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Jon Mills

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forthcoming in 2015, *The Sleuth and the Goddess in Women's Detective Fiction*. Correspondence: susanr183@gmail.com.

ABSTRACT

"A Jungian life" in this superbly readable book by Thomas B. Kirsch means meeting Jung, having family connections to the founder of Jungian analysis, becoming an analyst, helping to build the institutions of Jungian psychology, taking on an international leadership role, pioneering Jungian work in new nations and theoretical directions, teaching, writing, publishing, and, importantly, *befriending* persons, activities, and Jungian communities. Readers are challenged to wonder what of their inner experience constitutes their story—their personal myth—which shapes the development of their own Jungian life.

KEY WORDS

analytical psychology, analytic training, ethics, IAAP, IAAP president, Jung, Jungian, Jungian analysis, leadership

On Meant Objects, Unconscious Intentionality, and Time

JON MILLS

Review of: Cecile T. Tougas, *The Phenomena of Awareness: Husserl, Cantor, Jung*, London: Routledge, 2013.

What does it mean for objects to be meant? This very notion implies an intentional stance, something that is subjectively determined and lived. More radically, what is meant is spontaneously generated in the moment of acts of consciousness that underlie the structure of our experience. Here, what is meant is sensed,

perceived, felt, thought, dreamt. This broad array of psychic activity is elucidated in Cecile Tougas's thoughtful book *The Phenomena of Awareness: Husserl, Cantor, Jung*. For Tougas, "We tend towards something significant and long to have it before us. Sometimes the 'something' is awareness itself" (2013, ix). Following in the phenomenological tradition, Tougas invites us to consider how cognitive functions of subjectivity rest on a fulcrum of intending-toward-objects that are imbued with meaning, which encompass the spectrum of human consciousness from intuition to thought, sensation, perception, feeling, expectation, memory, imagining, dreaming, and temporal mediation comprising lived events and our burgeoning awareness of such experience.

What is radical about this thesis is that all these acts or faculties of cognition are volitionally *intended*, namely, they are pro-created, willed, and deliberately generated processes directed toward a telic object of meaning. In other words, they are acts of tending or aiming toward an object of experience, something fulfilling, "the presence of the meant" (31). What this implies is that there is an active agency operative behind all acts of cognition that freely constitutes all objects of experience. Let us explore how such a radical implication nicely fits with a discourse on unconscious phenomenology.

Tougas's background is varied; she was trained in phenomenological philosophy at Duquesne, identifies with the Husserl Circle in the United States, was in Jungian analysis, and teaches university Latin and math. Her book is an attempt to synthesize in a meaningful, albeit nonsystematic way, her major intellectual and literary influences expounded through both scholarly and narrative fashions. She examines the works of Husserl and his student and

assistant Edith Stein, Georg Cantor's mathematical notion of the "transfinite whole," and, to a lesser degree, Jung's theories. The reader will appreciate the comprehensive and detailed introduction to Husserl's many works that inform her examination of the myriad forms of human subjective awareness that comprise the acts of consciousness. She facetly illustrates this through her own personal reflections and identifications with Stein vis-à-vis her relationship with Husserl as an idealized (one could say Oedipal) transference figure. Tougas's prose is splendid as she presents Stein's biography and her own private empathic relations to her as a philosopher and a woman, both of whom have shared similar life experiences, hopes, and disappointments.

By engaging Husserl, one is likely to read Jung in a new light because one stays focused on the nature of appearance rather than on what lies behind it. Tougas enables this when she outlines in digestible form Husserl's key concepts: namely, that (1) subjectivity or consciousness is intentional (viz., it tends toward meaning) in its formulation and apprehension of the world; (2) each act of cognition stands in relation to fluid dynamic processes discernible as units or modes of experience (that is, thought, sensation, feeling, perception, remembering, dreaming, and so on) yet are inseparable from the whole; (3) the subject-object gulf or bifurcation is collapsed though awareness of this whole contained in a processual transfinite infinity; (4) the material-physical brain discourse of science and its objects reduce the complexity of this holism to a shallow conceptual philosophy; and (5) ontological or metaphysical commitments should be suspended in favor of the phenomena of awareness, which place more value on the quality of the lived experience.

Think here of these implications to Jung's emphasis on typology, imago, symbol, emotion, and the numinous. For example, how does an image or dream appear to the dreamer as a discrete unit of awareness yet be revealed as an interconnected collective whole? How does an archetype both symbolize an individualized experience and speak of a greater universal? But following the phenomenological method, would not psychic reality as immediate experience be privileged over any discourse on origins? Here, she attempts to bridge the two domains.

There are many noteworthy topics covered in this brief book. Some are quite challenging and controversial, such as that mathematical equations describe objective immaterial entities and truisms that exist "objectively" in themselves, that is, independent of mind (6). Here, Tougas claims that consciousness and its objects "exist non-spatially" and are "immaterial, intelligent, or spiritual" (7). Although Tougas may be accused of evoking an antiquated dualism espoused by medieval philosophy through to Descartes, she persuasively criticizes the banal discourse of reductive ontologies of consciousness popular among neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and the philosophy of mind. What she illustrates particularly well is how mind cannot be equated with brain. Here, she echoes Aristotle's arguments of a mereological attribution error that reduces the complexity of the whole to the sum of its parts and Whitehead's notion of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness or simple location, wherein the complexity of a process system such as the mind is crudely reduced to a particle or neuronal state in the brain. She is among good company; however, her failure to address the notion of spatial (physical) embodiment in relation to (if not housing)

the cognitive faculties of consciousness will likely evoke criticism. For instance, how can consciousness be immaterial and defy space when we are enmattered?

One of the book's strong suits is her persuasive use of her own experience in describing phenomenal moments of awareness. She demonstrates through her prose and writing style how the way of phenomenology, that is, as a philosophy and way of life, is the primary method behind literary genius when there is a merging of observational awareness with the creative use of imagination. The introduction of Cantor, a colleague of Husserl's, is interesting, as this brings the phenomenological method into discourse with both logic and metaphysics. A *transfinite* number both demarcates a realm of measurement with no delimitation and symbolizes a beyond that surpasses measurement. It captures an infinite ordinal series within an encompassing whole (contained) process. Once again, Tougas makes this an immaterial function, when we could also say it is a mental act of deliberation as the expression of language or logical schemata without educing the bifurcation between our embodied facticity and our conscious apprehensibility of the material world. But here she imports a metaphysics of dynamic complex holism, where limits are surpassed within the eternal that dialectically nullifies finitude while preserving the objectivity of numbers and the awe of infinity where the whole exceeds us. In other words, she wants to champion a philosophical monism similar to the *unus mundus*, where all particularity exists within an infinite whole.

Most noteworthy is Tougas's excellent analysis of the phenomenology of time (see 50–65). In amplifying her reflections, the way in which we come to apprehend experience is imbued with diachronies that punctuate the

pervasiveness of lived time. One could have a very immediate sense of temporal presence or a suspended sense of being in the moment that may involve a dissociative or trancelike feeling of timelessness, precisely because you are no longer preoccupied with the present apprehension of temporal events or current concerns that envelop everyday consciousness. The diachronic experience of time is that there is a sensation of interruption with ordinary sequential time: it could be that lived time is experienced as long when it is short, minimal when it is quantitatively enduring, fleeting when it is protracted, or unaccounted for, such as a depersonalized loss of time when one is in a state of psychogenic fugue, meditation, or mystical absorption. Here, time is both instituted and constituted in the moment of our living experience as we live it, which may entail a (felt) adjournment of consciousness as withering streams of awareness, or conversely, an attunement and intensity of self-consciousness as heightened self-reflectivity that directs our focus of awareness to a particularized moment of lived experience. While pondering the infinite, Husserl discovered the double continuity of time-consciousness that apprehends the presence of the past and the future in the immediate present moment of awareness as an intentional act of relating to meant objects. Husserl theorized that the origin of subjective experience sprang from a generative center in which all appearances arise, and that each moment is its own center responsible for engendering time. In *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, Husserl referred to this center as "a point of actuality, primal source-point" in which time generates itself, "that from which springs the 'now'" (1964, 100, ¶36). Each present moment is held together by its simultaneous relation to the past and the future as a doubly continuous

instant preserved in dialectical continuity. The double continuity of new presence, of the bipolar reiteration of itself in every fresh moment of experience, ensures that the continuously new presence of the “now” becomes the ground of all appearances. Our subjectivity of time always corresponds to a “new now” whether one is reflecting on the past, the present, or an imagined or anticipated future state that has not actually occurred.

Our attunement to presence involves a lived sense of “passing” and “enduring” within our moment-to-moment awareness of meant objects, which is both an act of “transcendence” and “immanence.” For Husserl, the ego or consciousness is a transcendental structure that generates forms of subjectivity in and through time where there is no formal division of subject from object. Here, subject and object, self and world are conjoined as a whole or superordinate totality only separated by moments, hence abnegating the vicious bifurcation between nature and mind. It is in the bracketed act of *epoché* (ἐποχή), or reduction, that the world is revealed as a correlate of consciousness, which is performed by the prereflective transcendental ego. So when Husserl speaks of time as instantaneously transcendent and immanent, he is also speaking of the psyche in general. That which is given to consciousness is as much a transcendent objectivity as it is subjectively constituted. The feeling or thought of something beyond us or in abundance of us that is temporally present to our immediate lived experience is a form of transcendence, as is the notion of anticipating the coming to presence or innateness of that experience arising in us. Such transcendental immanence, so to speak, is often infused through spiritual or mystical unities as a radically subjective act of meaningful lived qualia. Here, the notion of synchronicity and the numinosity of the archetypes come to mind.

Time is a succession of phases experienced through our river of consciousness, a patterned fluidity of perishing awareness that contains the coming into being and passing away into nothing of its previous series of moments, what we may call phenomenal diachronies of difference and change within a transmuting process of persistence. There are beginnings and endings, openings and closings, both ephemeral and permanent. Time is pure flow and unrest, at once continuous yet spontaneous and fleeting, for as soon as you try to pin it down, it is already gone. Each moment is merely a transitory conduit to a new movement or mode of experience within an interconnected chain of moments containing past, present, and future, all standing in dynamic relation to one another. Yet there is a universality to time that is ontologically invariant as sheer process.

Time is not merely a theoretical abstraction, for we feel its presence, its coming and going, that which is momentarily here then gone, only to be cyclically present as a dialectic of passing-over into a ceasing-to-be, only to enter into a new movement of becoming that is retained through enduring experience encountered as transient intervals of length and intensity. At the same time we may view time as an incorporeal condition, an immateriality of pure event, namely, experience itself. Yet experience is a temporal embodiment. On the one hand time is not an entity, literally nothing, and in this sense immaterial; yet on the other it exists as actuality governed by natural laws of patterned continuity, duration, perishing, and succession as a flux of appearing modes of becoming. Time is always coming, going, and is *here*, hence developing, transitioning, succumbing, and expiring yet never fully ceasing, as it is born anew as an eternal presence and recurrence within an ordered series of temporal modalities and periods.

Paradoxically, we may even say there is no such thing as pure time independent of mind, as it is merely a formal concept; rather time is constituted through embodied space, hence its appearance is always enmattered yet nowhere to be seen. To be more specific, because mind is embodied activity, temporal experience is only possible through cognition. And here the notion of time takes on its own phenomenological encounters. Time is neither static nor fixed, nor is it a tangible thing that can be appropriated, for it is invisible and indivisible, yet it transpires in a series of spacings each of us inhabit in our mental and material worlds; and this is why it is more appropriate to think of our experiential relation to spacetime as a fused event. Here the essence of time is process.

Our relationship to presence and absence, finitude and eternity, flux and permanence, all presuppose our intimate dynamic relation to what I call *temporal mediacy* (Mills 2010, 54–56). Here, time draws on the (a) *archaic primacy* of our past as the amalgamation of our historicities, ontological preconditions, and developmental trajectories; the (b) *immediational presence* of the phenomenology of our present (concrete and qualitatively) lived experience as mediated immediacy; and (c) the *projective teleology* of the imagined future as a valued ideal, goal, or purposive aim. These three simultaneous facets of temporal mediacy are operative at any given moment in psychic tandem where the past and future convene on the present, or immediate, subjective experience. The presentational encounters of past, present, and future we confront as immediacy become our metaphysical relation to time, albeit phenomenologically realized in the here-and-now.

The phenomena of awareness involve our immediate immersion in what we presently desire, feel, perceive, think, remember, emote, cognize, or otherwise experience as an internal

temporal relation to intentional objects in reality or fantasy mediated by unconscious agency. And just as Freud reminds us that the unconscious is “timeless” (1933, 74), the nature of consciousness as such is its epigenetic instantiation and dialectical contrary that fractures its primordial cosmic eternity by introducing temporal enactments in and through qualitative experience, namely, that which we live.

Although Tougas does address the unconscious, the conceptual bridge from phenomenology could be stronger. What remains underdeveloped is the notion of an unconscious phenomenology. Although Husserl minimally referred to a margin of dim consciousness, what he called a “*dimly apprehended depth or fringe of indeterminate reality*” (1964, 102, italics in original), it was not until his later lectures on the *Analysis Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis* that Husserl (2001) even remotely addressed the notion of the unconscious as a passively synthetic activity operative in the mind. But he minimized its importance, unlike the tradition of psychoanalysis and analytical psychology that made the unconscious an active agentic process in its own right. Here, we may say that any mode of awareness, such as the apprehension of given presentational appearances or the notion of expectation, must take into account a formal agency that precedes self-reflection. In other words, an unconscious agency must be operative in consciousness as the ontological condition that mediates the phenomena of awareness and its objects. Here we have an unconscious intentionality (see Mills 2013b) that is co-extensive with and hence on the continuum with consciousness. Tougas intimates this conceptual move when she speculates the existence of an unconscious Will *pace* Schopenhauer as the primal source of intending, although this idea needs nurturing. Perhaps she will take this up in future research.

Although Tougas identifies herself with the Husserlean school of phenomenology, which historically has fundamentally opposed psychologism and metaphysics, her theses are compatible with both psychoanalysis and Jungian psychology as well as the speculative metaphysics of the German Idealists Schelling and Hegel, who posited an unconscious ontology that permeated the feeling soul of Spirit. One of her main points is that awareness is not reducible to a material ontology or segregated into parts, but rather is on a continuum that is inseparable from supraordinate reality that contains us all. This type of monism (albeit differentiated into instantiated gradations) preserves the complexity of relativized subjective experience while broaching a universality that is empirically objective and conceptually unifying. Her courtship with metaphysics is further advanced by her attraction to Cantor's notion that mathematical numbers are infinite, and that our contemplation of such infinity constitutes a conceptual whole or appreciation of inclusivity and unbounded openness yet brought together under an intelligible rubric of unification. Lastly, her scattered engagement with Jung bridges this metaphysical treatment of the whole, as the collective archetypal both participates within and emanates from a primordial ground that is itself a grounding of its own ground (Mills 2013a). Overall, this book is an insightful and satisfying read.

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JON MILLS, PSYD, PhD, CPsych, ABPP, is a philosopher, psychoanalyst, and clinical psychologist. He is Professor of Psychology & Psychoanalysis at the Adler Graduate Professional School in Toronto and runs a mental health corporation in Ontario, Canada. He has published several works in psychoanalysis, philosophy, and psychology, including thirteen books, and is the recipient of three Gradiva Awards and the Goethe Award for his scholarship. In 2015, he received the Otto Weininger Memorial Award, which is awarded by the Section on Psychoanalytic and Psychodynamic Psychology of the Canadian Psychological Association, for lifetime contributions to psychoanalysis. *Correspondence*: 1104 Shoal Point Rd., Ajax, ON L1S 1E2 Canada. psychologist@sympatico.ca.

ABSTRACT

Husserl's phenomenology of time-consciousness is analyzed in the context of Cecile Tougas's views presented in her book *The Phenomena of Awareness*. Tougas provides a thoughtful account of the intentional subject as tending toward meant objects and their awareness. By introducing the notion of the "transfinite whole," she further establishes a metaphysical link between experiential phenomena and the unconscious. The relationship between material embodiment, psyche, and intentionality is explored through the question of an unconscious phenomenology as a basis for agency, which further invites a dialogue among those in Jungian studies.

KEY WORDS

agency, appearance, awareness, Cantor, Husserl, intentionality, Jung, metaphysics, phenomenology, subjectivity, time, unconscious