

Descartes in the Matrix: Addressing the Question “What Is Real?” from Non-Positivist Ground

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*With the 1999 film *The Matrix* as its point of departure, this work explores the meaning of ‘reality’ outside the scope of empirical positivism. Drawing on the phenomenological epistemology of the interplay of noetic and noematic dimensions of experience postulated by Husserl, and on the works of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, this work considers how the reality of our experience derives not from some correspondence to a universal ‘objective’ point of view, but from our concerned involvement with our lived world as the horizon of our lived and known projects. Finally, in light of Ricoeur’s work on imagination and productive reference, this work considers whether and on what grounds the distinction between so called ‘real’ and ‘virtual’ experiences is meaningful.*

“What is real? How do you define, ‘real’? If you’re talking about what you can feel, what you can smell, what you can taste and see, then real is simply electrical signals interpreted by your brain.”

—Morpheus, in *The Matrix*, 1999

“The reactions of an organism are understandable and predictable only if we conceive of them, not as muscular contractions that unfold in the body, but as acts which are addressed to a certain milieu, present or virtual.”

—Merleau-Ponty, 1942/1963, p. 51

Point of Departure: What Is Real?

At a critical juncture in the 1999 film, *The Matrix*, the character Neo discovers that his life is not what it seems. Instead he discovers that his entire world is an electronic simulation, a virtual world created by intelligent machines to occupy his mind while those same machines mine his body for the energy it creates. Upon this discovery, Neo asks Morpheus, the man who has revealed this to him, whether none of what he recalls as his life was real. “What do you mean by ‘real’?” is Morpheus’ response and the question that this work seeks to explore. Morpheus describes his belief that what we call reality, as far as human experience is concerned, is composed of electrical and synaptic activity in the central nervous system.

This response mirrors the approach of much of contemporary empirical and especially physiological psychology. If this illustrates the stance of psychology before the ontological structure of reality, then does empirical

psychology not find itself in the same solipsistic conundrum as Descartes upon his separation of the subject and its world into the categories of *res extensa* and *res cogitans*? Can reality, conceived of as neuro-electrical activity within a body, ever come to account for our experience of ourselves as fleshy, embodied entities in the midst of a fleshy, spatial world? How does such an account of the real fall short of faithfully describing human experience? How must 'reality' be re-conceived in order to faithfully account for a human existence that is meaningfully lived as in the midst of the things? How does the notion of 'openness,' understood in the context of a phenomenological epistemology, provide a pathway toward a non-positivist understanding of what is real and toward properly human criteria for this appraisal?

Subject and Object: Reality and 'Objectivity'

Much of the impact of *The Matrix* hinges on Neo's awakening to the knowledge that the world he has unreflectively accepted as real is an elaborate illusion. In his unreflective stance before the ontological status of his world, Neo exemplifies Husserl's (1950/1964) notion of the natural attitude. This natural attitude is described as the belief in transcendent things. A transcendent thing is a thing 'in itself' (see Sartre 1943/1956), independent of any perceiver's perspective on it.

This attitude emerges from and is fostered by the belief in a radical dualism of mind and body as instituted by Descartes. In his desire to establish that the soul was "patently distinct from any concept of a body," Descartes (1641/1979, p. 8) cleaved the human world into the realms of the physical and the mental, of *res extensa* and *res cogitans*. At the end of his fourth meditation Descartes asserts that as long as subjective will is curbed and one attends only to what is given to the intellect by the senses, "it can never happen that I err, because every clear and distinct perception is surely something." (1641/1979, p. 40) Thus in Descartes' epistemology, truth is available to us for insofar as we overcome our tendency to 'subjectively distort' perception and instead attend dispassionately to the information given to our intellect via the senses. We understand the Cartesian world by passively recording it, by allowing it to impress itself upon our sensory apparatus.

All this of course echoes the empirical positivist epistemology of much of contemporary science. Indeed, Husserl's naming of this stance the 'natural attitude' is a reference to its status as a largely tacit epistemological assumption at the foundation of the natural sciences. Hornstein (1988)

has argued eloquently that this assumption of transcendence in psychology has manifested itself in the continued ignoring of the so-called ‘quantity objection’ by the mainstream positivist models in psychology. This objection questions whether it is indeed possible to construct valid objective measures of essentially subjective phenomena. Hornstein argues that psychology began to legitimize itself in the pantheon of the natural sciences by developing supposedly objective measures. As the development of such measures began to assure psychology of its place in the social fabric and the academy (as well as accumulate enormous profits for the copyright holders of such instruments) it became increasingly important not to examine this objection carefully. This attitude is perhaps best exemplified in the famous assertion by the historian of psychology, Boring, that “Intelligence is what [intelligence tests] test.” (Cited in Hornstein, 1988, p. 11) By defining its subject matter in terms of its instruments psychology had succeeded in reifying its classic constructs. No longer a style or mental ability, intelligence became in this sweeping assertion a physical property of the individual analogous to weight (see Hornstein, 1988). In its efforts to conform to the model of the natural sciences, psychology adopted the attitude of the natural sciences with regard to its subject matter. In order to accomplish this, the subjective aspects of human experience had to be banished from consideration in the effort to achieve the hallmark of scientific knowledge—objectivity (see Giorgi, 1985; von Eckartsberg, 1986).

In practice this drive for objectivity results in the treatment of psychology’s human subject like an object among other objects. The language of objectivity requires a dispassionate observer like that described by Descartes who attends only to that understood as ‘given’ to the senses. Psychology’s attempts to embody this view are as well represented by the abandonment of consideration of mental processes by behaviorists (see Skinner, 1971) as by the foundational emphasis placed on neurological structures and processes by most general psychology texts (see Gleitman, Fridlund, and Reisberg, 2003; Myers, 1997; Sdorow, 2001). The appeal of such an orientation lies in its ability to speak generically about the body and its behavior as objects and to ground ‘subjective’ phenomena in the ‘objective’ phenomena of physiology and behavior as opposed to ‘subjective’ realm of experience. However, just as in medicine, this attempt to objectify the body, to make it literally ‘anybody’ has the end result of making it relevant in a vital way to ‘no-body.’ Nobody exactly corresponds to the generic body of the anatomy text just as no one experiences a lowered serotonin level so much as they *live* being

depressed within the vital living context of their lives. (See Romanyshyn, 1989.) This brings us to the insight that what Husserl calls the natural attitude is not ‘natural’ in the sense of being a neutral way of apprehending the real. Indeed it describes a highly structured and codified way of ‘revealing’ (Heidegger, 1927/1962).

This is significant in that it highlights that the highly prized, dispassionate, third person perspective valued by the natural sciences is itself a construction. Following Heidegger, truth rests not in some correspondence between one’s perception of a thing and that thing’s status as an object in itself. Indeed an object is never meaningful except in the context of the projected understanding of the one for whom it *is* and whatever substantiality we attribute to objects derives from our concerned involvement with them, and not the other way around (see Heidegger, 1927/1962.) One of the fundamental insights of phenomenological epistemology is that there is no possibility of a dispassionate, third person perspective upon the real. Even though I can explicitly or implicitly adopt such a stance, it always remains a stance *for me*—we never escape our perspectivity. This intertwining of the ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ aspects of a phenomenon, understood phenomenologically as an appearance before consciousness, points to the radical inseparability of a subject and their world—of the real and the subject who *realizes [v.]* it.

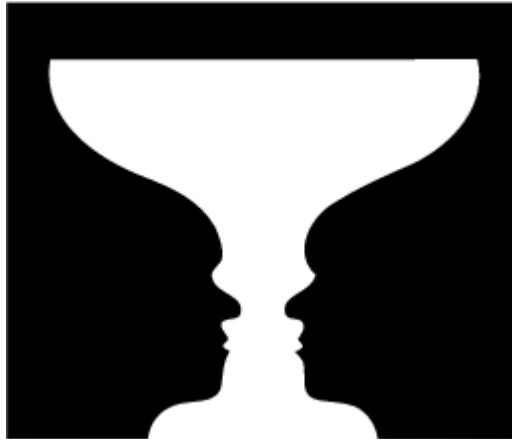
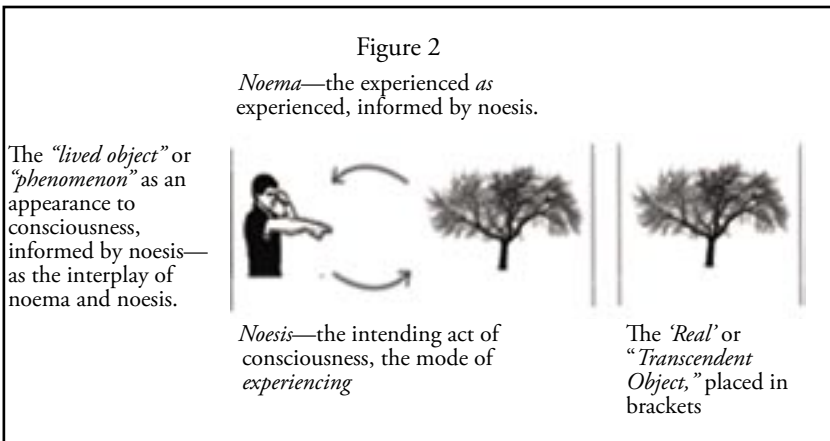


Figure 1: The Rubin Illusion

The figure ground relationship and multi-stable images (see Ihde, 1986) demonstrate that the perceiver participates in, even co-authors the perceived. In the classic Rubin illusion (see figure 1), whether one sees a vase or two faces in profile is entirely a matter of the viewer's directed attention. The figure neither simply *is* a vase or two faces which I passively see (the empiricist model), nor is what I see as much a projection of innate structures of my mind as it is rooted in the features of the actual figure (an idealist position). This sheds light on Husserl's (1950/1964) description of phenomena as co-constituted across noetic and noematic aspects. The noetic aspect of phenomena entails the 'directional aspect' of consciousness, that consciousness is always consciousness of something. Noesis is the intending act of consciousness wherein "every experiencing has its reference or direction towards what is experienced." (Ihde, 1986, p. 43) The appearance, "what is experienced as experienced," (Ihde, 1986, p. 43) is termed noema or the noematic aspect of the phenomenon. These aspects of all phenomena are ontological structures of human experience and their mutual interpenetration in human experience *is* the phenomenon, as it is meaningfully lived (see figure 2).



Both of these 'foci' or poles in the phenomenal field mutually in-form (literally 'give form to') and transform one another. This dynamic interplay is called co-constitution (see Husserl, 1950/1964), or revealing (see Heidegger 1927/1962 or 1954/1977). This co-constitution describes an erotic bond between a person and their lived world in which each is comprehensible only in terms of the other. Within this living dialectic, both poles sustain and transform each other. Heidegger describes this inseparable unity as *Dasein*

or being-in-the-world (1927/1962). Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) describes this unity as a 'body-subject' that is an active perceptual, meaning-making presence in and to the world of one's projective engagement. Thus, phenomena emerge as lived meanings, co-constituted by and co-constitutive of "a network of significant intentions which are sometimes clear to themselves and sometimes, on the contrary, lived rather than known." (Merleau-Ponty, 1942/1963, p. 173)

The empirical positivist drive for objectivity, far from being a privileged path to the truth, ruptures the unitary symbiosis of perceiver and perceived and renders its objects in terms of a duality that is never ontologically the case in the life-world. The life world is "the locus of interaction between ourselves and our perceptual environments and the world of experienced horizons within which we meaningfully dwell together, *prior to any explicit theoretical conceptions.*" (vonEckartsberg, 1986, p. 2, emphasis added.) The empirical model presents us with a world to which we are related only spatially and causally but which is essentially independent of our involvement with it. In the empirical model the real is known by ignoring the personal and 'subjective' perspective each of us brings to things and attending only to those aspects of the world that can be reduced to terms that will be similar for all observers. "The traditional procedure wants to control for meaning by measuring certain characteristic attributes of [phenomena] as though they existed 'in themselves.'" (Giorgi, 1985, p. 73) This is in opposition to a phenomenological epistemology in which the things a natural scientific approach attempts to 'control' are the very experiential parameters by which events and things are lived as meaningfully real. (Giorgi, 1985)

If we now return to the image of Neo's awakening in *The Matrix*, we may perhaps reconsider what is so disconcerting about his discovery. What is so unsettling about the film is not that it raises questions about what is true and what is false in terms of objective criteria. Rather it is unsettling in pointing out how it would possible for us to collaborate in our own imprisonment if we utilize merely objective criteria for this assessment. Without the knowledge he acquires upon his awakening, Neo could continue to live the matrix as his reality, but now that he knows what he knows he cannot in good faith (in Sartre's [1943/1956] sense) return to the life he had previously lived as real. The matrix as a convincing simulation relies on the artificial separation of subject and object, of perceiver and perceived, described by the natural attitude. Indeed, Neo's 'actual' circumstance as a source of energy for the machines embodies the radical separation of the

subjective and objective called for by the natural attitude. In this vision the human subject is detached from its freedom and choosing and 'set upon' as a 'standing reserve' (see Heidegger 1954/1977) of thermal and electrical energy. Thus the violence that has been committed against Neo is not that he has been deceived about his objective status. Rather, it is that his ability to participate freely and responsibly in the process of meaning making (a 'thrown' freedom to be sure [Heidegger 1927/1962])—his ability to live human life—has been usurped.

Phenomenology: Reality as 'Response-ability'

Within an empiricist epistemology, passive receptivity is the means to reaching the objective truth about things. In this model truth resides in the correspondence between one's appraisal of things and the 'objective' status of that thing apart from any particular perspective. Recall Descartes' assertion that as long as the will is curbed and one attends only to what is given to the intellect by the senses, "it can never happen that I err, because every clear and distinct perception is surely something." (1641/1979, p. 40) Still, at the end of his first meditation Descartes cannot find a way to distinguish between real and dreamed or imagined experience save by recourse to a benevolent God who would not create the philosopher only to perpetually deceive him. In this way Descartes attempts to answer the question of the reality of the world and the existence of God, but manages to do both in a most unsatisfactory way. It has been argued that the context of Descartes' inquiry, particularly his failing health and the increasing realization on his part of his own mortality, shaped the outcome of his inquiry even as he started it (See Leder, 1990). For such a man it was imperative to believe that his soul would outlast his frail and failing body. In framing his inquiry within the project to demonstrate that the soul that was "patently distinct from any concept of a body," (Descartes 1641/1979, p. 8) he reduced the degree to which and terms in which he could carry out this inquiry.

The Cartesian separation of the mind from the body is by extension the removal of the living subject from the context of its world. The central insight of phenomenology has been that the perceiver participates in the co-constitution of the perceived as meaning, and that we can never not participate in this process. The question of any objective reality outside of human experience is outside the scope of a consideration of the character and structure of human experience as it is lived. Putting the question of the

objective status of things aside is termed the *epoché* or bracketing by Husserl (1950/1964). This bracketing leaves *experience* of phenomena, appearances to an intending, directed consciousness, as the region of a properly human inquiry into the structure of the real (again, see figure 2).

Husserl's description of the dynamic intertwining of the noetic and noematic dimensions of experience as co-constitutive of phenomena as meaningfully lived, situates the 'reality' of a phenomenon in the dynamic unfolding of this relationship between the 'object' and the 'subject' for whom it emerges as such. As such the question of the phenomenon's object status is rendered moot in terms of the quality of the experience for any given subject. Ihde's (1986) example of being startled by a coat and hat that one momentarily takes for an intruder is illustrative of this purpose. As I am frightened, the 'objective' status of that which frightens me in this instance is clearly irrelevant. A purely empiricist model cannot account for my fright save to label it a misapprehension. But as my heart jumps and my breath comes in a gasp is my body not describing a meaning making stance before this 'object reality?' In that moment I have no access to this 'object reality,' but only to my immediate apprehension of these sensations as already meaningful. Heidegger elaborates this point (1927/1962) in describing how the 'worldhood of the world' does not reside in a spatial arrangement of things (entities merely *present at hand*). Instead it resides in the horizons of involvement outlined by those things that take up the role of *equipment* in the living of our projects. This suggests that the 'objective' version of things is an abstraction from phenomena as we live them and not the other way around as an empirical epistemology suggests.

Merleau-Ponty extends this insight to the human body and directly challenges the empirical model of a molecular analysis of the body as object. "The reactions of an organism are understandable and predictable only if we conceive of them, not as muscular contractions that unfold in the body, but as acts which are addressed to a certain milieu, present or virtual." (Merleau-Ponty, 1942/1963, p.151) In ignoring the 'subjective,' the empirical model institutes a division between subject and object, person and world. "The contrast between what is called mental life and what are called bodily phenomena is evident [only] when one has in view the body considered part by part and moment by moment." (Merleau-Ponty, 1942/1963, p. 181) The empiricist view of body, subject and world is based on precisely this 'part by part' and 'moment by moment' analysis. What is lacking in this view is an appreciation of how human beings, in Sartre's famous formula-

tion, 'are not what we are.' (Sartre, 1943/1956) This view cannot envision that our bodily existence, like all human existence, is lived forward, toward the virtual and emerging. It cannot comprehend how, "The body is never a simple presence, but that which is away from itself, a being of difference and absence," (Leder, 1990, p. 103) and thus cannot understand its human subject in appropriately human terms.

Having cleaved the body from its vital living context, empiricist epistemology resorts to that body now construed as an object to account for its own actions at a molecular level. This brings to mind Morpheus' response to Neo's inquiry whether the life he had known was real. At the level of a merely molecular answer there is no difference between a 'genuine' and a 'simulated' experience.¹ Recall how in his first meditation it is precisely the difference between real and dreamed or imagined experience that Descartes cannot answer save by recourse to a benevolent God who would not create Descartes only to perpetually deceive him (Descartes, 1641/1979). If this answer was unsatisfactory, it is due in large part to Descartes' positivist criteria for reality. Repairing the Cartesian rift between mind and body through a phenomenological epistemology, especially regarding the place of the body in relation to the world, can perhaps offer us other criteria for examining the real.

Counter to the Cartesian model of the body as an object among other objects, all of which stand apart from and against subjectivity, Merleau-Ponty describes the body as intimately involved in the disclosure of the world. For him it is "the third term, tacitly understood, in the figure background structure, and every figure stands out against the double horizon of external and bodily space." (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. 101) To finally undercut the dualism inherent in speaking about a body and the world, Merleau-Ponty introduces the term 'flesh.' "Flesh belongs neither to the subject nor world exclusively. It is the primal element out of which both are born in mutual relation." (Leder, 1990, p. 62) Leder further elaborates, "This intertwining [of perceiver and perceived] thus characterizes the body's relationship to its world. As a perceiver I am necessarily made of the same flesh as the things I confront." (Leder, 1990, p. 63)

Taking this as an elaboration of Heidegger's notion of the worldhood of the world as the horizons of my concerned involvements (1927/1962), Merleau-Ponty shows us that the involvement by which I *realize [v.]* my world is a reciprocal bodily involvement, grounded in flesh, in the midst of things. But this 'being in the midst of things' is not merely or even primarily

a spatial description so much as an intentional (in Husserl's sense) one. In this it can be seen that Merleau-Ponty's "notion of the flesh makes possible a radically deeper understanding of the human body as a phenomenon of a field of being: an opening and a clearing." (Levin, 1985, p. 65) In this allusion to Heidegger's description of Dasein as the place where being comes to light (1927/1962), Levin makes clear that Merleau-Ponty's conception of the flesh radically situates Dasein in its 'projecting understanding' as a body. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty's notion of flesh captures the essence of the mystery of human existence: we are subject *and* object and each of these dimensions of existence implies and interpenetrates the other. It is this ongoing dance of interpenetration that is the flesh and thus the ground for our concerned being-in-the-world. It is the ground for our experience of self and world, the element out of which both these aspects of human existence emerge.

In light of the role of our intentional, meaning making presence, as constitutive of worldhood, the ground for assessing the reality of phenomena shifts from correspondence to a 'neutral' perspective to the extent to which we engage our world from the ground of our fleshy, embodied, thrown freedom. In following the character Neo in *The Matrix* it is possible to see that the matrix's unreality for Neo in the first part of the film has to do with its curtailing his participation in it as a meaning maker. Instead he is transformed into caricature of the passive observer outlined by an empiricist worldview. When Neo is 'freed' his freedom entails the restoration of his capacity as agent and co-author of the meanings of his life. Recall that Morpheus presents him with a choice. He can terminate his inquiry or go on—but there can be no turning back should he choose to continue. In learning what the matrix is, Neo forever changes his life. He cannot go back to not knowing.² To do so would be to succumb to bad faith and to deny his responsibility to and for that which he knows—that which he *realizes [v.]* as his world. Indeed, now it falls into relief how the 'falseness' of the matrix lies not its being a deception regarding Neo's objective status but in its denial of his character as an embodied, fleshy, human agent, *realizing [v.]* his world in and through his fleshy involvement with it.

Subject to the matrix, set upon and transformed into a standing reserve of energy (see Heidegger, 1954/1977), Neo is not free to disclose the world except as it is given to him. He cannot come to incorporate (literally to bring within his body) a world that has no flesh and thus is not of the same 'stuff' as him. Heidegger (1967/1977) argues that the essence of truth lies in freedom and that freedom is "eksistent, disclosive letting things be."

Heidegger describes this conception of truth, tied to the dynamic interplay of subject and object, as ‘revealing’ (see Heidegger, 1927/1962, 1967/1977, and 1954/1977). But an essential element of this revealing is the maintenance of an ‘opening’ in and through which their being taken up in relatedness by Dasein reveals things. The image of the clearing or opening is the essential to understanding Heidegger’s vision of the truth. “[W]hat stands opposed must traverse an open field of opposedness and nevertheless must maintain its stand as a thing and show itself as something with standing.” (1967/1977, p. 123)

The image of Neo awakening in his cell is illustrative of how the matrix falls short of these criteria. First, as we have already said, the matrix as a stream of electronic impulses has no standing as a thing. This makes sense in light of a second feature of this scene: the lines and cables that connect Neo to the machinery and thus the matrix close off Neo’s bodily openness to the world made of the same flesh as him. For Heidegger truth lies in the realm of relatedness to the world across an open field. In the matrix the machines close Neo off from the world of flesh and literally and metaphorically feed him a world that has none. In this way the falsity of the matrix lies in its disruption of the ontological structure of human existence as a bond between an embodied subject and its world on the ground of their fleshy similarity.

Openness, the Virtual, and Reality

Thus far we have put aside positivist and objectivist criteria for assessing the reality of phenomena. Instead we have examined a phenomenological model based on co-constitution (Husserl, 1950/1964) and elaborated as relational stance before the world *realized [v.]* in and through one’s concerned involvement with it (Heidegger, 1927/1962, 1967/1977), and on the ground of its being of the same flesh as the subject (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). Freed from the positivist criteria that remain when the dualism of mind and body is taken as an *a priori* fact, the question of the structure of human reality can be reconfigured in the terms of the phenomenological epistemology of revealing. The embodied human subject, in its meaning making presence before the flesh of the world, elaborates the given into that which is lived as real. To the extent that this is done in consonance with the ontologically human characteristics of thrown freedom, projecting and understanding (Heidegger, 1927/1962) and in terms of the fleshy sameness of the subject

and the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1968), then the world thus *realized [v.]* is real. Again this does not necessarily point to an objective realization and can include 'only' a virtual one.

This points to an essentially existential quality of the real within phenomenological ontology. The distinction between real and not real is neither static nor permanent. Like all in human existence it emerges temporally. It is in process. It is becoming. Perhaps this is clearest in the phenomenon of human imagination. Distinct from fantasy which is concerned with the 'impossible and the autistic,' imagination points to the 'possible and the artistic.' (Knowles, 1986) Ricoeur echoes this distinction in arguing that imagination is misunderstood when it is characterized as merely reproductive or at best recombinative of what has already been given to consciousness. Instead, Ricoeur argues that imagination refers to reality in a productive way, co-creating and extending the real (1979). Similarly to the body (see Garza, 1996, 1998) imagination describes a fulcrum between the 'subjective' and 'objective' realms. Through imagination the 'mental' reaches into and ultimately transforms the 'objective' world.

Consider the leap of imagination entailed when President Kennedy proposed the bold initiative to send a man to the moon and return him safely within a few years time. In this bold imagining, what was previously the stuff of fantasy became increasingly possible as the object world was transformed to meet this challenge. Test pilots and other aviators became astronauts, physicists became 'rocket scientists' and soon what had been purely in the realm of the 'mental' was transformed and literally *real-ized [v.]* in the world of extended things. It is this power to take up and transform the given into a world that most characterizes our humanity. Empiricist epistemology 'enframes' (Heidegger 1954/1977) the world and delimits its disclosure to the terms deemed real within its view. In this view a thing is reduced to being defined by its most anonymous properties. In this reductionist vision, an empiricist epistemology reifies the given into the real and turns a blind eye to the transformative poetic power that is human existence. It describes a world like the matrix, anonymous and indifferent to the freedom of its inhabitants. It describes a world that lacks precisely the attributes of human dwelling and involvement that are essential to differentiating the human world from mere collection of things in space for Heidegger (1927/1962).

This difference is evident in the transformation in lived meaning that the matrix undergoes for the character Neo. At the end of the film Neo still

inhabits the matrix but he is no longer subject to it or held captive by it. Now Neo inhabits the matrix as incorporated within his equipment, ready to hand for the pursuit of his newly chosen project. Through his thrown freedom, the matrix no longer stands over and against him as an object to which he is subject. Instead he inhabits it freely (again, a thrown freedom), he dwells within it as an embodied choosing subject. He has made it a dimension of his world through the vital projects he pursues.

Ricoeur (1983) points to irrelevance of the distinction between fiction and truth, if the latter is taken to mean accordance with the objective status of things. Insofar as all human experience is narrative in structure and participates in the process of human story-ing, there is no such thing as a 'true' narrative in the objective sense described above. All narrative is fictional in the sense that it is the laying down of experience, not the mere re-presentation of it. Human beings are bringers of meaning, co-makers of the worlds we inhabit. A human science orientation to psychology (see Giorgi, 1970, 1985) recognizes that the subject matter of psychology is this active openness in and by which we *realize* [*v.*] the real. We recognize that the virtual is the real, the horizon of our project-ing existence, the horizon where subjectivity and objectivity interpenetrate each other and give birth to the life-world. This *realizing* [*v.*] is the 'how' of human experience and it is to this that we are called to be open and faithful in phenomenological psychology.

Notes

¹ Some recent research suggests that 'mental rehearsal' or the use of imagery in preparation for performance activates much the same neural activity involved in the physical performance of the task. See for example Roure, Collet, Deschaumes-Molinario, Delhomme, Dittmar, and Vernet-Maury, E. (1999).

² In many ways the Joe Pantagiano character, 'Cypher' speaks to the appeal of inauthenticity (Heidegger 1927/1962) understood as fleeing from and ignoring our finitude in favor of a general forgetfulness before our 'ownmost possibilities for being'. Through the deal he strikes with the 'agents' to be returned to forgetfulness of life within the matrix, Cypher speaks to how Dasein, proximally and for the most part is 'fallen' (Heidegger 1927/1962).

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