

# Enkinaesthesia and the Deep Roots of Morality\*

Susan Stuart  
University of Glasgow, UK

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## Abstract

The dynamic plenivalent<sup>1</sup> interrelation of agent and world is specified in kinaesthetic terms. Kinaesthetic activity, with its temporal-spatial-energetic qualities<sup>2</sup>, is always affectively-laden, and through the formation of intercorporeal resonances, the activity necessitates enkinaesthetic entwining with those agents with whom, and those objects with which, we are in relations of perpetual community. I will argue that the capacity for enkinaesthetic dialogue is an *a priori* nomological condition for agency and the generation of a felt anticipatory dynamics both within and between agents.

Enkinaesthesia emphasizes not just the neuromuscular dynamics of the agent, that is, the givenness and ownership of its experience but also the entwined, blended and situated co-affective feeling of the presence of the other<sup>3</sup> (agential and non-agential alike) and, where appropriate, the enkinaesthetically anticipated arc of the other's action or movement, including, again where appropriate, the other's intentionality. The 'other' can be sensing and experiencing agents and it is their affective intentional reciprocity, their folding, enfolding, and unfolding, which co-constitutes the conscious relation and the experientially recursive temporal dynamics that lead to the formation and maintenance of integral enkinaesthetic structures and melodies. Such deeply felt enkinaesthetic melodies emphasise the dialogical nature of the feeling of being as the feeling of being-*with* or being-*among*, and demonstrate the paucity of individuating notions that treat agents as singular.

Enkinaesthesia, as the openness to and reception of myriad subtle multi-directional cues in dialogical relations, provides grounds for saying, following Heidegger, that it is this which constitutes the primordial mood of care<sup>4</sup> for human relationships and the deep roots of morality. If this is the case, then we might think of it as composing an 'ethiosphere' consistent with the semiosphere and the biosphere as presented by Hoffmeyer [1995 & 2008].<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>By 'plenivalent' is meant 'fully feeling' or fully switched-on sensory experience.

<sup>2</sup>These qualities are felt within an horizon of embodied, sentient activity and characterized by their directedness and energy. They are, I will claim, pre-ontologically intentional.

<sup>3</sup>'Enkinaesthesia' is characterised by 'immanence', a term used by Deleuze & Guattari [1980] to emphasise the direct, non-duality of the inescapable experience of 'other'. This is also emphasized in the use of 'enkinaesthesia' as opposed to 'interkinaesthesia' because (i) with the prefix 'en' the experiential entanglement of agent and agent, agent and object is emphasised, and (ii) it doesn't bastardize the Latin and Greek etymological roots.

<sup>4</sup>A "mood is primordial, meaning that it is presupposed by the intelligibility of all explicit forms of cognition and volition. It is a condition of sense for any encounter with beings, whether theoretical or practical." [Ratcliffe 2002, p.289]

<sup>5</sup>The term 'ethiosphere' has a dual focus of derivation: firstly, 'ethi' has been taken from the term 'ethics', and secondly, since it is being developed within the contexts of the biological and semiological fields of enquiry it makes sense to speak of an 'ethiosphere', that is, the sphere of ethical enquiry.

## Introduction

I will open this paper with a quotation from Evan Thompson's work and follow it with five preliminary theses which will be fleshed out in the body of the text. The quotation and each of the remarks should be used as a guide by the reader for the metaphysics of the terrain of ideas they are about to cross.

In the Preface to *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind* Thompson writes that the

... incipient mind finds sentient expression in the self-organizing dynamics of action, perception, and emotion, as well as the self-moving flow of time consciousness. From this perspective, mental life is also bodily life and is situated in the world. The roots of mental life lie not simply in the brain, but ramify through the body and the environment. Our mental lives involve our body and the world beyond the surface membrane of our organism, and therefore cannot be reduced simply to brain processes in the head. [Thompson 2007, p.ix]

## Five Preliminary Theses

- Boundaries are mutable and yielding.
- Consciousness and agency are co-constituting.
- Consciousness is the relation between agents and agents, and agents and objects.
- Causality is, at least, bi-directional, but more likely to be reciprocally recursive.
- The substance / state ontology is misconceived.

The boundaries which seem to separate us from our worlds open us up to those worlds and reveal to us our inseparability from them. Those boundaries which can appear, at first, rigid and fixed are often malleable and semi-permeable. We need think only of the skin with its surfaces within surfaces [Hoffmeyer 2008, pp17-38], the biological membranes of stratum corneum, epidermis, dermis and subcutaneous tissue, and our sense receptors and nerves; then there are the hairs that respond to temperature, which can stand erect if we are suddenly fearful, and which can be brushed by a sleeve or touched gently by a breeze; and then there are the non-biological membranes of clothes with their textures and degrees of translucency, and our personal and social boundaries which vary in relation to our moods and emotions, our confidence, our company, our feeling of well-being and health, and so on. Our natural assumption is to see the boundary of the body as the limit of our experiential world, but it is precisely its semi-permeable nature its breach which provides us with the possibility of experience in the first place. The skin, overrun with an abundance of receptors – sixty kilometres of nerve fibres, fifteen kilometres of veins, with millions of sense receptors for pain, temperature, pressure and touch [Hoffmeyer 2008, p.18] – opens us up to the world and discloses it through our inescapable engagement with it, and then, of course, the skin is supplemented by the plenitude of visual, proprioceptive, kinaesthetic, auditory, gustatory, and olfactory senses which open us up in their own way, are affected by change or motion within our world and which, with internal feedback, can bring about affective change within themselves.

Agential bodies are co-affective sensory-kinaesthetic systems which spill out into the world and the lives of others. Embodiment may be a nomological condition for agency [Dobbyn & Stuart 2003] but it is 'embodiment' broadly conceived, for it is the agent's capacity to transgress its boundaries, to spill over into the bodily experience of others, which establishes the community and reciprocity of felt co-engagement<sup>6</sup>, and it is this felt co-engagement which is fleshed out in the expressive, meaningful

<sup>6</sup>This notion of community and reciprocity is redolent of the A edition version of Kant's third Analogy where he states that "All substances, so far as they coexist, stand in thoroughgoing community that is, in mutual interaction." [A212]. No more can be said about this connection at this point but it is something that I intend to develop in future work.

and cognitive bodily dynamics which are, in themselves, the necessary precursor to effective affective social, cultural and linguistic communication in the human agent.

The living body or *Leib* isn't just given [Henry 1963], that is, affectively present to the agent as part of its precognitive "operative intentionality" [Merleau-Ponty 1962, p.xviii]. The living body in its reciprocally affective co-agential lived experience anticipates, imagines, and enacts how it expects prenoetically its world will continue to be. In so doing it is co-affective with other agents and objects, perpetually folding into, unfolding from, enfolding the other and *vice versa*, and all within an experiential temporal and processual horizon, not a series of punctuated and discrete temporal moments. It is within this "passive synthesis", where an agent is involuntarily affected and influenced by its world or *Lebenswelt*.<sup>7</sup> The necessarily relational co-agential reciprocity of this affection is 'enkinaesthetic', and is the manner in which we are open to the world.

'Enkinaesthesia' is a neologism I will use to refer to the reciprocally affective neuro-muscular dynamical flows and muscle tensions that are felt and enfolded between co-participating agents in dialogical relation with one another.<sup>8</sup> Enkinaesthesia, like intersubjectivity and intercorporeality relates to notions of affect, but in this case it is with the affect we have on the neuro-muscular dynamical flow and muscle tension of the other, including other animals, through our direct and our indirect touch. Direct touch includes the physical touch of a caress, a pat on the back, a hug, or the rebuff of the shrugged pulling away from contact. Indirect touch can be achieved through a look<sup>9</sup> where one becomes the object of someone else's subjective attention and experience, for example, in an unspoken admonishment, a papal blessing which can shrieve us of your sins, a friend's wave from a departing train, or in the way words and language, as biodynamical engines<sup>10</sup>, can alter the way we feel.<sup>11</sup>

## The Feeling and Sensing Body

The feeling and sensing body has gained prominence in discussions of consciousness and experience in recent years<sup>12</sup>, including the work of Damasio [1994, 1999 & 2003], Edelman [1992 & 2006], and Sheets-Johnstone [1999, 2000 & 2003], and whilst I am generally sympathetic with these theories, they remain predominantly individual-centered and only minimally-activist in character. Noë's view [2004 & 2009] comes closest to my own, moving away, though not entirely, from the self-centred view, though he remains a little shy of the full commitment I want to make to the enkinaesthetic reciprocal affective neuro-muscular dynamical flow that is felt between agents in dialogical relation with one another. Noë writes:

The locus of consciousness is the dynamic life of the whole, environmentally plugged-in person or animal. Indeed, it is only when we take up this holistic perspective on the active life of the person or animal that we can begin to make sense of the brain's contribution to conscious experience. . . . Human experience is a dance that unfolds in the world and with others. You are not your brain. We are not locked up in a prison of our own ideas and sensations. The phenomenon of consciousness, like that of life itself, is a world-involving dynamic process. [Noë 2009, p.xiii]

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<sup>7</sup>'Passive synthesis' is a phrase used by Husserl to describe the pre- or non-linguistic, and thus, pre-conceptual sense-making which is the mark of our practical bodily, kinaesthetic engagement with our world. A simple example of this is the rhythm or momentum and muscular expectation we build up when walking on a moving walkway in an airport, or when walking down a moving, descending escalator. We make sense of how things are moving with us and we very quickly establish a kind of kinaesthetic prosody with our changing world. We move together fluidly until we leave the walkway or the escalator stops unexpectedly when we're forced to perform a more active, thought-full synthesis. [See Husserl 1966/2001.]

<sup>8</sup>By 'dialogical' I mean only the interactivity of agents and not textual, linguistic, or conversational activity.

<sup>9</sup>For an interesting elaboration of how we can be affected by the look of another read Chapter 1 of Part 3 of *Being and Nothingness* by Sartre.

<sup>10</sup>Stuart & Thibault "Enkinaesthetic polyphony as the underpinning for first-order languaging", forthcoming.

<sup>11</sup>Direct touch may be straightforward to describe but experientially it is as vast and variable in effect and affect as indirect touch; the reason has to do with surfaces, boundaries, and borders, and what we perceive to be the limit of the bodily 'self'.

<sup>12</sup>For a nice summary of embodied cognition work, though with a little too much emphasis on language for my own taste, see Borghi & Cimatti 2010.

The moving, feeling, perceiving body is at the core of lived experience. But a non-relationally-situated sensory-kinaesthetics with little consideration of the affectively-laden interpersonal and interobjective world in which the agent finds itself will provide only a partial account of the experiential whole. Noë is right: the agent must be conceived from a holistic perspective, but the essential nature of the organism is not simply its kinaesthetic<sup>13</sup> unfolding in the world and with others; the holistic perspective must embrace the agent not simply as a being in the world but as, and always as, a being with the world, folding into, enfolding with, and unfolding from those other agents and things with which it co-exists *in utero* to the point at which we depart this life.<sup>14</sup> Ratcliffe [2008] speaks of this experiential entanglement as phenomenologically primitive:

World-experience is not distinct from how one's body feels; the two are utterly inextricable. The experiential entanglement of body and world is more phenomenologically primitive than experience of either in isolation from the other. [Ratcliffe 2008, p.1]

Lived experience is, first and foremost, enkinaesthetic.

## **Kinaesthesia and the primacy of movement**

So let's lay out the stall. The cognitivist view of the mind, that presents the mind as symbolic, representational, and reducible to a set of physical states and processes that are fully-explicable through scientific experiment and analysis, has been the predominant explanation for the mind in the second half of the twentieth century. At heart it is individual-centred<sup>15</sup> and utilises a substance-state ontology that treats temporality and spatiality as uniform, linear, and regular, consisting of discrete or punctuated events, points, objects, and places. On top of this it maintains the Enlightenment ideal of systematization – attempting to carve nature at its joints.<sup>16</sup>

Enactivism, on the other hand, emphasizes the agent's situation and embodiment in terms of its active, ongoing, processual, non-symbolic, non-representationally-based engagement in its world. It is essentially anti-dualistic, but unlike cognitivism's inclination towards a monist materialism, the enactivist ontological commitments are rather more complicated. The agent is embodied and dynamically-coupled to the world of other agents and things; thus, agent, world and action are necessarily intricately interwoven, and the agent's body, experience, action, and world together shape the way in which she deals with her everyday pragmatic concerns. Under this conception mind and world are inseparable, and it is embodied affective practice, rather than cognitive deliberation, that is the hallmark of the agent's engagement with her world. With only a slight modification enactivism embraces enkinaesthesia; the focal point moves from the agent and their individual agency to the necessity of our being co-agential in a co-dynamically continuous, affectively-laden intersubjective and enkinaesthetic processual horizon of experience. "By a 'way of finding oneself in the world'" Ratcliffe says "I mean a sense of the reality of self and of world, which is inextricable from a changeable feeling of relatedness between body and world." [Ratcliffe 2008, p.2] Thus it is that feeling bodies and things together in a dialogue of community and reciprocity with other feeling bodies and things play an integral role in full-bodied pre-linguistic sense-making relations.

Babies in the womb ... send and receive messages without benefit of the words, syllables, and phrases that begin appearing in a year or two after birth. Their daily experiences of communication are punctuated by self-initiated and reactive movements which express needs, interests, and feelings. ... Based on the early development of the senses in the

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<sup>13</sup>From here on 'sensory-kinaesthetics' will be encompassed in the term 'kinaesthetic'.

<sup>14</sup>For a commentary and discussion of enactive *in utero* development see Wood & Stuart 2009.

<sup>15</sup>Clark provides the starkest example of an individual-centered cognitive approach in his Hypothesis of Organism-Centered Cognition (HOC): Human cognitive processing (sometimes) literally extends into the environment surrounding the organism. But the organism (and within the organism, the brain/CNS) remains the core and currently the most active element. Cognition is organism centered even when it is not organism bound. [Clark 2008, p.139]

<sup>16</sup>Possibly a phrase originating in Plato's Phaedrus 265d-266a.

womb, a fetus remains in constant dialog with the surrounding environment. [Chamberlain 1995]

So, the genesis of this activity begins *in utero* and is necessarily co-agential, mother with pre-nate, occasionally mother with two or more pre-nates, and pre-nates with their bodies and the surrounding amniotic environment and beyond. “The maternal womb is an optimal, stimulating, interactive environment for human development. Activity never ceases and a fetus is never isolated.” and, Chamberlain adds:

Between week six and ten, fetal bodies burst into motion, achieving graceful, stretching, and rotational movements of the head, arms and legs. Hand to head, hand to face, hand to mouth movements, mouth opening, closing, and swallowing are all present at 10 weeks (Tajani and Ianniruberto, 1990). By 14 weeks, the complete repertoire of fetal movements seen throughout gestation are already in evidence (deVries, Visser, and Prechtl, 1985). Movement is spontaneous, endogenous, and typically cycles between activity and rest. Breathing movements and jaw movements have begun. Hands are busy interacting with other parts of the body and with the umbilical cord.

From this early stage onward, movement is a primary activity, sometimes begun spontaneously, sometimes provoked by events. Spontaneous movement occurs earliest, probably expressing purely individual interests and needs. Evoked movement reflects sensitivity to the environment. For example, between 10 and 15 weeks g.a., when a mother laughs or coughs, her fetus moves within seconds. [Chamberlain 1997]

Our sensed and felt co-agency begins as soon as movement starts for this movement incorporates the sensations of touch, temperature, pain, hearing, balance and orientation, chemosensors of smell and taste, mouthing, and sucking and licking which are used to explore texture, hardness, and contours of objects, and, of course, the pre-nate’s own body and, in the case of twins, the other’s body too. Neither mouthing nor sucking and licking in this context are involved with eating and nutrition, rather they are, as are the others, affective dialogical means of exploration, and it is in this exploration, this non-propositional questioning of its world of felt-being-with, that the pre-nate is establishing its first field of values. Its *Umwelt* can be better described as its *Mitseinwelt*, the felt-being-with, for its experience is affectively-laden co-engagement; its touching, tasting, hearing is concerned exploration that matters and is values-realizing from the start.<sup>17</sup>

Through its enkinaesthetic sensitivity the agent can establish the reciprocal affective enfolding required for the timely response and adaptation it will need post-natally to survive, and the greatest advantage afforded the burgeoning agent is to feel as it moves, to move as it feels, and to begin to grasp its world *ab initio*.<sup>18</sup>

We are deeply and naturally kinaesthetic and enkinaesthetic, aware of our bodily movement and our action in the world, but also able to affect others and be affected by them, moving and being moved (Bråten 2007) within a reciprocal affective neuro-muscular dynamical temporal flow. The way in which these felt somatosensory relations fold and unfold by bringing forth our world through our kinaesthetic imagination and associated somatosensory expectations together influences how we will shape and adapt our world, how we will then adapt to those changes, and so on. [Stuart 2009b, p.179-80]

Our unceasing kinaesthetic and enkinaesthetic felt-engagement, with its associated somatosensory anticipations, is mutually co-determining with our motor-sensory evaluations of action possibilities. In all our action, whether it be taking a step forward, reaching out tentatively with a hand, or gazing out over a landscape, we are continually, as part of our experiential horizon, asking tacit, pre-reflective, pre-noetic, non-propositionalized questions about our world and our being with and within

<sup>17</sup>For a thorough and engaging discussion of values, affordances, and value fields, see Hodges (2007), Hodges & Baron (2007), and Steffensen & Hodges (2010).

<sup>18</sup>The ambiguity with the term ‘grasp’ is intentional.

it [Cotterill 1995 & 1998]. Thus the feeling of being is, by its nature, a feeling of being *with*, the capacity for enkinaesthetic dialogue is an *a priori* nomological condition for agency, and, through the creation of kinaesthetic memories, melodies and imagination [Stuart 2007 & 2009a], the generation of a felt anticipatory dynamics, makes possible the effective engagement with object- and movement-dependent sensorimotor contingencies [Noë 2004]. In our intersubjective openness we don't just possess a transcendental intersubjectivity [Zahavi 1997], we possess a transcendental enkinaesthesia.

## Enkinaesthesia

The enkinaesthetic dialogue is rarely, if ever, simply two, though with the influence that language has had on our thinking we do tend to characterize it in this way. We exist within an ongoing processual dialogue from our earliest moments *in utero* to the time in which we cease to feel, and at that point others don't cease to feel, that is, to be enkinaesthetically linked to us. This is part of a universal dialogue that consists of a topologically complex web of relations of the community and reciprocity of sensing and experiencing agents and things and their felt implicit, and, sometimes, explicit intentional co-agency. It is this which co-constitutes conscious relations and the experientially recursive temporal dynamics of the non-symbolic, non-representationally-based experiential horizon for all agents.

The organism does not develop in isolation from what happens around it; it is literally created (hence *poien*) by nature, while at the same time modifying both nature and itself. In this respect, autopoiesis more accurately describes what in the phenomenological structure of *Paarung* is generally presented as an experiential circularity, because the former stresses that the autonomy of the living [being] is the very result of its contextual dependence. [Depraz 2008, p.240]

Enkinaesthesia may emphasise the neuromuscular dynamics of the agent, the givenness<sup>19</sup> [Henry 1963] of its experience, but it also emphasises the entwined, blended and situated co-affective phenomenological structure of *Paarung*. Unlike the circularity that characterizes *Paarung* enkinaesthetic activity possesses a recursive dynamics, and it is these experientially recursive temporal dynamics that lead to the formation and maintenance of integral enkinaesthetic structures and melodies. Such deeply felt enkinaesthetic melodies emphasise the dialogical nature of the feeling of being as necessarily having the feeling of being-*with*, being-*among*, or even being-*in-with*, and demonstrate the paucity of those notions that individuate agents and objects and treat them as singular and independent, as states and substances.

If one wants to speak of a commitment to the alive consciousness of others here, one should speak not of a cognitive commitment but, rather, of a practical commitment. Like the baby in relation to her mother, we are involved with each other. It is our joint cohabitation that secures our living consciousness for each other. We live and work together. [Noë 2009, p.33]

It is certainly our 'cohabitation', our being in affective relations of community and reciprocity, that secures our living consciousness for one another; the pragmatics of the commitment, of the living and working together are, in a strong sense, to do with survival. But "our living consciousness for one another" is just one element of a much broader 'practical commitment' expressed throughout the enkinaesthetically co-ordinating, values-realising ongoing processual situation which comprises no well-defined boundaries between agents, actions, substances, and objects. It is a 'practical commitment' which emphasises the bodily, kinaesthetic affective tonalities that underpin and make possible the proto-modal in relationships, or what Gendlin calls the "implicit interactional bodily intricacy".

<sup>19</sup>We might understand self-givenness in terms of Husserl's concept of "eidetic intuition": the direct givenness which "refers to the acts in which 'objects show up in person'" (Depraz et al. 2003, p. 45) and which primarily reveals itself as a perceptual and imaginative act concerned with disclosing an essence [ibid., p.55]. Self-givenness is concerned with the revelation of the tight experiential coupling between body and ownership of the experience.

There is an implicit interactional bodily intricacy that is first – and still with us now. It is not the body of perception that is elaborated by language, rather it is the body of interactional living in its environment. Language elaborates how the body implies its situation and its next behaviour. We sense our bodies not as elaborated perceptions but as the body sense of our situations, the interactional whole-body by which we orient and know what we are doing. [Gendlin 1992, p.352]

What seems to be missing from both authors, Noë and Gendlin, is the reciprocal co-affectivity of these feeling states in the co-creation of the interactional dialogue. Such co-affectivity is characterized by being inherently intentional, which is to say that being-*with* and being-*among* is necessarily relational and comes already clothed in ‘aboutness’, already saturated with intentionality.<sup>20</sup> The ‘knowing’, referred to by Gendlin, occurs through the enkinaesthetic affective enfolding which enables the balance and counter-balance, the attunement and co-ordination of whole-body action through mutual, let’s say, reciprocal adaptation. It is this that Maturana refers to as ‘*linguaging*’.

To language is to interact structurally. Language takes place in the domain of relations between organisms in the recursion of consensual coordinations of actions, but at the same time language takes place through structural interactions in the domain of the body-hoods of the linguaging organisms. ... As the body changes, linguaging changes; and as linguaging changes the body changes. [Maturana 1988, §9.5]

Thus we exist in a continuous flow of the creation and fragmentation of agential-kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intersubjective, intercorporeal, enkinaesthetic melodies. But we must be clear that enkinaesthesia is not simply empathy by another name or in another guise.

Whilst I agree wholeheartedly with the claim that “Individual human consciousness is formed in the dynamic interrelation of self and other, and therefore is inherently intersubjective.” [Thompson, 2001, p.1], it is neither just at the level of persons or selves that this interrelation occurs, and nor is it restricted to human consciousness [de Waal & Thompson 2005]. Additionally, and more importantly, there is a strong sense in which the individual at a sub-personal level is never an individual; at this level of explanation the agent is a co-constituent of an enkinaesthetically co-ordinating, values-realising situation, and it is the situation, with its pico-scale affective and motor resonances, which needs to become the focus of our attention. Current work in empathy, even at the lowest level of its conception as spontaneous and unreflective motor mimicry [de Waal & Thompson 2005, p.39], fails to address this in sufficient detail; it also fails to prioritise the situation over the individual when it is no longer the individual which should be the primary concern.

Co-dependent enkinaesthetic affectivity must be primitive to and necessary for empathy. As Cowley says “First, we interact and co-engage; later, as persons, we construe experience.” [Cowley 2008]. Empathy is felt at an intersubjective personal level and is one of the ways in which we construe experience, but that construal emerges through a topologically complex dialogical array of affective co-agency, that is, the rich enkinaesthetic co-engagement of perpetual situations. The intentional arc of action is not the means to put ourselves into a situation [Merleau-Ponty 1962] but the means with which we propel ourselves fallenly and thrownly, in the Heideggerian senses, through *the* – experientially entangled, continuously folding, enfolding and unfolding – situation which constitutes our *Lebenswelt* with its inevitable *Mitseinwelt*.

<sup>20</sup>Husserl speaks of the *hyle* or *hylletic* as the sensuously palpable affection in a temporal horizon of subjective bodily living [Husserl 1982, §85, pp.203-7], but he seems inconsistent in terms of the relational dialogue for he denies the intentionality of the sensuous saying: “the *sensuous*, which has in itself nothing pertaining to intentionality” [ibid. p.203]. But if the hylletic core affection is non-intentional, as Husserl would seem to think, we would be unable to establish kinaesthetic memories, melodies, and anticipations but, much more seriously we would be ineffective socially, unable to engage enkinaesthetically through the “passive synthesis” of affective enfolding.

## Enkinaesthesia and the ethiosphere

The ‘situations’ agents inhabit possess, what Steinbock [1999] refers to as, affectively “saturated intentionality”. It is through the intentionally saturated affectively-laden enkinaesthetic engagement that things and others in our *Mitseinwelt* are felt as concerns for us. We reach, touch, taste, grasp, hear, and see, and all as the felt mattering of spontaneously occurring motor and aesthetic evaluation. We may speak of things and agents but it is at the level of perceptual and kinaesthetic experience that we are primordially related to our world. It is at the level of textures, smells, tastes, colours, movement, and so on, that we check out our world, asking non-cognitive, pre-reflective questions about whether it will continue as it feels now, anticipating how it might change and how it would feel if it does, and being most keenly aware of ourselves, not when it all runs smoothly but, when our anticipations are confounded. All of this rich experiential tapestry is woven through with the primordial moods of care and the openness to the possibility of fear. Through our ongoing processual enkinaesthetic dialogue we project ourselves into our possibilities; we grasp – with our hands, our eyes, and our heads – the perceptual-kinaesthetic values and facticity of our “Being- already-in-(the world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within the world)” [Heidegger 1962, p237].

Thus, it is within the continuous flow of the creation and fragmentation of agential-kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intersubjective, intercorporeal, enkinaesthetic melodies that these situations constitute “our living consciousness for one another”; and it is the felt reciprocity of active forces between agents – again, the enkinaesthetic – which “over-determines” the relational community and which expresses, in their embodied affective manner, the vacillations of freedom, commitment, and responsibility felt in our temporally recursive relationships with one another. We are endogenously ethical, folding enkinaesthetically into the being-in-time of the other.

So, if agents are, as I have argued, transcendently enkinaesthetic, and our actions *ab initio in utero* are felt concerned matterings which are values-realising, then the domain of values, what I shall here call the ‘ethiosphere’, is co-extensive with the domain of that which we deem to matter and have meaning for us, that is, it is co-extensive with the semiosphere. Since “Every action . . . that consists of perception and operation imprints its meaning on the meaningless object” [Uexküll 1982 / 1940, p.31], and every action is affectively-laden co-engagement replete with concerned, values-realising exploration, every action, even *in utero*, operates within the semiosphere, the immanent habitus, and that semiosphere extends throughout the biosphere.

The semiosphere is a sphere like the atmosphere, the hydrosphere or the biosphere. It penetrates these spheres and consists in communication: sounds, odours, movements, colours, electric fields, waves of any kind, chemical signals, touch etc. [Hoffmeyer 1995, p.35]

Our senses open us to the reception of these forms of communication, but it is not a passive reception; it is a reciprocally affective, intentional, co-agential, concerned, enkinaesthetic communication in which we are able to affect others and be affected by them, to move and be moved within the sphere of ethical engagement, that is, within the ethiosphere. The implications for the community and reciprocity of enkinaesthesia and its ranging over the ethiosphere, all that is sensed and felt by the agent, is significant. Although the details of this significance cannot be drawn out at length here, there are a number of instances which can be presented as a means to advance the claim.

Merleau-Ponty, though ostensibly speaking about the conscious ‘cognitive’ relation whilst I have emphasised the dialogical ‘felt’ one, recognises the fragmentation and failure of the intentional enkinaesthetic relation in illness.

Let us therefore say . . . that the life of consciousness-cognitive life, the life of desire or perceptual life-is subtended by an “intentional arc” which projects around about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, ideological and moral situation, or rather which results in our being situated in all these respects. It is this intentional arc



which brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensibility and motility. And it is this which 'goes limp' in illness. [Merleau-Ponty 1962, p.136]

In all organisms the intentional agency directed towards another, that is, its conscious affective, enkinaesthetic relation to the other, is seeking to affect the other and be affected by the other. As Ratcliffe states "practical *relatedness* between people [is] an aspect of interpersonal understanding and experience that typifies most social encounters" [2008b p.196] and through which "patterns of affective interaction between people" [ibid. p.197] are established which make mutual understanding possible. So, if the organism, whilst functionally fit, attempts to fold into its environment but the environment fails to perceive it or perceives it but fails to respond to it – say in the case of being rendered socially invisible through ostracism – the organism will feel the failure in affective response; the enkinaesthetic entwining, blending and situating co-affective feeling of the presence of the other will be absent, and the negation of affect will be felt as suffering. This is a case of social ailment that ruptures the enkinaesthetic relatedness and produces a real bodily affective disorder, but Ratcliffe presents a cogent account of how changes in "existential feeling, involving the diminution or absence of possibilities for interpersonal relatedness" [2008a p.143] can be presented as explanations for Cotard's and Capgras' syndromes and depersonalisation.<sup>21</sup>

Significantly for the robustness of the claim for an enkinaesthetic dialogue, Ratcliffe argues that none of these illnesses results from affective diminution alone, rather it is an affective diminution that results in the fragmentation of the practical relatedness and loss of possibilities for attunement. The person who suffers from Cotard, Capgras or depersonalisation is, to varying degrees, incapable of feeling the reciprocally affective, intentional, co-agential, concerned existential feelings of Being-alongside. The diminution of affect dims the capacity for motor-aesthetic value-realising engagement, reducing their field of concerned mattering, and damaging their well-being and overall functional fitness. As their ethiosphere shrinks, so shrinks their field of engagement, their semiosphere.

In the context of non-communicative states we find another excellent example of the potential explanatory power of enkinaesthesia.

The sensation or feeling we have of Being-alongside, the *Mitseinwelt*, is conscious within topologically complex affectively-laden dialogical fields. In some dream states we are able to create these fields in the absence of actual waking experience; REM sleep and Lucid Dreaming offer such possibilities, but in a coma this ability seems lost. In a coma or under general anaesthesia there is a temporary cessation of the normal practical relatedness we feel; our level of arousal and our awareness of the environment and ourselves is low to non-existent [Plum & Posner 1983]. There is an absence of existential feeling. However, in, for example, a minimally conscious state<sup>22</sup> which possesses a higher level of arousal and, in some cases, a greater level of awareness of the environment and the self, some relatedness continues to be present and it might be possible to create other forms of relatedness by suggestion from outside [Laureys *et al.* 2007]. The problem in these cases is how to disentangle the automatic brain activation from the conscious intentionally-related activation.

Owen *et al.* (2006) have recently addressed this issue by asking non-communicative patients to actively perform mental imagery tasks. In one exceptional VS patient studied five months after a cerebral trauma, activation was observed in the supplementary motor area after being asked to imagine playing tennis. When asked to imagine visiting the

<sup>21</sup>Cotard's delusion was first identified by Jules Cotard in 1880 and is characterised as *délire des négations*, that is, the delusion that one is dead or that the world no longer exists. [See, for example, Young, Leafhead, & Szulecka 1994, Berrios & Luque 1995, and Ratcliffe 2008a.] Capgras delusion is characterised by a person's being able to recognise a family member or friend as a family member or friend, but simultaneously believing the person to be an impostor. [See, for example, Capgras & Reboul-Lachaux 1923, Ramachandran & Blakeslee 1998, Hirstein & Ramachandran 1997, and Ratcliffe 2008a & 2008b. It is now proposed that in both instances there is a malfunction between the face recognition areas of the brain (the fusiform gyrus) and areas associated with emotional recognition, for example, the amygdala and other limbic structures. The face may be recognised by the proper functioning fusiform structures but, because of the faulty connection, it lacks the usual affective accompaniment that generates emotional recognition.

<sup>22</sup>Minimally conscious states can include some kinds of vegetative state, more normally those described as 'persistent' not 'permanent'. [Laureys *et al.* 2007]

rooms of her house, activation was seen in premotor cortex, parahippocampal gyrus and posterior parietal cortex. Near identical activation was observed in the 34 healthy volunteers studied in Cambridge and Liège. The patients decision to imagine playing tennis rather than simply rest must here be seen as an act of willed intention and, therefore, clear evidence for awareness. [ibid. p.735]

Whether or not this patient did ‘decide’ to play tennis is not important in this paper, what is important is the relatedness which was becoming possible. It is with the possibility of relatedness that the world reopens to us, disclosing itself once more as the arena for enkinaesthetic dialogue, concerned exploration and a field of values-realising possibilities. This corresponds well with what Laureys *et al.* say next: “Interestingly, when re-examined six months later the patient showed inconsistent visual tracking—the most frequently encountered clinical sign of recovery from VS”. [ibid.] This patient’s recovery coincides with an improvement in their enkinaesthetic awareness and, thus, their motor-aesthetic values-realising engagement.

To the case of illness we can also add the loss of the reciprocal felt intentional relation in grieving for the death of another. For example, a friend has recently lost her cat to cancer, she grieves for the loss. Perhaps we might explain the grief in the following way: the dialogical relation she had with Sara [the cat] continues even though Sara has gone. She still thinks about Sara, expects to see her and to reach out to touch her, and anticipates her purr and her vocalisations. In part my friend’s grief is a result of the absence of the habituated enkinaesthetic feedback in that topologically rich dialogue. We become used to interacting with and being affected by the other, anticipating and receiving feedback from the other, like the purring that the cat does when we stroke it, but that deeply felt reciprocated response is no longer there to be received. The co-engagement is absent, and the lack of affective feedback is felt quite simply as negative affect and loss.

One brief last word is important to respond to a possible objection and emphasise the range over which the ethiosphere can be said to extend. Tønnessen [2009] distinguishes between the semiotic niche or semiosphere, and an ontological niche. The semiotic niche, he argues, operates within the class of ideal agents, and the ontological niche describes real agential relations. So, the ontological niche concerns living organisms. If we accept his distinction, then the ethiosphere would seem most naturally to apply in real world circumstances where the relations are felt concerned matterings and not over the semiosphere; however, from an enactivist ethical consideration of real, multi-directional, contrapuntal relations [Colombetti & Torrance 2009], it would be possible to conceive of, and even formulate, a normativity that ought to hold in ideal circumstances and, thus, across the semiosphere. So, although at first glance the notion of the ethiosphere seems more clearly co-extensive with the non-ideal ontological niche, there is no confounding reason to think it not, at least, potentially co-extensive with the semiosphere as well.

## Conclusion

I have argued that the capacity for enkinaesthetic dialogue is an *a priori* nomological condition for agency and the generation of a felt anticipatory dynamics both within and between agents. It is not empathy but it is a necessary requirement for empathy. It corresponds in some ways to the ‘existential feeling’ spoken of by Ratcliffe [2008a & 2008b] but the emphasis in enkinaesthesia is on the dialogue: the topologically complex web of relations of the community and reciprocity of sensing and experiencing agents and things and their felt implicit, and, sometimes, explicit intentional co-agency. Enkinaesthetic dialogical-relations are the preconceptual, prenoetic, experientially recursive temporal dynamics which form the deep extended melodies of relationships-in-time, and any understanding of how those relationships work, when they falter, when they resonate sweetly, and so on, will depend on a grasp, not only of our intersubjectivity or our intercorporeality but, of our enkinaesthesia. In arguing for this I hope to have demonstrated how the deeply felt enkinaesthetic melodies emphasise the dialogical nature of the feeling of being as the feeling of being-*with* or being-*among*, and to have demonstrated the paucity of individuating notions that treat agents as singular. I hope

also to have shown the explanatory power and potential that enkinaesthesia has in health and caring contexts.

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