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Depersonalization and the Sense of Realness

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Abstract: From Minkowski and Jaspers to Blankenburg, phenomenological psychopathology has assumed that lost or diminished experience of 'realness' is related to an impairment of tacit level intersubjectivity. This paper develops a theoretical framework for this hypothesis by drawing mainly on the phenomenological tradition and the works of Wittgenstein. The argument, in return, contributes to recent discussions regarding depersonalization and intersubjectivity. In addition, the approach suggests some interesting implications for psychopathology.

Keywords: realness, depersonalization, Jaspers, Wittgenstein, Husserl

With 'reality,' we usually refer to the state of things as they actually are in the world. Such an understanding takes its start from what is generally valid and objective, in opposition to mere subjective appearance. However, as Jaspers (1997, 96) points out, to have a deeper grasp of what reality is, we must also take into account important aspects that reveal themselves in subjective experience. Jaspers urges us to focus on the 'phenomenology of reality' and to take seriously that real things sometimes fail to feel real or familiar to us. Indeed, such experiences are common and may span from the normal to the pathological. In the latter case, they may amount to depersonalization (DP) (and/or derealization [DR]), in which a patient's experience of self and the world is permeated by 'feelings of unreality' and a general sense of unfamiliarity (American Psychiatric Association 2000; Oyebode 2008, 245). Such experiences may also involve dissociative features, in which one experiences a pathological, subjective detachment from the external world, an estrangement from one's body and even from mental processes. Classifying such phenomenological states is not easy, however. Although intact reality testing is a criterion of DP syndrome (American Psychiatric Association 2000), many—including Radovic and Radovic (2003) and Modigh (2002)—emphasize that patients with DR and/or DP complaints may be delusional. Adding to the complexity of this matter, psychotic patients may also experience feelings of unreality.

Around 23% of a general, nonclinical population has at some point experienced short-lived DP (Aderibigbe, Bloch, and Waler 2001). It is thus a relatively common phenomenon, which often occurs during conditions of fatigue, stress and/or drug use (Simeon 2004; Sedman, 1966, 1970). DP may occur as the primary disorder, but there are also high rates of comorbidity, especially with personality disorders, anxiety, and depression (Baker et al. 2003; Ball et al. 1997; Brauer, Harrow, and Tucker 1970; Mula et al. 2009). Despite constituting a common psychiatric symptom (Cattell and Cattell 1974; Dixon 1963) that is highly resistant

to both psychotherapeutic and pharmacological treatments (Guralnik, Schmeidler, and Simeon 2000), DP continues to be one of the least investigated and diagnosed conditions (Simeon 2004; Simeon et al. 1997).

This paper considers the investigation of such experiences of 'unreality' as being of interest to the psychopathologist as well as the philosopher. The investigation of such experiences both offers the possibility of understanding the normal constitution of the 'the real' as well as its fragmentation. Following Arendt (1978, 51), this article employs the term 'realness' to avoid the confusion with our usual definition of reality. The point is not to address an entity called reality, but a special feature of experiencing reality (realness) that seems to be altered in DP. Thus, realness (and its alteration and diminishment) is understood in a manner in which the focus is not on the content but on the overall status of the world itself in experience—the unspecifiable 'horizon,' within which the content of our experiences appears.

Before going further, we need to clarify a crucial methodological issue. Following the precedent set by prominent figures like Janet, Jaspers, and Blankenburg, this paper does not distinguish between DP and DR, as is done in the DSM-IV, but instead subscribes to an *embedded view.* Hence, DP and DR are addressed as manifestations of the same impairment, that is, a diminished sense of realness. There are both philosophical and clinical arguments that can be given in favor of such an approach. In recent philosophy of mind and phenomenology, there is a growing acceptance of the essentially embodied and embedded nature of the self and cognition. In addition, there is a growing acknowledgment of the idea that in some cases the sense of self and the perception of the external world cannot be sharply distinguished. In other words, it is often the case that how one feels and how the world appears are not really separate, but rather two sides of the same experiential entity (Ratcliffe 2008). This view is also characteristic of the work of early, phenomenology-informed psychiatrists such as Jaspers and Blankenburg. As a result, they refrain from understanding DP and DR independently, holding that the "diminished awareness of Being and of one's own existence" (Jaspers 1997, 95), or the "alteration of the world and the change of the state of self" (Blankenburg 1971, 2), should not be considered separately.

In support, but from a clinical aspect, Radovic and Radovic (2002) note that some clinicians avoid sharp and categorical distinctions between the phenomena of DR and DP for nosological reasons. Often, the feelings of unreality are amalgamated, and the patient cannot clearly express whether it is the self or the world that feels unreal (Stockings 1947). The feelings may encompass both the "the self and the outer world" (Schilder 1914) and therefore Ackner (1954, 856) argues to "include under the heading of DP those complaints of a change in the relationship of the patient to his world." Some researchers who defend such an *embedded view* question the adequacy of the DSM criteria for DP and attempt to provide more satisfactory criteria. For instance, Simeon and colleagues (2008) have proposed both the 'unreality of self' and 'unreality of surroundings' as diagnostic criteria. In agreement with this, Sierra and associates (2005) include criteria like alienation from self and 'alienation from surroundings.'

In this paper, the main issue is approached in three steps. First, the account of a pre-reflective 'sense of realness' relates to the issue of intersubjectivity and what questions this leads to (I). Thereafter, a preliminary account is presented that sheds light on the connection between realness and intersubjectivity. Drawing on phenomenology and the work of Wittgenstein, it is shown how the 'sense of realness' makes up the background for propositional attitudes and how this is itself non-propositional, pre-reflective, and pre-intentional (II). On this basis, it is possible to counter mainstream accounts of DP that build on problematic assumptions (III). In the fourth section, the issue of transcendental intersubjectivity is addressed. It is shown that realness depends on what one may call a minimal 'presence of others' (IV). In conclusion, it is argued that the account developed in this article, besides clarifying the issue of DP, could upon futher elaboration also contribute to recent discussions on impaired intersubjectivity in schizophrenia (V).

Jaspers, Blankenburg, and Minkowski on 'Realness' and Intersubjectivity

In phenomenological psychiatry, there is an interesting approach to 'the sense of realness' and its alterations in psychopathology. This approach has two interlinked aspects. First, phenomenology-informed authors argue for a *non-cognitivist position*. Second, the sense of realness is understood as *intrinsically connected with a primitive level of intersubjectivity*. Let me briefly sketch these interconnected ideas.

Jaspers (1997, 96) argues in favor of a non-cognitivist position, and a crucial move in his argument is the introduction of a distinction between reality judgments and a primary awareness of reality, which I refer to by the term 'realness.' He not only states that "we must distinguish the original experience from the judgments based on it" (1997, 96), but also maintains that there is a certain asymmetrical relation between these two levels. The relation is asymmetrical in that "conceptual reality carries conviction only if a kind of presence is experienced" (Jaspers 1997, 93-4). Blankenburg parallels this reasoning by arguing for the existence of a pre-predicative world relation (Blankenburg 1971, 2) on which our conceptual grasp of reality hinges. In this sense, both Jaspers and Blankenburg hold that our experience of realness is not something that can be deduced from propositional attitudes.

In the case of DP and delusion, the view is that the pre-predicative level of 'realness' is pathologically altered. At this point, there is a striking difference between this view and the idea that 'feeling unreal' is somehow related to poor reality testing—a claim that has dominated psychoanalytic and other medical models (Sass 2004, Ch 9). As if to underline this fact, Blankenburg (1971, 54) notes that the problems of reflexivity (*Reflexionskrampf*) are secondary in comparison with the basic impairment, which in his terminology is connected to the loss of 'natural reality-aquaintedness'. Correspondingly, in the work of Minkowski, we find an analogous line of thought. He argues that normal experience is embedded in a feeling of being in contact with reality, which boils down to the kind of sense of being acquainted with oneself and the world that the term 'realness' attempts to convey. One of Minkowski's most central points is that the loss of this pre-reflective "vital contact with reality" is the most fundamental psychopathological feature of schizophrenia (Minkowski 1997, 83, 93).

Overall, Jaspers, Blankenburg, and Minkowski seem to be in agreement that it is not cognition and reflection that provide the realness of experience. Rather, they all seem to hold that a primordial and "pre-intentional relation to the world" (Blankenburg 1971, 139) is the source of the realness of experience. Reflecting on Descartes' dictum 'cogito ergo sum,' Jaspers remarks that it holds even for the person experiencing severe DP. As he points out, the person suffering from DP may paradoxically add that, "I am not, but have to go on being nothing forever" (Jaspers 1997, 94).

The other interlinked aspect that I wanted to point out is that these authors understand the sense of realness as intrinsically connected to a primitive level of intersubjectivity. Unfortunately, this connection is not elaborated in depth in their work. For instance, it is well-known that Minkowski sought to reach beyond the level of symptoms to capture their underlying organizing structure—the "le trouble générateur don't découleraient tous les autres" (generating disorder) —which lends coherence to the various manifest symptoms at more advanced pathological stages (Minkowski 1997, 85). What is less well-known is that the lost or diminished realness is for Minkowski intrinsically related to an *intersubjective impairment*, which he describes as the autistic loss of the presence of others. In discussing Minkowski's work, Urfer (2001, 284) confirms this view and notes that in Minkowski "the loss of vital contact with reality and autism are nearly equivalent: autism is the range of phenomena signifying loss of vital contact with reality." Clearly, autism in this context is not a withdrawal into solitude, but a deficit in basic, non-reflective attunement that "cuts across the categories of extro- and introversion," as Parnas, Bovet, and Zahavi (2002) put it. Similar to Minkowski, Blankenburg sees in "the core of alienation from reality" (Blankenburg 1971, 105) an intersubjective impairment and notes that ba-

sic realness is itself intersubjectively constituted (Blankenburg 1971, 114).

At first glance, such a view seems to be in accordance with recent accounts of DR and DP that also emphasize "high levels of interpersonal impairment" (Simeon et al. 1997) and estrangement from others (Hunter et al. 2003). However, on closer examination the difference is quite striking. Whereas Simeon, Hunter, and others think of interpersonal impairment and estrangement from others as a result of DP and DR, phenomenologically oriented psychiatrists consider the diminished primordial, pre-reflective attunement with others as somehow causing DR and DP.

All in all, central figures of phenomenological psychiatry seem to agree that diminished realness can both manifest itself in DR and DP and that it should be understood as a disturbance of the primordial and pre-intentional relation to the world. However, there remain two pressing questions to which the rest of the paper is dedicated. First, is diminished realness truly a question of altering the pre-intentional relation to the world? Some may counter that it is a question beliefs or propositional content. Second, it remains unclear *how* the loss of realness and autistic loss of the intersubjective presence should be related. It seems that even contemporary phenomenological psychiatrists do not address this question. Therefore, an attempt is made here to show how the loss of realness and the presence of others converge. The remaining parts of this paper address these issues in unison by drawing mainly on the phenomenological tradition.

Realness: Two Poles of Experience

Let me begin by presenting philosophical support for the *non-cognitivist* view that these psychiatrists defend in regard to the sense of realness. What we are seeking to demonstrate is that realness is constituted by a pre-intentional background sense that frames experience and that cannot be deduced from propositional attitudes. Both phenomenologists and Wittgenstein are well-known for emphasizing that experience does not take place in a void; there is a sense of reality and certainty of the 'world' that is taken for granted in everyday experience. We may say that experience has in general two interconnected poles: a pre-intentional relation to the world that makes up the tacit background of any experience, and the intentional relation we have when experiencing an object. Somewhat simplified, we can say that Husserl refers to the first as the natural attitude (*die natürliche Einstellung*) and claims that it is characterized by a general thesis (*Generalthesis*) which grounds everyday life (Husserl, 1970, 1976, Hua III/1 §30-31). Even though we might not agree with Husserl's choice of terminology, and perhaps even question whether the term 'thesis' is the best choice in this context, his work is especially relevant in our context. He claims that our consciousness posits the lived world (*Erfahrungswelt, Umwelt*, *Lebenswelt*) as a factually existing, independent and temporally continuous whole (Husserl 1976, Hua III/1 §30-31). In addition, both Wittgenstein and Husserl hold that the way in which we are primarily embedded in the lived world is characterized by a sense of certainty. This is what makes up the background for everyday life, and the changes of world and self are intelligible within the limits of such certainty. It is in this sense that Husserl (1973a, 36–7) emphasizes that the "sense of world" (*Seinssinn Welt*) remains invariant in the flow of world-experience, such that all cognitive activity presupposes this domain of pre-givenness. A further point that Husserl proposes is that an intuitive, pre-predicative 'certainty of being' (*Seinsgewissheit*) (Husserl 1973a, 7, 30; Leask 2003, 145) is the basis of the self-evidence of a judgment in predicative experience (Husserl 1973a, 17; Snyder 1981). Translated to our context, we can say that the sense of realness that characterizes everyday life emerges from the kind of pre-predicative certainty that Husserl and Wittgenstein discuss.

Why call this intuitive certainty of being pre-intentional? To see this it is crucial to emphasize that the intentionality of the world-relation is not only gradually but also categorically different from our intentional relation to objects. We can say that, whenever we intend something, we are always already in a kind of intentional relation to the world. Still, we must insist that there is a different kind

of intentionality at stake here, which intends the world as a whole and not as an object among other objects. The term 'pre-intentional' seems adequate since it refers to a basic, precognitive, non–object-directed openness to the world that conditions 'normal,' object-directed intentionality. We find such an idea of a basic, pre-intentional relation both in Husserl and in Merleau-Ponty (Merleau-Ponty 2008, 429; Husserl 1970). Furthermore, the distinction that Husserl introduces between operative intentionality and 'normal' intentionality (of beliefs, judgments, etc.) is carried on in the work of Merleau-Ponty, who describes this basic openness as "a deeper intentionality, which others have called existence" (Merleau-Ponty 2008, 140fn). He emphasizes that the basic pre-intentional relatedness to the world is what "produces the natural and antepredicative unity of the world and of our life" (Merleau-Ponty 2008, 62).

Belief or Faith?

With this, we arrive at another important issue that needs to be clarified and that is related to the claim that such a pre-intentional world-relation cannot be put in terms of belief, knowledge, or propositional attitudes. One may ask why the unity that this pre-intentional relation to the world generates is one that is necessarily 'antepredicative,' as Merleau-Ponty holds. Similarly, one may ask whether Heidegger is right to emphasize that the ontological certainty of attunement (*Befindlichkeit*) should not be confounded with (theoretical) knowledge (Heidegger 1963, 136). The argument that I present in support for this view is a modest one, aiming to make plausible the idea that it is more adequate (and less misleading) to understand the pre-intentional world-relation in terms of faith instead of belief.

First, the kind of pre-intentional certainty that makes up the background of everyday life is constitutive not only of experience, but also of holding a belief. Ratcliffe (2008, 70) has recently argued that to take on any propositional attitude:

> one must already have a sense of what it is for something to *be the case*. This cannot take the form of a 'belief,' construed in propositional attitude terms, given that the distinction between being and not being is presupposed by the possibility of belief. Even if we believe that *p* is not the case, we must at least have a sense of what it would mean for *p* to be the case, in order to be able to adopt such an attitude.

Following Ratcliffe, the pre-intentional sense of realness and certainty is a precondition for adopting any propositional attitude; it carries the sense of *what it is for something to be the case*. To avoid the lurking regress, this cannot take the form of a simple belief. The pre-intentional sense of realness or belonging to the world—which makes up the background of experience, structures the specific experiences, beliefs, and thoughts—must be distinguished from simple propositional attitudes.

What Ratcliffe describes may be understood as a basic 'realness' that involves a certainty of the world that—turning to Wittgenstein—can neither be doubted nor justified. We cannot know its 'truth' since certainty is presupposed in all judgment (Wittgenstein 1969, §211, 308, 494) and provides the foundations of rational thought and scientific inquiry (ibid., §163). As Wittgenstein notes, even the skeptic relies on some kind of certainty. Doubt cannot stand at the beginning of the language-game, because it presupposes a fairly enduring backdrop of certainty (Wittgenstein 1969, §115, 150, 283, 472–7).

Now, such pre-intentional certainty cannot just be a matter of simple propositional attitudes among others, with the added difference that we do not doubt their truth. This could not be the case, because beliefs are justified by other beliefs, therefore one would run into problems of infinite regress or vicious circles. Alternatively, if we want to keep the notion of belief, we need to accept some kind of foundationalism. According to this view, at the bottom of our world relation there are beliefs that can be justifiably held without additional justification by other beliefs. Put differently, we must accept that the beliefs in question are not ordinary beliefs, but immediately warranted or epistemically basic. The certainty we connect to them does not stem from their role within our framework of beliefs.

Wittgenstein and Husserl opt for a slightly different option. In their view, 'doxastic certainty' (*Glaubensgewissheit*—Husserl) is not a matter of accepting a certain set of propositions, but a mat-

ter of facit faith that makes up the foundation of episteme. Admittedly, Wittgenstein does consider certainty as depending on "hinge-*propositions*." However, Wittgenstein's use of the term "hinge proposition" can be interpreted in two ways. Until paragraphs 204 and 205 of *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein describe hinge propositions as being propositional and belief-like—although some of the examples he gives are not propositional (like the certainty of the sense of ownership of body parts). However, if one takes these paragraphs into account, it becomes clear that hinge-propositions are now linked to practice (Moyal-Sharrock 2003).

> Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end;—but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our acting, which lies at the bottom of the language-game. (§204)

With this move, Wittgenstein embraces a kind of foundationalism that relies on an account of non-propositional hinges that are taken to constitute the background of our experience and judgments. The background sense of certainty that frames everyday experience and the realness that usually characterizes experience is no longer grounded in beliefs but, rather, in our practice, in our patterns of actions.

I take it that in both Husserl and Wittgenstein there is a commitment to such non-propositional foundationalism. Before going further, however, let me briefly point out that the term foundationalism and its connection to the work of Husserl usually connects to a different discussion (see Drummond 1990; Hopp 2008). It has often been proposed that Husserlian phenomenology is foundationalist in that it views itself as a transcendental discipline that can provide apodictic knowledge about experience. However, the manner in which I use the term here remains neutral on this issue. What is important is that some commitment to this kind of a non-propositional foundationalism is revealed in Husserl's work, in particular when considering his use of the term 'faith' (instead of belief). In fact, both Husserl and Wittgenstein maintain that epistemological praxis is built on the ground of a passive and non-intentional faith-in-being or faith in the world (Husserl 1973a, 24; Wittgenstein 1969 §160). Like Husserl and Wittgenstein, Merleau-Ponty connects this faith to a sense of "absolute certainty" (2008, 347), and rules out that it could be described in terms of propositional attitudes. He points out that "It is not faith in the sense of decision but in the sense of what is before any position" (1969, 3).

Expression

The distinctions between intentionality and pre-intentionality, between belief and faith and the general non-propositional foundationalist picture, have interesting consequences for the issue of realness. Given the distinction between a pre-intentional sense of realness (that does not concern a posited object) and propositional attitudes, we may ask how reports that attempt to convey experiences of unreality are to be understood. The point is that if such reports are taken to report a standard intentional state, then there is a risk that important aspects of the experience are overlooked. Such expressions are not about objects experienced in a certain manner (unreal). Rather, they regard something that expresses the altered manner of experience as a whole.

In addition, it is plausible that alterations or disturbances in this background have an effect on the structure of belief (Ratcliffe 2009). Reports of DP patients who communicate experiences of unreality must be understood as referring to an altered pre-intentional background, a changed relatedness to the world, which in turn diminishes the basic sense of realness that gives us a sense of what it is for something to be. Instead of merely being propositional attitudes, such reports are first and foremost *expressions* of the (diminished) sense of realness—the background sense of certainty.

Depersonalization: Problems in Mainstream Accounts

With these distinctions in mind, let us look at existing explanations of DR and DP. It seems that there are three prevailing and interconnected positions. We could call these the 'inadequate interpretation model,' the 'disrupted integration model,' and the 'add-on model.' Hunter and co-workers (2003) have suggested a cognitive–behavioral conceptualization of DP. Because

there is compelling evidence that links DP with anxiety disorders, the cognitive–behavioral model is thought to provide a coherent framework for understanding and treating DP. Supporting this view, these authors maintain that initial results suggest that cognitive–behavioral approaches to DP may be effective. Within the cognitive–behavioral framework, symptoms of DP are associated with specific cognitions and their 'catastrophic' misinterpretations. Negative thoughts that derive from underlying assumptions and core beliefs are automatically activated. The aim is to gradually challenge these through 'reality testing' and evidence gathering; they must be replaced with more balanced thoughts. The bottom line is that an inadequate interpretation of reality plays the central role in DP.

In a different manner, Ackner (1954, 855) has suggested that DP may originate from the "failure to integrate new experience into the total organization of the psychic functioning." In the same vein, Simeon (2004, 344) recently argued for a similar 'disrupted integration' model. Here, DP is explained in the following way: it is a "disrupted integration of" perceptions with the sense of self that lies at the core of the disorder.

Let us concentrate on an assumption that is accepted in both views. They both hold that it is the integration of experiences into a belief system that adds a sense of realness to experience. Consequently, in the 'inadequate interpretation model,' it is a deficient interpretative integration that gives rise to feelings of unreality. In the 'disrupted integration model' there are two possibilities. The first possibility is that something seems to be unreal because it is experienced in an outlandish way and cannot be integrated into a belief system. The second possibility is that such an outlandish experience is integrated, but in a way that gives rise to automatic negative thoughts about reality that in turn lead to symptoms of DP. Thus, what these accounts have in common is that they understand 'the sense of realness' as an *add-on*, as something that is added to experience. This view seems to be shared by other accounts. Roberts (1960, 485) interprets DP along these lines and comes to the conclusion that what is lost is an element "which is added to perception as it matures." Similarly, Guralnik and colleagues (2000, 108) suggest that we should aim at identifying the "mechanism that removes from experiences their 'realness.'" And last, in an attempt at conceptual clarification, Radovic and Radovic (2002) argue that the sense of unreality consists in a changed experience of self or world, which leads to the belief that something either does not exist or is somehow fake.

How plausible is the add-on view? It is not difficult to see that such a view is difficult to square with the view that I have proposed over the last few pages. In experience, we are not simply confronted with specific contents that we then interpret, judge, integrate, and thereby add 'realness' to. Realness is not 'added' to a world, which discloses itself neutrally. Instead, the world is disclosed within a framework that we already are acquainted with. For this reason, the sense of realness cannot be separated from the experience of belonging(ness).

On the other hand, the add-on view is also problematic in regards to what I have said about beliefs and propositional attitudes. As we have seen, realness is neither a matter of specific experiential content nor of a belief regarding what one has inferred on the basis of such content. All intentional attempts to 'zoom in' on particular objects, to grasp them, presuppose an intuitive and pre-predicative pre-givenness, which is the basis of self-evidence for a judgment in predicative experience (Husserl 1973a, 17; Snyder 1981). Predicative evidence is founded on primordial evidence, which stems from the pre-predicative 'givenness' of the world (Husserl 1973a; Leask 2003). Using the vocabulary provided by Ratcliffe (2009), this can be put the following way: the belief *that* some object *x* is in a certain way, is founded upon the sense of *what it is for something to be or not be*. This means that expressions such as 'everything is unreal' refer to the diminishment of the background sense of certainty. Following Ratcliffe (2009), we may say that such expressions reflect an alteration of 'the modal structure of belief,' the sense of 'is' and 'is not.' If this is right, then we may say that in DP, because of the alterations of the sense of 'is,' familiar things appear in a veiled and detached way, shaped by a different sense of 'is.'

Although this is, of course, a preliminary account that needs more substantiation, its basic approach has several advantages. First, it neither needs recourse to the questionable idea that the sense of realness is connected to more or less standard beliefs and propositional attitudes, nor is it dependent on the add-on view—namely, that it is our interpretation and integration that adds a sense of realness to experience. Here experiential preconditions and an accompanying variable sense of certainty and belonging are simply not taken into account. Second, the differentiation between intentional and pre-intentional 'aboutness' makes this account more precise and capable of taking into consideration the qualitative differences between reports that describe experiences of unreality. Third, the idea of an all-encompassing alteration of the sense of realness—the sense of 'is'—seems to accurately match the atmosphere-like quality of the phenomenological descriptions by individuals suffering from DP.

The Sense of Realness, Horizontal Intentionality, and Open Intersubjectivity

Another step is needed to show how the pre-intentional sense of belonging has constitutive intersubjective dimensions. To argue for this connection, we first need to see how it manifests itself in experience. For this, I draw on Merleau-Ponty's work on what he called 'perceptional faith.'

As Husserl has emphasized, entities always present themselves within the pre-reflexive framework for the world—a horizon. When perceiving, the object of perception is never given as a whole and the reality of the appearing 'slice' depends on the presence of the hidden dimensions (Husserl 1973d; Hua XVI, 55; Zahavi 2003). The issue of perceptual faith is connected to these hidden dimensions and has two aspects. The first aspect is the veracity of perception, thus the faith that "our vision goes to the things themselves" (Merleau-Ponty 1969, 28; Rohmdehn-Romluc 2009). The second aspect of perceptual faith is that the realness of experience depends on perceiving the appearing horizon of experience as stable and capable of being satisfied by further observation.

> In experiencing a perceived truth, I assume that the concordance so far experienced would hold for a more detailed observation; I place my confidence in the world. Perceiving is pinning one's faith, at a stroke, in a whole future of experiences, and doing so in a present, which never strictly guarantees the future. . . . It is this opening upon a world which makes possible perceptual truth and the actual effecting of a *Wahr-Nehmung,* thus enabling us to 'cross out' the previous illusion and regard it as null and void. (Merleau-Ponty 2008, 346-7)

Perceiving the horizons of one's experiences in this manner (as capable of being satisfied) is for Merleau-Ponty simply for one's experience to have the "value of reality" (Merleau-Ponty 2008, 399). As Rohmdehn-Romluc (2007) notes, Arendt (1978, 51) takes this point further and argues that

> To perceive the horizons of experience as capable of being satisfied is thus simply to perceive the things one sees as real.

It is in this context that Arendt speaks of "the sense of realness" (Arendt 1978, 51). Without this component of faith, experience loses its significance and eventually what Merleau-Ponty calls the 'index of reality.' In perception with 'perceptional faith,' a sense of reality permeates experience, because in the perception of an object there is a presence of possible and 'inexhaustible' experiences of this object from an infinite number of other possible viewpoints.

Importantly, what we can add to this by drawing on the work of Husserl is that intersubjectivity must be a part of perceptual experience. The plurality of aspects or profiles of the object that coexist at any given moment of my perception cannot merely be profiles anticipated, imagined or previously seen by me. In that case, they would lack the actuality that characterizes perceptual experience (Zahavi 2003). The solution that Husserl presents is that the absent profiles must not be thought of as the possible—though non-actualized —perceptions of the subject in question (they would lack actuality), but should rather be correlated with the possible perceptions that others could have had at the same time. So idea is not only that any perception of an object immanently refers to the possible perceptions of an infinite number of possible subjects. It is also maintained that others are somehow present in

the perception as co-subjectivity, regardless of whether they actually are there or even exist at all (Gallagher 2008; Zahavi 2003, 119). This is the level of intersubjectivity that Husserl attempts to convey in the term "open intersubjectivity," on which intentionality depends a priori:

> Thus everything objective that stands before me in experience and primarily in perception has an apperceptive horizon of possible experience, own and foreign. Ontologically speaking, every appearance that I have is from the very beginning a part of an open endless, but not explicitly realized totality of possible appearances of the same, and the subjectivity belonging to this appearance is open intersubjectivity. (Husserl 1973b, Hua XIV, 289, quoted in Zahavi 2003, 119–29; 2005, 167)

Taking these points together, we may say that the objects of my perception are open, real, and meaningful if they are experienced as having an apperceptive horizon of possible experiences for others. The absent dimensions are potentially perceivable by others, meaning that others are present in the multiplicity of coexisting profiles. In other words, the sense of reality and practical significance requires an access to open intersubjectivity. It requires the sense that our awareness is essentially *co-awareness*. That is, the pre-reflective faith in the world, which is an essential part of the non-pathological background sense of realness, is really a faith in the presence of others-as-me, the faith in being in an "open horizon of co-subjects" (Husserl 1973c, Hua XV, 497). Hence, the very structure of horizontal intentionality and the primordial 'Umwelt' already entails a reference to intersubjectivity (Husserl 1950, Hua I, 148). Through this horizontal structure, my experience of the object is supplemented by a sense of the concealed parts of the object; the absent, but co-intended dimensions, which again refer to other possible perspectives on the object and thus to the general intersubjective experience-ability of it. Sartre (1948, 233) has made a similar point, stating that an object is not constituted by a simple relation to the subject, but is given together with a web of references to an indefinite plurality of others.

This also means that our 'special' aquaintance with others can at least partly be explained owing to this double structure. We are acquainted with others as a species of intentional objects and at the same time also as those who are already present in our horizontal intentionality. So the actual experience of another concrete embodied subject is built upon this a priori reference to intersubjectivity.

Finally, we arrive at the point where it becomes arguable, and to a certain extent theoretically substantiated, that realness depends on some kind of intersubjective presence. Perceptional faith constitutes the foundation of realness and turns out to be the faith in the presence of others.

Concluding Remarks

This article addressed the issue of reality. However, rather than considering reality in the traditional metaphysical sense, 'realness' was explored as a specific feature of everyday experience. Whereas some of the central figures of phenomenological psychiatry consider reduced realness to be caused by the loss of the presence of others, it remained unclear in their work *how* the connection between realness and intersubjectivity should be grasped more precisely. This paper theoretically underpinned the phenomenological conjectures of Minkowski, Jaspers, and Blankenburg and developed the idea that realness depends on a kind of primitive intersubjective presence. Such presence—in the form of a *pre-reflective* faith *in the presence of others* —permeates the capillaries of perception (*perceptional faith*). Additionally, not only the ontological but also the embedded view of these authors was reinforced. The tacit presence of others in perception both enables the realness of experience and the stability of the self. As Arendt (1978, 48) notes, no self "that had suspended all faith in the reality of its intentional objects, would ever have been able to convince him of his own reality."

At the same time it was argued that existing approaches to DP do not take into account the background of experience; they make recourse to the problematic idea that the sense of realness is connected to propositional attitudes and/or think of realness as something that is added to experience through interpretation and integration. One crucial point was that the diminishment of the sense of realness in DP should not be understood as a matter of standard beliefs or propositions. To

the extent that the sense of realness is diminished in DP it should therefore not be understood as a matter of some proposition being accepted or rejected, but as a reduction in the sense of familiarity and significance of a pre-predicative world-relation. Furthermore, it was suggested that rethinking DP along these lines presented in this article has several advantages. For instance, it can help explain some of the central features of DP and particularly the "high levels of interpersonal impairment" connected to it (Simeon et al. 1997), not as a causal relation, but as two aspects of the same impairment.

As a last remark, let me add that this endeavor could also contribute to the recent discussion on impaired intersubjectivity in schizophrenia. Blankenburg's account—and Stanghellini's (2004) recent adoption of it—maintain that the issue of realness and pre-reflective intersubjectivity must be addressed as the impairment of 'common sense' of 'knowing how' or knowing 'the rules of the game,' as Blankenburg (1971, 113) puts it, which even includes complex '*Feingefühl*.' The modest contribution of the account presented in this paper could be to draw attention to a level of intersubjectivity that is found at a deeper plane, functioning as a prerequisite to 'common sense' and even permeating the capillaries of perception.

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