the emotional dimension can easily be attributed to differences in the temporal rhythm. Thus, for Bergson, hope is such an intense pleasure because the future we may have at our disposal seems open to us and pregnant with possibility: and “the idea of the future, pregnant with an infinity of possibilities, is thus more fruitful than the future itself,” since “even if the most coveted of these becomes realized, it will be necessary to give up the others, and we shall have lost a great deal” (1888: 10). Joy is likewise an orientation of our states of consciousness towards the future, while sadness “begins by being nothing more than a facing towards the past, an impoverishment of our sensations and

ideas, as if each of them were now contained entirely in the little which it gives out, as if the future were in some way stopped up" (*ibid.*), a sort of crushing in the present, until we reach the "absence of rhythm" typical of the monotonous days of war recounted by Minkowski, that monotony which enables him to speak of the phenomenon of boredom in the trenches (1968: 332). In all pathological conditions it is still the modification of time which is most evident: "répétition incessante des rituels conjuratoires de l'obsessionnel, circularité immobilisante de la pensée, cycle des vœux et des annulations rétroactives, va-et-vient de l'acte et de la pensée, la flèche du temps est, à chaque atome d'espace franchi, tentée d'annuler son parcours au risque de se briser" (Green 2000a: 169-70).

The second observation concerns the atemporality of the unconscious, that unconscious for which existence is a "flux with no end or beginning," as Husserl declared. Atemporality with respect to the indestructibility of desire. To speak about the atemporality of the unconscious (which is different from declaring is eternity) requires reference to primary or primordial fantasies, to a species memory, and to conceive of the individual also as a link in a chain of which it is an instrument, independently of its will. Far from being a mere receptacle of desires, beliefs and affects that do not yield to the commands of reason and logic, "l'inconscient est d'abord un *trésor des sens*, réserve qui n'est pas seulement un conservatoire des illusions passées, mais une source dynamique inépuisable tendue vers le futur par la stimulation constante des forces qui délogent le sujet de son centre, le déplacent, le renvoient 'ailleurs'" (*ibid.*: 170-1); "réceptacle porteur des traces des pulsions primitives qui ne connaissent pas le rides du temps" (*ibid.*: 173). So psychic activity arises from the conflict of opposed drives, attributable in the last analysis to the "intrinsic potential for conflict" between the conservative character of the instincts and the indispensable evolution which is the task assigned to the Ego; in a permanent indestructibility of desire which on the one hand throws down a constant challenge to the constraints exercised by time, and on the other, through the compulsion to repeat, pushes towards the urgency and imperativeness of an actualization, of a real materialization, of a "prise de possession d'une pulsion sur le fragment de moi suppose *être* porté par elle et devant lui donner la forme d'incarnation le plus brute" (*ibid.*: 175). In this context, the atemporality of the unconscious has the purpose of keeping active in us that which pushes us to live, orienting our choices and our destiny, reconciling our desires with what life authorizes us to satisfy in a permanent "movement d'ouverture et de fermeture par lequel le sens se dépasse lui-même en se complétant, s'enrichissant, se donnant, à la limite, la possibilité d'une révision rétrospective par se mouvement même qui pousse à accroître le champ de ses formulations significatives" (*ibid.*: 180). There is a strong similarity, which Green acknowledges, between what I have just quoted and the distinction, proposed by René Thom, between salience and pregnancy. The latter can be seen as coinciding with instinctual excitation, conceived by Freud as a constant and uninterrupted urge, unlike the excitation originating from outside (sensation), and which we envisage as having a

capacity for expansion, diffusion and cessation. Here we find ourselves at the margin of the constitution of the representative system, beyond the resources of representation, in pure presentification. Pregnancy pervades representation: “le prédateur, rempli du désir de capturer sa proie, s’en imprègne jusqu’à devenir totalement habité par l’objet de sa prédation (*ibid.*: 181); “le psychisme serait ce qui re-vient, ce qui fait re-tour, ce qui se re-produit, Ce qui est une autre manière de dire que la pensée se pense” (*ibid.*). Viewed in this way, the Freudian thesis that perception and memory are mutually exclusive (or, as Bergson would say, are differences of kind and not of degree) acquires a precise meaning.

Conclusion

We are now in a position to clarify the sense in which Merleau-Ponty makes reference to the notion of *value*, where he asserts that the essence of the emotions is “a-logical” in that it is expressed “in their reference back to *values*.” The reference to values takes concrete form in overcoming the paradigm of an isolated psychic life enclosed in its own internal sphere with no opacity. The notion which more than any other marks this overcoming is that of the atemporality of the unconscious. Extending between a limit that is not an origin and an elsewhere that is not an end, between desire and resistance to change – ie. rejection of extinction – the unconscious simply goes on.

According to Green (2000b), the unconscious draws no lesson from life since it dwells within the signifying organization of desire. When one says oblivion one is saying memory, the system for retaining mnemonic traces which Freud irreducibly opposes to the perceptual system, which records without preserving anything. For Freud, perception implies a discharge, an impoverishment, an actualization which in his view prevents retention, elaboration, transformation by means of contact with the repressed: that is, with the living and never completed past.

The value to which Merleau-Ponty is referring is signalled by precisely this irruption of the impersonal into psychic life, from its openness and at the same time its rootedness in a past which transcends consciousness, of which the notions of behavior, body and temporality constitute the essential indicators.

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NOTES

- 1 This is especially obvious in the relationship between the newborn infant and its mother, characterised by a sort of fleshly inter-subjectivity. Communication between mother and child is guided by rules, which we could call circular, such as *reversibility* and *transitivity*.
- 2 According to Green, there are two tendencies in psychoanalysis: one which valorized history at the expense of structure in the excessive importance it gave to the notion of development and correlatively to the notions of fixation and regression; the other privileged synchrony through a predominance of reference to discourse and language, at the expense of the historical point of view. In Green's view, this opposition derives from having equated history with the theory of libidinal development, thereby postulating a predetermined biological maturation (2000b: 14).
- 3 This re-managing arises from the occurrence of events (*après-coup* indeed) which, thanks to the subject's organic maturation, enable him to attain that meaning which was inaccessible to him before because of an inadequate degree of psychic maturation.

Emotion and Affection Between Phenomenology and Psychoanalysis: Behavior, Body, Memory

The notion of emotion in phenomenology involves the centrality of the concept of “value.” This general assumption is here articulated in three theses. The first thesis concerns the public, expressive and behavioral nature of emotion. The second thesis relates to its corporeal and material nature. The third maintains that the structure of emotion is essentially temporal. Each of these arguments converges in emphasizing the irruption of an impersonal dimension into human consciousness, and in particular into emotional consciousness. The objective of this essay is to probe this sub-categorical, or inter-corporeal, dimension from the dual viewpoint of phenomenology and psychoanalysis.

Émotion et affection, entre phénoménologie et psychanalyse : comportement, corps et mémoire

La notion d'émotion en phénoménologie implique la centralité du concept de « valeur ». Cette supposition est ici articulée en trois thèses. La première concerne la nature publique, expressive et comportementale de l'émotion. La seconde se rapporte à la nature corporelle et matérielle de l'émotion. La troisième soutient que la structure de l'émotion est essentiellement temporelle. Ces trois arguments permettent de souligner l'irruption d'une dimension impersonnelle au sein de la conscience humaine, et en particulier dans la conscience émotionnelle. L'objectif de cet essai est de sonder cette dimension sous-catégorique, ou inter-corporelle, à partir du double point de vue de la phénoménologie et de la psychanalyse.

Emozione e affezione tra fenomenologia e psicoanalisi: comportamento, corpo, memoria

La nozione di emozione in fenomenologia implica la centralità del concetto di “valore”. Nel presente articolo, questo assunto generale è articolato secondo tre tesi. La prima concerne l'aspetto pubblico, espressivo e comportamentale dell'emozione. La seconda ha a che fare con la sua natura corporea e materiale. La terza afferma il carattere essenzialmente temporale dell'emozione. Queste argomentazioni convergono nel tentativo di mettere in luce l'irruzione di una dimensione impersonale nella coscienza umana, e in particolare nella coscienza emozionale. L'obiettivo di questo studio è esaminare questa dimensione sub-categoriale, o inter-corporea, dal duplice punto di vista della fenomenologia e della psicoanalisi.