

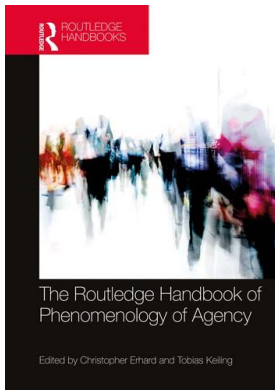
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ALEXANDER PFÄNDER'S
PHENOMENOLOGY OF
MOTIVATION*Genki Uemura***Introduction**

We often activate our volitional capacity for some reasons. For instance, I go to bed *because* it is late at night; you decide to escape from the university campus *because* the weather is too lovely to attend the afternoon seminar. What is, then, the relation that holds between these voluntary activities and reasons?

According to the Munich phenomenologist Alexander Pfänder, this problem calls for phenomenological considerations. In his 1911 paper “Motive und Motivation,” he writes: “The relation of the grounds [i.e., reason] to the decision of the will is not put into it by the interpretation of an outside observer but *is experienced in the actual facts, hence is present in them phenomenally*” (Pfänder 1911: 141 [tr. 27], translation modified, our italics). Since Pfänder calls the relation between the volition and its grounds *motivation*, his contention here is that phenomenology is indispensable for understanding motivation. In fact, his phenomenological analysis of motivation is meant to support the following claims which must have some imports for our theorizing about actions in general.

- 1 Motivation is not causation.
- 2 Motives (i.e., grounds of the will) are mind-transcendent entities.
- 3 A judgment on one’s own ought does not necessarily yield motivation.

The aim of this chapter is to reconstruct and assess Pfänder’s phenomenology of motivation and the three claims he defends through it.¹ In section “Pfänder’s method of phenomenological description,” we outline Pfänder’s method of phenomenology in so far as it concerns with our topic. In section “The structure of Pfänder’s argument in ‘Motive und Motivation,’” we clarify the structure of his argument in “Motive und Motivation.” With these preliminary considerations at hands, we reconstruct his phenomenology of motivation in section “Phenomenology of motivation.” Sections “The nature of motives and motivation” and “The connection between ought-judgment and motivation” are devoted to the exposition and examination of his arguments for (1), (2), and (3).

Before starting the discussion, let us make clear what we will *not* do in the sections to follow. We will *not* take issue with skeptics about the very existence of a phenomenal character (or a set of such characters) peculiar to volitional experience. In what follows, we assume that there is something it is like for us to have volitional experience and that it is irreducible for it is barely fruitful to look for an argument for the so-called *agentive* or *conative* phenomenology in Pfänder and other classical phenomenologists. As Kriegel observes, “[i]n the phenomenological tradition, the existence of both cognitive and conative phenomenology is often taken to be unproblematic” (Kriegel 2015: 83; see also 75–83 for his own defense of the irreducibility of conative phenomenology). The philosophical significance of classical phenomenology for this issue, if any, lies in their phenomenological analyses of voluntary experiences, of which Pfänder’s discussion of motivation is an example – or so we shall argue.

Pfänder’s method of phenomenological description

As Moritz Geiger, another prominent figure in the Munich school of phenomenology, points out, Pfänder appeals to an analogy with space and material objects in his phenomenological descriptions of various experiences (cf. Geiger 1933: 10). Pfänder sheds light on his target phenomena by utilizing terms that we usually associate with space and matter. For instance, Geiger writes:

That love is characterized by Pfänder as “looking-up [*aufblickend*]” does not mean that he regards love as something spatial. Rather, the concept of direction [*Richtungsbegriff*] is something entirely general that is never confined to space but realized in sentiment as well as in space.

(Geiger 1933: 10–11)

In this section, we give a brief outline of what Geiger calls the method of “analogical description” (cf. Geiger 1933: 11) in so far as they are necessary for the discussion in the rest of the chapter. (As we will discuss at the end of this section, Geiger’s interpretation of Pfänder’s method is not without problems. For the sake of the simplicity, however, for a while we assume that this interpretation is correct.)

A key idea behind Pfänder’s method of phenomenology is that the world consists of two different kinds of reality (*Wirklichkeit*). This point is made clear for the first time in *Einführung in die Psychologie*. There he claims that while natural sciences investigate on one kind of reality called “material,” phenomenology or psychology has to do with the other kind of reality (cf. Pfänder 1904: 8). Note, however, that the issue is not whether such “mental [*psychisch*]” reality exists, but what it amounts to (cf. Pfänder 1904: 12). The existence of the second reality is now taken for granted, because, even though it is easily missed in natural sciences, we never doubt it in our ordinary life (cf. Pfänder 1904: 13). Pfänder further holds that the mental reality makes humans and animals something more than merely material entities like machines (cf. Pfänder 1904: 13–16). In other words, the mental reality is made up of varieties of experience, which must be absent in the machines.

Another important difference between the material and mental realities is that the latter is *not spatial*: “The application of these spatial predicate to *mental* reality has no sense” (Pfänder 1904: 52). This implies that the mental reality is immaterial since every material object is in space. Contrary to what one might expect, however, Pfänder does not mean to make the mental reality entirely isolated from the material reality. Instead, like many other classical

phenomenologists, he emphasizes that consciousness is not like a capsule because it involves the world that transcends it. But how does this cohere with his claim that the mental reality is not spatial? To this question, Pfänder answers that a portion of the material reality, which is not *in* the mental reality, is nevertheless *on the periphery* (or *limit*) of it, when a subject has the object-consciousness (*Gegendsbewußtsein*) such as perception (cf. Pfänder 1904: 208; see also Uemura and Yaegashi 2012: 255–258). It is beyond the present aim to examine whether and to what extent this claim is convincing. What is important for our purpose is that it obviously presupposes the analogy between the mental reality and space.

Pfänder develops his method of description in “Motive und Motivation.” In this short piece, he makes some distinctions by means of the analogy of the mental reality with space and material objects. Among these distinctions, what matters for the present concern are one (a) between real versus phenomenal causes, and another (b) between the “I-center [*Ich-Zentrum*]” or “I-core [*Ich-Kern*]” and the “I-body [*Ich-Leib*].”

(a) Pfänder illustrates his notion of phenomenal cause through some examples (cf. Pfänder 1911: 130 [tr. 18]). When a heard-noise (*gehörtes Geräusch*) arouses in a subject a striving (*Streben*) to look at a particular position of her surrounding, her striving has the heard-noise as its *phenomenal* cause. This phenomenal cause should not be identified with the real cause of her striving, which is a complex set of certain psychophysical conditions.

Even though Pfänder himself contends with giving examples in this context, we can clarify his claim in terms of his idea of analogical description. His discussion seems to be led by the observation that we sometimes experience an object as arousing something in us. To capture such an experience, we can describe its object as the *cause* of experience: just as material objects are causally connected to each other, an analogous connection is also found in the mental reality and its periphery. The analogy with material objects helps us to realize that the concept of cause is also applicable to items in the mental reality.

(b) According to Pfänder, a subject of experience, which he calls “the I [*das Ich*]” is structured by the I-center and the I-body that surrounds it (cf. Pfänder 1911: 130 [tr. 18]; note that they are called “ego-center/core” and “ego-body,” respectively, in the English translation). Nowhere in his 1911 piece, however, does he explain what this distinction amounts to. As he makes explicit later, his claim could be justified well only after considering various mental facts with that distinction (cf. Pfänder 1916: 67).² In this chapter, we do not deal with this issue in detail. For our purpose, it suffices to highlight a role, perhaps among others, that is played by the distinction.

Let us start with one of the reasons why Pfänder brings the notion of the I into his phenomenology in the first place. As pointed out in the earlier passage from Geiger, Pfänder holds that the direction is found not only in the space of the material reality but also in the mental reality. For him, the having-an-object of an experience, which is a characteristic of the non-spatial mental reality, could be described as a direction. Being a direction, however, it must have departure and end points. According to Pfänder, the I serves as either of those points, depending on the kind of experience it has. While, for instance, an experience of striving has a “centrifugal” direction from the I to its object loved, an experience of the arousal (*Erregung*) is a “centripetal” one from an object to the I (cf. Pfänder 1911: 128–130 [tr. 16–18]).

It is at this point Pfänder appeals to the distinction between the center and the body of the I. By this distinction, he describes different ways in which strivings figure in our experience (cf. Pfänder 1911: 130–131 [tr. 18–19]). Most of our – namely grown-up humans’ – strivings, he claims, take place in the *I-body*. Such a striving, which is called eccentric or off-center

(in German: *exzentrisch*), tends to get hold of the I-center, but this tendency is realized without the voluntary control of the subject; the realization is experienced only as phenomenal causation. By this series of descriptions, Pfänder seems to capture situations like this: a striving for water, which has *happened* to me, comes to hold me so that I now *do want* some water. Therefore, we can understand Pfänder's notions of the I-body and the I-center as means to pin down the difference between an experience that figures as *something happening to me* and one that figures as *something I do*.

Now, with those (and some other) distinctions at hands, Pfänder provides the phenomenological analysis of motivation. Before dealing with this topic, however, we make a remark on how to interpret his phenomenological descriptions. If we are to follow Geiger's interpretation, we should read "periphery," "cause," and other terms in Pfänder's writings as straightforwardly applicable to the mental reality as well as the physical reality. Then, we should read those terms as *literarily* expressing the concept of periphery, cause, and so on. This line of interpretation may be attractive, but some passages from Pfänder seem to resist it. In *Einführung in die Psychologie*, he sometimes holds that terms he uses for the phenomenological description are *metaphorical*. When he is discussing the "distance" between the I and an object, for instance, he claims that spatial determinations are applied to experiences only in non-literal sense and suggests to take the terms "near" and "far" as "metaphorical instruction [*bildlicher Hinweis*]" (cf. Pfänder 1904: 357; see also 274–275; we owe this reference to Marbach 1974: 245 n. 40). If we are to emphasize this point, we could not accept Geiger's interpretation of Pfänder. In this chapter, however, we do not go further into this otherwise important issue. Our reconstruction of Pfänder is neutral about whether his terms for the phenomenological description are metaphorical.

The structure of Pfänder's argument in "Motive und Motivation"

In the introduction of "Motive und Motivation," Pfänder defines motive as the grounds or reason (*Grund*) of the will, which is never identical with the cause of the will (cf. Pfänder 1911: 125 [tr. 15]). This implies (1) above, namely that motivation is not causation. It is not charitable, however, to interpret Pfänder as drawing the non-causality of motivation trivially from his definition of motive. Rather, we should understand him as justifying his definition of motive through phenomenological descriptions of motivation. In other words, by giving some good reason to accept the non-causality of motivation, he justifies his definition of motive as a reason rather than a cause.

In this way, Pfänder turns to the phenomenology of motivation, but he actually does not deal with the whole range of this topic. Dividing volitional experience into three sub-class, namely act of willing, voluntary action (*Willenshandlung*), and impulse of willing, he confines himself to the grounds of acts of willing, i.e. volitional experiences of *deciding* (cf. Pfänder 1911: 126 [tr. 15]). For, he claims, we must have solved the question concerning grounds of decisions if we are to ask what are grounds of voluntary actions or impulses of action. Even though he does not explain why he gives such a primacy to deciding, we can find two reasons for his claim. First, to argue for (1) and thus for his definition of motive, he does not have to deal with the motivation in the other two classes of volition. If he succeeds in showing that the motivation involved in deciding is not causation, he would obtain a sufficient counter-example to those who oppose to his position, for it is implausible to assume that motivation is either causation or not, depending on which class of volition is at issue. Second and more importantly, deciding may well serve as a paradigmatic case if we are to investigate motivation *phenomenologically*. Even if there is something it is like to be motivated,

it must be much more *elusive* for the subject of experience than something it is like, say, to see something. While most of us would agree that colors and shapes are figuring in (normal) visual experiences, we are not that sure about what are figuring in experiences we (normally) have when we are motivated to do something. To capture the phenomenal character of motivation, therefore, the best available point to start is a set of cases in which motivation is *experientially most salient* to us.

Having delimited the field of research, Pfänder divides his argument into two steps (cf. Pfänder 1911: 127 [tr. 16]). In the first step, he shows that deciding is different in kind from striving. In the second step, which includes the phenomenological analysis of motivation, he sorts out various experiences that precede an act of deciding. The first step helps him with clarifying further what is deciding, the second with getting rid of the confusion between the motive and the cause of deciding. In the remainder of this section, I give a brief reconstruction of (i) the first step and (ii) some part of the second in so far as it enables us to see how Pfänder gets prepared for the phenomenology of motivation.

- i Pfänder differentiates acts of willing from strivings by two factors (cf. Pfänder 1911: 133–134 [tr. 20–21]): (1) while the acts of willing are *always* performed by the I-center and thus always take place at that center, the same does not hold for strivings. This description illuminates that deciding figures necessarily as something *I do*, whereas striving may be experienced as something that *happens to me* (see Section 1). (2) Of the two types of experience, only acts of willing always involve the awareness of their object, which he calls “projects” (cf. Pfänder 1911: 135 [tr. 23]). To sum, Pfänder takes it as inconceivable that I have an experience of deciding and yet I’m not aware of whether/what I decide.
- ii Pfänder argues that the motive of a decision is distinguished from any striving that precedes it (cf. Pfänder 1911: 138–141 [tr. 24–27]). It is true that a striving may have some influence on a decision of mine. However, he claims, the relation between the striving and my decision is not a motivation for two reasons. (1) I can decide for some reason against striving in me. (2) We can decide in the total absence of striving. Here, one might object that decision-making in the second case is explained by the victory of the striving of which I am not aware. But Pfänder refuses this objection as a prejudice (cf. Pfänder 1911: 139 [tr. 25]). His contention, it seems, is that the postulation of unconscious striving is justified only if one already presupposes that the motive of a decision is striving that causes the decision, but this is question-begging.

In this way, Pfänder gains support for his *negative* claim that motivation is not a causal relation. But it remains unexplained what is the *positive* characteristic of motivation. Thus he turns to the phenomenological analysis of motivation.

Phenomenology of motivation³

Pfänder begins his phenomenological analysis motivation with four examples:

- (1) A person enters a room, perceives the chill in it, and decides *on the ground of the perceived chill* to leave the room. (2) A person receives from another a piece of work he had ordered; he recognizes that it has been done with special care, and he decides, *on the ground of the recognized fact* that the other has done the work so carefully, to give him a special reward. (3) A man remembers that when he lived in a certain region, he was

always very well, and he decides *on the ground of the remembered facts* to revisit that region. (4) A fourth person decides to forego an action *on the ground of the thought* that another person could feel hurt by this action (Pfänder 1911: 141 [tr. 27], translation modified, my numberings).

Obviously, they all are cases in which a subject makes a decision more or less *deliberatively*. Even though it is difficult to determine whether he admits the possibility of motivated decision without deliberation, but we can set aside this problem, for it is plausible that motivation is experientially most salient to us in deliberation.

Of the four examples, Pfänder picks the first one for his detailed analysis of motivation. Since deliberation is a *temporarily extended* exercise, the present case must be understood as consisting of more than one temporal stage. Then the question is: at which stage does that person experience something as a motive and get motivated to leave the room?

To deal with this question, Pfänder breaks his case into four stages and claims that the motivation is located in the last of them. His four-stage phenomenological analysis could be reformulated as follows (cf. Pfänder 1911: 142–144 [tr. 28–30]; to underline the fact that *phenomenology* of motivation is at issue, we restate Pfänder’s claims by using the first-person singular pronoun):

- 1 I enter the room and perceive the chill in it.
- 2 The perceived chill causes not only attention to it, but also *mental listening* to it at the I-center. This mental listening involves a *questioning stance* toward the perceived chill.
- 3 I receive a *demand* to leave this room that comes from the perceived chill and acknowledge it. I thereby obtain knowledge about what I ought to do by *relying on* the perceived chill.
- 4 *Relying on* the demand from the perceived chill, I decide to leave the room.

The description of the first stage, which Pfänder does not deal with as a separated stage, does not seem to need any further explication. And, as already pointed out, it is implausible that the motivation in question takes place here. Quite often I perceive something and yet I do not make any decision.

The second stage is analyzed as the initial point of my deliberation, in which I have not been motivated yet. At this stage, I come to notice that the room is too cold and try to figure out how to deal with the chill. To describe such a change in my experience, Pfänder talks about the phenomenal causation of attention and that of “mental listening [*geistiges Hinhören*].” While the former explains how I come to notice that the room is too cold, the latter is meant to pin down what is going on in my experience when I start to deliberate on the current situation. Toward the perceived chill, I take a certain stance, which can be expressed as: “What should I do (right now)?”

At the third stage, I receive a response from the perceived chill to my question. Since here I ask about my ought in a broader, non-moral sense, the response to it takes the form of demand (*Forderung*) for me to do a certain type of action. In the present case, the perceived chill demands me to leave the room. Then I eventually acknowledge (*anerkennen*) the demand. But, according to Pfänder, the acknowledgment of the demand or ought to leave the room does not amount to the decision to do that. “For the decision of the will is no mere apprehension of ought [*Sollen-Erkenntnis*]” (Pfänder 1911: 143 [tr. 29], translation modified).

It is at this point that Pfänder commits (3): a judgment about one’s own ought does not necessitate motivation. Since he defines motive as the ground of the will, such a judgment,

by means of which I acknowledge the relevant demand, does not by itself bring about motivation unless I simultaneously have a volitional experience in accordance with the demand. At the third stage, in which I do not decide to leave the room, Pfänder maintains, I do not have the experience of motivation. Later I will examine such an argument in detail.

For Pfänder, therefore, it is at the fourth stage that I have motivation. As I decide to leave the room, he claims, the demand from the perceived chill becomes a motive for my decision. In other words, the demand is not a motive unless it is actually connected to the decision (or some other volitional experience). To account for such an actual connection, Pfänder posits an experience called “relying-on [*Stützung-auf*].” “This relying-on-something in the performance of an act of willing is a *peculiar* mental doing” (Pfänder 1911: 143 [tr. 29], translation modified, our italics). One might be suspicious about this move of Pfänder. If a decision is always made on some ground, why is it necessary to add an extra element that connects the decision and the ground? He keeps silent about this problem, but we can give a case that supports his idea. Let us suppose the following: when I enter the room, I feel the smell of smoke and took the stance of mental listening to the felt smoke too; then the felt smell demands me to leave the room; but my decision to leave the room is not based on this demand, because I know a window of the room is opened and that there is someone building a fire outside; I make my decision just because of the demand from the perceived chill. In this situation, I receive two demands, but I experience only one of them as the motive for my decision. To explain the experiential difference in this circumstance, one has to posit an experience that makes the demand from the perceived chill into the motive. It is to describe this experience that Pfänder calls it “relying-on.”

Now, by generalizing the analysis of the fourth stage, we obtain the following claim about phenomenology of motivation.

(PM) To be motivated for *S* is to decide to φ while relying on an object of *S*'s experience that demands *S* to φ .

Note that an object that demands *S* to φ is not necessarily perceived. (PM) does give no restriction to the kind of that object. In the third of Pfänder's four examples, it is something *remembered* that serves as the reason for decision. In his fourth example, the reason for the decision is something *thought about*. They are, needless to say, not perceived.

The nature of motives and motivation

With the help of his phenomenological analysis of motivation, Pfänder then argues for his claim (1): motivation is not causation. Since he distinguishes real and phenomenal causation, he would have to discuss (1) in two different variations:

(1-R) Motivation is not *real* causation.

(1-P) Motivation is not *phenomenal* causation.

In support of (1-R), Pfänder gives three claims. First, questions concerning the real cause of the will are irrelevant for phenomenology, because we do not experience the real cause of any experiences in the first place (cf. Pfänder 1911: 149 [tr. 34]). Second, while the real cause of a decision must be *present* and *real* at the moment in which I make the decision, the motive of the decision may not be real nor present (cf. Pfänder 1911: 150 [tr. 35]).

Third, while the real cause of a decision has no degree in its being a cause, the motive for decision may differ in degree (cf. Pfänder 1911: 153–154 [tr. 37–39]). The causation of decision must always involve sufficient cause. In contrast, we can decide on an insufficient reason.

As for (1-P), Pfänder gives an argument, which could be reconstructed as follows (cf. Pfänder 1911: 148–149 [tr. 33–34]):

- i I experience my decision as phenomenally caused by the I-center.
- ii A motive is mind-transcendent. (Namely (2) above)
- iii Therefore, the motive for my decision is not the phenomenal cause of my decision.

How could the two premises of this argument be defended?

The first premise seems to rest on the idea that we experience our decision as an active and thus *free* act. Let us say that we then enjoy the *experiential freedom*. But some might wonder whether the experiential freedom is well accommodated by introducing the I-center as the phenomenal cause of the relevant experience. Against those skeptics, we can defend Pfänder in the following way. If Pfänder is wrong, three alternative phenomenological descriptions are possible for my experience in question, but none of them succeeds in accommodating the experiential freedom. First, it might seem to be the case that the decision is experienced as *ex nihilo*, namely without any slightest awareness of its cause. If this is correct, however, making a decision would be as free as, say, a sudden feeling of a pain in my head. Second, it might seem to be the case that the decision is experienced as caused by something *outside* of me. Such a description is also incompatible with the experiential freedom because, if it is correct, my decision would be experienced as being out of my control. Third, it might be the case that the decision is experienced as caused by some mental item such as a belief, a desire, or a pair of them. According to this description, the decision would be experienced as caused by a mental item just in the same way in which, say, an anxious feeling is experienced as caused by my conscious thought that I might not be able to finish a paper by the deadline. But this does not amount to the experiential freedom.

In describing the decision as a free act, Pfänder seems to endorse the following idea of Chisholm: “I shall say that when an *agent*, as distinguished from an event, causes an event or state of affairs, then we have an instance of *immanent causation*” (Chisholm 1964: 7). Then one might think that Pfänder is subscribing to a position that is not easy to defend, for immanent causation, which is now more often called “agent causation,” seems to conflict with some plausible claims such as the causal closure of the physical world. This is, however, too hasty a conclusion. It is true that Chisholm himself conceives agent causation as part of reality. It is also true that the idea of agent causation, *if* it is taken in such a metaphysically loaded way, would face difficulties. At the same time, however, the idea of agent causation has a *phenomenological* dimension that could be admitted while remaining neutral, at least to some extent, about the *metaphysics* of agency (for a similar idea, see Horgan et al. 2003: 329).

It is possible and perhaps even plausible to interpret Pfänder’s endorsement of agent causation as limited to such a *phenomenological* dimension alone. Nowhere in “Motive und Motivation” does he say anything about the extent, if any, to which his phenomenology of motivation has metaphysical implications. Also, back in *Einführung in die Psychologie*, he admits that mental reality would remain real (*wirklich*), no matter whether it may be superfluous (*überflüssig*) (cf. Pfänder 1904: 14). In other words, his position in 1904 is compatible with the claim that phenomenal causation is in fact epiphenomenal.

Now, what about the second premise, namely the claim (2)? Here Pfänder seems to miss another possibility that is not excluded yet. There remains a room in his framework for the

claim that the motive of my decision is a mental item rather than something out there in the mind-transcendent world. According to Pfänder, my decision is phenomenally caused by the center of the I, but it seems implausible to say that the phenomenal cause, in this case, is the center of the I *simpliciter*. Instead, my decision seems to be caused by the center of the I *qua* a subject of the belief that the perceived chill demands me to do so, for, if I had not believed so, I might not make the same decision. Isn't it my belief about the demand, rather than the demand itself, on which I actually rely when I make the decision? Unfortunately, we do not find any answer nor hint of an answer to these questions in "Motive und Motivation." But his claim can be supported.

As Gareth Evans famously points out, "in making a self-ascription of belief, one's eyes are, so to speak, or occasionally literally, directed outward – upon the world" (1982: 225). For example, he continues,

If someone asks me "Do you think there is going to be a third world war?", I must attend, in answering him, to precisely the same outward phenomena as I would attend to if I were answering the question "Will there be a third world war?"

(Evans 1982: 225)

In short, it is the world that tells us what we believe. Now, just like this case, if we are asked what we ought to do, we would very likely consider the situation we are in rather than looking inwardly into our mind. In this way, it seems, the world tells us not only what we believe but also what we should realize in a given situation. Therefore, against those who consider motives to be mental items, Pfänder could claim that such an idea leads us to a compromise on how we experience those motives when we are deliberating.⁴

Indeed, such an attempt of defense is far from decisive – the two premises may be still disputable. We hope to have shown, however, that Pfänder's idea of motivation as a non-causal relation, according to which motives are in the mind-transcendent world, can be one of the viable options.

The connection between ought-judgment and motivation

Pfänder's argument for (3) – a judgment about one's own ought does not necessitate motivation – could be understood as resting on the following observation: when I judge that I ought to do something, I do not always decide to do it. For instance, when I judge that I ought to help suffering people in front of me, I might consider whether that is feasible *before deciding*. Such a situation may be most straightforwardly described as an experience of ought-judgment *without* any volitional experience. Then, since for Pfänder a motive is the ground of a volitional experience, it would follow that I have no motive and thus no motivation yet at the moment of my judgment in question. This would serve as a counter-example to the claim that a judgment about one's ought necessarily yields motivation. Hence we would obtain (3).

Reconstructed in this way, however, Pfänder's argument for (3) does not seem convincing as a phenomenological argument. Admittedly, there is a sense in which I do not decide anything at the moment I judge that, say, I ought to help the suffering people. If we are to understand the verb *to decide* as applicable only to cases in which we are *pointedly* or *thematically aware* of what we decide, the present case would be described as that of an ought-judgment without a decision and thus motivation. At the same time, however, there might be *another* sense in which I may decide something even in this case. If we are to understand the verb as applicable even where we are aware of our decision only at the *margin* of consciousness, the

present case might possibly be described as follows: I judge that I ought to help the suffering people and thereby decide to do so, but I am not thematically aware of my decision, which is *immediately given up* (or *suspended*) because of the consideration about the infeasibility of the decided action. To argue for (3) phenomenologically, therefore, one has to exclude such a possibility by means of the description of experiences.

Let us restate the problem in a more general way. What is at stake here is the difference between the following two possible forms that an experience of ought-judgment might have.

(OJ-1) I judge that I ought to φ and yet I do not decide to φ .

(OJ-2) I judge that I ought to φ and thereby I have decided φ , which is immediately given up (or suspended).

To argue for (3), it is at least necessary to show that an experience that instantiates (OJ-1) is not only logically but also phenomenologically possible. For any putative case of such an experience, however, one seems to be able to regard it as an instance of (OJ-2) rather than (OJ-1). Proponents of (3) have to deny this alternative and, to do so, they must be able to tell an instance of (OJ-1) from that of (OJ-2). There certainly is a sense in which the difference is obvious. Arguably, the schematic sentences express two distinct logical forms, as it were, of experience. But this does not seem to certify our ability to discern them phenomenologically, i.e. *from a first-person point of view*. In other words, it seems that the *phenomenal* difference, if any, between an instance of (OJ-1) and that of (OJ-2) would be too elusive for us to capture. This is fatal for the proponents of (3), since Pfänder holds this claim as a *phenomenological* one. Therefore, we have to conclude that we cannot decide whether a judgment about one's ought has a necessary connection to motivation from a phenomenological point of view adopted by Pfänder.

Further note that, contrary to an impression one might have, (3) does not in itself imply any position in the debate between motivational internalism and externalism in contemporary metaethics. It is true that the internalism in this debate is roughly formulated as the claim that there is no internal, a priori connection between moral judgment and motivation; if I judge that to φ is the right thing to do, I am, as the matter of certain necessity, thereby motivated to φ . If we refuse this claim, we will subscribe to a version of externalism in the debate. We should not forget, however, that the very notion of motivation is here construed differently. The contemporary notion of motivation could be characterized as follows: "someone who is motivated to perform an action is *inclined* to perform it" (Alvarez 2010: 55). To be motivated to φ in this weaker sense, we do not have to decide to φ . Rather, a want or a desire to φ would suffice.

What is interesting in this context is that Pfänder's position could possibly be interpreted as *internalism* in the contemporary debate. According to him, a received demand is not a motive in his stronger sense unless the agent makes a decision by relying on it. At the same time, however, he admits, "even when something makes a practical demand received by the I, it is not yet a real motive but still a *possible one*" (Pfänder 1911: 147 [tr. 33], translation modified, my italics). This seems to suggest that the demand, once it is received by the agent, brings about motivation in the weaker sense for her to perform the demanded action. Otherwise, it would be rather mysterious why Pfänder characterizes demands as *demands* in the first place.

Even if this interpretation is correct, however, Pfänder's position would face another problem. Internalism is typically challenged by the possibility of *amoralists* (see, for instance, Brink 1986). Amoralists are rational agents who make a moral judgment and yet remain unmotivated to act in accordance with their judgment. In other words, they are potential

subjects of an experience of the form: I judge that I ought to φ and yet I am not inclined to φ . To defend internalism from a *phenomenological* point of view, then, one has to show that such an amoralist *experience* is impossible. However, to any attempt to establish the impossibility of the amoralist experience by means of phenomenological description, one could object: “You cannot imagine what it is like to be an amoralist just because you are a moralist. The limit of your imagination is one thing, the limit of the possibility of experience is another.” How is it possible to respond to this objection without begging the question? The best available way would be to note that the objector also has no phenomenological support for the possibility of amoralist experience. For any allegedly amoralist experience, we could offer an alternative description: I judge that I ought to φ , and I am thereby inclined to φ , but my inclination is immediately overridden.

Given those considerations, we seem to be reaching toward a limit of Pfänder’s phenomenology of motivation. Regardless of whether we are to define motivation in accordance with Pfänder or with the contemporary debate, his discussion would not help us much with deciding whether there is an internal connection between ought-judgments and motivation.

Concluding remarks – Pfänder’s position in the classical phenomenology of agency

Let us close the chapter with some historical remarks. Pfänder’s phenomenology of motivation had considerable influence on philosophers from the phenomenological tradition. Having read Pfänder’s piece on motivation, Husserl left a series of manuscripts in the 1910s (cf. Uemura and Yaegashi 2012: 269–271). Geiger’s and Stein’s discussions of motivation can be understood as reactions to Pfänder’s conception of motives (cf. Uemura and Salice 2019). Pfänder’s idea of the I-center as the phenomenal cause of volition is echoed in Reinach’s characterization of spontaneous acts as experiences that have the I as “phenomenal originator [*phänomenaler Urheber*]” (Reinach 1913: 705). Stein subscribes to a similar idea in discussing free acts (Stein 1922: 46). Reiner provides a detailed analysis of volition in which Pfänder’s distinction between the I-center and the I-body plays an important role (Reiner 1927: 127–133). Last but not least, Ricœur draws on Pfänder in his phenomenological analysis of decision (1950/2009: pt. 1, ch. 1). As such a short glance already suggests, it is not an exaggeration to say that Pfänder is an originator (if not *the* originator) of the classical phenomenology of agency.⁵

Related topics

Chapters 2 (on Pfänder and Husserl), 5 (on Reinach), 7 (on Reiner), 15 (on Ricœur), 19 (Horgan & Nida-Rümelin)

Notes

- 1 It must be noted that the analysis of motivation is a part of Pfänder’s phenomenology of volitional experiences. For an overview of the latter, see Uemura and Yaegashi (2012).
- 2 At this moment, Pfänder no longer uses the term “I-body” and holds that the I consists of the center and the “self (*Selbst*)” (cf. Pfänder 1916: 67–68).
- 3 Parts of this and the next section overlap with section 2 of Uemura and Salice (2019).
- 4 At the same time, Pfänder’s position has to square with the fact that sometimes we decide on reasons that cannot be identified with anything in the mind-transcendent world. For instance, we may decide to leave the room by following the demand from the *hallucinated* chill. On this issue, see Uemura and Salice (2019).

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Further reading

H. Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement. A Historical Introduction* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994) includes a chapter on Pfänder, which presents an outline of his philosophy. G. Uemura and T. Yaegashi, "Alexander Pfänder" in T. Szanto and H. Landweer (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Phenomenology of Emotions* (London, New York: Routledge, 2020) deals with the way Pfänder makes use of his method of phenomenology in discussing feelings and, in particular, sentiments. K. Schuhman and E. Avé-Lallemant (eds.), *Pfänder-Studien* (The Hague, Boston, Hingham, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1982) is a collection of papers on Pfänder and contains some of Pfänder's unpublished texts (including a manuscript on the theory of imperatives).