

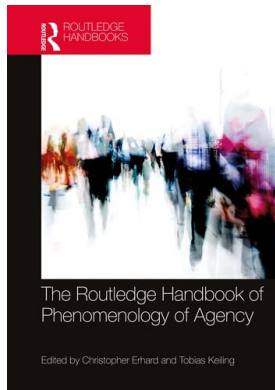
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THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF FREE AGENCY

Galen Strawson

The experience of freedom

You set off for a shop on the evening of a national holiday. You intend to buy a cake with your last ten-pound note in order to supplement the good supply of food you already have. When you get to the shop it's about to close, along with all the other shops. As it happens, there's one cake left; it costs ten pounds. On the steps of the shop someone is holding out an Oxfam tin, collecting money for Famine Relief. You stop. It is absolutely clear to you—it seems absolutely clear to you—that it's entirely up to you what you do next. It is (it seems) perfectly clear to you that you are truly, radically free to choose what to do, in such a way that you'll be wholly responsible for whatever you do choose. What could be more plain? You can put the money in the Oxfam tin, or go in and buy the cake, or just walk away. You're not only completely free to choose. You're not free not to choose.

Standing there, you may believe determinism is true.¹ You may believe that in five minutes' time you'll be able to look back on the situation you are now in and say, of what you will by then have done, 'It was determined that I should do that'. But even if you do wholeheartedly believe this—right now—it doesn't seem to be able to touch your current sense of the absoluteness of your freedom and moral responsibility; not in any way at all.

Such situations of choice and action, large and small, morally significant and morally neutral occur constantly in human life. Shall I have white wine or red? Shall I go to Vietnam or Canada? Shall I go to The Elephant Room or The Continental Club? The experience of freedom of choice and action lies at the very heart of the human experience of agency.

There are interesting exceptions, both good (a sense of inevitability in artistic creation) and bad (experience of compulsion in cases where one is doing something one believes to be wrong and believes that one could possibly not do). But the normal case is clear: in the normal case—and I'm going to stick to the human case—experience of freedom of action is—from a young age—essentially constitutive of the overall experience of agency. This is not to say that it is vivid in every case.

This experience of freedom exists in many degrees, from one-year-old Louis's experience of being in control of his limbs, to eight-year-old Louisa's sense of freedom of choice between two different flavors of ice cream, to thirty-year-old Lucy's experience of being free in a way that makes her wholly morally responsible for what she does. I'm going to put

little Louis aside and focus principally on experience of freedom in agency—in deliberation, choice, decision, *passage à l'acte*—that involves experience of responsibility, moral or not. The subject is vast, and I can examine only one part of it. But it is I think a central part.

People mean different things by 'the experience of freedom'. Spinoza thinks that freedom is consciousness of necessity, and presumably thinks the same about experience of freedom (Krishnamurti holds a similar view). Some have in mind an experience of liberation—liberation of mind, or perhaps liberation from jail—that has nothing necessarily to do with the experience of agency in performing a particular action. These things are not my present subject.

Cognitive phenomenology vs. sense-feeling phenomenology

The experience or *phenomenology*² of free agency is more than a matter of sense-feeling experience. This is apparent even when one takes the term 'sense-feeling' in the widest possible way to cover not only all exteroceptive sensory experience and all interoceptive (kinaesthetic, proprioceptive, somatosensory) feelings, but also all moods and emotional feelings—all elements of all moods and feelings—that can be taken to be non-cognitive.

One way to express this point is to say that the experience of freedom essentially involves *cognitive* phenomenology in addition to *sense-feeling* phenomenology. I introduced the term 'cognitive phenomenology', at the beginning of *Freedom and Belief* (1986a), precisely in order to be able to characterize the phenomenology of agency. Some such term seemed necessary because I was working in the analytic-philosophy tradition, in which it was standardly assumed that all phenomenology is wholly a matter of sense-feeling phenomena. Taking the term 'cognitive phenomenology' to cover all aspects of phenomenology—including of course *conative* phenomenology—that go beyond mere sense-feeling phenomenology,³ I said that the book was centrally concerned

with what one might call the *cognitive phenomenology* of freedom . . . with our beliefs, feelings, attitudes, practices, and ways of conceiving or thinking about the world, so far as these involve the notion of freedom. It is concerned with the *experience* we have of being free agents, and of being truly responsible for what we do in such a way that we can be truly, ultimately, *sans phrase* deserving of (moral) praise and blame. It considers the causes, the character, and the consequences of this experience.

(1986a: v)⁴

Many analytic philosophers still reject the idea that there is any such thing as cognitive phenomenology, even when they allow that there is such a thing as phenomenology at all (some, madly, do not). But one has to allow that the phenomenology of free agency essentially involves cognitive (*sc* non-sense-feeling) phenomenology in addition to sense-feeling phenomenology as soon as one allows that there is such a thing as the phenomenology of free agency at all. It's enough to consider the most basic characterization of the experience of free agency. It's the *experience*, no less, the lived, felt conviction, no less, *that it is up to one what one does*. Even this simplest expression of the experience of freedom has an irreducibly propositional, hence conceptual, hence cognitive, content. It's marked here by the word 'that', but doesn't depend on it; the experience is equally well described by saying that it's experience of its being entirely up to one what one does. It's an interesting question to what extent non-human animal agents—dogs and dolphins, say—may experience something like this.⁵

In the normal case, the human experience of freedom in the living moment of agency or choice flows out of a settled, standing sense of being a free agent, a steady background feeling of being, generically, a free agent. And this persisting experiential set is active not only in the positive experience of its being entirely up to one what one does in a particular case, but also in the negative experience of *lack* of freedom in action, experience of constraint, constriction, of its *not* being up to one what to do, in a particular case. In fact the generic sense of oneself as a free agent can be uniquely vivid in such negative cases. One is sharply aware of one's usual or generic free agency precisely in experiencing oneself as not free in a particular case.⁶ The experience is also vivid when one struggles not to do something one wants to do.

The basic or core experience of up-to-me-ness is already and essentially a matter of cognitive (= non-sense-feeling) phenomenology, although sense-feeling phenomenology is of course also involved, and it carries in the normal adult human case something richer: the conviction that one is fully responsible, and indeed fully morally responsible (if it is a moral matter), for what one does. Plainly this can't be supposed to be merely a matter of sensory phenomenology.

'Yes. It's *obvious* that the adult human phenomenology of agency involves cognitive (=non-sense-feeling) phenomenology as well as sense-feeling phenomenology'.

I agree. It's extraordinary that so many analytic philosophers have supposed that all phenomenology properly so-called is (and can only be) sensory phenomenology. But facts are what they are, and one does for this reason need to insist, however briefly, on the reality and importance of cognitive phenomenology understood in the current extremely broad sense—even if one ignores the considerable number of analytic philosophers who, directly or indirectly, deny the existence of phenomenology altogether. There is “no banality so banal that no philosopher will deny it” (Antony 2007: 144). This is part of the reason why “philosophy is often a matter of finding a suitable context in which to say the obvious” (Murdoch 1964: 33).

The usefulness of the distinction between cognitive phenomenology and sense-feeling phenomenology isn't put in question by the fact that there may be border disputes. Certainly cognitive phenomenology is not only a matter of linguistic understanding-experience—the experience of understanding what people say when they speak. And this is not just because it's equally essential to the experience of private conscious thought, as well as the human experience of agency. The point is far wider. All *perceptual* experience (as opposed to mere *sensory* experience) also essentially involves cognitive phenomenology, because it essentially involves the deployment of concepts. Suppose you look up and see tables and chairs, a window, a tree. You naturally, automatically, immediately, and involuntarily see them *as* tables and chairs, a window, a tree. This is not a merely sensory—sense-feeling—occurrence.⁷

'Up-to-me-ness', radical freedom, and ultimate responsibility

One of the most interesting questions, when one considers the experience of *radical freedom*, of being *radically free* in one's actions—I'll call this *RF* for short—and the associated experience of *ultimate responsibility*, of being *ultimately responsible* for one's actions—I'll call this *UR* for short—is whether it is possible for fully self-conscious conceptually sophisticated intentional agents like ourselves to entirely lack any sense of themselves as RF and UR while still genuinely experiencing themselves as agents.⁸ If you think as I do that freedom of action of a sort that suffices to ground UR is provably impossible,⁹ you may think that it must be at least be *possible* for such creatures not to believe that they possess it, because it must at least be possible for such sophisticated agents to believe the truth. In fact, though, this is not obvious, as the story with which I began aims to show.

We may begin by considering pathological cases—extreme depersonalization, for example, as it occurs in severe clinical depression. In these cases, however, it may be said that people cease to experience themselves as genuine agents at all, even as they continue to be aware of themselves as opening doors and brushing their teeth. In *Freedom and Belief* I introduce a large cast of different possible agents, in order to test the idea that one could have a genuine sense of ‘up-to-me-ness’ without necessarily having a sense of RF or UR. There is ‘Theoria’ (Chapter 12), also known as the ‘Spectator Subject’, who is profoundly and curiously affectively detached from her own actions (she is related to Meursault, the hero of Camus’s novel *L’Etranger*). There are the ‘Natural Epictetans’ (Chapter 13), whose experience of choice and action is always utterly effortless, in such a way that they never have any sort of experience of difficult choice or indecision. There is the ‘being of limited conception’, also known as ‘Stolidus’ (§14.8.1). Stolidus can genuinely grasp itself as facing choices, but seems nonetheless to lack any sense of itself as RF or UR, and is perhaps kin to Fido the dog (who faces a vivid choice in Chapter 8), or one of Fido’s even more intelligent future descendants. Then there’s the ‘Genuine Incompatibilist Determinist’, also known as ‘Moira’ (§14.8.3), a supremely sophisticated intentional agent who is fully self-consciously self-aware, who is not affectively detached from her life and actions in the way the Spectator Subject is, and who is utterly convinced of the metaphysical impossibility of RF or UR. Can she, and her sisters Pepromene, Eimarmene, and Chreousa (*Freedom and Belief*, Appendix G) genuinely manage not to experience themselves as RF, when facing choices like the one described in §1—or indeed far more agonizing and consequential choices? (If Moira agrees to submit to ten years of torture—torture of a kind that she knows she will bitterly regret submitting to as soon as it starts (it leaves no time for moral self-congratulation)—she will save ten other people from the same fate.) Well, that is the question.

Kant’s views about the phenomenology of agency are of great interest in this connection. He holds that self-conscious agentive creatures like ourselves (‘rational beings’) can’t help thinking of themselves as RF and UR, and that the reason this is so is that they experience themselves as subject to the moral law. Experience of moral obligation is fundamental to—essentially constitutive of—experience of RF and UR, on Kant’s view. “The moral law”, he says, “is the only condition under which freedom can be known” (Kant 1788: 4 n).

Kant not only claims that consciousness of the moral law is necessary for knowledge of RF and UR. He also claims that it’s sufficient: for “if there were no freedom, the moral law would never have been encountered in us” (ibid.). Experience—awareness—of moral obligation is in his terms the *ratio cognoscendi* of freedom, the means by which we know we have RF.

The concept of the freedom of the will¹⁰ does not precede the consciousness of the moral law in us but is deduced [i.e. derived by us] from [our experience of] the determinability of our will (*Willkür*) by this law as an unconditional command.

(Kant 1793: 45 n.; cf. 1788: 30; 1785: 95/447; 1781–1787: Bxxxii–iii)

Is this true? Kant is plainly right that experience of moral obligation is deeply bound up with experience of freedom in the normal human case. I don’t, however, think that experience of radical freedom necessarily involves experience of moral obligation.

Consider Zibidi, a solitary, highly intelligent, thoroughly rational, fully self-conscious, purposive intentional agent from Aldebaran. It seems that Zibidi can have experiences of such a kind that it can form the idea of its own RF, and perhaps can’t help forming this idea, without having any distinctively moral sense at all. Zibidi regularly has vivid experience of

being able to do only one of two overwhelmingly desirable but incompatible things, and of deliberating furiously about which to do—experience of precisely the kind that seems likely to give rise to the characteristic absolute sense of being able to choose and act freely—although it has not acquired any trace of any specifically moral habit of thought. If one considers the matter generally for a moment, and independently of Kant, I think it becomes clear that a grasp of moral notions isn't strictly necessary for having the idea of oneself as RF—even if it's sufficient. It remains true that the human phenomenology of agency is deeply moralized, deeply penetrated by moral beliefs, emotions, attitudes, and practices—not only in the case that principally concerns me here, the case of one's experience of one's own agency, but also and equally in the case of one's experience of other people's agency.

Compatibilist and incompatibilist elements in the experience of freedom I

Theories of the metaphysics of free agency divide naturally into *compatibilist* and *incompatibilist*. Compatibilists think that genuine free agency is wholly compatible with determinism. Incompatibilists deny this; they think that the truth of determinism renders genuine free agency impossible (whether or not the falsity of determinism can help). And some incompatibilists are *libertarians*; they think that determinism is false, and that we are genuine free agents, and indeed that we have RF and UR.

This theoretical division is worth mentioning because it has a counterpart in the phenomenology of freedom of action. There are important elements in the thoughts and feelings that constitute the phenomenology of agency that may be said to be compatibilist in character and implication *in the following sense*: they don't necessarily involve any phenomenologically live sense of RF or UR of a sort that is (by common consent) incompatible with the truth of determinism. I'll say that they are *compatibilist**. So too there are elements in the phenomenology of agency that may be said to be incompatibilist and more specifically indeed libertarian in character in the following sense: they do involve some phenomenologically live sense of RF or UR. I'll say that they are *libertarian**.

Philosophers and psychologists have conducted a number of experiments designed to establish whether people in different cultures are more naturally compatibilist in their conception of freedom or more naturally incompatibilist or libertarian. They've had mixed results, and this, no doubt, is because different experimental set-ups, different questionnaires, and so on elicit different aspects of our experience of freedom, some of which are, precisely, compatibilist*, and some of which are incompatibilist* or libertarian*.

I'll consider some of these shortly. First, though, I think it's worth conducting a small thought experiment. It consists in applying the belief in determinism constantly and unremittingly to the present course of one's life. One does one's best, for a minute or two, to think rapidly of every small action one performs or movement one makes as determined—as not ultimately determined by oneself (perhaps as ultimately determined by things that happened long ago). Every time one finds the thought slipping away one refreshes it and reruns it.

This (I propose) is likely to have the effect of erasing any sense of the presence of a freely deciding and acting 'I' in one's thoughts. For—so it appears—there is simply no role for such an 'I' or self to play. It may be strangely, faintly depressing, or it may give rise to a curious, floating feeling, a feeling not so much of impotence as of radical uninvolvedness in the passing show of one's own psychophysical being. I take this to indicate a respect in which one's natural pre-theoretical sense of agency has a strongly incompatibilist* and indeed

libertarian* cast, even though it also has strong compatibilist* elements. One naturally and unreflectively conceives of oneself as possessing RF (and indeed UR) of a kind that is simply incompatible with the truth of determinism. One's everyday 'I', with its standard everyday sense of its RF, fades or disappears in the thought experiment because such an 'I' is simply not possible on the terms of the thought experiment. And this sense of 'I' is central to the human phenomenology of agency: the sense of self and the experience of agency are inextricably entangled.¹¹

Compatibilist and incompatibilist elements in the experience of freedom 2

In the last section I proposed that there are respects in which our natural sense of self and of freedom is profoundly libertarian*, i.e. deeply imbricated with a sense of RF and UR. I also proposed that there are respects in which it is entirely compatibilist*: there are aspects of our general sense of ourselves as free agents that don't seem to be put in question in any way by the fact that RF and UR are impossible if determinism is true. But what is perhaps most striking is the way in which natural compatibilist* components of our sense of free agency seem in practice to underlie or underwrite the incompatibilist* and libertarian* components (the belief in RF or UR) even though compatibilism is incompatible with belief in RF. A fully naturalistic explanation of our deep sense of RF must connect it tightly with our primordial sense, massively and incessantly confirmed since infancy, of our ability to do what we want to do in order to (try to) get what we want, by performing a vast variety of actions, great and small, walking where we want, making ourselves understood, picking up this and putting down that. We pass our days in more or less continual and almost entirely successful self-directing intentional activity, and we know it. Most of these actions are routine or trivial, more or less thoughtlessly performed, but this doesn't diminish the importance of the experience of their performance as a source of the sense of RF—radical self-determinability—that we ordinarily have. Even if we don't always achieve our aims, when we act, we almost always perform a movement of the kind we intended to perform, and in that vital sense (vital for the sense of RF, of radically self-determining self-control) we are almost entirely successful in our action.

This experience is central to our natural compatibilism*. It gives rise to a sense of freedom to act, of complete self-control, of responsibility in self-directedness, that is compatibilistically unexceptionable and completely untouched by arguments against RF based on the impossibility of UR. And yet it is—I suggest—precisely this compatibilistically unexceptionable sense of freedom and efficacy that is one of the fundamental bases of the growth in us of the compatibilistically *impermissible* or libertarian* sense of RF. To observe a child of two fully in control of its limbs, doing exactly what it wants to do with them, and to this extent fully free to act in the wholly compatibilist sense of the phrase, and to realize that it is precisely such unremitting experience of self-control that is the deepest foundation of our naturally *incompatibilistic** or libertarian* sense of RF, ultimate-responsibility-entailing self-determination, is to understand one of the most important facts about the genesis and power of our ordinary libertarian* sense of freedom (and of self).

One reason why we advance from the compatibilist* to the incompatibilist* or libertarian* sense of freedom is perhaps negative. Ignorant of the causes of our desires, we don't normally experience our character, desires, or pro-attitudes as determined in us in any way at all, let alone in any objectionable way; as Spinoza remarked. We don't think back behind ourselves as we now find ourselves. And even if a desire is experienced in its importunity

as somehow foreign, alien, imposing itself from outside the self, as it were, this probably only serves, by providing a contrast, to strengthen our *general* sense that our desires and pro-attitudes are *not* determined in us. For if a desire or pro-attitude is experienced as imposing itself, then there must be some other pro-attitude in the light of which the first is experienced as imposing itself, and the second one will presumably not also be experienced as an imposition. It will presumably be a pro-attitude one ‘identifies’ with and apprehends as part of oneself, and acquiesces in.

A very great deal is locked up in this acquiescence. For although it’s highly unlikely to involve any explicit sense that one has been in any way *actively self-determining* as to character, it does nevertheless seem to involve an implicit sense that one is, generally, somehow in control of and answerable for how one is; even, perhaps, for those aspects of one’s character that one doesn’t particularly like. As for those pro-attitudes and aspects of one’s character that are welcome to one, it’s as if the following ghostly subjunctive conditional lurks in one’s attitude to them: *if per impossibile* I were to be (had been) able to choose my character, then these are the features I would choose (would have chosen). This, I suggest, contributes importantly to the sense of responsibility for themselves (and hence for their agency) that most people have, more or less obscurely, more or less constantly.

It’s hardly surprising that the ghostly subjunctive conditional confirms the central acceptable *status quo*. For the ‘I’ that features in the conditional is in fact constituted, considered as something with pro-attitudes that imagines choosing its pro-attitudes, by the very pro-attitudes that it imagines choosing.

I think that this implicit sense of being somehow self-determined in respect of one’s agentive being (it’s strictly implicit—it’s really just a Spinozan shadow, a lack of any sense of *not* being self-determined) is one of the deep reasons why we have (or don’t fail to have) a libertarian* sense of RF. But I don’t think it’s the principal reason. The principal reason was given in the first section; it concerns the nature of our experience of choice in particular cases. It’s simply that we are, in the most ordinary situations of choice, unable not to think that we will be truly or absolutely responsible for our choice, whatever we choose. And here our natural thought may be expressed as follows: even if my character is indeed just something given (a product of heredity and environment, or whatever), I’m still now able to choose (and hence act) completely freely and truly responsibly, given how I now am and what I now know; and this is so *whatever else is the case*—determinism or no determinism. This is what we find, I think, when we consider the case of the choice between the cake and the donation to Famine Relief.

The case is relatively dramatic, as remarked in the first section; but choices of this general type are common. They occur frequently in our everyday lives, and seem to prove conclusively that RF is both possible and real. The argument that RF is impossible seems powerless when faced with this conviction, which is reinforced by the point just considered, according to which something in itself negative—the absence of any general sense that our desires, pro-attitudes, character, and so on are *not* ultimately self-determined—is implicitly taken as equivalent to some sort of positive self-determination. We certainly don’t ordinarily suppose that we’ve gone through some sort of active process of self-determination at some particular past time. Nevertheless, it seems accurate to say that we do unreflectively experience ourselves rather as we would experience ourselves if we did believe that we had engaged in some such activity of self-determination. This, I propose, is one of the foundation stones of the general human phenomenology of free agency.

There are many complexities here, but the main features of the development of our libertarian* sense of RF and UR out of our unremitting and compatibilistically speaking

unexceptionable sense of complete self-control may be summarized as follows. (1) We tend to think that we have a will (a power of decision) distinct from all our particular motives. (2) In all ordinary situations of choice, we think that we're absolutely free to choose whatever else is the case (even if determinism is true, for example), and are so just because of the fact of our full appreciation of our situation. (3) In some vague and unexamined fashion, we tend to think of ourselves as in some manner responsible for, answerable for, how we are (see further Strawson 1986a: ch. 6).

All these aspects of the sense of RF or UR directly concern only one's experience of oneself and one's own agency. It's one's commitment to belief in *one's own* radical efficacy, control, self-determination, and total responsibility (in normally unconstrained circumstances), rather than one's commitment to holding others responsible and treating them as proper objects of reactive attitudes, that is primarily unrenounceable. For what on earth is one to think that one is, or is doing, if one thinks one is not and cannot really be responsible at all for what one does?

Here I disagree with those who follow P. F. Strawson in thinking that our overall experience of RF and UR is grounded primarily in our experience of other people, and in particular in our experience of other people as being proper objects of the 'reactive attitudes', rather than, more simply, in our experience of our own agency. On Strawson senior's view there's a powerful and essential element of intersubjectivity in the constitution of our overall experience of agency; and it is surely true that our experience of others as agents plays a large part in our overall phenomenology of agency. I think nevertheless, and once again, that the deepest source of one's sense of RF and UR lies in one's experience of oneself and one's own agency, one's core sense of oneself as a self-determining planner and performer of action, someone who can create things, make a sacrifice, do a misdeed. Obviously one's sense of oneself as agent and one's sense of others as agents coevolve. Even so I think that one's experience of one's own agency is primary.

This, again, is not to deny that one's experience of oneself is deeply determined by one's interaction with others (one's awareness of others' positive and negative attitudes to one's actions is also crucial). It's simply (1) to consider two things that develop in us in the course of our social development—our sense of ourselves as truly responsible and our sense of others as truly responsible, (2) to claim that the nature and causes of these two things can profitably be distinguished, and (3) to claim that the former is more fundamental than the latter, so far as our general commitment to belief in RF is concerned.¹²

The ordinary human phenomenology of agency, free agency, is in any event fundamental to the ordinary human phenomenology of self. It's utterly fundamental to most people's basic sense of self, of what they are, of what it is to be a person. There is also, however, vast and extraordinary variation, both when one considers different people and when one considers the same person at different times. And the notion of ordinariness is to that extent somewhat fragile.

One of the more striking interpersonal variations has to do with the experience of reasoning, thought, and judgment: of what it is to ponder, try to puzzle something out, come up with new ideas. When I turn my mind to some issue, I bring it to presence in conscious thought, usually in silent inner speech, and, for the rest, simply wait for something to happen—pop up, spring to mind in the tumbling conscious process (it is not, for me, phenomenologically, any sort of flow). Something strikes me; it occurs to me that *p*, dawns on me, suddenly hits me. At no time do I have any trace of what Wegner calls the "emotion of authorship" with respect to what actually comes up (Wegner 2002: 325–326). It's as Merleau-Ponty says (he is describing writing a book): "I struggle blindly on until,

miraculously, thoughts and words become organized by themselves” (Merleau-Ponty 1945: 429). It’s not at all a matter of agency, phenomenologically speaking. There is agency in the business of pushing my mind back to the issue when it starts to wander, but none of the actual occurrence— emergence —of content carries any trace of a feeling of agency. Others do claim to have such an experience, and although I can’t imagine what it might be like, I’m happy to accept that it does occur. “The tendency to attribute control to self is a personality trait”, as Wegner also says, and is much stronger in some than others.¹³ I’m in the Rimbaud camp: “It’s false to say ‘I think’: one ought to say ‘it thinks me’ ”; “I am an other . . . This is obvious to me: I am a spectator at the unfolding of my thought; I watch it, I listen to it” (Rimbaud 1871: 251).

Related topics

See Chapters 19 (Horgan and Nida-Rümelin), 13 (on Merleau-Ponty), 21 (Hanna), and 26 (Figal).

Notes

- 1 Determinism is the view that everything that happens in time is necessitated by what has already gone before, in such a way that nothing can happen otherwise than it does.
- 2 I follow current practice and use ‘phenomenology’ as a general name for the lived, felt character of experience. Originally and strictly speaking ‘phenomenology’ denotes the study (the *-ology*) of the character of experience.
- 3 The oppositional contrast is *cognitive* vs. (merely) *sensory*, not *cognitive* vs. *conative*. In Strawson (2011) I introduced the blanket term ‘non-sense-feeling’ (‘NSF’) phenomenology in place of ‘cognitive phenomenology’ in order to clarify the originally intended contrast, and because the expression ‘cognitive phenomenology’ had by that time become particularly associated with specifically linguistic ‘meaning-experience’ or ‘understanding-experience’ to the exclusion of both agential experience and perceptual experience (where perceptual experience is understood in the traditional way to be essentially conceptually informed, essentially more than merely sensory experience).
- 4 See also p. 26: the “cognitive phenomenology” of freedom is the ‘examination . . . of certain more or less definite, more or less dubious aspects of our general, unreflective, implicit, non-philosophical conception or experience of ourselves as free agents in the ordinary strong sense’, and p. 47: ‘anyone seriously concerned with the philosophical problem of freedom must be concerned with the cognitive phenomenology of freedom’.
- 5 For some thoughts see e.g. Strawson (1986a: §8.3, §14.8).
- 6 Even then there is almost always a fundamental respect in which one still experiences oneself as free. See Strawson (1986b).
- 7 The theoretical distinction between sensation and perception doesn’t depend for its viability on the idea (not in itself unreasonable) that there could possibly be mere or pure sensory experience without any admixture of conceptual content. Some *theoretical* distinction of this sort is indispensable, and it’s unfortunate that it has been fudged in recent analytic philosophy (e.g. in the claim that conceptual content can be sensory content).
- 8 In the normal human case experience of RF comports experience of UR, but it seems possible to imagine the former existing without the latter.
- 9 See e.g. Strawson (1994).
- 10 Of *Willkür*, in Kant’s terminology, i.e. freedom of choice of a sort that is compatible with wrongdoing.
- 11 The entanglement is disrupted in a variety of ways in psychopathological cases.
- 12 For more see Strawson (1986a: §§6.3–6.5); see also Dennett (1984) *passim*.
- 13 Wegner (2002: 330). I discuss these issues in more detail in Strawson (2003).

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