

Understanding Conative Phenomenology: Lessons from Ricœur

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1. Introduction: Phenomenal Intentionality and Conative Phenomenology

The core aspiration of the science and philosophy of mind of the past half-century has been the search for a *mechanistic* conception of mind modeled on our mechanistic conception of matter. The aim is to ultimately understand the field of mental phenomena in terms of a web of lawfully causal interconnections among mental states. Many different pictures of the mind are consistent with this general conception, but they all tend to approximate a certain ideal that impresses somewhat as follows. Mental states divide in the first place into two groups: (i) states that are essentially and universally phenomenal though occasionally and accidentally intentional, and (ii) states that are essentially and universally intentional though occasionally and accidentally phenomenal. States of group (i) include prominently perceptual experiences (experiences as of red, as of shrieks, etc.) and bodily sensations (tickles, orgasms). States of group (ii) divide in turn into two sub-groups: (ii₁) cognitive states, characterized by a *theoretical* intentionality, and (ii₂) conative states, characterized by a *practical* intentionality. The theoretical/practical distinction is often cast, within this framework, in terms of the

direction of fit between mind and world: cognitive states have a mind-to-world direction of fit, conative states a world-to-mind one.¹ The former include prominently belief, supposition, doubt, and expectation; the latter include prominently desire, wish, intention, and preference. The basic mental phenomena are thus phenomenal states, cognitive states, and conative states; other mental phenomena can be exhaustively accounted for in terms of causal and/or constitutive relations to these basic ones.

Recent critics of this ideally general picture have found two kinds of deep miscues in it. First, the mechanistic aspiration itself is thought appropriate only for phenomena to which we have exclusively third-person access. With such phenomena, the deepest understanding consists in identifying their specific role within a larger well-behaved system. But when we have first-person access to phenomena, we can grasp their nature not only in this indirect way, but also by direct encounter with them. To theorize about such phenomena purely in third-person mechanistic terms is to miss out on a whole way of acquiring deep understanding of them. Crucially, at least *phenomenal* mental states are certainly such that we enjoy first-person encounter with them, which encounter can certainly afford us *some* insight into their nature.

Secondly, the clean-cut division of mental phenomena into essentially phenomenal ones and essentially intentional ones – meant as both exhaustive and exclusive – is thought to be wrongheaded. On the one hand, perceptual experiences and bodily sensations are not merely occasionally and accidentally intentional; on the contrary, critics have claimed, they are virtually universally and essentially so. Likewise, cognitive and conative states are not merely occasionally and accidentally phenomenal, but on the contrary universally and essentially so.² Indeed, the phenomenality and intentionality of perceptual, bodily, cognitive, and conative states may be two sides of the same coin. This coin, which we may call *phenomenal intentionality* due to its two sides, should be the central currency of a first-person understanding of the mind – just as mechanistic relations are the central currency of its third-person understanding.

What emerges is an alternative program for understanding mental life, in terms of first-person encounter with different varieties of phenomenal intentionality. Within this program, three central tasks stand out immediately: (i) accounting for the inherent, essential intentionality of perceptual experiences and bodily sensations; (ii₁) accounting for the inherent, essential phenomenality of *cognitive* states; (ii₂) accounting for the inherent, essential phenomenality of *conative* states. A quick survey of the literature reveals, however, that while the first two of these tasks have been pursued quite robustly, the third one has received considerably less attention. Thus discussions of *perceptual content* (see Hawley and Macpherson 2011) and *cognitive phenomenology* (see Bayne and Montague 2011) have flourished, but discussions of *conative phenomenology* remain limited in the analytic-philosophical literature.

At the same time, dedicated discussions of conative phenomenology and the associated experiences of the will in (proto-)phenomenologists' writings go back to Brentano's (1874) Chs. 6 and 8 in Book II of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. The main themes are further developed by Brentano (1889) in *The Origins of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, but receive a much more thorough treatment in his student von Ehrenfels' (1897/8) *System of Value Theory*. The golden decade of conative phenomenology, so to speak, arrives only in the French philosophy of the 1940s, with a succession of impressive treatment in Sartre's (1943) *Being and Nothingness*, Merleau-Ponty's (1944) *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Jean Laporte's (1947) *The Consciousness of Freedom*, and Paul Ricœur's (1950) *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* (Vol. 1 of his trilogy *The Philosophy of the Will*).

Ricœur's book in many ways represents a climax in the study of conative phenomenology in the phenomenological tradition. It combines Sartre's ability to capture in words the finest shades of experience, Merleau-Ponty's occasional flash of brilliant insight, and Laporte's methodical and systematic manner of proceeding. But it is also much more thorough an inquiry into the will than all of the above. In what follows, I use Ricœur's analysis to pivot my own discussion of the structure of

conative phenomenology. According to Ricœur, exercise of the will involves three main elements or ‘moments’: deciding, acting, consenting. Although they *sometimes* appear in a temporal order, this is neither essential nor universal. In spontaneous acts, for example, the deciding and the acting are contemporaneous – yet such acts often qualify as *voluntary* (1950: 253).³ The essential relation between deciding, acting, and consenting is thus not temporal, but compositional: they are components, or parts, or aspects, of willing. In what follows, I will argue that Ricœur is right to focus on deciding (rather than wanting or intending, say) as the fundamental act of the will, but that (i) the role he designates in his account for acting is better played by trying and (ii) consenting is not an additional phenomenal element on a par with deciding and trying. The upshot will a picture where the phenomenology of deciding-cum-trying exhausts proprietary conative phenomenology. I start, in §2, with some of Ricœur’s methodological assumptions, before discussing each of the three major components Ricœur analyzes conative phenomenology into: §§3-4 concern deciding, §5 acting and trying, and §6 consenting.

2. Methodological Preliminaries

David Chalmers (1996 Ch.1) has claimed that mental terms lead a double life, in that they can be used to express two systematically different concepts, grounded in two different conceptions of mentality. One conception characterizes mental phenomena third-personally in terms of their causal and functional relations to the environment and to each other; the other characterizes them first-personally in terms of their subjective feel, their phenomenal character. We may put this by saying that the former focuses on the *mechanical* dimension of mental life, the latter on its *experiential* dimension.⁴ Interestingly, much the same attitude is foreshadowed by Ricœur, whose starting point is a distinction between *empirical* psychology and *phenomenological* psychology. Empirical psychology studies the will from a third-

person mechanistic standpoint, phenomenological psychology from a first-person experiential one.

For Ricœur, this starting point has an all-important foundational implication for the study of the will. Consider that our behavior throughout the day is sometimes determined by conscious personal-level processes of deliberation, decision, choice, etc., but just as often by a variety of unconscious processes: reflexes, habits and instincts, needs, sub-personal automatized processes, and so on. Ricœur takes the former are voluntary (involve exercise of the will) and the latter involuntary. Thus behavior-determination is sometimes voluntary and sometimes involuntary. Plausibly, the involuntary processes are psychologically and evolutionarily more basic, the voluntary ones more complex and sophisticated. For empirical psychology, this means that the order of investigation must proceed from the involuntary and sub-personal to the voluntary and conscious.⁵ In truth, however, our very grasping of the involuntary is parasitic of our grasping of the voluntary. Although the *causal* order goes from the bottom up, the *conceptual* order goes from the top down. Consequently, if we want to get to the bottom of our conception of the involuntary, we must start by elucidating our conception of the voluntary. Ricœur (1950: 22) writes:⁶

Not only the involuntary has no proprietary meaning, understanding proceeds from the top down and not from the bottom up... I understand myself first as he who says 'I want.' The involuntary refers itself to wanting as that which gives it motives, powers, foundations, even limits. This reversal of perspective is just one aspect of that Copernican revolution...

Thus although the causal explanation offered by empirical psychology grounds the voluntary and conscious in the involuntary and unconscious, true understanding of this web of phenomena would require a phenomenological psychology that grounds the involuntary and sub-personal in the voluntary and conscious.^{7,8}

Given this reversal of perspectives, understanding the will depends in the first instance on phenomenological analysis of conscious, experiential exercise of the will: conative phenomenology. Following Husserl, Ricœur thinks of

phenomenological analysis as *intentional* analysis, whereby the nature of a type of phenomenology is revealed in its *formal object*: ‘a consciousness is understood by the type of object in which it surpasses itself’ (1950: 23). For each of the three main components of conative phenomenology – decision, action, and consent – Ricœur seeks a proprietary intentional object that would illuminate the phenomenology of the intentional *act*. To this extent, phenomenal intentionality is a cornerstone of Ricœur’s inquiry.

Further following Brentano and Husserl, Ricœur is keen to appreciate both aspects of phenomenal intentionality: its relation to the object as well as its relation to the subject. A conscious presentation is both a presentation-of and a presentation-to: it always presents *something* and presents *to someone*. We may call the presenting of *something* (of an object) the presentation’s *directedness*, and its presentation *to someone* (to a subject) the presentation’s *givenness*.⁹ The point foreshadows McGinn’s (1988) thesis that phenomenal intentionality is distinctive in being Janus-headed, or double-faced, having both an outward-looking face to do with its relation to what it presents and an inward-looking face to do with who it presents it to. In any event, the intentional analysis of conative phenomenology requires, for Ricœur, attention to both its directedness and its givenness.

3. Deciding: I. Directedness

Cleaning after a birthday party, Aristide comes across a nice-looking slab of leftover chocolate cake. He likes chocolate cake and would enjoy eating some unceremoniously and unselfconsciously. But he also plans to lose ten pounds by April, and is acutely aware that he ought to be on the guard against fleeting temptations of this sort. The cake is right there – he has to make a decision. He can *feel* the battle of temptation and self-control in him, but eventually decides to throw out the leftover piece without eating it.¹⁰

The process of deliberation in such an episode has tangible duration to it, but the act of deciding, of making up one's mind, is a matter of a split second. Yet that instantaneous act is the quintessential conative act, and there is certainly something it is like to make that decision – a phenomenal character of deciding. To reveal some of this phenomenal character, we engage in intentional analysis: we get a handle on the feel of deciding is to be illuminated by appreciating the part of the world it shines on.

According to Brentano (1889), the formal object of conative experiences is *the good*. Just as cognitive states aim at the true, so conative states aim at the good. Furthermore, just as cognitive states, as a category, can be *defined* as the *sui generis* states intentionally directed at the true, so conative states can be defined as the *sui generis* states intentionally directed at the good. To say that conative states are not just any states directed at the good, but *sui generis* ones, is to say that their directedness at the good is not reducible to other types of directedness at the good. Thus, a person may *believe* that going to work would be good without quite wanting to. Some philosophers have defined desires (a conative state *par excellence*) as *perceptions of the good* (see, e.g., Stampe 1986), which reduces the goodness-directed intentionality of desires to perceptual intentionality. By contrast, Brentano would claim that desires and other conative states present the good neither perceptually nor belief-wise, but in a *sui generis* way proper to them.

Two caveats are in order. First, the relevant notion of goodness need not be *moral* goodness; it is, rather, a kind of *basic* goodness. Secondly, to say that conative states aim at the good is not to say that they always hit what they aim for. Sometimes we mistake for good what is in fact bad. Still, our conative states are *supposed* to hit the good – they *target* the good. Even with these caveats in place, however, there is a deep problem with Brentano's suggestion. To see why, consider Ricœur's account of the formal object of decision.

According to Ricœur (1950: 66), every decision is directed at a *project*. A central characteristic of projects is their temporal phenomenology: they send to the

future (1950: 73). But other conative experiences also have this character of futurity, including commanding, wishing, desiring, and worrying (1950: 74). What distinguishes deciding is that it presents the project as *in my power*. This ‘feeling of power,’ as Ricœur (1950: 78) calls it, is essential to the phenomenology of deciding.¹¹ One way to think of this is in analogy to internalism about moral judgments or commitments, the idea that such commitments are essentially tied to motivation – unless a mental state involves at least a *pull* to action, it does not qualify as a genuine moral commitment. Regardless of whether such internalism is true of moral commitment, it is manifestly true of decision: unless a mental state involves a pull to action, it is not a genuine decision. This feeling of pull to action is nicely captured by Ricœur (1950: 62, my italics):

What is remarkable is that the decision, cut off from its execution by a delay, by a blank, is nonetheless not indifferent to its execution; when I have decided to make a delicate move, *I feel myself somehow charged*, in the way a battery is charged: I have the power to act, I am capable of it.

This feeling of chargedness, of readiness, is clearly essential to – indeed definitive of – the phenomenology of deciding. This creates an internal connection to action, as what would *discharge* the decision.

This internal connection to action suggests that the formal object of deciding is better thought of not as *the good* but as *the right*. For rightness is primarily an attribute of *actions*, where goodness is in the first instance an attribute of *states of affairs* in the world. Suppose you see a one-legged beggar on the subway and give him a dollar. We may distinguish (i) the act of giving the dollar and (ii) the state of affairs of the beggar owning the dollar. You perform (i) in order to bring about (ii). What we find natural to say is that (i) is the *right* thing to do and that (ii) is a *good* scenario or state of affairs. Now, it has often been claimed by philosophers that one of these can be analyzed in terms of the other. Perhaps an action is right in virtue of leading to a good state of affairs. Perhaps a state of affair is good in virtue of an ideal subject finding it right to bring it about. On the other hand, perhaps the good and the right are mutually independent and irreducible, and perhaps they are inter-

definable. However all this shakes out, the right is by definition primarily an attribute of actions (and clusters of actions, such as projects), while the good is by definition primarily an attribute of states of affairs. With this distinction in the background, another important distinction comes to the foreground regarding Aristide's decision not to eat the cake because he wants to lose weight. The desire to lose weight seems indeed directed at the good, presenting the state of affairs of Aristide being ten pounds lighter as good. But the decision not to eat the cake does something else – it presents the act of avoiding eating the cake as the *right thing to do*. More generally, decisions appear directed at actions, desires at states of affairs, and accordingly, desires aim at the good and decisions at the right.

It is true, of course, that both actions and states of affairs can be used to describe the intentionality of both wanting and deciding. You want the beggar to *have* the extra dollar, but you also want to *give* him the dollar; you decide to give him the dollar, but you also decide that he shall have that dollar. Still, the natural order of explanation in both cases is opposite: you want to give the beggar the dollar *because* you want him to have it (you want the right in virtue of wanting the good), but you decide that he shall have it *by* deciding to give it to him (you decide the good in virtue of deciding the right). At the fundamental, non-derivative level, you want the good state of affairs to obtain and decide to do the right act. Thus the formal object of decision is the right, due to decision's internal connection to action.

This is not to say that a desire/wanting does not involve an essential connection to action. On the contrary, it is essential to the desire to eat that if no other states or considerations outweigh it, it would lead to eating the cake. But this connection is *hypothetical*: the desire would lead to action *if* certain conditions are met. By contrast, a decision's connection to action is *categorical*: a person who makes a decision is thereby committed to acting on it, *period*.¹²

Both, however, involve an essential connection to action. In this they are distinguished from *wishing*. One can wish for an end to world hunger without feeling any inclination to act toward achieving that goal, indeed while feeling a distinct

sense of the futility of any such project. In fact, wishing can be intentionally directed at the past ('I wish I had not done that'), which is of course unalterable, and as Aristotle points out in Book III, Ch.2 of his *Ethics*, one could even wish for (what one knows to be) a nomological impossibility (e.g., immortality). To that extent, wishing is conceptually severed from action, in a way that sets it apart from desire and decision. Indeed, my own temptation is to regard it as essentially a non-conative state. Consider the old debate over whether the 'desire as belief' thesis – the thesis that desiring that p is nothing but believing that it would be good if p obtained (Lewis 1988, Price 1989). The thesis is utterly implausible, precisely because desire, unlike belief, has a world-to-mind direction of fit phenomenologically encoded in its (hypothetical) pull-to-action feel. But a 'wish as belief' thesis may be viable: to wish that p may indeed be nothing but to believe that p would be good (perhaps plus some affective element, such as mild yearning).

Although distinguished from wanting by its lack of any pull-to-action feel, wishing shares with wanting the good as formal object. As noted, though, it seems to me plausible that wanting is related to the good by a world-to-mind direction of fit, whereas wishing by a mind-to-world one. Deciding is distinguished from both by having the right as its formal object, associated with a *categorical* pull-to-action feel.¹³ This scheme treats wanting and deciding as the two fundamental conative experiences. Other conative experiences can be understood in terms of them. For example, intention appears to be just the inertia of decision: one intends to φ when one has decided to φ , the decision can only be discharged at a future time, and one remains committed to one's decision. As long as one remains so committed, one is intending to φ . Thus intending can be understood in terms of deciding. Likewise, valuing can be understood in terms of wanting: to value state of affairs A is to want A to hold and reflectively endorse one's wanting – or something like that. The details are important, of course; my current point is simply that our understanding of many types of conative experience can probably be grounded in our grasp of wanting and deciding.^{14,15}

There is a further question as to whether wanting or deciding might be understood in terms of the other, that is, whether one might be more basic than the other. There are many ways to approach this question – I will only mention one potential ‘entry point.’ Consider again Aristide’s two desires (to eat cake and to lose weight) and one decision (not to eat the cake). The fact that Aristide decided not to eat to cake is connected to the fact that Aristide *prefers* losing weight over tasting chocolate cake. (Preference here is just the ranking of desires: one desire’s intentional object is represented in preference as *better than* the other’s.) A natural view is that Aristide decides not to eat the cake *because* he prefers losing weight over eating cake. But according to Sartre (1943, Part IV, Ch.1), at least as interpreted by Fernández (2009), the order is actually opposite: Aristide prefers losing weight over eating cake precisely *because, or insofar as*, he made the decision he did; had he made the opposite decision, this would have constituted his preferring for enjoying the cake. These views clearly have implications for the question of conceptual primacy between deciding and wanting.

To appreciate these implications, let us introduce some precision. Consider a subject *S*, a range of desires D_1, \dots, D_n , and a decision *C*, such that D_1, \dots, D_n are all of *S*’s desire, *S* makes *C*, and *C* is the decision to act on D_i ; and let us say that D_i is *S*’s ‘preference,’ or (as a variant) that ‘*S* prefers D_i ,’ just when D_i is *S*’s strongest desire. There appears to be an a priori connection between D_i and *C*: *S* makes *C* iff *S* prefers *D*. However, a Euthyphro question arises: does *S* make *C* because *S* prefers *D* or does *S* prefer *D* because *S* makes *C*? There are four interesting answers to this question: (a) ‘the former’; (b) ‘the latter’; (c) ‘neither’; (d) ‘depends.’ According to (a), decisions *reveal* preferences – they are *symptoms* of preferences. According to (b), decisions *constitute* preferences: to prefer a desire (i.e., for a desire to be a preference) just is to decide to act on it. Note that, plausibly, if (a) is true, then deciding can be analyzed in terms of wanting (roughly: a decision is a subject’s commitment to act on her strongest desire); and if (b) is true, then wanting can be analyzed in terms of deciding (roughly: as a state such that if it is the strongest of its kind in a subject, the subject decides to act on it). According to (c), neither decision

nor preference is more basic than the other, whence neither deciding nor wanting can be analyzed in terms of the other. According to (d), in some circumstances one decides as one prefers and in some one prefers as one decides (for example, there might be ‘mundane decisions’ that *reflect* who one is and flow *from* one’s preferences as well as ‘existential decisions’ that *make* one who one is and *constitute* one’s preferences); it appears to follow that neither wanting nor deciding is generally more basic than the other. The issue of which of these four views ought to be adopted is too vast to broach here, but to my mind (b) and (d) are by far the most plausible options. To that extent, I am tempted to hold that either deciding is the most fundamental conative state, or deciding and wanting share that status between them. This position is markedly different from the now-standard approach (insinuated in functionalist ‘belief-desire psychology’) that takes the desire to be the paradigmatic and fundamental conative state.¹⁶

4. Deciding: II. Givenness

There is a phenomenological connection between the feeling of *making a decision* and the feeling of *taking responsibility*. According to Ricœur (1950: 83), the connection is simply this: To take responsibility is to make the second-order judgment that one has made the decision. The phenomenal character of feeling responsible is thus just the cognitive phenomenology of judging that it is oneself who has decided.

It is clear from this that the feel of taking responsibility is *separate* from the feel of making a decision. For it is always possible to undergo an experience (such as the experience of deciding) without making an explicit, reflective, second-order judgment that one is undergoing that experience. What the experience of deciding does is only to *put one in a position* to take responsibility, by disposing one to make a second-order judgment.

But this disposition is not all that is built into the experience of deciding. In addition to the reflective second-order judgment that it is oneself who has made a decision, there is also a *pre-reflective* awareness of oneself as the one who has made the decision. This pre-reflective self-awareness of oneself *qua* decider is also built into the experience of deciding, and moreover as an *occurrent* and not merely *dispositional* element. In general, pre-reflective self-awareness is according to most phenomenologists a universal feature of conscious experiences: they all involve awareness of oneself as the subject of experience. This awareness is typically dim and unimpressive, humming in the background or fringe of consciousness – but it is there nonetheless.¹⁷ This pre-reflective self-awareness accounts for the givenness of experience, the inward-looking face of its intentional character. In the case of deciding, it takes the form of a dim, peripheral self-imputation of the decision (Ricoeur 1950: 85). Interestingly, and plausibly, Ricoeur (Ibid.) claims that this pre-reflective self-imputation built into the experience of deciding is precisely what disposes the subject to make the second-order judgment whereby she takes responsibility. It is the reason *why* undergoing the experience puts one in a position to make the judgment.¹⁸ It is, in other words, the *categorical basis* of the disposition to take responsibility.¹⁹

There is an interesting question as to whether this pre-reflective self-imputation is itself conative or on the contrary cognitive. A crude and narrow version of the question can be put thus: is the pre-reflective self-imputation built into deciding a form of *thinking* that one decides, or a form of *deciding* that one decides? The wider question concerns which direction of fit characterizes the self-imputation built into conative phenomenology.²⁰ In the case of *cognitive* phenomenology, it is clear that the pre-reflective self-awareness is itself cognitive – there is no pressure to hold otherwise. In the case of *conative* phenomenology, however, there is some such pressure. Even though it is still natural to hold that what is dimly built into the experience of deciding is *thinking* that one decides, this creates a strange bifurcation within the agent: since being a decider is different from being a thinker, the agent would appear to be one thing *qua* decider and another *qua*

dimly self-aware. The decider cannot be the *subject* of the self-imputation, then – she is something of an object to it. Yet there is phenomenological pressure to see the subject as at once the decider and the self-imputer of decision. With his view that the project is what is properly decided, Ricœur (1950: 86) writes:

A primordial identification resists the temptation to exile the self to the margins of its acts: the identification of the projecting self and the projected self. Me who wants now (and who projects), I am the same as me who will do (and who is projected). ‘This action is me’ means: there are not two selves, the one who is in the project and the one who projects; I affirm myself precisely as subject in the object of my wanting.

Ricœur (Ibid., italics original) further attempts to cast the conative view of self-imputation in a plausible light:

... the very first implying of myself is not a relationship of awareness, a gaze. I behave actively toward myself, I determine *myself*. The language here too is illuminating: to determine one’s behavior is to determine oneself. The pre-reflective imputation of oneself is active and not speculative.

It is thus not entirely implausible that in imputing a decision to myself, I do in fact decide to be a decider. It is in this sense that I determine *myself*.

This conative view of the relevant self-imputation is not without its difficulties, however.²¹ For one thing, it seems phenomenologically obvious that, whatever else is the case, experiencing making a decision does involve being *aware* of oneself as making the decision.²² Such awareness of the deciding would require a ‘theoretical’ presentation of it (whether cognitive or perceptual). This impression is supported by consideration of what is involved in decision in general. When I decide to hang a painting in the living room, part of what makes me capable to decide *that* (rather than, say, to hang the painting in the bedroom), is that I have a theoretical representation of what it would be for the painting to hang in the living room. So, if there is also a sense in which I decide to be a decider of hanging the painting in the living room, I must have a theoretical representation of what it would be for me to be a decider of *that* decision (rather than another). This means that, at the very least, deciding that I am a decider must be *accompanied* by thinking, or at least

entertaining, that I am a decider – it cannot *exhaust* the pre-reflective self-imputation built into the deciding. The practical representation of the decision must be accompanied by a theoretical representation of the same.

One might suggest a third view, according to which conative phenomenology implicates two distinct pre-reflective ‘self-imputings’: one cognitive (theoretical) and one conative (practical). But the ensuing picture comes across as a little baroque, casting the experience of deciding as involving three distinct components: a directedness, a conative givenness, and a cognitive givenness.²³ This may be a bit much to swallow in a number of respects, including phenomenological and implementational.²⁴

I close this section without a decisive claim. I have considered three views of the givenness of deciding: as cognitive, as conative, and as both. Each has turned out to be problematic. The cognitive view introduces untoward daylight between the agent *qua* decider and the agent *qua* self-imputer. The conative view cannot account for the agent’s being *aware* of her experiencing her deciding. The combined view is overly baroque. Yet I would be surprised if none of these views is correct, and some fourth account of the relevant self-imputation is the right one. Thus the only assertive claim I would like to make at the close of this section is that I opened with: whatever it turns out to be, the pre-reflective self-imputation built into the experience of deciding is the categorical basis of the experience’s disposition to bring about a reflective second-order judgment that effectively constitutes the experience of taking responsibility.

5. Acting and Trying

‘The *willing* terminates with the prevalence of the idea; and whether the act follows or not is a matter quite immaterial, so far as the willing goes’ – so contended William James (1890: 560, italics original). Something about this feels wrong, and according to Ricœur, we can appreciate that ‘something’ already in the phenomenology of

deciding. Although deciding always presents a course of action, there is an unsettled feeling about this presentation – a feeling of ‘something more’ needing to come through. ‘I “recognize” the intention’s emptiness in the act’s plenitude,’ says Ricœur (1950: 259). Deciding feels *impatient*: its pull to act is unnerving, strongly calling me to act it out. Not only the decision disposes me to act, but until the decision is acted upon – until the disposition is manifested – there is an ever so light but distinctly unpleasant feeling of tension in my consciousness. Thus by its very nature, a decision desperately wants to be *realized* – realized in action.²⁵ Phenomenologically, then, the willing is not *done* yet when a decision has been formed; it is done only when the process of realizing the decision is underway.

The immediate problem that arises is that action itself is not an entirely mental phenomenon, certainly not a *conscious experience*. So it is unclear how the sphere of conative phenomenology is supposed to cover it. Ricœur appreciates the force of this problem and attempts to establish that it is a bona fide object of his inquiry by claiming that acting is possessed of *intentionality*. His case for this is somewhat underwhelming, however: he notes that action verbs are transitive in the way ‘representational verbs’ are, expressing ‘a directedness from a subjective pole to an objective pole’ (1950: 261). He concludes that in a ‘very wide sense we may well call practical intentionality the relationship of action to the ends of action’ (1950: 262). However, transitive verbs far outstrip intentional verb. ‘The ball hit the glass,’ ‘the ship hit the fan’ – these too are intentional ascriptions insinuating a direction from a subjective pole to an objective pole. Yet neither ball nor ship enjoys conative phenomenology, and their hitting is not intentional. A stricter test of the alleged intentionality of action is clearly needed.

The best criterion of intentionality we have comes from Chisholm’s (1957) discussion of Brentano: for a transitive verb to graduate to intentional status, it must fail to support certain inferences, notably existential generalization and substitution of co-referential terms. By the light of this criterion, action verbs do not fare well. From ‘Anatole moved his hand’ (or ‘Anatole moved his painting’), one can validly infer ‘there is something that Anatole moved,’ so existential generalization is

supported rather than failed. Further, from ‘Anatole moved his hand’ (or ‘Anatole moved his painting’), in conjunction with ‘Simone’s favorite object is Anatole’s hand’ (or ‘... Anatole’s painting’), one can validly infer ‘Anatole moved Simone’s favorite object’ – so there is no substitution failure either. One would have to conclude that moving, whether proximal or distal (that is, whether of one’s body or of objects in the world), is non-intentional and outside the scope of conative phenomenology.

We are faced with a difficulty, then. On the one hand, action is not an intentional phenomenon and thus cannot be part of conative phenomenology. On the other hand, conative phenomenology clearly includes a component that goes beyond the *making* of a decision and involves the releasing of a process of *realizing* the decision. I propose that the way to respect both these facts about conative phenomenology is through the notion of *trying*. On the one hand, trying to do something involves initiating the process of realizing one’s decision.²⁶ On the other hand, trying is genuinely intentional. Thus, from ‘Anatole tried to move his hand’ it does not follow that ‘there is something that Anatole tried to move’ – in case Anatole has momentarily forgotten that he lost his arm in battle. Likewise, it does not follow that ‘Anatole tried to move Simone’s favorite object’ – in case Anatole is unaware that his hand is Simone’s favorite object.

I conclude that Ricœur is right, contrary to James, that conative phenomenology involves an element referring to realization in action, an element of moving from disposition to manifestation; but that he is wrong that conative phenomenology must therefore involve a phenomenology of action. Rather, it is the phenomenology of trying that is built into conative phenomenology. Ricœur would protest that in our actual experience action manifests itself to us firstly and foremostly, while trying is relatively obscured and requires careful attention.²⁷ This is true, but is explained by the fact that we often connect to our action not through our conative phenomenology, but through *perceptual* phenomenology, which after all is generally the clearest and most vivid phenomenology and predominates our conscious awareness. It remains that the sphere of conative phenomenology

includes as component the phenomenology of trying, not any alleged phenomenology of action.

The phenomenology of trying is a major subject better left for another occasion. I will only comment on two natural starting points for such an inquiry. The first is the question of the *formal object* of trying. Recalling the distinction between good states of affairs and right acts, it seems that trying is directed primarily at the latter: in the first instance, one tries to move a painting, not for the painting to change location. It is true that the result of one's action is a change in the painting's location, but that change is not what is tried – it is what is wanted. What is tried is the moving of the painting – an act.²⁸ In retrospect, it stands to reason that trying would be directed at the right, just as deciding is, given that trying is merely the realizing of the deciding. If trying is but the realization of decision, it ought to inherit the latter's intentional object: surely one tries what one decided. Since that which is decided is tried, and that which is decided is the right, that which is tried must be the right as well.²⁹

The second natural starting point for the study of the phenomenology of trying concerns the relationship between trying and effort. Dedicated discussion of the 'feeling of effort' has a substantial history, going back at least to Maine de Biran (1812).³⁰ Even James (1890 Ch.26) saw it necessary to concede that in some cases a phenomenal element is present in the form of the feeling of effort. Plausibly, there is an intimate connection between the phenomenology of trying and the phenomenology of effort: trying *mobilizes* effort. One might hope that understanding the feeling of effort might shed light on the phenomenology of trying. Interestingly, and not implausibly, Ricœur himself argues that the order of explanation would have to be opposite: effort itself is phenomenologically obscure, and we get a handle on it only in relation the goal one is mobilizing the effort in pursuit of – essentially, what one is trying to do.³¹ Still, understanding effort can shed retrospective light on the trying in the context of which it is understood. Thus, Laporte (1947) argues, again plausibly, that the feeling of effort is a phenomenal vector of *force* and *resistance*. It is hard to believe that developing our understanding of the categories

of phenomenal force and phenomenal resistance would not in turn shed light on the phenomenology of trying.

6. 'Consent'

So far two aspects of conative phenomenology have come through: deciding and trying. The former is perhaps the core act of the will, but has a phenomenal 'lack' at its heart, as it calls out for realization but does not contain the initiation of that realization within it; trying offers its phenomenal 'filling,' as an outset of the process of its realization. In these metaphorical terms, we might say that with the combination of deciding and trying one's conative experience is phenomenally 'saturated.' Yet Ricœur maintains that there is one more central component to conative phenomenology – what he calls *consent*. In this section I will argue against Ricœur that consent is *not* an independent component of conative phenomenology on a par with deciding and trying.

What is Ricœur's consent? The matter is not straightforward, but at bottom consent appears to be the will's relation to that aspect of the world that is outside its control. Ricœur puts this by saying that the formal object of consent is necessity, where by this he appears to mean a kind of practical necessity, or *inevitability*. I will present two more specific interpretations of the role of consent in Ricœur's picture of the will, which I call the 'complement' interpretation and the 'alternative' interpretation. I will argue that both lead to problems for the claim that we have here a distinct third component of conative phenomenology.

To appreciate the first ('complement') interpretation, recall Aristide's dilemma: he wants to eat a piece of leftover cake, but also wants to lose weight, and eventually decides to throw away the cake. Observe, now, that the only reason a decision is needed – the only reason there is a dilemma here at all – is that Aristide is aware of the conflict between his two desires: he realizes that, the way the world works, one normally cannot lose weight while eating chocolate cakes. This is an

aspect of the world over which Aristide has no control – it is ‘necessity’ staring back at Aristide – and Aristide must *accept* it, *consent* to it, if a conscious act of deciding is to take place at all. Accordingly, we do not *fully grasp* the deciding if we have no grasp of the consenting. Consenting goes to the meaning of decision. In this interpretation, what Ricœur has in mind is that understanding decision (and the consequent trying) requires as a component understanding consent. Although surely very peripheral, consent is one important element in Aristide’s overall phenomenology as he exercises his will in the face of the cake dilemma. Without this element, there is no exercising of the will. For without consent, there is no call for decision.

The problem with consent, so interpreted, is that there is nothing particularly *conative* about it. To *realize* something, say that the world is set up in a certain way, is to have a cognitive representation of the world. To be sure, it may be that such realization is a necessary accompaniment to the conative experiences of deciding and trying, but that does not make it conative itself. It still involves a theoretical orientation on the world – a mind-to-world direction of fit. This casts consent as one more non-conative element surrounding conative phenomenology. Consider Aristide’s overall phenomenology during the episode. In addition to the deciding and trying, it involves a perceptual (visual and/or olfactory) experience of the cake, a gustatory imagining of the cake’s taste, myriad background beliefs and desires loitering in the fringe of consciousness, and so on. Many of these may be such that appreciating them is necessary for understanding Aristide’s decision. Arguably, one does not fully grasp the decision if one does not grasp that Aristide is perceiving the cake as nearby and smelling good. Regardless, the perceptual experience is not literally part of Aristide’s *conative* phenomenology – and neither is his consent.

This suggests to me that this first interpretation of Ricœur’s notion of consent cannot be right. For Ricœur (1950: 431, my italics) is explicit on the need to construe consent as an experience directed at the world in a *practical* mode:

... [C]onsent is not a *judgment* on necessity, since it does not consider *theoretically* the fact; it does not put it at a viewing distance; it is not a speculative perspective on the inevitable, it is a contemplation without distance, better an *active adoption* of necessity.

There must therefore be another interpretation of consent, one that casts it as a genuinely conative act.

Consider the following thought-experiment. Like Aristide, Adelaide is hit with craving for chocolate cake. Unlike Aristide, she has none about – and it is getting late. She decides to drive to her favorite bakery, but discovers that it is already closed. So she heads to another couple of bakeries, which turn out to be closed as well. With a heavy heart, she reconciles herself to the idea of mass-produced chocolate cake, and heads to the nearest grocery store. To her surprise, the grocery store is closed as well, whereupon she drives to the local supermarket, only to be again disappointed. At this point, she gives up and drives home cakeless and exhausted. The whole ordeal has taken well over an hour, an hour bustling with a succession of feelings: desire, decision, excitement, disappointment, hope, wish, surprise, frustration, dissatisfaction, more disappointment – and finally, a certain *acceptance* that in this instance the world will simply not yield to her will: she will not have her chocolate cake. In accepting the world's resistance to her will, Adelaide *consents* to the world being the way it is – a world of cakeless Adelaides.

When consenting happens, trying ceases. The mind no longer attempts to change the world to fit it. Indeed, where trying is the relation between the will and the world when one pursues what one takes to be achievable, consent is the relation that ensues when one no longer takes what one wants to be achievable: 'consent is even the opposite of effort; it is expressly will without power' (Ricœur 1950: 432). On this interpretation, consenting is not so much a *complement* of deciding and trying (as it is on the first interpretation), but rather a sort of *alternative* to deciding and trying. It is not that an act of the will has three 'moments' in it, deciding, trying, and consenting. It is that there are two radically different kinds of acts of the will: deciding-and-trying, on the one hand, and consenting, on the other. There are overtones here of the Stoic idea that one ought to divide the world into the part one

can control and the part one cannot control and try to change the former to fit one's desires and change one's desires to fit the latter. These Stoic overtones are manifest in the following passage, which starts with an affirmation of the practical intentionality of the 'active adoption' that captures consent (Ricoeur 1950: 431, my italics):

This active adoption of necessity... is in fact not without analogy to decision; like the latter, the former can be expressed by an imperative: let this be; strange imperative certainly, since it ends at the inevitable; at least in wanting the pure fact, I *change it for me* where I cannot *change it in itself*.

This interpretation, taking Adelaide rather than Aristide is the paradigmatic consent, has the exegetical advantage that it casts consent's intentionality as practical rather than theoretical. (At the same time, it has the exegetical disadvantage that it does not integrate consenting with deciding and trying into a single conative phenomenology.³²)

Although in this interpretation consent is certainly conative, there is another problem with it. This is that although consent is indeed a special kind of act of the will, it would nonetheless appear to be a special kind of *decision*. Adelaide *decides* to give up on the sweet dream of a chocolate cake. In accepting that the world will not yield to her desires this time, she decides to *refrain* from certain activities. In essence, she decides *not to try* to find a piece of cake any more. She decides to revise her expectations, and in a bigger scheme of things, decides to find a way to live in a world of cakeless Adelaides. This is a radically different kind of decision – a decision to change one's desires to fit (the uncontrollable part of) the world, instead of the more typical decision to try to change (the controllable part of) the world to fit one's desires. But it is a decision nonetheless. Furthermore, as a decision it entrains its own kinds of trying, albeit importantly different ones. When Aristide decided to throw away the cake, he proceeded to try to change the world to fit his desire for slimness, which entailed trying to get rid of the cake. When Adelaide consents to cakelessness, she proceeds to try to change her desires to fit a cakeless world. In doing so, she is acting on certain second-order desires, such as the desire to have as

few frustrated desires as possible (other things equal). Deciding to act on these second-order desires, and then *trying* to act on them, is what Adelaide's conative phenomenology really comes down to in this instance. Thus consent is not a *sui generis* type of conative phenomenology, over and above the phenomenology of deciding and trying. Rather, it is a *special case* of the phenomenology of deciding and trying – a particularly interesting or instructive special case perhaps, but a special case all the same.

I conclude that, whether we adopt the 'complement' interpretation or the 'alternative' interpretation of Ricœurian consent, the plausible view is that conative phenomenology is *exhausted* by the phenomenology of deciding-cum-trying.³³

7. Conclusion

I conclude with the following proposed paradigm for a theory of conative phenomenology: conative phenomenology is the phenomenology of deciding-cum-trying. A full development of a theory of conative phenomenology that organized itself around this proposed paradigm would face a number of tasks. Three stand out: characterizing the directedness and givenness of deciding and trying; showing that the resulting characterization casts the phenomenology of deciding and trying as *sui generis* and irreducible; showing that (conversely) the phenomenology of other conative experiences – wanting, preferring, valuing, etc. – is reducible to the phenomenology of deciding-cum-trying. I have sketched starts on each of these fronts, but their proper development would require a much more extensive inquiry.

There is one final word of wisdom we should take from Ricœur. As noted, in phenomenological psychology we grasp an experiential phenomenon from the first-person perspective. This means, for Ricœur (1950: 32-3), that when it comes to the will, purely intellectual grasping is bound to be incomplete; one must 'actively participate' in willing in order to fully appreciate its nature (see also Arendt 1978). This reflects an inbuilt limitation of Husserlian phenomenology when applied to the

conative realm. When we attempt to understand cognitive phenomenology, we as theoreticians enter a reflective state directed at the cognitive, but the reflective state is itself cognitive, so we have not yet left the sphere we are attempting to understand. But when we attempt to understand the conative, we also enter a cognitive reflective state, which this time does sever us from the sphere we are attempting to understand. Thus whereas cognitive experience is still lived when we try to theorize about it (even from the first-person perspective), conative experience is no longer lived when we do. Therefore, full grasping of conative phenomenology cannot be obtained only through appreciating the right phenomenological theory – one must also *experience* the conative activity.

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¹ Talk of direction of fit starts with Anscombe 1957, and is nicely developed in Searle 1983.

² This requires some qualification. It is often accepted that cognitive and conative states occur unconsciously and non-phenomenally quite often. However, it is insisted that the very identity and existence conditions of such non-phenomenal cognitive and conative states refer back indirectly to phenomenal tokens of the same types of state. There are several ways this sort of referring-back may play out; see Kriegel 2011 Ch.4 for discussion.

³ All references are to the 2009 reprint mentioned in the bibliography.

⁴ This way of putting things is mine; Chalmers puts it in terms of a distinction between the 'psychological' interpretation of mental terms and their 'phenomenal' interpretation.

⁵ This can be seen already in William James' (1890: 487; italics original) seminal work on the will: '*voluntary movements must be secondary, not primary functions of our organism*. This is the first point to understand in the psychology of Volition. Reflex, instinctive, and emotional movements are all primary performances.' Ricœur (1950: 20-1) describes this attitude expressively: '[The] rule that gives the natural sciences their force leads to constructing man like a house, that is to say first laying the foundations for a psychology of the involuntary and then topping these lower functional floors with an additional floor called the will.'

⁶ All translations from the French are mine, though I have been assisted by Erazim Kohak's excellent 1966 translation.

⁷ In Kriegel 2011 Ch.1, I argue for proceeding in what is a similar way in the theory of intentionality. A more developed justification of this kind of approach can thus be found there.

⁸ A similar move is made by Ricœur with respect to our understanding of the normal, well-functioning of the will and our understanding of pathologies of the will. Although empirical psychology tends to appeal to pathologies to illuminate normal functioning, Ricœur argues that our grasp of the pathological is in truth parasitical on our understanding of the normal, which should therefore be the focus in phenomenological psychology. This is one of those themes that are clearly very important to Ricœur, but which I will ignore here.

⁹ Brentano and Husserl debated whether or not the givenness of a presentation is a *sui generis* aspect of intentionality, but this debate will not concern us here.

¹⁰ Note that whatever Aristide ends up deciding, it is his decision, taken voluntarily, and so is certainly an exercise of his will. It is therefore misleading to describe one possible decision – to eat the cake – as 'weakness of will.' Without reading Greek, I suspect *akrasia* is much better translated as incontinence or imperfect self-mastery.

¹¹ From Ricœur's discussion, it is not entirely clear (to me at least) whether he means this in-my-power-ness to be constitutive of the notion of a project, or to characterize some projects and not others. Accordingly, it is not clear whether it *the project* as such that can be designated the formal object of decision, or just a subset of projects, namely those that are in my power. In the text, I have tried to conduct the discussion in a way that is neutral as between these alternative bookkeeping systems.

¹² A decision can have a hypothetical content (as in my deciding to visit grandma next if my sister does not do so this week), but then this hypothetical content is categorically committed to. Conversely, the content of a decision can be categorical (e.g., to visit grandma next week) but desiring that content commits one to going through with it only hypothetically. Ricœur (1950: 70) too asserts the categorical nature of decision's connection to action, but does not draw a contrast with desire's merely hypothetical connection.

¹³ This scheme drops the project as a prospective formal object – it seems insufficiently abstract somehow. At the same time, it is the discussion of the relevance of action to the project that has led us to assign the right as decision’s formal object.

¹⁴ This include quite trivially *desiring*, which I take to be the same as *wanting*, though in everyday talk ‘desiring’ does connote a more biologically grounded and/or viscerally felt ‘wanting.’ In philosophical discourse, ‘desire’ typically loses this connotation and is used as effectively synonymous with ‘wanting’; the wider usage of ‘desiring’ is probably due to the clarity and non-ambiguity of the noun form.

¹⁵ It has sometimes been claimed that hoping involves a type of *sui generis* motivational force not to be found in any other conative experience (McGeer 2004). If this is right, then there are at least three fundamental conative states: wanting, deciding, hoping. Personally, I am unconvinced by such claims on behalf of hope, and am inclined to think that hope reduces to a certain combination of belief and desire, as per traditional ways of thinking of it (see Martin 2011 for discussion).

¹⁶ As noted, however, this is only one possible entry point to the issue. Another might be through consideration of the interrelations between the formal objects of wanting and deciding – whether the good and the right may be analyzable one in terms of the other. This too is a matter too vast – and too foreign – to broach here, but see Ross 1930 for a classic discussion.

¹⁷ Outside the rank of phenomenologists, this is quite a controversial matter, but we will not take it up here. Here I am going to dogmatically assume that the view is correct. (For defense of it, see Kriegel 2004 and 2009 Appendix.) Inside the phenomenologists’ ranks, the debate is typically over what this pre-reflective self-awareness consists in, not whether it is psychologically real.

¹⁸ Ricœur (1950: 85) writes: ‘It is this implication of oneself that must hold in germinal fashion the possibility of reflection, hold the will ready for the *judgment* of responsibility: it is I who...’

¹⁹ My own view is that all pre-reflective self-awareness is the categorical basis of the corresponding disposition, when it exists, to be reflectively self-aware. For a related discussion, see Kriegel 2009 Ch.2 (with relevant connections drawn in Ch.5).

²⁰ This question parallels one arising for higher-order theories of consciousness, according to which a mental state is conscious just in case it is targeted by a higher-order representation. Although in the standard version of the view, the higher-order representation is explicitly construed as a *thought* (Rosenthal 1990), it has sometimes been suggested that the higher-order representation is a sort of ‘pro-attitude,’ that is, a mental state with a world-to-mind or ‘telic’ direction of fit (see Kobes 1995).

²¹ One apparent difficulty that I think is illusory is that the conative view would lead to an infinite regress of decisions; I will not discuss it here.

²² More accurately, it is *as* phenomenologically obvious that experiencing making a decision makes one aware of oneself as making the decision as it is that experience in general involves the kind of pre-reflective component phenomenologists standardly hold it does.

²³ It also faces the difficulty that, as Michael Smith (1994 Ch.2) has argued, there may be something incoherent about the notion of a mental state that bears both a mind-to-world and a world-to-mind direction of fit toward the same content. Without going into this issue, I only want to point out that it may be solved by casting the ‘cognitive’ givenness as a matter of entertaining rather than believing or thinking, since arguably entertaining is characterized by neither direction-of-fit (see Kriegel forthcoming Ch.3).

²⁴ It should be mentioned, though, that Brentano (1874) effectively held that a conscious experience involves *four* components: its directedness at an object, its givenness in presentation, its givenness in judgment, and its givenness in mood (pleasure or displeasure). This may not have bothered Brentano, who probably thought that this remarkable complexity is justified by the need to simply *describe* the manifest facts. Still, I trust many readers will join me in thinking that at this level of complexity the relevant facts are no longer manifest, indeed become somewhat obscure.

²⁵ For Ricœur, this relationship of ‘filling’ or ‘realization’ between decision and action finds expression in their respective temporal phenomenologies as well. We have already noted that deciding is phenomenally oriented toward the future. In the very same sense, acting is phenomenally oriented toward the present. Ricœur (1950: 259) writes: ‘The temporal index of action is the present that renews itself incessantly. Whereas the future timing, signified by the project or prediction, can discontinuous and reversible... action by definition participate in advance of existence.’

²⁶ Recall that according to Ricœur a decision need not *precede* acting – in spontaneous act they are simultaneous.

²⁷ This comes through in Ricœur’s discussion of the feeling of effort, which I take to be closely connected to the phenomenology of trying, as will be seen momentarily. He writes (1950: 389): ‘The feeling of effort is not a simple awareness encountered in [mere] description; it proceeds, through reflection, from a more fundamental awareness: the awareness of action.’

²⁸ What is wanted, we have seen in § 3, is the painting’s change of location – a state of affairs. I should stress, in any case, that these claims should more properly be made about what is tried and what is wanted *basically* and *primarily*. As we saw in §3, there are derivative ways of talking about what is tried and wanted that mix things up.

²⁹ It is worth noting, perhaps, that Ricœur himself seems to hold the opposite view about the intentionality he attributes to action. According to him, action is directed at worldly states of affairs (what he calls ‘pragma’), not bodily motions. He writes (1950: 264): ‘what is “acted” ... is the very transformation of my environment, it is the *factum* reciprocal to the *facere*...’

³⁰ Indeed, following de Biran, it has been something of a recurring theme that the feeling of effort constitutes an introspective proof of the existence of libertarian free will (see, e.g., Laporte 1947 and Campbell 1957).

³¹ Ricœur (1950: 389-90) writes: ‘The feeling of effort is not the simplest awareness that description encounters; it proceeds, through reflection, from a simpler awareness the awareness of action.... Torn away from the context of its work in the world, the production of movement tends to become unintelligible in its very simplicity and familiarity. At the same time, in reflecting on the obstacle, the effort is accentuated before consciousness...’

³² This is only a disadvantage insofar as the text suggests that Ricœur means the three to integrate in this fashion. One certainly get that impression in the 60-page introduction. But in practice, the whole third part of *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* (the part devoted to consent) comes across as a somewhat artificial superposition on the first two parts. Ricœur seems to have a whole new agenda in this part, to do with a defense of a vaguely Stoic conception of freedom, that nowise flows from the rest of the book. Arguably, it is only in the context of the latter agenda that the material on consent makes sense: ‘... consenting is not so much noticing necessity as adopting it; it is to say yes to what is already determined; it is to convert within oneself the hostility of nature, [to convert] necessity into freedom’ (Ricœur 1950: 433). If so, perhaps there is no exegetical disadvantage here after all.

³³ This conclusion creates a puzzle. If Ricœur is right that conative phenomenology comes in two varieties, then the account of practical intentionality in terms of world-to-mind direction of fit would

appear unworkable. For it is not involved in cases of consent. The solution to this puzzle lies in keeping in mind that consensual decisions are fueled by certain second-order desires that *are* supposed by their nature to change that which they are directed at (namely, first-order desires). The lesson is that the labels 'world-to-mind' and 'mind-to-world' are misleading; better labels would be 'subject-to-object' and 'object-to-subject.'