

The Contingency of Consciousness

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In the following pages I will discuss a case, necessarily from afar (it occurs in the early 19th century), that poses some important questions about the way we understand consciousness, intentionality, and its precursors in the human organism. It suggests that some traditional questions need to be replaced, such as the notion of intentionality in animals, which buttresses a hypothetical evolutionary continuity for which human consciousness is only a latest, highest form or stage. The presupposition in such questions is that consciousness is an innate, biologically necessitated development. On this basis, one sets the dividing line between the conscious and the non-conscious somewhere other than between the human species and others. In general, we naturally tend to set this line further down the ladder because we are inclined to attribute consciousness to animals to make sense of their behavior. But this motivation is doubly unsatisfactory: in it, we are speaking about ourselves, not animals; and however we try to modify the definition, consciousness is always consciousness as we understand it in ourselves.

I will argue that the case of Kasper Hauser gives us an insight into what can be called a pre-intentional state of being. It suggests 1) that, for the human organism, consciousness is not "internally" necessitated, but "externally" contingent, 2) that what germinates as consciousness finds its seedbed in an activity in the world, and 3) that the dividing line between the intentional and the non-intentional is wholly within the human species itself. That is, granting that human physiology and neurophysiology is the ground, nevertheless the arena where the drama of an emergence and development of consciousness is played out lies beyond it, elsewhere—a view which immediately explains why neurophysiology has such difficulty demonstrating an experimental link between neural processes and intentional states.

For two reasons, this discussion must necessarily be philosophically heuristic. The first is that it is distant. We know of Hauser only through texts. Our data comes to us in the form of narratives. Hauser's own account of himself is imbedded in these narratives, as in a meta-text. In a sense, this narrativity is appropriate, since only narrative permits us to grasp the particularity of consciousness, or of the subject. Second, the "data" is not repeatable. The inhumanity that led to Hauser being a "case" in the first place shall hopefully never be permissible as a mode of experimental investigation.

The Case of Kasper Hauser

When Kasper Hauser appeared in Nuremberg at the end of the afternoon of May 26, 1828, he seemed drugged or demented.¹ He stood immobile: silent, blank of expression, acknowledging nothing and no one--resembling perhaps a department store mannequin accidentally abandoned in the street. Bending slightly forward on stiff legs, he appeared to be perpetually off-balance. He held a note in his hand directing the reader to take him to the captain of a cavalry unit stationed nearby. When he himself was bodily turned in the direction indicated, his unresponsive demeanor remained unchanged. From time to time, at random, he would utter one of three rote expressions, which appeared to have no meaning for him. (285) Only one word of German escaped his lips: "ross" (horse). (Of language altogether he knew only two words and his rote expressions.) The note stated he was 17 years old.

At the cavalry stable, he was presented with a variety of foods and objects. For a while, he evinced recognition of only two (i.e. his blank, uncommunicative attitude was replaced by an expression of mild attention): a coin, which he greeted with the word "ross" (286), and a man's bending over him. All other people and objects, and all questions, he disregarded as if they were non-existent. And when the coin was taken from him, he relapsed into immobility and blankness. But he was neither drugged nor demented. When given a piece of paper and a pencil, he seized the pencil eagerly and carefully wrote the name "Kasper Hauser" in large script across the page. And the next day, when presented with a wooden toy horse, he eagerly embraced it, as if it were a suddenly encountered island of infrangible familiarity in a sea of surrounding alienness. Did he live in a world consisting of only two things, a toy horse, and paper and pencil? What kind of blankness or non-awareness would this be?

Anselm von Feuerbach gives the following description of Hauser's personal comportment during his first weeks in Nuremberg.

¹ My primary source is a text by Anselm von Feuerbach, a biologist and criminologist who immersed himself in the case, and wrote extensively about it. His most prominent pamphlet is reprinted in *Wolf-Children and Feral Man* by Singh, Rev. J.A.L. and Prof. Robert Zingg (New York: Harper, 1942), hereafter cited in the text in parentheses. Certain impressionistic descriptions in this essay must also be credited to Werner Herzog's movie on Kasper Hauser, entitled "Every Man for Himself and God Against All." Herzog is reputed to have done considerable research on the case, exploiting sources not immediately available to myself. And indeed, on impressions or subjective descriptions, his guess is probably better than mine.

He seemed to hear without understanding, to see without perceiving and to move his feet without knowing how to use them for the purpose of walking (284).

He appeared neither to know nor to suspect where he was. He betrayed neither fear nor astonishment, nor confusion; he rather showed an almost brutish dullness, which either leaves external objects entirely unnoticed, or stares at them without thought, and suffers them to pass without being effected by them (285-6).

Some days after his arrival, Casper was conducted . . . around the city to discover whether he could recognize the gate through which he had entered. But, as might have been foreseen, he knew not how to distinguish the one from the other; and upon the whole, he appeared to take no notice whatsoever of what was passing before his eyes. When objects were brought more than ordinarily near him, he gazed at them with a stupid look, which, only in particular instances, was expressive of curiosity and astonishment (295).

He did, however, reach for things that glittered; and he greeted animals with the word "ross," humans with the word "bua."

Hauser was temporarily consigned to the police station until his history could be ascertained. Examined by a physician, he was found to be in adequate health, except for a deformation of his knees; the knee-caps had sunk into the joint from under-use (a condition partially explained by his habit of seating himself on the floor, both legs stretched out straight in front of him) (292). His sensibility to the world appeared intact; when he reached out to grasp something, he did in fact grasp it. Neither were his reflexes defective; when attracted by a burning candle, he stuck his finger in the flame and instantly jumped back, withdrawing to a corner of the room and whimpering (294). But he seemed to have no sense of danger nor awareness of malice. For example:

Feigned cuts and thrusts were made at him with a naked saber, in order to try what might be their effect upon him; but he remained immovable, without even winking; nor did he seem to harbor the least suspicion that any harm could come to him (294).

Only gradually did his initial absence of awareness dispel itself. For instance, though the bells of a church steeple tolled every hour throughout the day right outside his police station window, it was only after several days that he gave any indication of having heard them, and then only because they were pointed out to him by someone (295).

In a word, Hauser appeared naive and "pre-conscious," not unlike an infant, a comparison Feuerbach makes several times. In this respect, Hauser fascinated Feuerbach; he afforded a unique and unprecedented opportunity to observe mental development in a fully grown body, unclouded by the requirements of infantile biological development. From his undoubtedly Romantic point of view, Feuerbach explained Hauser's initial insensibility to the world in the following manner.

Yet, even with seeing and unblinded eyes, he would have seen nothing; at least he would have observed and taken cognizance of nothing. For nature, with all her phenomena, must at that time have shone before his eyes, with the glare of one confusedly diversified and checkered mass, in which no single object could be distinguished from another (309).

That is, for a period of time, nature's richness would have left him in the throes of sensory overload. This is reminiscent of William James' remark that to a new born baby the world must appear a "blooming, buzzing, confusion"—a miasmic, undifferentiated background. Hauser himself was later to confirm James' insight, though not Feuerbach's theory of sensory overload.²

Like any child, Hauser learned to speak with great rapidity. Also, like a child, once he learned some language, he attributed life to things, carrying on one-sided conversations with inanimate objects. He also referred to himself in the third person, and spoke with a distorted syntax (317). During Hauser's first months in Nuremberg, the mayor of the town, a man named Binder, had Hauser brought to him every day for language lessons and interrogation. Binder issued an official report on Hauser's condition and background on July 7, 1828, in which he constructed the following story (304-6).³ As a baby, Hauser was locked in a cell, whether a

² Feuerbach became Hauser's chief educator and defender against a host of detractors. Indeed, controversy surrounded Hauser from the moment of his discovery, including charges that he was a fraud, a spy, and a freak. The controversy arose mainly over the question of Hauser's memory. Though Hauser avidly attempted to educate and integrate himself into his new cultural environment, the controversy surrounding him made this difficult and left him very little peace. After 5 years in Nuremberg, he was murdered. A year and half later, Feuerbach himself died under rather strange circumstances, after having hypothesized that Hauser's death was in fact a political assassination.

³ Besides a short autobiographical sketch Hauser himself was later to write which essentially parallels Binder's report, the report is the only

basement or an attic being unknown, and kept there. He sat on the floor, his legs straight out before him, dressed only in pants and a shirt, his feet bare. He ate only bread and drank water from a pitcher. He "never saw the face of the man" who brought him food, and was not taught to speak any language. Periodically, he was drugged via his drinking water, presumably with opium, from which state he would awake dressed in clean clothes. He was taught to write the name he transcribed that first day in the cavalry stable by someone who stood behind him and guided his hand over the page. He similarly learned the letters of the alphabet. At times, he was left to scribble at will on paper placed before him. During those years he had two toy horses to play with and a few ribbons with which to decorate them. When brought to Nuremberg, he walked part of the way in the company of a man—"the man with whom he had always been." He remembered being beaten once by the man (with a stick) for making too much noise with his horses (though sword slashes meant nothing to him). And that was all he allegedly could recall of 17 years.⁴

Hauser's Memory

The date of Binder's report is important. It was issued only six weeks after Hauser's arrival. For Feuerbach, this raises two questions: first, given Hauser's initial state of insensibility, how could he have recalled what Binder attributed to him? And second, if he initially knew no language at

document that purports to describe Hauser's existence prior to his appearance "in the world."

⁴The case of Genie, which is similar in some respects to Hauser, might be noted here. Genie was a girl locked in a small room at age 20 months and kept there for 12 years. When finally rescued, in 1970, she was malnourished and knew no language. Curtiss, Susan; *Genie: A Psycholinguistic Study of a Modern Day 'Wild Child'* (New York: Academic Press, 1977).

Like Hauser, after a number of weeks, Genie showed what her nurses called 'stimulus hunger.' There was a three week period between her release from her room and her hospitalization, during which time she was with her mother and grandmother. At the end of this time, she was still malnourished! (p. 7) She apparently did not become as accomplished with language as Hauser. Like Hauser, she claimed to recall having been beaten by her father, a fact that had, at the time, already been affirmed by her mother. But the question of her memory is not really addressed in the literature. Curtiss mentions the issue in the same section as an account of Genie's foster-father becoming angry at her, and of Genie's development of an ability to lie and to tell fantasies. From the point of view of the present essay, it is frustrating that this issue should be dealt with in an ambiguous manner.

all, how could Hauser have recounted what is reported? Part of Binder's account could be the result of deduction. For instance, when first fed, Hauser spat out all food and drink except bread or water; this would suggest that he had previously known only those two foods and found all else strange and unpalatable. At the dinner table, he at first reached for a pitcher to drink from, rather than a glass of water placed before him. Conclusion: he had previously drunk only from a pitcher. But a deduction is not the same as the subject's own memory. Feuerbach felt it would be a serious mistake to attribute to Hauser what had been, in fact, deduced by another. Furthermore, to communicate a feeling, the fact of a clean shirt, for instance, or a pain, requires linguistic ability. Even signs and grimaces, to the extent they signify internal states, require previous linguistic "definitions," which Hauser was receiving from Binder. Binder was teaching Hauser the language of his answers at the very moment of questioning.

It is not (Feuerbach says) an easy matter to discriminate, in every particular instance, between what really appertains to the person questioned, and what in fact belongs to those who questioned him: between what really flowed from Casper's obscure recollections, and what, by dint of repeated questions, may have been insinuated into his mind, in such a manner, as to have been involuntarily confounded by him with things actually stored up in his memory (303).

In other words, Feuerbach suggests that Binder may have been "leading the witness," or rather, teaching Hauser his story in the process of teaching him how to tell it.⁵

⁵ We encounter an inverted version of this in the case of Genie. In discussing Genie's acquisition of language, Curtiss seems to overemphasize the quantifiable, what can be tested. According to both Curtiss and Fromkin, Genie learned language more slowly than normal children her 'intellectual' age, though cognitively she seemed in some ways to be more advanced. They hypothesize a right hemisphere language lateralization. Still, they test Genie for competence in correct English syntax and grammar. That a different syntax may evolve, perhaps peculiar to right hemisphere language, or conditioned by the fact that it is learned in a fully grown body, as seen in Hauser, remains unaddressed. That is, Genie may have learned language differently, and thus learned a different language, than normal children. It seems that Genie tended to produce syntax rather than learn it (Curtiss, p. 193ff). Victoria Fromkin (*Brain and Language*, Vol 1(1) (1974) reports that Genie seemed to comprehend all the "WH" words (who, what, where, when, why, and how), though she could not use them to produce

Yet even granting the validity of deduction from what Hauser evinced as familiar, some anomalies appear in Binder's account which raise other questions about Hauser's memory. Hauser recalled toy horses, yet he could not recall what supported him in a seated position (304). One would imagine that he sat away from the wall, since a person was able to crouch behind him to teach him to write. Did he never see his backrest? This would imply he never moved about his chamber. Seventeen years spent without moving his legs would have resulted in very serious atrophy; yet, upon arrival in Nuremberg, he was able to stand and (barely) walk. Perhaps he had no backrest, and held his body upright by his own strength; would he not "recognize" this as he "recognized" clean shirts? And why would he not have sought the support of the wall, and later "recalled" that he had done so, as he "evinced familiarity" with the pitcher of water? Again, he "remembered" a man bending over him, but he couldn't remember the shape of the room, nor if one left it by going up stairs or down (or if stairs existed at all). If he could recall that there was a man, the "man with whom he had always been," why did he not recognize the existence of men in the stable when they gave him a pencil and paper to write the name that was his? Finally, he seemed to be somewhat familiar with coaches (and he tended to fall asleep as soon as he entered one, as if part of an habitual pattern) (309), but he had no recollection of having been in one before. Whether Feuerbach is right or not, there seems to be a selective process of recall that transcends Binder's deductions or assumptions. If, by "recall", we mean "evince a familiarity by reaching for or attending to" rather than ignoring, then we can say he recalled toy horses. Yet this simple act of synonymy makes a perhaps impermissible

questions, while normal children at a comparable stage generally comprehend the first three, and only later the rest. The difference is that the second three require a story or semi-narrative response while the first three can be answered nominatively. Is it possible that for Genie, words were more fully apprehended as events (see balloon incident, Curtiss, p. 15)? Also, because Genie did not learn to read, her tests involved pictures, not only of objects, but of events. A test places "language" in an alien, objectified, event structure; it becomes something "out of there." In effect, Genie's language acquisition and testing may have moved at cross purposes. As Curtiss herself says, "The tests indicate one picture, anecdotal evidence indicates another" (p. 142). I am reminded of the on-going controversy about measuring language deficiency strictly on the basis of 'official' English among children from black communities, for instance, ignoring above all the syntactical particularities of "Black English."

One is drawn to the idea that perhaps Curtiss functioned with respect to Genie as Binder did to Hauser; the event structure embedded in learning language becomes a component of the language learned.

leap from something knowable only in a first person sense to a third person view of the behavioral. It changes the subject, in both senses of the term.

Ironically, what rendered Hauser a celebrity in Nuremberg was precisely his capacity to remember. After residing in Nuremberg a while, he demonstrated powers of recall for data and detail far beyond the capacity (or belief) of those observing him. Visited by thousands of strangers during his first year in Nuremberg, he effortlessly remembered them all. Feuerbach reports:

Whenever any person was introduced, Casper went up close to him, regarded him with a staring look, noticed every particular part of his face . . . with a penetrating glance. He then repeated the name of the person as it had been mentioned to him. And he knew the person; and . . . he knew him forever (316).

He remembered all associated personal information, including occupation, title, ancestry, address, friends and associates, etc. and whatever stories his visitor chose to tell him. His visitors tested him again and again to discover when he would forget something, or to expose his devices for such accurate recollection, or to catch him revealing some fact from his past. But in vain; he never did slip. The opulence and accuracy of his memory remained unimpeachable while the details of his past remained buried. (After some time, his ability to remember gradually declined until it closely approximating that of any other person.)

Let us add one more element to this account of Hauser's memory: his interest in drawing (319). Because he demonstrated an immediate familiarity with paper and pencil, he was given these things to occupy himself. After a while, he attempted to train himself to draw. He proceeded to repeatedly copy a painted portrait of the mayor. With each attempt, he arrived at a closer approximation of his model. Considering it a serious enterprise, he saved each trial drawing in the order of its completion as a record of his progress. He never became really accomplished at drawing, but for about a year it held his interest. Whatever his eventual skill, however, he never attempted to depict any aspect or object of his pre-Nuremberg past. He evidently recalled pitchers of water, but he made no attempt to draw the particular pitcher he had previously used. The toy horses he had to play with fared no better in becoming subjects of his art. Neither did he ever attempt to draw the man who brought him to Nuremberg, although he allegedly recalled they had walked part of the way, and so would no doubt have seen his overall figure, if not his face.

Did he not remember these images? Or did he perhaps seek to repress all recollection of his former incarceration? Though logical, this latter possibility does not seem to be the case. On the contrary, he at first longed

for his former existence, for its simplicity and freedom from the struggle (though a wholly self-engendered struggle) to learn and to know. He quite openly yearned for "the man with whom he had always been" to come and take him back again. Yet he drew no pictures of where it was he yearned to be. He was constantly surrounded by people extravagantly interested in how he had previously lived, yet he could not sufficiently remember a concrete image from his past to render it on paper. How are we to reconcile the luxuriance of his memory with the immensity of that absence?

Could it be that particularities of his imprisonment (his captivity's circumstances) got lost in the monotony of a condition approximating sensory deprivation? If had grown up under those conditions, in relation to what world would they seem monotonous? On the other hand, would not his few steps from his cell to a coach, or his walk to Nuremberg have at least partially awakened him from his incarceration's effects? And wouldn't his toy horses, with their ribbons, have stood out as changing elements for him? Though he never drew their picture, he recognized a toy horse immediately when it was presented to him. Neither sensory deprivation nor sensory overload (an "overload" immediately transcended by the toy horse and paper and pencil, for some reason) explain his lack of memory.

All mammals have a memory. Hauser, a mammal, must therefore have remembered his first 17 years in some sense. The necessity to rely on deduction and interpretation from "evinced familiarity," however, marks the absence of a voluntary account. What seems to be at issue is Hauser's power of intentional recall. Though he had a mammalian memory, and thus a primordial capacity for recognition that rendered certain things familiar to him--in the same sense, perhaps, that a cat "evinces a familiarity" with a space by resting in it, and not lurking at the edges or skulking in its corners--that power appears to have been lacking. And it seems to be precisely what flowered extravagantly upon his arrival in Nuremberg. Even if we use the notion of intentional recall in a non-thetic sense, it still transcends animal memory. For instance, recalling words in the midst of conversation occurs without reflection or attention to the experience that has bestowed meaning upon the words recalled and spoken in the moment. A word is recalled and used intentionally; it is not an evinced familiarity. That is, we cannot equate "recall" as an autonomous act, as a function of consciousness, with "evinced familiarity," with behavior that looks like "recall" when viewed from elsewhere. And it is precisely this distinction that thrusts our first questions upon us.

Does that mean that intentional recall is not inherent in the human organism? If not, then what would mark or make manifest the transition from animal memory to intentional recall? In Nuremberg, two glaring deficiencies in Hauser's life were filled; he learned language and engaged in dialogue with others. Is it possible that the activities of learning language and engaging in dialogue are necessary for intentional recall?

There are two similar examples of feral people who learned language upon re-entry into human society, and were successfully socialized: a girl of 12 (The Girl of Songi) captured in the Champagne region of France in 1731 (252), and a boy of 5 (christened Ruben) captured in El Salvador in 1933 (259). Both demonstrated the same memory deficiency concerning their former existence, and one (Ruben) developed prodigious powers of recall quite similar to Hauser's.⁶ (Of course, strictly speaking, Hauser cannot be

⁶The term 'feral man' refers to a human organism reared by an animal or by its own means in isolation from other humans. It is generally supposed that, beyond a certain point, such a life results in degeneration of the intellect, and that such people are doomed to dementia. For the most part, this has appeared to be the case. Most attempts to integrate "recaptured" feral individuals into society have proved fruitless. The cases of the girl of Songi, and Ruben, are therefore of singular interest. ("The Wild Boy of Aveyron," one of the most celebrated cases in the literature, never learned language. Itard, J.M.G., *The Wild Boy of Aveyron*, New York, 1932.)

The girl of Songi was a quick, agile person with powerful arms, capable of climbing trees very rapidly to escape danger, and able to catch small animals and fish with her bare hands when hungry. When attacked by a dog, she killed it skillfully with a single blow of a club she carried. She was adopted as a resident at the Castle of Songi, and very slowly learned to speak. She later became a nun.

Prof. August Rauber, in a sketchy biographical report of the girl of Songi, states:

Mlle 'le blanc' (why she is referred to in the masculine is not reported) indicates that she began to think only after some education. During the entire period which she passed in the woods, she almost had known no other thoughts but of her sense of her needs and the desire to fulfill them. She does not remember either her father or her mother, or any other person (though she had lived with one—SM), or her country. She does not remember having seen houses before (though she had lived in one—SM), but holes in the ground and a type of hut which were perhaps covered with snow. But she remembers very well that she often climbed trees and went hunting for animals (which she continued to do long after she became an inhabitant of towns—SM). She believed that trees and earth had produced her. She also believed that she preserved a like memory of the sea or a river and a large water animal.

considered 'feral.' He was cared for, housed indoors, and protected from predators and weather. Unlike these other feral cases, he didn't know how to care for himself, and would not have survived in the absence of others. With respect to his memory, however, he is not unique.) These three cases suggest that, within the spectrum of human realities, a human organism devoid of intentional recall, and still capable of surviving, is possible.

But we all have a certain familiarity with the absence of intentional recall; it is an outstanding feature of normal infancy. Though recall of infantile events is not impossible, it is very difficult, and generally requires some external phenomenon--an accidental encounter with a catalytic object, or some hypnotic technique (as well as additional, usually parental, corroboration)--i.e. 'externally' induced rather than voluntarily recollected. When such recall is affected, not only does it have a timeless quality, a mysterious familiarity, but it presents itself larger than life. It is commonly supposed that infantile events dominate the personality

Her recollection of the sea and snow were the source of speculation that she was, perhaps, of eskimo descent and had crossed the ocean in a boat, a kidnap victim, perhaps, or a stowaway.

Like the girl of Songi, Ruben was of powerful build and able to travel through the thick tropical forests by jumping and swinging from tree to tree. He was amazingly agile, and caught fish with his bare hands. Though he was afraid of no animals, he did not hunt them for food. After capture, at which time he spoke neither Spanish nor any Indian language, he was adopted by a schoolmaster and educated. Like Hauser, he had a prodigious memory. For example, some months after his capture, he overheard a telephone conversation of some length. When it was finished, Ruben lifted the telephone receiver and performed a perfect repetition of the entire phone call, complete with pauses for the other party's words.

A report on his condition when captured states:

. . . and we know from himself that he lived for food on shellfish, fruits, and grass, and that he slept in caves and trees. He went naked. The animals he knew best were the snake, the lizard, and the dog. It is supposed he did not know others. Though we tried to find out if some animal fed him, we did not succeed (p. 256).

Again we encounter the inability to recall more than a few generalities concerning life before capture, education, and access to language. Personal events, especially those of nurture, survival, or origin, are lost. No stories are told of places or circumstances, the learning of survival skills or narrow escapes from attack or dangerous situations. In both cases, entire years of daily living are seemingly collapsed into a few details.

because they are, being early, incomparable to anything, and because the infant mind, being open, is unreasoning and susceptible. True though this might be, the contingency of intentional recall suggests that such events achieve their power because, upon recall, they present themselves as alien. They arrive by accident, with all the force of reality, atemporal in a temporal world, while the power that induced them remains unknown, exterior and indiscernible. They appear as sudden intangibles by which the world both confronts and commandeers one's being.

The Question of Perception

If the case of Kasper Hauser calls into question the innateness of human intentional recall, it also calls into question the innateness of human perception. This is not a farfetched notion, because perception, as opposed to primordial sensing (vision as opposed to sight, "touch" as opposed to tactile sense), is a cognitive process. All conscious processes require memory; recognition, search, articulation, conceptualization, imagination, all occur only in terms of what has already occurred, i.e. with an entire past on tap. If one removes cognition, search, intention, or intentional recall from 'perception,' only sensation is left (and I will borrow the term "sensation" temporarily, in spite of its many unfortunate connections and connotations, until the conceptual basis has been developed to change it?). It is the awareness of both "object" and "familiarity" itself that distinguishes visual perception from sight.

Feuerbach recounts two experiences concerning Hauser's perception that need to be understood; first, Hauser's own account of his inability to perceive, and second, the event of Hauser's first seeing the stars. Referring to a moment in 1828, Feuerbach writes:

I directed Casper to look out of the window, pointing to the wide and extensive prospect of a beautiful landscape, that presented itself to us in all the glory of summer; and I asked him whether what he saw was not very beautiful. He obeyed, but instantly drew back, with visible horror, exclaiming "ugly, ugly," and then pointing to the white wall of his chamber, he said, "There is not

⁷ See, in particular, Merleau-Ponty's critique of "sensation" in *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith and Forrest Williams (New York: Rutledge Kegan and Paul, 1974), chap. 1. His critique, however valuable for an approach to perception, will not be useful for the argument being developed here, because it begins precisely with the question of intentional discernment and the constitution of objects, which is already posterior to what this essay is attempting to address.

ugly." To my question, why was it ugly, no other reply was made, but "ugly, ugly" (323).

In 1831, almost three years later, Feuerbach asked Hauser about the incident. Hauser replied that he remembered it, and gave the following account of his reaction.

Yes, indeed, what I then saw was very ugly. For when I looked at the window, it always appeared to me as if a window-shutter had been placed close before my eyes, upon which a wall-painter had spattered the contents of his brushes, filled with white, green, yellow, and red paint, all mingled together. Single things, as I now see things, I could not at that time recognize and distinguish from each other (322-23).

Here we have Hauser's own explanation of why he did not recognize the gate through which he entered Nuremberg, nor the route taken there; why he could draw no pictures of the objects in his cell, nor for many days hear the steeple bells when they rang outside his window. He could not discern individual objects. The static, immobile world presented itself to him flatly, a non-spatial, non-dynamic curtain whose entity and entirety were one, and whose unity he could not penetrate.⁸ Sound as well as sights lost themselves in the dull roar of objectlessness surrounding him. What he saw continuously before him could only resemble background visual "noise" (a "blooming buzzing confusion"). As a counter-example, soon after his arrival in Nuremberg, he was taken to a military parade, and inadvertently placed near the regimental drum. When the drum started, he fell into convulsions. Here, perhaps, was a true case of sensory overload, the drum's beats being, perhaps, totally unavoidable as "objects."

The second experience occurred one summer evening in 1829; "his instructor (a man named Daumer, who provided him with a foster home) showed him, for the first time, the starry heavens" (332). Understandably, this appears to be a somewhat aggrandizing statement,

⁸This picture should not be surprising to any readers of Merleau-Ponty, for instance. In *The Phenomenology of Perception* he says:

It has long been known that during the first nine months of life, infants distinguish only globally the colored from the colorless. . . . [The distinctions] between warm and cold shades, between the 'colored' and the 'non-colored,' . . . take the place of color in children; . . . in the same way the 'strange' colors seen by a diseased person cannot be identified with any color of the spectrum (p. 29-30).

especially in light of Hauser's visual capabilities. When Hauser first arrived in Nuremberg, and for years thereafter, he had extremely acute night vision (a common characteristic of 'feral people'). The brightness of day he found, in fact, to be quite uncomfortable. He moved with greater assurance at night, and was able to discern small objects on the ground or in the distance (for instance, raspberries) and identify them. He was able to read house numbers at night at a distance of three blocks (334). How is it possible that despite his night vision, and despite the fact that the stars provided the light that allowed him to see as if in broad daylight, it was not until August, 1829, well over a year after coming to Nuremberg, that he saw the stars themselves?

Yet something of that order is meant, because the sight of the stars, as they were pointed out to him, precipitated a profound crisis for him. He was at first awestruck, and exclaimed that it was the most beautiful sight he had ever seen "in the world."

At length, standing motionless, with his head bowed down, and his eyes staring, he fell into a train of deep and serious meditation. When he again recovered his recollection, his transport (at seeing the stars) had been succeeded by a deep sadness. He sank trembling upon a chair, and asked, why that wicked man had kept him always locked up, and had never shown him any of these beautiful things. He (Casper) has never done him done him any harm. He broke into a fit of crying, which lasted a long time (332).

This incident marked a crisis for Hauser because it signified a total reversal in Hauser's estimate of his own past. When he first arrived in Nuremberg, and for a year thereafter, he felt neither bitterness nor enmity toward his unknown former keeper.

He had no fault to find with 'the man,' except that he had not yet come to take him back again, that he had never shown him or told him anything of so many beautiful things in the world . . . (later) the burgermeister must take him (Hauser) home, and then he will show the man what he has learned in the meantime. When I expressed my surprise that he should wish to return to that abominably bad man; he replied with mild indignation, 'Man not bad, man me no bad done' (32).

As if by an umbilicus, his every attitude seemed tied to his unremembered years sequestered somewhere else. And in urgently seeking to educate himself, he was not making up for lost time, but preparing to impress the

man who would return someday to reclaim him. He states, in an official court report, taken October 1828, that he still felt he was happier in his former existence than out in the world in which he "suffered."

At least, this was his attitude until the moment in question, a moment which caused him to reinvent his own story of his former existence. The profundity of his reaction clearly marks the experience as a 'first' of some kind. It could not have been a first aesthetic experience. Feuerbach mentions his negative aesthetic responses to nature on several occasions. Neither could it have been a first application of a aesthetic appreciation (perhaps upon Daumer's reference) to previous experience of the stars, for he is reported as making special discovery and notice of the brightest stars, and of their differences in color. We are left with the conclusion that prior to this event, Hauser had not perceived the stars at all, in spite of the fact that he must have 'seen' them, given that he saw by them. And the 'event' itself consisted of their being pointed out to him by another and named.

It is astonishing to think that perception too may be contingent in the human organism, that there may be such a thing as an awake, unblinded, yet unperceiving human being. Yet Hauser's inability to recognize the gate through which he had entered the town, his apparent unawareness of objects shown him, the fact that for days he did not hear the bells ringing outside his police station window, and his not having seen the stars, all suggest that it is not sufficient that an object present itself to a human organism for it to be perceived, but that certain pre-conditions must be satisfied. The organism must be prepared or have prepared itself in some way.⁹

⁹ Merleau-Ponty's continuation on this question (see note 7) is apropos here.

Psychologists would concede here no more than that ignorance or the confusion of names prevents the child from distinguishing colors. The child must, it was alleged, see green where it is; all he was failing to do was to pay attention and apprehend his own phenomena. . . . The psychologists were not yet able to conceive a world in which colors were indeterminate, or a color which was not a precise quality. The first perception of colors . . . is a change of the structure of consciousness (p. 29-30).

Oliver Sacks offers a reverse confirmation of Merleau-Ponty in *The New York Review of Books*, Nov. 20, 1987. It is an account of a painter who lost the ability to perceive color after an accident, and saw the world in a kind of high contrast 4-tone range of black, gray, and white. The odd, inexplicable aspect of the case is that it appeared to be neurological, though nothing seemed to be wrong with the patient's eyes; the patient

Feuerbach himself would have disagreed with this interpretation. For him, Hauser had been "asleep" for 17 years, and "awakened" only slowly, neither seeing nor hearing due to sensory overload. He attributed Hauser's non-discernment of individual objects, his recoil from a summer landscape to Nature's panoply as a "confused and checkered mass." However, we would have trouble applying such an explanation to Hauser's non-encounter with the stars. The stars, after all, are discrete points of light, especially clear to anyone with night vision, and set against a uniform non-interfering, non-distracting background. Yet, Hauser saw them no better. Furthermore, by positing "sensory overload," Feuerbach is assuming that there is an innate apprehension of the world to become overloaded. Feuerbach could not divorce himself from the notion that consciousness was at all times present though dormant in Hauser. That is, Hauser was already intentional. Hauser's dysfunctional memory stands in the way of such an explanation.

As an alternative, one could hypothesize an elaborate structure of repression to explain the paucity of Hauser's memory, given the alleged direness and oppressiveness of Hauser's former situation. But to posit repression as a psychological defense mechanism is to go in the wrong direction, for it assumes an even more complex innate consciousness and psychological structure than that needed to explain perception. While "repression" might explain the slow "awakening" of his powers of perception, it is contradicted by his enthusiastic recognition of three diverse objects his first day "in the world."

Jerome Bruner gives a synopsis of perception that confirms our present interpretation when he says:

Basically, perceiving involves a three-step cycle. Analytically, we may say that perceiving begins with an expectancy or hypothesis. . . . we not only see but look for, not only hear, but listen to. In short, *perceiving takes place in a tuned organism. . . .* What evokes a hypothesis? Any given hypothesis results from the arousal of central cognitive and motivational processes by

dreamt and imagined only in black and white after his accident, and could no longer remember what color "looked like." While the neurological aspect is deduced, it is clearly a "change in the structure of consciousness" backward.

With respect to Hauser, one could say that something had not yet changed the "structure of his consciousness" to the point where he was able to "attend" to his "own phenomena." It is indeed not the existence of the name that is in question. The question we wish to address here is, a change of the structure of consciousness *from what?* Or is it in fact the birth of a structure of consciousness that is in question?

preceding environmental states of affairs (my emphasis).¹⁰

('Information input' from the environment constitutes the second step, and the third involves checking or confirmation procedures.) On Bruner's account, not only is perception the result of an attention that is already intentional (a search component based on former familiarity or need), but one perceives with a past that recognizes through re-presentation of that past (a self-verification of the perceived object). Information input (what is actually "seen") is thus surrounded by cognitive processes. If perception implies that the object must already have or be a meaning, then it must have received that meaning from prior experience. Perception is an evaluative process for which memory is prerequisite; that is, memory is the essential medium (though not the means) through which the organism is 'tuned' to perceive.¹¹ A separation of perception and memory is not possible. To claim Hauser to be deficient in perception is not only to remove the notions of meaning and cognition from the picture, but to confirm the absence of intentional recall.

A Theory of the Pre-intentional

What are the overall implications of this? All conscious processes require memory; if intentionality consists of an attention to its object even in the absence of that object, then recall of its (intentional) object intentionally lies at the core of it. An absence of intentional recall implies

¹⁰ Bruner, Jerome; *Beyond the Information Given* (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 91.

¹¹ Thomas Kuhn reflects a search for the same kind of account of perception when he says, in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979):

Surveying the rich experimental literature . . . one suspects that something like a paradigm is prerequisite to perception itself. What man sees depends both upon what he looks at and also upon what his previous visual-conceptual experience has taught him to see. In the absence of such *training* (my emphasis) there can only be, in William James' phrase, "a bloomin' buzzin' confusion." (p. 113)

But Kuhn cannot permit himself to accept perception as contingent, though he suggests that is the logic of his argument. This is mainly because he makes an incomplete distinction between sensory experience and perception. For Kuhn, sensory experience is also paradigm dependent. (p. 126)

a state of being, albeit human, devoid of consciousness. If "tuning" the organism constitutes what Merleau-Ponty calls a "change in the structure of consciousness," what it changes *from* we must consider, on this account, a pre-intentional state of being. How are we to apprehend such a pre-intentional state?

Memory, it appears, is the medium whereby the organism is tuned (and we might recall here that Hauser's memory burgeoned and matured more rapidly than his powers of perception). If so, then the means whereby intentional recall is developed would lie at the center of the organism's "tuning," as the central factor in the constitution of intentionality.¹² Hauser's biological being, developed though desocialized, neither burgeoned coevally, nor stood in the way. If we must look for 'external' processes or activities as the means of "tuning," we are led to the fact that he learned language and engaged in dialogue with others, that things were pointed out to him and named. Is it language and dialogue that "tune" the human organism to perceive the world?¹³ Or are we confronted with something more primordial than language, something from which language itself develops? We would have to immediately discount the name itself; how would a pre-intentional being perceive it as a name? What leads us to language seems to obviate the role of language *per se* in the very same movement. Indeed, how would a pre-intentional state of being enable an organism to encounter any means whereby it 'tuned' itself, if it could not perceive them?

Let us return to Binder's report (and Feuerbach's critique of it). Could Binder determine that there had been a "man with whom he had always been" without teaching Hauser the language to state that fact? But what would the word "always" mean to someone with no past, someone for whom time had just begun?¹⁴ Hauser's answer to a question concerning time or "a

¹² The notion of an acquired power of intentional recall is not what Bruner had in mind in positing the notion of a 'tuned' organism; he is speaking in greater generality. We might note that when Merleau-Ponty speaks of the primacy of perception (*The Primacy of Perception*, Northwest Univ. Press, 1964), he is already assuming just such a tuned organism. And even if we accept that both intentional recall and perception develop coevally, the former is already the "medium" of the latter, the source of its temporality.

¹³ This is a different, more basic notion than the Whorf-Sapir hypothesis, for instance. The latter claims that world-view is determined by language, or that the form of language determines the content of thought. That is a different discussion, however. My reading of the Hauser case does not concern what determines thought, but only what is the condition for it.

¹⁴ What makes conceptualization of Hauser's plight bearable is the realization that temporality existed for him no more than perception. When he awoke in Nuremberg, it was without a sense of the duration of his previous 17 years.

man" would represent his arrival at naming only his present sense of them for himself. Hauser's future cognizance would thenceforth be only of the idea of this "man" and "always" as come upon in himself when first named--that is, the recent past of having learned the terms, and not the distant past to which they refer. Otherwise stated, his future cognizance would be of the real moment of alleged recognition, rather than the real antecedent in an alleged past.¹⁵ Thus, each term Binder taught Hauser would name both the referent and its recognition as being one and the same. "The man" would already be faceless abstract Man, a name indistinguishable from his recognition of one bending over him his first day. Whether Hauser had ever 'seen' another face before, he would never have perceived another human face. A face would be lost in the flat spattering of colors and shapes, as were the houses and trees beyond the

Oliver Sacks provides a supplementary example in *Awakenings* (New York: Dutton, 1983): an encephalitic patient (Parkinsonism) in a state "virtually motionless and speechless."

She gave the impression of an infinite remoteness. She seemed to dwell in some unimaginably strange, inaccessible ultimity, in some bottomless deep hole or abyss of being; she seemed crushed into an infinitely dense, inescapable state.

When administered L-DOPA, however, after twenty years of motionlessness, she "jumped to her feet, and before incredulous eyes walked the length of the ward. 'What do you think of that, eh?' she exclaimed in a loud, excited voice." That is, after years of motionlessness, there had been no atrophy. Sacks explains this (using 'explains' loosely) by noting that "her standstills had *no subjective duration whatever*. There was no elapsing of time."

Only through such considerations, fantastic as they seemed to me at first, could I comprehend how Hester was able to resume normal activity after years of inactivity, in contrast to an 'ontologically normal' person who would lose or 'forget' action patterns over a length of time.

¹⁵ In this regard, one of Prof. Rauber's statements is interesting. The terminology he uses concerning the Girl of Songi is: "She believed she preserved a memory of . . ." As an outside observer, Rauber is construing her report of her own awareness, a report given in a language others had taught her, and through whose terminology only was she enabled to articulate or express that awareness. Rauber is not reporting the fact that she is unsure of her memory (its veracity), but that her memory is a story of alien experience which she appropriates as her own belief.

window Feuerbach led him to that summer's day. Other men would simply present themselves to him as one man whose face would have remained indiscernible to him against its owner's bulk. His non-acknowledgement of people and objects, being of a piece, indicate that even the one "abstract man" would be beyond his experience until the day one brought him to Nuremberg.

All Binder had to go on were the deductions which he, Binder, would name. Binder was thus providing conjectural interpretations for Hauser's "evinced familiarities" and alleged recollections. In this manner, Binder's language instruction would necessarily condition the content of Hauser's responses in the direction of Binder's interpretations of Hauser's possible past (possible for Binder). Binder's instruction would transform itself into knowledge for Binder himself as well as for Hauser. Hauser would come upon his recognitions and recollections at the very moment they were created for him by being noticed and named by Binder. For Hauser, there would be no other truth, and nothing quite as absolute, as the story Binder was essentially writing for him. (This isn't the 'power of suggestion,' it is more akin to what we might experience as subliminal influence.) Feuerbach's skepticism, in warning about Binder's generating too much recall in Hauser, i.e. of interpretively reporting Hauser as recalling more than he actually did or was able to, appears to be justified.

If Binder had to have been doing something more than naming, since the absence of perception would leave the name itself unperceived, Hauser must also have been participating beyond providing the "evinced familiarities" on which Binder would meditate; there must have been some reality to his recognitions. Let us turn to the categories Binder was able to create to tell Hauser's story. A more basic question awaits us than the question of language.

It makes sense that Hauser accepted or rejected certain foods according to the familiarity of their taste or texture, an absence of familiarity inducing rejection of the food as an alien substance. Similarly, we may conclude with Binder that Hauser drank from a pitcher in his unknown chamber, as suggested by Hauser's "evinced familiarity" with pitchers. The pitcher at the dinner table would "recall" the pitcher in his cell, and he would drink from it as he had before. But even if we admit that the external object induced recall of past experience with that object ("recognition" manifesting itself as particular comportment), then he must have discerned that object as individuated at some point in the past, and not as part of a 'spattered screen.' If he discerned the pitcher at the dinner table, when he reached for the pitcher rather than the glass of water, because he had previously discerned the pitcher in his cell, the question becomes, how did he earlier discern the pitcher? What individuated it for him against the 'spattered screen' of his cell? What constituted that modicum of perceptive power in the absence of intentional recall?

Let us establish a horizon of discourse in the everyday. Anyone who has watched a squirrel leap through the branches of trees must marvel at its precision of motion and balance, especially since its eyes are laterally placed like a bird's, without stereoscopy. One's natural attitude is to attribute sensitive powers of perception to the squirrel. Because our own intentionality locates us (or rather embeds us) in a sea of objects, we tend to apprehend any other being that employs or applies itself to objects as "intending" them in a similar way. But Hauser's story suggests we must restrain this tendency. We cannot seriously contemplate attributing greater sensory acumen to the squirrel than to Hauser, since Hauser is a more complex mammal--and Hauser reports to us that the world appeared to him as a spattered screen before his eyes. On the other hand, our explanation of a squirrel's precise discernment of branches must also be applicable to Hauser without contradicting his own first-hand account. After all, we cannot simply assume animals are programmed machines--a cat's "curiosity" and a squirrel's "cautiousness" would be difficult to explain. And finally, neither sensing nor perception are explainable starting simply from the 'spattered screen' phenomenon. A notion of sensing must be developed that renders Hauser's initial state intelligible with respect to what we know of animals. (Exempt from this discussion will be the sense of smell, a chemical sense that is more primordial, and thus requiring of a different treatment, than sight, hearing, etc.)

Gregory Bateson has given a synopsis of the necessity of motion for sight and touch, which is not a new idea.¹⁶ Line, shape, texture, etc. are discerned because the organism's motion presents them as distinction. Line, for instance, is detected because the eye vibrates slightly, causing the image of the line--an interface between zones of different colors or shades--to pass over a succession of retinal cells. Similarly, one discerns texture by moving a finger over a surface, by stroking, or by pressing down slightly. Distinction is detected as a difference between two states into which the organism places itself. "The unchanging is imperceptible unless we are willing to move relative to it" (Bateson, 107). If one could actually rest a hand motionlessly on a surface, cloth would be indistinguishable from smooth plastic. And conversely, one is always electrified when one unexpectedly touches something alive--it has its own vibrations.

As I look about this room, I see a plenitude of objects--a table, a telephone, a cushion on the sofa--all of which are quite familiar to me. Nothing commands my attention as being extraordinary. If I move my head, I see these objects move with respect to each other, and change minutely in their own particular aspects. But, unless I pay attention to that motion, it goes totally unnoticed when I inadvertently shift my position. That is, the body's sensory-oriented motions generally go undetected; the vibrations of the eyes are no more discernible to the individual than

¹⁶ Bateson, Gregory: *Mind and Nature* (New York: Bantam, 1980), p. 106-8.

vibrations of the eyes are no more discernible to the individual than duodenal peristalsis. And even if one were able to rest a hand motionlessly, sight would recognize the cloth, and maintain its texture for the hand. That is, for the intentional being, a certain permanence, a temporality is given; these objects do not change at all for me under my shifts of position or sensory mode.

Now, suppose I were as Hauser, and looked at this room. What would it mean that I saw it as a spattering of colors before my eyes? Although my eye vibrations might enable me to discern lines, and the boundaries between color-zones, I would discern no objects. They would have no permanence for me, and their existence would be as atemporal as Hauser's first 17 years. Then, my every shift of position would amount to a revelation; the seeming motion of objects with respect to each other would be what rendered each discernible. That is, my motion would be my ever instantaneous presentation of each object to myself against whatever sat behind it.

Such a strict dependence on motion is evident in the behavior of animals. A cat will raise and lower its head slightly a few times before jumping from the floor to a table, a motion permitting the cat to better estimate the distance and configuration of the table's edge. Similarly, it will wiggle its body back and forth, giving its head a sideways motion, before pouncing on a ball of paper sitting on the floor, a motion which renders the ball discernible to the cat's "spattered screen." But when stalking a squirrel, which is always moving, twitching its tail or turning in one direction or another, the cat does not waste its energy wiggling; it merely creeps closer or leaps without hesitation. Conversely, when the cat is still, only motion seems to catch its eye; that which is unmoving is ignored.

In effect, the ontological foundation for sensation is the autonomy of organismic activity; it is not resident in the objecthood of what is discerned. What is "sensed" is not a stimulus that besets the organism, but a response, instead, by the world to the organism's autonomy. The "object" besets the organism as a stimulus only when the object itself moves autonomously.

Now we are ready to replace the term "sensation." It is unsatisfactory because it pertains to the stimulus-response paradigm. But we have inverted that here. The organism does not respond to the world as stimulus; the organism acts and the world responds. And its actions manifest a total capability and involvement.¹⁷ "Sense reception" would be a better term; it

¹⁷ The term "sense-data" is also unsatisfactory. If a non-perceptual state is possible, objects are not automatically discernible as individuated. The notion of sense-data assumes apriori that objects naturally stand out discernibly as a necessary concomitant to their providing information about themselves. The data contained in sense-data is not dependent upon 'seeing' but upon perceiving, which is an intentional process. Furthermore,

suggests that the organism receives the world's response to its (the organism's) actions besetting the world. It will signify the general horizon within which discernment of an object against a background can take place. Thus, we could say that a cat's meanderings, its zig-zags through the world, its curiosity, constitute the very foundation of pure sense reception, the separation of objects as figures against the world's background that make them discernible to the cat.

In general, this means that the object and the organism stand in no formal or apriori relation. The motion that permits discernment of the object for the organism does so because it makes the object that organism's event. Whether the organism moves, or the object moves, or both, an object becomes an object only in so far as it becomes an event for the organism. In the absence of being an event, the object remains indiscernible, lost on the spattered screen of the visual field. In other words, an object does not exist objectively, an immutable form that presents itself to sight. It partakes only in a background uniformity from which distinctions do not emerge autonomously. The object is discerned as separate from the background only with respect to the way motion presents it as separate. The organism's motion, its manner, is thus as much a determinant of the object sensed as the pure form of the object itself. There is a style to discernment.

In these terms, the visual abilities of the squirrel become explainable. The world in which the squirrel moves is presented to it by the squirrel's motion itself. A branch of a tree is discerned instantaneously as a branch by the very approach of the squirrel to that branch; for the unmoving squirrel, on this account, the branch would sink into the background. What appears awesome to us to whom all distinguishable facets of objects are always present, is the speed with which such discernment and distance judgment must occur to the squirrel in the midst of its leaps and scampers over the tree's branches. Our philosophical discernment will not keep pace with the instantaneous mid-leap discernment of the animal.

Though motion provides a different foundation for sense reception of an object, it does yet not constitute it. As instantaneous, each revelation of particularity to the animal would also be only momentary. The moment bodily motions cease, all would devolve back to background uniformity, again a patchwork of colors. It is precisely the atemporality of this state that precludes calling it awareness, or intentionality; it is pre-intentional precisely because each cessation of motion engenders a 'disappearance' of all objecthood, and each renewal of motion is always the first appearance of all objects. Their impermanence and rebirth is all that constitutes them in the absence of intentional recall.¹⁸ Yet, the question before us is not only

if sense-data is information-laden, it obviates the necessity that the organism be "tuned" to read it, and not simply see it.

¹⁸ We can make this more explicit in phenomenological terms. Intentionality is not simply a relation to the world. All objects are in a

how Hauser discerned objects, however momentarily, but how he also recognized them within that momentary discernment. Between discernment induced by the organism, and recognition induced by the object (recalling itself as that object, or calling forth an "evinced recognition" as a response to its own response to Hauser's discerning motions), a process of individuation must occur, still at a pre-intentional level. The question of individuation is the question of what raises a particular object above a background of now discerned objects that has replaced the 'spattered screen.' What makes Hauser's pitcher an object he can reach for in his cell, and reach for again among the plenitude of objects on the jailkeeper's dinner table? If he doesn't drink from it every time he 'sees' it, what is it that he reaches for when he does?

If the object itself moves, its motion, its own peculiar event-ness, already subducts it from its static background; its autonomous style individuates it. It besets the organism as an individual event. A man moving up to Hauser and bending over him constitutes such an event, something that would present itself as familiar to him later; men standing and talking across the room would not. The pitcher, on the other hand, is given motion by Hauser himself. He moves the water pitcher to his lips, and his own motion renders it an individual event. One teaches a baby to feed itself by putting a spoon in its hand, dipping the spoon in its food, and moving it then to the baby's mouth. Hauser in fact explained that he at first distinguished between a picture of an object and the object (for instance, something triangular and a drawn triangle) by feeling them (323).

On the other hand, he did not drink from the pitcher every time he saw it, or so we may assume. Animals, as pre-intentional organisms, don't tend to gluttony or neurotic eating. If he drank only when thirsty, then his thirst must constitute a component of individuating discernment. Once the baby "knows how" to eat, its hunger recalls the "know how" of that action, and it reaches, first for the food, and later for the spoon. Hauser's individuating motion, the act of raising the pitcher and drinking, is that through which his thirst manifests itself. Though Hauser discern the pitcher each time he moves, he would recognize it only through the individuating necessity to drink. If his individuation of the pitcher includes his thirst as a component, then his thirst, an "external" sense reception, becomes what induces recall of the act of grasping the pitcher and moving it, recall of the act of drinking, the act which individuated it

relation to a world, but it is a relation of indifference. As Brentano pointed out, consciousness is characterized by a special relation, one of attention to, of an importance of the object, a directedness. Or as Merleau-Ponty emphasized, in *The Phenomenology of Perception*, the central question of perception is how consciousness constitutes the object for itself. Atemporality obviates attention, directedness, the constituting of the object—in short, intentionality is not a possibility.

as pure sense reception. (To fully explicate how it does that will require a theory of memory that space does not permit to be developed here.) A squirrel renders recallable its buried cache of food by landmarking it, or "mapping" it, in the terrain, which terrain and location is recognized through the squirrel's individuating hunger. The instrumentality of the act of food burial, which individuates the cache and its terrain, becomes the content of recall induced by the ("external") internal state that besets the squirrel as hunger (analogous, perhaps, to what we humans experience as a "taste in the mouth"). That is, smell, taste, sound, texture, hunger, anger, etc. are all factors that would serve to individuate an object or location. Out of Hauser's hand, or apart from his thirst, the pitcher would lose its individuated quality and become part of the shutter spattered with paint that was his world. In the absence of a thirst, we could no longer say that he saw the pitcher standing near him at all as he sat there on the floor of his cell, any more than he seemed to see the people observing and speaking to him in the stable. Though it momentarily emerge from the surrounding miasma when he moved his head, the pitcher would immediately sink back, unrecognized. The absence of thirst changes the style by which the pitcher is discerned. The same is true, of course, of intentional beings. A glass of water for one who is not thirsty is a different object than for one who is (though conceptual evaluation may render them the same).

In sum, sense reception and primordial recognition can not be considered as either strictly neural processes or innate behavioral patterns. Not only is an activity always involved, but there is at all times an involvement of the entire organism. The organism's motions or somatic states 'become' the objects of the world by being the means of their individuation.

Finally, we would have to conclude that Hauser drew no pictures of the pitcher because, in its motionless "still-life" state, it disappeared eventlessly from his vision, unappropriated by his eyes and unrecognized after years of instantaneous discernment. To be drawn, the unmoving pitcher would have to be more than an event he presented to himself from time to time through his own motions. Later, in the police station, when he thirsted, and discerned a pitcher before him, he reached for it, moved it toward him, and drank in full utilization of both the event that constituted the pitcher, and the activity toward the pitcher that constituted both its individuation and the act of drinking. But even his thirst failed to recall an image of that original pitcher for him to draw. It would recall only the motions that rendered the pitcher his individual event. Similarly, in his cell he pushed a toy horse back and forth on the floor and decorated it with ribbons; but even the word 'horse' did not later lead him to draw its picture.

In Binder's report, everything that Hauser managed to "recall" can be understood in terms of its eventhood for him, and through the recreation of that event in Nuremberg. The pitcher, his name, the toy horse with its ribbons, are all events. He remembered a man, "the man with whom he

had always been;" a man entering his cell is pure event. So is a man helping him out of the cell, and travelling with him to Nuremberg to desert him somewhere on the street. But stairs would be beyond encounter. One would surmise that, given the state of his knees, the presence of stairs would probably necessitate his being carried. If that were the case, whatever stairs he might negotiate in Nuremberg would be similar to no activity of his own from his past, and thus, would induce recall of nothing. And how would he be able to distinguish faces, or to render the face of this man a face with features and expressions? What motions would the face make, beyond its changes of expression, that would more than instantaneously differentiate it from the integral entity of "person"? All humans would be, upon his entry in Nuremberg, one human. Perhaps the face would have to kiss him, or speak. Above all, the face would have to have a name. Only after he began learning names could he distinguish different persons by peering into their faces, and repeating the name given. And at that moment, his memory flourished beyond belief.

Summary

Not hard conclusions, but only affirmations are to be drawn from this heuristic discussion. But it suggests that our attitude toward intentionality should be changed somewhat. First, it is possible for the human organism to live without consciousness or intentionality, and survive; consciousness is neither inherent nor essential for the human organism. Consciousness is also not an innate quality of the mammalian brain or of human brain size (although brain size is probably a necessary condition for consciousness); it is contingent on other factors and activities. Among these activities we must posit speech, and hence a form of dialogue, that both precedes and engenders the semantics of language (that is, speech as activity rather than as linguistic representation). This must be reiterated; at the level of the preintentional we are speaking of speech as possible individuating event, and not as linguistic object to be perceived. Second, we do not find the evolutionary stages of development of human mental capability, consciousness, and intentionality, between the human species and other non-human species (missing or non-missing links). Those stages lie within the human and are self-generating. Third, we must recall that the first two incidents of recognition Hauser evinced in Nuremberg, incidents that themselves outline the profundity of his lack of attention to everything else, both involved names. When he recognized the coin that first day, it was only in terms of that for which he had a name. He did not see the stars until they were named for him. This raises a multitude of questions. While it would be illogical, within the argument given here, that the name was necessary for perception of the object it names, since that only begs how the name is perceived, we are confronted with the question of what is peculiar about the act of naming that it might play such a

revelatory role. In the account given here, can we consider Hauser's thirst to be a primordial form of the act of naming? Is a dialogue about the object, as a particular unfolding of events, even though it restrict itself to the mere name, necessary for perception of the object? Is the name for the object in actuality a name for the dialogue that constitutes an individuation of the object? Is dialogue, even at the primordial level of the act of naming, the milieu through which consciousness is self-generating? Not only does this discussion raise these questions, it suggests they have affirmative answers.¹⁹

But now, how are we to understand the transformation of speech as event to speech as linguistic object. This discussion changes the fundamental questions confronting a theory of language. First, we must discount the notion that language is hereditary based on the fact that feral people raised by animals lose their ability to learn language.²⁰ Second, if intentional recall and perception occur in the human organism only in association with language and social interaction, we have what Derrida calls a chiasmus. How can language partake in the foundation of intentional recall, in order to provide for the cognitive aspects of perception, if those same cognitive aspects are essential for the emergence of language in the first place? This, now, is the problem for the theory of language; if the human organism is innately pre-intentional, and language and dialogue are perhaps the critical ingredients necessary for the generation of intentional recall, how does language emerge from the three identifiable aspects of the pre-intentional state (induced recall, motion, and sense reception), such that it engenders signification at the same time that it engenders both itself and the autonomy/spontaneity that underlies signification?

And these three phases? How are they related? At the pre-intentional level are they still separate, or do they constitute a unity? How are we to grasp that? We can envision Hauser seated in his cell, legs straight out before him, his back leaning against . . . something. When he feels hungry, he reaches over and picks up his loaf of bread from where he

¹⁹ The question of this transformation, of an ontological foundation for language, as well as its pre-cognitive forms, are addressed by me in an unpublished manuscript entitled *The Word and the Echo*, whose central thesis is that the peculiarly human capability of speech is both the necessary and the sufficient condition for the existence of consciousness.

²⁰ See in particular the case of Amala and Kamala (in Singh and Zingg), two girls raised by wolves who, after being captured, resisted both language and walking upright on two legs. In addition, the two girls seem not to have begun to develop even a wolfish language between them. This case suggests that a form of socialization results from being reared by animals that blocks any future human socialization—which poses a big question for the notion of linguistic inherency.

had left it. His hunger recalls for him the eating of bread, biting and chewing. He moves the loaf now in his hand before his eyes to find a place where the crust juts out, where it will be easier to bite. The motion exposes the topography of the bread, the irregularities in the crust left by his former bites. He sees them. These motions are all things he has done before.

Each motion he makes contains the memory of a former motion, of a motion consequent only upon other similar moments of his life. Each recalled former motion, each induced and momentary recognition occurs upon encounter with a previously encountered manifestation of the world: an object, an event, or a process of his own physiology. Each of the world's aspects that he senses comes to him through a motion: its own or his own transformation of its stillness into his event. He recalls because of his sense receptions. He moves because he recalls his former motions, remembering 'how' to make them. He sees or feels the objects of his world because he moves, and thereby presents them to himself, each individuating movement momentarily raising a particular figure in relief against a background. Thus, each aspect of his being only manifests what is given to it by a preceding aspect. Recall manifests itself as motion, activity; motion manifests itself as sense reception; sense reception manifests itself as recall. At the pre-intentional level, sense reception, induced recall, and motion are inseparable. That is, each aspect of this cycle has been stripped of its content; it occurs without the content that we as intentional beings would find within it. Each phase only establishes the next one, the one it calls into existence, as its content. Sense reception leads to recall which leads to motion; motion leads to sense reception which leads to recall. The cycle goes around and around. There is neither awareness nor necessity in this picture, nor is there temporality, without which perception or any other aspect of consciousness is unimaginable. The world that surrounds Hauser encounters only his indifference, as it did his first week in Nuremberg when he toured the city with dull, staring, uncurious eyes.²¹ That is, there is no

²¹ With respect to Hauser's initial expressionlessness, we might add the following. In *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987) Oliver Sacks speaks of a woman who lost her proprioception to polyneuritis. She regained her mobility by using her eyes to monitor her movements. Yet she regained no facial expression. "Her face . . . still tended to remain somewhat flat and expressionless (though her inner emotions were of full and normal intensity), due to lack of proprioceptive facial tone and posture" (p. 50). In effect, facial expression is itself an intentionality.

Another facet of this is added by Curtiss. She states that when first hospitalized, Genie "did not react to temperature, heat or cold" (Curtiss, 1977, p. 9). She further notes, without comment, that the 'wolf girls' (see note 17) and the Wild Boy of Aveyron "also displayed this imperviousness

difference between himself and this "world;" he has no attention to give it, to constitute it with. For Hauser, in his cell, seventeen years go by this way. Hauser was not asleep before Nuremberg; he didn't exist.

Finally, if consciousness is contingent, then language must be also. For neither is there necessity nor inherency.²² The ontological foundation of language must lie elsewhere than in the realm of communication or expression, since both presuppose intentionality with respect to content and to the intention to communicate or express that content. If that foundation is to be sought in the cycle of sense reception, induced recall, and motion, and in the means of transformation of the pre-intentional, i.e. in speech activity and speech interaction, then to articulate or conceptualize the realm of that transformation should be the first step for any theory of language. But if language reflects that transformation itself, then language becomes the ontological foundation for what language itself is about.

to temperature." That is, whether the individuals spend their "feral period" indoors or outdoors, they evince this common characteristic of non-awareness.

²² The question of the innateness of language, of course, is pre-empted by the non-innateness of intentional recall. There is the additional question of the innateness of the capacity for language, which Chomsky raises, among others. In general, the idea has a certain desperation about it, from the need to postulate something. But it is trivial if, by 'capacity,' one means something akin to the capacity to walk upright. On the other hand, if one means more than that, then the wolf children and the Wild Boy of Avero present counter-examples.