BASIC PROBLEMS OF HAUGELAND'S PHENOMENOLOGY

R. MATTHEW SHOCKEY

Indiana University–South Bend

John Haugeland aimed throughout his career to determine what it is for an entity to count as having *intelligence* or *thought*, and at each stage he developed the idea from the phenomenological tradition that genuine thought requires *intentionality*. His most mature essay to do this, “Authentic Intentionality,” shows how the intentional directedness of thought requires that thinkers understand themselves as responsive to entities they think about, that they be committed to maintaining the socially shared forms of understanding of those entities, and yet that they be self-critically open to the possibility of needing to revise or reject those forms of understanding. In this essay I argue that, while Haugeland’s account of intentionality sheds much light on *empirical* thought (thought directed at different kinds of things in the world), it doesn’t address what it takes for thought to intend or think *its own form*—and so it fails to describe the kind of *transcendental* thought of which the account itself is an instance. Building on Haugeland’s own rich picture of self-understanding, I show how we can remedy this omission, and that when we do, we see that transcendental thought is performed by each of us as concrete individuals and yet takes place from a perspective outside of, and thus free from, the normative demands and existential situations of our empirical lives. It is thus of at most therapeutic use in them, even as it is valuable for its own sake as an exercise of our finite freedom.

1.

“The trouble with artificial intelligence,” John Haugeland said early in his career, “is that computers don’t give a damn” (1998d: 47, 60). By the end of it he had a fairly well-developed picture of what damn-giving intelligence really looked like. In one of his last published essays, “Authentic Intentionality,” having shifted from talking of intelligence to “thought,” he argues that “the objectivity and

Contact: R. Matthew Shockey <shockey2@iusb.edu>

intentionality of scientific thought—and by extension all thought¹—depends essentially on a certain rather rich structure of self-criticism and responsibility,” the “deepest and most fundamental layer” of which involves “an *honest commitment*—in the sense of resolve or dedication—to making something work, on pain of having to give the whole thing up” (Haugeland 2013a: 274). Thought thus involves a rather involved set of capacities for caring about things, being responsive to them, and being aware of oneself as doing so. Whether or not anything of human design or any other natural entity besides us in fact has these capacities is an empirical question, but Haugeland’s goal in his late work, as essentially in his earlier, is only to illuminate “boundary conditions” on what it would take for an entity to count as doing so (2013a: 269). At the heart of his work, then, is the goal of articulating what is *necessary* to be the sort of intelligent, thinking beings we ourselves are.

Now, one rather remarkable aspect of our sort of intelligence is that allows us to pursue just this goal, that of saying what is required to be intelligent, to have thought. When we do, we engage in what Kant called “transcendental” thought, thought not directly about “empirical” objects, i.e., the usual things in the world (including ourselves, considered anthropologically, psychologically, or biologically) that we as thinking beings direct ourselves towards, but instead thought about the “form” any thought has, which is to say, about the subjective, a priori conditions for cognizing objects *as* objects (Kant: A11–12/B25–6). Haugeland, following Heidegger’s “ontological” re-interpretation of Kant’s transcendental thought, has a broader conception of subjectivity, of what counts as an object, and of the forms that thinking takes than Kant does, but his project is nevertheless, as he himself happily recognized, a Kantian, transcendental one.²

As transcendental, however, a philosophical account of thought is by definition not itself an instance of empirical thought, from which it follows that a truly universal account of thought, one which says what *any* thinking involves, needs to have both transcendental and empirical thought in view as modes of thinking. Thus a transcendental account of thought needs to bring *itself* into view in such a way that its nature and possibility can be understood, along with its relation to the empirical thought it also describes. If a general account of thought doesn’t do this, then it is at best partial, and at worst it risks distorting what it purports to explain—if, for instance, it turns out that there are transcendental elements implicitly at work within empirical understanding, as Kant certainly thought there were.

1. As this quote indicates, Haugeland uses the terms ‘thought’ and ‘intentionality’ interchangeably, and I will do the same, but these terms cover all manner of comportment towards things in which they are understood, whether that understanding is practical, theoretical, ordinary or scientific. I will use ‘thing’ and ‘object’ in a correspondingly broad sense.

2. See, for instance, his self-description in the Introduction to Haugeland (1998).

Given that Haugeland recognized his project as a transcendental one, one would expect from him a fairly rigorous investigation into the character of the kind of thought required for it. But he says almost nothing about this.³ His descriptive focus remains exclusively on the character of thought or intentionality that is in a broad sense empirical (ontical, in Heidegger's terminology). So we must ask: Can what Haugeland says about empirical thought simply transfer over to transcendental (ontological, in Heidegger's terminology) thought? Or does his theory of intentionality need to be modified in order to account for the sort of transcendental thought that it itself exemplifies?

I argue in what follows that some significant modification is needed, specifically, that we need a richer conception of *self-understanding*—intending or thinking about oneself—than the one Haugeland offers. In his later work, he only looks at how we understand ourselves within single roles we play or “ways of life” we participate in, not exactly denying, but certainly leaving unexplored, the fact that we are each individuals who participate in multiple ways of life and who have an understanding of ourselves as doing so.⁴ This mode of self-understanding, however, implies a certain distance from and freedom with respect to our particular roles, and unless we have it in view, I argue, we cannot see what transcendental thought is, for it is properly seen as a distinctive, non-empirically oriented exercise of this singular freedom we each have, one in which we deliberately abstract ourselves from the many determinate roles we play. When we work out what this use of our freedom looks like, it turns out that transcendental thought is *phenomenological* thought essentially as Husserl and (I would say also) Heidegger conceived it. Thus my overall thesis, most generally stated, is that Haugeland's own phenomenology, while deeply insightful about empirical thought, fails to get in view the first-person singular ground of

3. One of the referees for this journal reminds me that Haugeland's essay on Daniel Dennett, “Pattern and Being” (Haugeland 1998b) at least begins to address this issue, but the remarks made, principally at the end, are only barely suggestive of a real treatment of the character of transcendental thought. Somewhat more may be found in the discussion of Heidegger's methodology in the unfinished manuscript on Heidegger found in Haugeland (2013), but it remains unclear from that how Haugeland translated those methodological remarks into his own positive project. In the present essay, I leave Heidegger and Haugeland's detailed reading of him largely to one side. I discuss some aspects of this in Shockey (2012), and my current work aims to develop a detailed reading of Heidegger's phenomenology which puts front and center the issue I identify in this essay, that of how transcendental (i.e., ontological) thought is possible, and how it amounts to a form of self-understanding of the person who explicitly pursues it. See also Taylor Carman (2014), in which he argues that Haugeland's reading of Heidegger fails to account for the form of self-understanding ontology itself represents.

4. As I will discuss below, something like this picture is to be found in his early (1982) essay “Heidegger on Being a Person” (Haugeland 2013c), though he doesn't connect it there to the question of philosophical methodology. For whatever reason, he didn't carry this picture forward into his later work, even though it is separable from the thorough-going social constitution view of the self that he puts forward in that essay and later explicitly abandoned.

transcendental thought, and thus ends up with an incomplete and in some ways distorted account of the boundary conditions that define what it is to be the sort of thinking, intelligent, understanding entities we ourselves are.

2.

I begin with an overview of the “rich structure of self-criticism and responsibility” that Haugeland claims constitutes thought about empirical entities, that is, any thing or domain of things we may encounter as world-embedded, socially-situated understanders. In order to get this structure in view, he looks to its instantiation in natural science, where he thinks its key features are especially visible. I’ll follow him in that, then briefly show how he takes the structure to work in some other cases.

Haugeland takes science to have as its characteristic aim “objective knowledge,” understood as “beliefs or assertions that are true of objects nonaccidentally” (2013a: 263). And he argues that there are three inter-connected “orders” of self-criticism that constitute the conditions of such objective knowledge. In first-order self-criticism, scientists must follow “proper procedures” in identifying and accessing the entities they study: equipment must be used correctly, methods of calculation and analysis must be performed in the right ways, etc. Scientists must be constantly vigilant that these conditions are met in order to ensure that anything that appears through observation, detection, analysis of data, etc., genuinely manifests the entities being studied, rather than being the product of human error.

But this isn’t the only work scientists must do. Whereas first-order self-criticism is concerned with whether procedure is followed, in second-order self-criticism, scientists are concerned with whether they’ve got the right procedures. So they check to see, for instance, whether they can generate replicable results. A perfectly executed procedure that yields a different outcome when executed by another scientist is not a sound procedure. Additionally, at this level scientists look to see if the results of the procedures are, even if replicable, in line with the laws they take to govern the entities in question. If they conflict with what the laws say is possible, then that’s evidence that what have been taken as proper procedures don’t actually provide access to the things they were supposed to, and so must be revised. And presumably, though Haugeland doesn’t say much about it, the work of exploring in new ways already partially known entities by coming up with new hypotheses, concepts, and procedures to test them fits at this second level of self-criticism as well.

While most science occurs at these first two levels, a third order of self-criticism is needed, for scientists must not only be vigilant about whether they are

following proper procedure, and whether their procedures generate replicable results in line with the laws of nature, they must also be vigilant about whether their understanding of the laws themselves is correct. This requires being on the lookout for anomalous data that isn't the product of error in either formulation or execution of procedure. When such ineliminable anomalies accumulate, they put pressure on the scientists to abandon the received interpretation of the laws and seek a new one which now regards what were previously seen as anomalies as genuine data coming from the entities themselves. This willingness to abandon, to give up on an extant way of understanding, represents, Haugeland thinks, the "deepest and most fundamental" level of self-criticism, which he (deliberately echoing Heidegger) calls "authentic responsibility" (2013a: 274). Only where there is such total willingness to give up what in an understanding of things doesn't work, he insists, do scientists truly 'let the entities be' the entities they are.⁵

The working divisions within science mean that not everyone needs to (or can) be involved in all these orders of criticism. Third-order self-criticism in particular will be done only by the revolutionary "heroes" of science (2013a: 271), who are, by necessity, rare. Most science must be "normal" science as Kuhn (whom Haugeland is consciously building on) described it and so much of the internal pressure among scientists is conservative, seeking to preserve the status quo against revolutionary upheaval. Still, even if not every scientist engages in all of these forms of criticism, and even if most actively resist the third, the community as a whole, in order to be a genuine community of scientists—i.e., not one just pretending to seek to understand or deluding themselves into thinking that's what they're doing for purposes of getting funding, or supporting a pre-established theological framework, or whatever—must allow for all of them.

The overall picture of scientific understanding here is one of a complex, norm-governed social practice, within which particular people engage in different acts of responsibility in which they lay claim to that practice and the understanding of nature it embodies as their own. This fact of individual engagement entails, however, that it is as much of a mistake to think that one can reduce intentionality to the level of the purely social as it is to think it can be reduced to the purely individual, such as those that ground intentionality in the causal relation between perceiver and perceived. Individuals understand, but only insofar as they participate in a shared social practice organized around the ongoing comportment towards some specific domain of entities, in this case physical ones.⁶

This picture of individual ownership of socially formed, norm-governed

5. He doesn't use this (Heideggerian) phrase in "Authentic Intentionality," but the idea, one central idea in his later work, is nevertheless present. For discussion of the phrase itself with reference to Heidegger, see "Letting Be" (Haugeland 2013d).

6. See "Social Cartesianism" (Haugeland 2013e).

practices generalizes, Haugeland thinks. When he says (as I quoted at the outset) that “all thought” depends on the forms of self-criticism he identifies, he really means it. The self-proclaimed “dramatic conclusion” to “Authentic Intentionality” is the suggestion that what he has illuminated is nothing less than the core structure of love and freedom.⁷ To be free, he implies, is to bind oneself in commitment to what or whom one loves, which, if it is an “honest” commitment, entails being willing to accept that one’s way of binding oneself must be abandoned if the person or object of one’s commitment requires it, analogously to what happens in science when ineliminable anomalies necessitate a revision of the understanding of basic laws (Haugeland 2013a: 174). Haugeland never got into print anything explaining in detail how he thinks inter-personal love fits this model, or how it amounts to a full theory of freedom, though in the last years of his life he was working on and had given presentations about these issues (and related ones, such as what the import of this picture for ethical theory is). In this work, he suggested that in a deep and committed relationship, one has a shared understanding of that relationship which entails various expectations and agreements about what is acceptable and desirable, which each in the relationship must be attentive to and strive to live up to. Most of the “normal” work of a relationship is just living together in light of these expectations and agreements, but they can be revised in mutually understood ways, and it’s possible that the whole relationship can break down and need to be given up. Obviously the division and distribution of labor won’t work quite the same way in such a case as it does in physics, but the forms of responsibility involved in maintaining the understanding of the relationship show a striking parallel with those involved in maintaining the understanding of nature.

Elsewhere in Haugeland’s work, games come in for considerably more philosophical attention than love, and almost as much as science (though not with the goal of showing that science or love are just games). The “direction of fit” between entities and basic rules may be opposite in the cases of physics and games, since the latter depends on the people who make it in a way that physical things do not depend on physicists. But, as Haugeland sees it, in both, the desire to preserve the way of life based around the entities in question drives the critical process.⁸ In each of his favorite examples of chess and baseball, for instance, there is a clear set of rules that must be followed in order to count as playing the game. Most play just involves acting in light of these rules, conformity to which is continuously monitored and violations punished, but the rules themselves are subject to local and global revision as the overall sense of the game’s ‘working’ or not dictates. It’s not immediately obvious what third-order self-criticism

7. See also Haugeland (1998a: 2).

8. See “Truth and Rule-Following” (Haugeland 1998c) for detailed discussion of the idea of direction-of-fit and how it works in games and science.

would be in the case of games, but Haugeland, following Joseph Rouse, offers as an example the proposal some have made to have a random placement of pieces at the outset of each game of chess.⁹ This would be to substantially reconfigure what the game was 'about,' for though many rules would remain (what legal moves look like, what winning consists in), it would make success less about player's capacities of memory of already played games and the power to compute or intuit probable future courses of action based on them (what computer chess players are good at) and more about creative, situational—and therefore human—intelligence.

Haugeland also saw the same basic distinctions of forms of self-criticism at work in constitutionally-formed political societies. In these, individual actions are continuously judged in light of existing statutes, but the statutes themselves can be revised, either to better handle the cases being dealt with or to bring them in line with constitutional principles, which define what count as genuine laws. But these principles can also be revised (by amendment of the constitution) or completely overturned as the citizens sense of whether they capture the ideals of the society dictates (Haugeland 2013b: 53–4).¹⁰

In the cases of both games and political life, as in the case of love, the social structures within which labor will be distributed will look quite different from those of science, but the necessary forms of responsibility and commitment are, as Haugeland is right to see, strikingly similar. And so, even so cursorily presented, we can see why his focus on the "existential" activity of the intender is essential if we are to understand human intentionality or thought, for we cannot account for objectivity, the playing of games, the maintenance of political society, or the loving union of persons, unless we think about the volition of the people involved and the way it is situated within and responsive both to various entities and to a complex, norm-governed social setting.

One can, it's worth noting, raise concerns about just how universal Haugeland's account of empirical (ontical) intentionality really is. For one thing, it's not so obvious that everything we do that we ought to count as intentional is so strictly situated within relatively clear normative frameworks with just these

9. See Chapter 7 of Joseph Rouse (2003).

10. The discussion here is in the context of elaborating an account of what Heidegger means by the "ontological difference" between being and entities (that which is or 'has' being). Haugeland notes that constitutional laws are not strictly speaking on the being side of the difference; rather, *constitutedness* is. I think this is right, but interestingly, when talking about science he doesn't (at least usually) make the analogous point, that lawfulness not laws is the being of the physical. This has serious implications for his views, however, for on the one hand lawfulness doesn't come explicitly into science's view in the same way laws do, nor, on the other, is it subject to the same sort of possibility of revision and replacement. Knowledge of lawfulness amounts to what Kant called synthetic a priori knowledge, which has its source in the capacities of the knower, and it sets the "boundary conditions" on candidates for empirical knowledge.

modes of responsibility and self-criticism. Actual forms of human life are messy, i.e., rife with disagreement and misunderstanding, even of what appear to be basic and essential concepts or practices—think of how contested a document our own (U.S.) constitution is: it's not as if everyone who accepts it *as* our constitution agrees on what it means and so what it would be to revise it. It also seems like cases of, say, ordinary perception or action (e.g., seeing an apple, eating lunch) involve fairly rich forms of understanding and intentionality, but not in ways that ordinarily involve the kinds of responsibility Haugeland highlights. And there is also the question of whether there is anything that counts as third-order self-criticism in cases other than science. Science seems in part defined by its openness to revision all the way down; at the very least, ethics and love aren't *obviously* like that. Whom one loves and what one is committed to ethically may in fact change; but in both cases there seems to be a demand *not* to hold oneself open to the possibility of that change before it happens. (Whether politics is like science or love depends on whether you're Hobbesian or Lockean in your view about the legitimacy of revolution). Still, having noted these concerns, the fact remains that Haugeland is right to call our attention to the many deep similarities among the cases he considers, cases which need to be taken as central by any theory which purports to say what full-fledged intentionality is.

3.

The question I want to find an answer to, however, is whether Haugeland's account is sufficient to deal with the case of truth-seeking that it itself as a philosophical theory represents: i.e., the attempt to articulate correctly the essential form shared by all thought or intentionality. Since a theory of intentionality (intelligence, thought, understanding, etc.) is an account of what we ourselves are, it represents a distinctive form of *self*-understanding for those of us who grasp it, so let's look a little more closely at how self-understanding works for Haugeland.

That self-understanding plays an important role in his story is evident. One can't, he rightly thinks, *be* a scientist, citizen, game-player, lover, or whatever, and so intender of the various entities understood in each of those "ways of life," except insofar as one understands oneself *as* playing the role that identifies oneself as a member of that way of life.¹¹ This means acting not just in *accord* with but in *light* of all the relevant norms that constitute it. As a first point, note that as Haugeland describes the role-specific understanding of oneself, all pressure to *alter* oneself arises when something in the practice the role is a part of goes

11. This isn't the only condition for being these things; they also involve being *taken* by others as being them. I leave aside consideration of this point here, but in a fuller account it needs to be addressed, given the concerns about solipsism in philosophy that I raise below.

wrong. However different being a physicist is from being a committed partner in a relationship, in Haugeland's portrayal of each there is a constancy of self that is only threatened when something comes along to destabilize the way of life defined by the shared understanding constitutive of it—anomalies in the case of physics, betrayal or the like in the case of love. For me, the physicist or lover, I may at that point have to give up on the way of life, if I am honestly committed to it, but nothing other than such breakdown could, as Haugeland presents it, lead me to do so.¹²

And yet it's clear that there are cases where I feel pressure to abandon a way of life—or at least question whether I should—without its being internally disrupted. For instance, if I am a physicist with some talent and training as a musician, and a love of both physics and music, I will realize that I can't do both professionally, for each requires time and energy that would make it impossible to pursue the other at the highest level. The impossibility I face here is not an impossibility in the way I have been going on *as* a physicist when my understanding of the phenomena or my procedures for investigating them is shown up as inadequate in some way (the sort of impossibility Haugeland emphasizes). It's more akin to the impossibility I face in wanting to leap tall buildings in a single bound, only here, instead of an impossibility of a certain kind of *physical* action, it is one that is, we might say, *logistical*: however possible *either* role is for me, I can't do *both* because my will is basically limited in its scope by the time, energy and resources necessary to discharge it. An anecdote about violinist Fritz Kriesler makes the point nicely:¹³ he was approached by a woman who said she would give her life to be able to play like he did, to which he responded, "Madame, I did." Perhaps there are remarkable individuals capable of more than one profession, and certainly there is the occasional intellectual polymath like Leibniz or Wren (the late 17th century seems to be flush with them) who is capable of far more than most of us, but even the most capable will face some eventual limitation on how much they can take on.

Note, however, that just as an understanding *that* I am physically limited is necessary if I am to succeed in any physical actions I undertake—I must always be open to the possibility of physical failure in order not to undertake the

12. One important thing this doesn't adequately capture, but which is somewhat tangential to the main issues I am exploring, is the fact (stressed by Harry Frankfurt, among others) that we find ourselves *moved* to participate in a shared form of understanding in the first place. Whether it's deep curiosity about nature or a powerful attraction to another person, our volition is engaged in such a way that we *desire* the participation. This means that my intentional comportment towards what I understand depends on something *prior* to any commitment (assuming we ought to reserve the idea of commitment for some more deliberate, conscious act of will, whether an endorsing of desire or something stronger).

13. I don't recall where I heard this, and web sources attribute it also to Isaac Stern, so it's probably apocryphal.

impossible—so too must I understand that I am logistically limited, i.e., there are things that, were I to try to will them, would result in a breakdown in all of my undertaking. If I lacked this form of self-understanding, this grasp of my volitional finitude, I would not be able to *succeed* in undertaking any action, at least not for very long, any more than I would survive for very long if I didn't have a basic understanding of my physical finitude. But this logistical self-understanding, the understanding of myself as free but finitely so, isn't one that is defined in terms of a grasp of norms that say what is proper or good, and it has no identifiable role associated with it. It is instead a mode of self-understanding in which I grasp an underlying, constitutive structure of finite selfhood, which grasp is a condition for inhabiting *any* norm-governed social roles.

Consider a couple of further variations on the example. Suppose I find myself asking "should I be doing physics at all?" not because I have some competing alternative that attracts me (as above), but because I have simply lost interest in it. Or suppose I find myself asking the same question, but this time because I have come to think that the practice of physics is morally problematic (maybe, for example, I become bothered by its inevitable contribution to the development of military technology or global environmental disaster). In each of these situations, as in that of choosing between physics and music, I find myself confronted with the freedom I have to commit to the ways of life I either already am or might be participating in, but again this confrontation is not because there is anything that is recognizably problematic or anomalous *within* the way of life itself. It comes into question in such a way that I see I have to choose whether or how to go on in it, which is to say, I experience myself as free with respect to it.¹⁴ But that again means I have a perspective on myself, an understanding of myself, as a single individual, not wholly defined by my ways of life but with some complex ability for negotiating among and committing to or withdrawing from them.

It is perhaps possible to find a way of interpreting the last conflict mentioned along Haugeland's lines, if we think of my rejection of physics as a kind of second-order self-criticism within a way of life defined by moral norms. (He was friendly to such a view of morality, I think, but its details were part of what he was working on that he wasn't able to complete.) But note that this would still require thinking that one role (that of moral person) would entail, internal

14. I should perhaps note that my talk about freedom here doesn't assume I have an argument that proves we are metaphysically free. I take it that our freedom, whatever we ultimately understand it to be, is something we begin with every time we ask a question or face a choice, not something we need to arrive at after the course of an argument. To the extent that an argument can be given, it will thus be of the form of Descartes' argument against anyone who would deny he is thinking: any attempt to make the denial (whether of thought or freedom) entails a performative contradiction by the one making it. More argument than that I can't offer, at least not here.

to it, a perspective on, and so distance from, whichever other roles one takes as potentially subject to moral demands. I can't ask whether I ought to give up physics unless I have the capacity to step back from my physicist-self and see it from another perspective where I question it on grounds that it itself doesn't recognize. But insofar as this other perspective presents what we might call my "empirical" roles as ones I can choose to give up on, it shows me that I have some freedom with respect them (if not initially, at least as a matter of ongoing participation). And that means that to get morality in the picture as something that can trump other normative systems one lives by, we must think of the self as inhabiting a potentially complicated, hierarchically organized structure of roles, at least some of which it can step back from, and as having an understanding of itself as having the ability to do so.

This same sense of one's own freedom, and the non-socially normative constraints on it, emerges also when I consider the fact that even if I am really committed to all my ways of life, at some point I will not be able to carry on with them, not because of anything going wrong with what I am committed *to*, but because I—as a free committer—will simply cease to be at all. My understanding of this possibility—the possibility of death—is an understanding that I have of myself whichever roles I happen to play in the ways of life I participate in.¹⁵ Thus it points also to our capacity to view ourselves not just from within particular roles but as somehow the locus of all of them.

To sum up the picture of the self so far: everyday competence in existing requires that we have an understanding of ourselves as a *single* individual who is nevertheless *distributed* among multiple ways of life and who has a form of *finite freedom* that is not exhausted by the socially defined ways of life one is distributed into, nor even by a socially defined understanding of how to have a perspective on all of one's roles. Everyday existing is in large part a matter of exercising our ability to be a free self by negotiating the logistics of our multiple roles in such a way as to maintain the ongoing existence we have as individuals with such a multiplicity. This requires we tacitly understand what we can and can't do as a self—what is logistically possible and impossible for us—and so what our finite freedom is.

One aspect of this, so far mostly implicit but important for what's to come, is that this ongoing maintenance, and so the self-understanding that grounds it, is usually only tacitly understood and exercised without any more awareness than

15. This is an important issue when considering the Heideggerian provenance of Haugeland's picture, for it ties the missing picture of the complex self to his central but deeply idiosyncratic interpretation of death. He denies that the core concept of death Heidegger advances is that of a first-person singular individual, but is rather instead that of a "way of living," which is something instantiated at the level of a community (see, for instance, Haugeland 2013: 81–2, but the idea pervades all of his later writings on Heidegger).

other skills or abilities are. Nevertheless, it can come explicitly into view in times of crisis, anxiety, and the like. When I face the loss of love, the boredom with a way of life I am involved in, a life-determining choice between careers, or the fact of my own mortality, I can become consciously aware of my freedom and the responsibility I bear for deploying it in a way I am not usually. In this way, part of living as an individual is having the possibility of *seeing* one's individuality and freedom as in a sense "transcending" one's socially-defined normative frameworks.

Being a self thus means "intending" ourselves in quite complex ways, not all of which Haugeland's later thought recognizes. Up to a point, the sin here is largely one of omission, and much of what I am saying can be understood as simply supplementing the picture of the self who is able to commit to a way of life as we get that in essays such as "Authentic Intentionality." And, in fact, Haugeland recognized and developed a very similar picture of the distributed (or "dispersed" as he says) and yet unified self early on in his career in "Heidegger on Being a Person." There he describes an individual who is "genuinely self-critical" as one who recognizes "tensions among [her] roles" and "does something about them" (Haugeland 2013c: 14). If I am such a person, he says, "I find and root out an inconsistency in my overall self-understanding; instead of vacillating unwittingly between one 'me' and another, I become one of them (or perhaps a third) constantly and explicitly and thereby achieve a 'truer' self-understanding" (Haugeland 2013c: 14). What I seek when I am fully self-critical is thus "self-constancy"; I seek "a critically realized, maximally self-constant ability to lead an individual cohesive, limited life: *mine!*" (Haugeland 2013c: 14–5). This emphasis on coherence and constancy across roles, not just within them, addresses the idea that logistical limitations (as I called them) on selfhood impose a practical-logical requirement: I must avoid a certain kind of contradiction in my will that faces me in being a self. Unfortunately, and for whatever reason, recognition of this sort of cross-role self-criticism is missing from Haugeland's later account, where the three orders of self-criticism describe what we may do internally in each role we play. But, as I now argue, without this fuller picture of the modes of our self-intending and of our freedom, we won't just have a limited philosophical picture of the self, we also won't be able to see how it is possible to *give* such a picture in the first place.

4.

So far we have seen that there are two primary modes of self-understanding: I understand myself internally to a number of roles I play as their player, and I understand myself as the individual who is the nexus of them all and so in cer-

tain ways free with respect to each of them. While I have to understand that I am free but finitely so in order to be successful in any of my action, normally I don't think about this fact, but it can become explicit (in anxiety or crisis). Still, whether I understand my freedom implicitly or explicitly, as I have so far presented this self-understanding, it is always representative of a mode of self-engagement in which I am facing the question "how shall I live?" And for that reason, none of the modes of self-understanding so far described achieve the sort of transcendence characteristic of transcendental thought of the philosopher. For even in explicitly seeing myself *as* a free, singular self in anxiety or crisis, I haven't yet *explicitly* grasped myself in terms of the *form* or *structure* of selfhood that all singular, free beings share. And it's understanding oneself in this way, formally or "ontologically," that characterizes transcendental philosophical thought.

What, then, *does* transcendental thought require? How, to paraphrase Kant, is a priori knowledge of the self possible?¹⁶ How can we think our form, given that usually what we think is our socially-situated particularity, our life, whether in part or in whole, as how to live it is at issue for us? While the details of an answer may be obscure, the basic form of any adequate answer is not. For, in a sense, all we have to do is deliberately stop asking "how shall I live?" and ask instead "what is it to be the *kind* of being who can and must ask 'how shall I live?'" Asking this transcendental question thus means being concerned with and so asking about a form that *any* genuine dealing with (intending of, thinking about) *any* entities instantiates, not just my own case of it, or that of any other particular selves. That means that any particular cases of intentionality I consider, whether ones drawn from my own life or examples such as physicist and musician that are associated with indeterminate others, my interest in them is not ultimately with what is particular about them, but only with the way they help me see a universal form. If we feel that we learn something about physics or music in the process, that's fine, but if what we learn is really something that is *specific* to physics or music, we haven't yet gotten to the *universal*, or, better, *formal*, level we as philosophers are after. The questioning and thinking involved in philosophical understanding is, to be sure, always mine or yours (or whoever else's), just as is the perspective of asking whether I am doing a procedure properly, or whether I should give up physics for music, or whether there is a point in going on at all. But as a *philosopher*, it is the *structure* of the self, not the way *I* happen to instantiate it, that I care about.

Now, asking this question about the structure of the thinking self is not something we ordinarily need to do in the course of figuring out how to live, even (I would say especially) in times of crisis in one or other of our roles. Yet, while this

16. In Kant such knowledge takes the form of knowledge of the nature of one's basic faculties (their functions and limitations). See Smit (1999) for an interesting discussion of the status of such knowledge and the form of reflection required to obtain it.

transcendental question is not a question we need to face in living our particular lives, it is one we are *free* to ask. This fact that we *can* ask about our form, and that we can each *do* so as singular, first-person entities, points, however, to the fact that it involves an exercise of the very capacity of singular freedom that is always at least tacitly, and occasionally explicitly, understood in our dealing with how to live as the individuals we are. Being “existentially” free with respect to my roles thus means not just being able to give up on a role or commit to one, it also means being able to set them aside in reflective consideration of what giving up on and committing involve. That is to say, my freedom to take up (or abandon) a commitment also allows me to freely *think* the freedom I have. This isn’t to entertain the possibility of living with no roles at all; it’s rather to entertain the thought that roles vary and that there is a common form with respect to which this variation occurs.

The resulting situation of thought is a little odd, however. For *I* remain as a concrete entity who is thinking, yet, because I have set aside in thought all that pertains only to me or any other particular self, I am thinking *about* the universal form my own thought instantiates. The “content” of my thought, *what* I think about when I think transcendently, will be disclosed through the very activity of thinking I am engaged in as I ask what thinking is. And so, because it is my own activity of thought I am thinking about, that means I am both source and object of the thought: I give myself that very activity which I seek to understand. So, while as in a way disengaged from questions of life this thought is theoretical rather than practical, it is nevertheless a kind of *performance*, and so a form of activity or self-engagement. But because the performance is that of me asking only about what understanding (thought, intentionality) in general is, what my *form* is, what I find as an answer (if I am performing properly) is the same in form as what *any* individual would find when she asks the same question. My thought is “pure,” even as it remains grounded in an orientation towards a real entity: me. In a sense, then, anyone who achieves an understanding of the self, the intender or thinker, of the relevant kind will have, in the moment of philosophical vision, *become* the universal self, not by mystically dissolving into an ur-Self, but rather by abstracting from all that is particular about her place in the world and so seeing herself only in terms of what all selves share.

However remarkable the fact that this is possible — and it is remarkable! — it’s not spooky or weird or indicative of any supernatural, noumenal ground to our being. Carrying out this form of formal self-understanding is precisely the sort of transcendental inquiry that constitutes *phenomenological* inquiry in something close to the way Husserl and Heidegger understood it. Yet Haugeland’s phenomenology, because it lacks the full picture of our singular freedom, can’t get in view this “pure” self-encounter that it itself implicitly rests on.

5.

I find my form by examining my own instantiation of it: questioner and questioned are, in a sense, identical. This means that the activity of transcendental thought is, at its heart, solitary, even if the results hold for any thinker at all. This, however, makes it sound as if transcendental thought is fundamentally solipsistic. Two things would seem to undermine this, however: first, the sociality of empirical intentionality, whose form we are concerned to grasp; second, the fact that philosophy is itself a social activity with practices, norms, etc.

With regard to the first: when I grasp the form of thinking as such as I find it instantiated in my own concrete activity of thinking, what I find is what characterizes me and other entities of the same kind as *finite*. But to understand my finitude is also to see what it is that is limiting it. Built into my form (which I understand a priori) is thus, as Kant (and Descartes for that matter) recognized, an understanding of the forms of those *other* entities which define me, the world I necessarily bump up against, so to speak. In Kant this is (in part) the idea that in limning the structures of the subject, we find knowledge of the constitution of objects, i.e., synthetic a priori knowledge of the empirical world. (In Descartes one finds knowledge of God as well as of world, in the form of innate ideas of them.) In my (more Heideggerian) version of this, when I grasp my own form in transcendental thought, I also thereby find I have an a priori understanding of the social and worldly conditions of this thought—not the *particular* features of my world and others in it, but the a priori concepts or forms of world (as such) and other (as such) on the basis of which entities in my particular empirical situation can become intelligible to me. I can't get those a priori conditions in view by empirically studying specific ways of life, for the conditions are ones that are *presupposed* in the engaging in those ways. So I must look to my own ontological constitution to see what I must presuppose about other entities in order to be the one I am. Thus the first-person singular, reflective nature of transcendental phenomenological investigation of the form of thought is not in any way at odds with thinking being something that is only possible for a social, worldly being. Bracketing or withdrawing from the particulars of my world and myself as I am indexed to it does not mean questioning whether there is a world or others at all.

What about the second issue, the social nature of philosophy itself? This essay is, after all, a professional article, meant to be read and criticized so that I may better formulate (or reject if it comes to that) the ideas in it. Doesn't that point to some fundamentally shared, so non-solitary form of understanding of the matters in question? Yes and no. For I think that we have to explain the possibility of the social dimension of this sort of philosophy by reference to the fact that we each have the capacity to take up the question of the form of our own be-

ing for ourselves as individuals. And since this form is invariant across individuals, we can articulate rules or a method for how each must investigate it, and we can see when someone is in breach of those rules, when for instance, we see her importing aspects of her own life into her account of what thinking as such is. But we can only understand the kinds of possible mistakes and recognize them in others if we first have a grasp of the method and matter in question that is our own, which means one that we get through the relevant kind of engagement with our own selves. (The issue here is, in fact, precisely that which came to the fore in Augustine and obsessed Platonists for centuries after, how to teach an individual about being, her own being in particular. The first-personal structure of Descartes' *Meditations* is one attempt to deal with precisely this.)

6.

A couple of concluding thoughts: the solitariness of the activity of transcendental thought, and the fact that it takes place in deliberate withdrawal from the world-indexed particularities of the individual, while not epistemologically problematic in the ways solipsism is, has one perhaps unwelcome consequence: since the truth sought is neither grounded in any particular lived, existential question of a particular inquirer (a "how shall *I* live?" question), it promises no normative uptake in the business of actually living a life. It may be tempting to think that somehow the "laws" of thinking I formulate—the descriptions of thinking's basic form—are themselves normative with respect to the pre-theoretical activity they are describing. But if I have successfully described the most basic form that all of my being instantiates, I have described something that holds of *anything* that counts as my life activity, not something that I merely *aspire* (or *ought* to aspire) to be. There can be no question of living up to what I have described. The fundamental description of my form of being is not an articulation of norms I follow; it is an articulation of what any norm-following or failing-to-follow looks like, as well as an articulation of those fundamental non-normative possibilities and impossibilities (logistical, etc.) that I understand myself to have simply in virtue of being a self.

This means that transcendental phenomenological inquiry which seeks to articulate "boundary conditions" on what count as intentional entities, can only be at most of "therapeutic" or "critical" use: it will help free those caught in the grip of a false theory of thought, but, of course, only if those individuals who are so gripped take up the right sort of inquiry for themselves! The very nature of the inquiry and what it takes to understand its results means that no one who doesn't engage in it for themselves will "get it." The results of transcendental philosophy will of necessity fall on deaf ears to all but other transcendental philosophers.

I'd note too that, even though doing transcendental philosophy and so seeking transcendental truth is a possibility for us, that doesn't mean it's necessarily a *good* thing to seek. For each of us who engages in transcendental philosophy faces a danger: that of getting so drawn into the philosophical analysis of our form that we treat philosophy as itself a mode of *escape* from our concrete lives and the responsibility we have for them. After all, philosophical questioning is endless: it's difficult, inherently uncertain, and there are always more things to consider than one has so far managed to do. So it's very easy to find instead of a confrontation with one's lived freedom and responsibility that helps one engage with the world a desire to keep carefully thinking through the philosophical issues to see whether one has *really* understood what one is. (It's often forgotten, but Descartes advised doing metaphysics "semel in vita," once in one's life, and not to get caught up in metaphysics-for-metaphysics sake. This is partly why.)

To end on a positive note, however, there is perhaps one way we can see transcendental thought as having a more-than-therapeutic aim (or, perhaps, see philosophical therapy as more profound than I have presented it). For, provided we are cognizant of the danger it represents, transcendental thought involves a kind of performance in which we demonstrate to ourselves and, in an odd way, to others, the fact of our freedom and individuality. It is after all something we can freely do, and it is the sole form of free activity that aims only for a conscious, conceptualized self-comprehension of freedom. This quasi-Hegelian moment brings with it its own distinct form of pleasure, which anyone who engages in the activity comes to appreciate. Its reward may thus be more than just that of freeing us from confusion. There is a positive joy in doing it as well. So, even if doesn't help me discharge my duties or live up to my human responsibilities, it nevertheless represents the realization of a fundamental possibility I have of exercising my freedom. From the perspective of worldly engagement, it is in a sense a pointless exercise, but not unlike the way that art is pointless (when it is). It is no less profound for lacking a point, indeed, it is profound precisely because it has none.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to two referees for this journal, along with Joan Wellman, Nate Zuckerman, and those at the 2013 meeting of the International Society for Phenomenological Studies, especially Joe Rouse, for comments on previous drafts of this essay.

References

- Carman, Taylor (2014). Is Dasein People? Heidegger According to Haugeland. *Boundary 2*, 41(2), 197–212.
- Haugeland, John (1998a). *Having Thought*. Harvard University Press.
- Haugeland, John (1998b). Pattern and Being. In *Having Thought* (267–290). Harvard University Press. Reprinted from *Dennett and His Critics* (53–69), Bo Dahlbom, (Ed.), 1993, Basil Blackwell.
- Haugeland, John (1998c). Truth and Rule-Following. In *Having Thought* (303–361). Harvard University Press.
- Haugeland, John (1998d). Understanding Natural Language. In *Having Thought* (47–61). Harvard University Press. Reprinted from *Journal of Philosophy*, 76(11), 619–632, 1979.
- Haugeland, John (2013a). Authentic Intentionality. In Joseph Rouse (Ed.), *Dasein Disclosed* (260–276). Harvard University Press. Reprinted from *Computationalism: New Directions* (160–74), Matthias Scheutz (Ed.), 2002, MIT Press.
- Haugeland, John (2013b). *Dasein Disclosed*. Joseph Rouse (Ed.). Harvard University Press.
- Haugeland, John (2013c). Heidegger on Being a Person. In Joseph Rouse (Ed.), *Dasein Disclosed* (3–16). Harvard University Press. Reprinted from *Nous*, 16(1), 16–26, 1982.
- Haugeland, John (2013d). Letting Be. In Joseph Rouse (Ed.), *Dasein Disclosed* (167–178). Harvard University Press. Reprinted from *Transcendental Heidegger* (93–103), Steven Crowell and Jeff Malpas (Eds.), 2007, Stanford University Press.
- Haugeland, John (2013e). Social Cartesianism. In Joseph Rouse (Ed.), *Dasein Disclosed* (243–59). Harvard University Press. Reprinted from *The Externalist Challenge* (213–26), Richard Schantz (Ed.), 2004, De Gruyter.
- Kant, Immanuel (1954). *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Ed. R. Schmidt (1954). Felix Meiner. Cited by the page numbers of the first (A) and second (B) editions.
- Joseph Rouse (2003). *How Scientific Practices Matter*. University of Chicago Press.
- Shockey, R. Matthew (2010). What's Formal about Formal Indication? Heidegger's Method in *Being and Time*. *Inquiry*, 53(6), 525–39.
- Shockey, R. Matthew (2012). Heidegger on Understanding One's Own Being. *New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, XI, 128–43.
- Smit, Houston (1999). The Role of Reflection in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 80(2), 203–23.