I. General Introduction
Time and again it becomes necessary for us to impress on ourselves the methodological maxims of phenomenology not to flee prematurely from the enigmatic character of phenomena nor to explain it away by the violent coup de main of a wild theory but rather to accentuate the puzzlement (Heidegger 1982a: 69).
§1 People Gather Everywhere

People gather. Everywhere. They gather to witness. To tell and to listen to stories. To show what was done, and how what is to be done might best be done. To perform the necessary procedures to make sure the gods are glorified and the world continues to be made as it should. To dance, to heal, to marry, to send away the dead, to entertain, to praise, to order the darkness, to affirm the self. People are gathering. As they always have—everywhere.

Doctors, lawyers, bankers and politicians don evening wear to attend performances in which people sing in unearthly voices in languages they do not understand, to sit in rows, silent, and to measure the appropriate length of time they should join with each other in continuing to make light slapping noises by striking the palms of their hands together to show their appreciation at the end of the performance.

One hundred thousand people gather on the last Saturday of September every year in a giant stadium in the city of Melbourne, Australia at the “hallowed turf” of the Melbourne Cricket Ground, to watch 36 men kick, punch and catch an oval shaped ball with each other, scoring points by kicking it between long sticks planted in the ground. The gathered multitude wears the same ritual colours as the men playing the game. They cry out, stand and sing anthems. This game is played and understood nowhere else in the world, but in the Melbourne cultural calendar it is the most important day of the year. It is what makes Melbourne Melbourne.

Before the whitefella came, aborigines from the clans of the Yiatmathang, Waradjuri Dora Dora, Duduroa, Minjambutta, Pangerang, Kwatt Kwatta—the wombat, kangaroo, possum, Tasmanian tiger, echidna, koala and emu, would gather on the banks of the Murray River, near what is now the twin cities of Albury/Wodonga to organize marriages, perform initiations, to lay down weapons, to dance, to settle debts and disputes, to tell stories, to paint their bodies, and to request permission from the Yiatmathang to cross the river and make the climb to the top of Bogong High Plains in late spring, to feast on the Bogong moths arriving fully grown after their flight from Queensland, ready to be sung, danced and eaten.
On the island of Sulawesi, a son of a family bears the responsibility of providing the largest possible number of buffalo to be sacrificed at the funeral of his father. A sacrifice which will condemn the son to a life of debt to pay for the animals which must be slaughtered in sufficient number to affirm the status of his family, provide enough meat to assure the correct distributions are made, and assure that his father has a sufficiently large herd in *Puya*, the afterworld. Temporary ritual buildings for song and dance must be constructed, effigies made, invitations issued. Months are spent in the preparations. And then the people will arrive, family, friends, colleagues and tourists, in great numbers, from surrounding villages, from Ujung Pandang, from Jakarta, from Australia, from Europe, from the USA, to sing, dance, talk, look and listen. And if the funeral is a success, the son will gain respect, status and honour for himself, and secure a well-provided journey to the afterlife for his father.

In a primary school playground, in an outer suburb of any Australian city, thirty parents sit in a couple of rows of metal and plastic chairs on a spring afternoon to watch their own and each other’s children sing together in hesitant or strident voices, in or out of time and tune versions of well-known popular songs praising simple virtues are applauded; the younger the children, the greater the effort, the longer and louder the applause. Some of these people are the same doctors, bankers and lawyers who had donned evening wear the night before at opera houses, now giving freely of the appreciative palm slapping sound held so precious in that other environment.

And they will gather and disperse and regather, at times deemed appropriate, at the times when these gatherings have always occurred, these lawyers, doctors, sons, mothers, sports fans, when and where they can and should and must, to sing, to dance, to tell stories, to watch and listen, to be there with and among each other bearing witness to their faith, their belief, their belonging, their values.

But what, in these superficially disparate, culturally diverse and dispersed groups of people, what draws them, what gathers an audience, what gathers in an audience, and what in an audience is salient for the audience members? What gathers, what gathers in an audience?
§2 A Work of Faith

This is a work of faith. It finds its possibility in the belief that if I inhabit the world in certain ways: if I am as rigorous and honest with myself as I can be in my thinking, if I face up to what I really do not know, if I hold my wonder in the face of the unknown and the unknowable, if I do not deliberately push any partisan political barrows, if I refrain from thinking that I know better than anyone else, if I try, as best I can, to describe my own experience as the product of my prejudices and what I encounter in the world, if I allow evidences to stand as what they appear to be, if I follow the thoughts of thinkers which seem to harmonize with something like what I might call my own worldview, then, by processes whose nuts and bolts will always remain to some extent mysterious, I will be able to think the unthought in a revealing way in the question of what it is that we do and how we do it when we gather in audiences.

As far as I am concerned I begin in darkness. As I begin writing I can make out only vague outlines. Cracks of light spark, crackle and disappear. I need to be there to catch the outlines and follow them as far as seems possible in the meagre light, to hopefully make a clearing in which the objects under study can emerge and stand as what they are. There are no proofs, just evidences calling to be lived and interpreted. There is no comforting ballast of a pre-proven body of reproducible observations, no apparent mathematical system of constant values and variables to which I can appeal for truth value. The generalities pressing on this writing, cutting through it, supporting it, can ultimately only be verified by whatever you, the person reading this, makes of it. I am in your hands.

Grace must remain my main methodological imperative at all times. Grace is the methodological principle of faith. I have no doubt, in fact I have absolute certainty, that if my inhabitation of my investigations is conducted in a state of grace, if I graciously accept what I am given and gracefully follow its call, then what will be revealed will be of worth.

Simple as that. And it’s got nothing and everything to do with God.
§3 Institutional Heritage

This thesis emerges from the work of the Department of Performance Studies at the University of Sydney, an institution which has always conducted, as part of its identity and mission, and in harmony with the rude methodological promiscuity of Performance Studies generally, an overt inquiry into ways in which performance might be studied. The department has evolved a distinct and unique trajectory over a twenty year period, turning most recently to an appropriation of techniques of critical and cultural ethnography directed towards the study of the secret world of the rehearsal room (McAuley 1998), and leading into a Bourdieuan sociology of performance institutions (Maxwell 2002). These developments have occurred concomitant with the influence on the department of the Peircean interpretive cultural semeiotic anthropology of John Lowell Lewis (Lewis 1992).

The primary methodological figure in these disciplinary shifts is “the field”. It is taken-for-granted that the field is the apprehendable reality, the ground in which the researcher finds themself conducting their work. By turning towards any phenomenon, be it a cultural or social institution, a rehearsal room, a body of knowledge or a set of practices, and making it an object of study, it becomes a field. In the field, the researcher converses with “respondents”, who tell what they think they are doing. The researcher, in some cases critically, in some sympathetically, in some dispassionately, uses various interpretive devices to render the “reports” of their respondents intelligible in terms of generalities which are best left not too general. The field is taken to be an exploratory region which the researcher affects and to some extent constructs by their presence, but which can never be fully known and can only ever be interpreted. It is open to infinite investigation, partly because the gesture of the researcher in the field is itself a feature of the field, and which, in its emergence from it, changes the field. To this extent, ethnography and Bourdieuan sociology share a border with phenomenology and have often made appeal to an overt and rigorous phenomenological dimension in their development.

But, phenomenologically speaking, it is perhaps more important to observe how the application of these approaches to their respective objects within Performance Studies
arose from the demands of those objects, how they belong to those objects and how they lend clarity to those objects.

The ethnographic approach appeared in the work of Gay McAuley, specifically to deal with the phenomenon of the rehearsal room: the unexplored, secret world of the preparation of performance. In rehearsal rooms, actors, dancers, directors and other artists indulge in vulnerabilities designed to push them to and sometimes beyond their personal limits in service of finding new avenues to address the demands of the performance. In rehearsal rooms, practitioners attempt things which, although performed, are specifically not for display to open audiences, but sketches, stages on the way to the ultimate goal of performance in front of audiences. The presence in the room of others, not directly involved in the process, had hitherto always been considered a hindrance to free experimentation in the work. Geertzian cultural anthropology and its postmodern heirs, with their soft tread, the apologetic timidity of their relationship with the truth of their work, and their tentative interpretive layering, provided a means by which the least intrusive inquisitive entry into the secret delicacy of the rehearsal room might be made.

Bourdieuian sociology, on the other hand, with its unfailing critical imperative and its broad and powerful ambit of applicability, claimed to render and offer up the common ground of causal connectedness between the most general and generative contexts, between the institutional, social, financial decisions made in the boardrooms, banks and bedrooms of the powerful, and the most minute, intimate, gestures of performers on stage. A perfect tool for taking massive, bureaucratic, state-funded institutional performance companies to task.

However, neither of these approaches, with their fields, their fieldwork, their empiricism, their careful listening to the always questionable reports of their respondents, and their gentle hermeneutic venturings, stemming from and proper to the creative and institutional contexts which called for them, seemed appropriate to the study of Audience.

The study of Audience calls for its own proper modes of approach. And the first job of this thesis is to be open, to hear and receive, to describe, to allow the essences of Audience to emerge and show themselves, to enter into the constitution of Audience and to let the most apparently proper modes of approach give themselves.
So, although departing from the prevailing methodologies taught and practised at the Department of Performance Studies at the University of Sydney, this thesis is very deliberately and consciously aware of its continuity with the institutional heritage that devolves to it. It arises partly from the aporias, the gaps, the paradoxes and the unanswerable questions left by the application of the methods of sociology and ethnography to performance, motivated by the quest of phenomenology to provide a scientific underpinning to the humanities, and partly from the inspiration of the methodological audacity which has animated performance studies ever since the initial illicit mating of theatre studies and anthropology gave birth to their bastard interdiscipline.

§4 For Performance Studies

In the introductory theoretical sections of the thesis: on intentionality, reduction, intersubjectivity and transcendence, I have included perhaps more rudimentary reiterations than necessary of some of the basic concepts of phenomenology. I am certain that a PhD thesis written in a department of philosophy would expect its readers to have a thorough knowledge of the concepts. I have done this because I am writing from Performance Studies, which is dominated, theoretically speaking, by the descendants of structuralism; so semiotic, deconstructionist, anthropological, sociological, psychoanalytical and postmodernist methodologies preponderate. I would like, with all due humility, to offer this thesis to Performance Studies, as bringing a glimpse of the potential worth of phenomenological approaches to this most elastic and promiscuous of interdisciplines. So I have perhaps been a little more expansive at times on basic phenomenological concepts than would be have been considered necessary if this were a thesis at this level in a department of philosophy. However, for readers who are more phenomenologically adept, I would hope to present a perspective which draws the material together in a particular way aimed at and derived from the matter under discussion: transcendental intersubjective Audience. The revelation of the object of the study (to the extent that it can be spoken of as an object capable of revelation) demands a specific thematic arrangement of the phenomenological categories Intentionality, Reduction, Intersubjectivity and Transcendence. The exegesis of this particular telling of
these rudiments is driven by their application to and illumination of the question with which I began: What does it mean to be in an audience?

I would also hope that the development of the phenomenological group methodology which I have derived and used, drawing together a practical tradition from Herbert Spiegelberg’s workshops, David Seamon’s environmental experience groups, and Duquesne phenomenological psychology, combined with a Levinas-inspired technique of immanent description as writing from..., provides the basis for further possible practical applications, in Performance Studies and elsewhere, for revealing intersubjective phenomena.

And moreover, I would hope to have conducted a phenomenology that can stand in its own right as a worthwhile return to the things themselves, in this case a description in and from audiences, aiming at the transcendental intersubjective essence Audience, conceived eidetically as gathering to witness; to have written a dissertation which is able to stand with some value as a contribution, methodologically and theoretically, to the tradition of transcendental and psychological phenomenology.

§5 Why Audience?

This study became possible as a consequence of research I conducted during 2001 for an Honours dissertation. The original research was a first person, solipsistic, hermeneutic phenomenology conducted by and on myself across four nights of attendance to a performance of a piece of contemporary dance called Nerve 9, performed and devised by Tess De Quincey in collaboration with a number of media artists, sound artists and poets.¹

The impetus for this previous study had stemmed from my attendance at a seminar of Honours students at the Department of Performance Studies at the University of Sydney some 12 months earlier, during which the students had discussed their responses to another Tess De Quincey performance, Skyhammer. I had been mesmerized by the performance: the room pulsated a visual and aural synaesthesia, in which the dancer’s body exuded a rhythmic halo of colour determined by repetitive recorded voices in the

soundscape. Minute twitches in the dancer’s body resounded metakinetically in my own. However, the judgements and opinions of the different people in the group were so varied and disparate that we may as well have been attending-to completely different shows. Attempts in the subsequent seminar to raise discussion were summarily blocked by last resort appeals to taste, in the ultimately irreconcilable court of subjectivity—“it’s just not my cup of tea”, “it did nothing for me”. I found this frustrating and unproductive. It seemed to me that through a phenomenological examination of how subjectivity is given to itself in audiences, and of how the relations between performances, audiences and subjectivity are given, that something more substantial might be said in these cases where the resort to the dead-end pronouncements of sovereign subjectivity silences all inquiry.

It was brought to my attention by Professor Gay McAuley, who was at that time the Chair of the Department for Performance Studies, that the audience and its responses remained one of the unexplored frontiers, as she saw them, of Performance Studies. Very few attempts had been made to crack the opacity of the reign and rule of subjectivity over this domain, and those attempts that had been made had foundered inconclusively.

I decided that since one of my own bugbears had been legitimated as a credible object of study by such an eminent scholar in the field that I would pursue the matter further. Also, the Honours dissertation was sufficiently well received, and provided enough openings onto further questions, for me to continue and develop the research in this Doctorate.

I had conducted the prior research as a phenomenological reduction of sorts, observing and apprehending my normal attitudes and modes of attendance-to performance in a loose, fairly unstructured fashion, in order to foreground them as objects of study. Nevertheless, the project was successful to the extent that I came away with some basic methodological clues and avenues for further study.

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2 The concept of metakinesis was developed by the dance critic John Martin in the 1930s. It describes the way the dancer’s movement “is transferred in effect by kinaesthetic sympathy to the muscles of the spectator”. (Martin 1933: 85).
§6 The Approach and the Structure

This thesis has a simple structure. In the first section, II. Phenomenological Groundwork, I cover some rudimentary phenomenological concepts and tools: Intentionality, Reduction, Intersubjectivity and Transcendence; laying the groundwork for the theoretical basis from which the thesis becomes thinkable and from which it proceeds. As I have stressed, there is perhaps a little more detail in the basic phenomenological material I cover than would be appropriate in a dissertation from a philosophy PhD, because I am writing in and for the discipline of Performance Studies, where such knowledge cannot be assumed. The second section, III. Methodology, outlines the group phenomenological method by which the research was conducted, and some more general theoretical methodological concerns, some of which gave rise to the process and some of which arose from it. The method of writing from..., as immanent description from within phenomena is also described in its genealogy and application. The third section, IV. Phenomenology of Audience, contains the results of the research. The categories and parameters which arose in the work from the phenomenon’s giving of itself are outlined and articulated. Section V. Conclusion, points towards possible future directions for the research and questions left unasked. And finally, there is, under separate cover, an appendix of selected writings, VI. Appendix: Writings from Audiences, written from audiences by members of the audience groups.

The writings in the Appendix are not a necessary part of the reading of the thesis, but the Department of Performance Studies at the University of Sydney maintains a firm rootedness in fieldwork disciplines, and despite my insistence that the Audience Groups are not properly fieldwork - working empirically, through induction, from the ground up - but more a testing and proving laboratory for the transcendental essences, given in reduction, which remain, in my opinion, the apriori given primary grounds of the work.
II. Phenomenological Groundwork
Who has the right theoretical vocabulary for explaining behaviour determines who should get the grants (Fodor 1985).
A. Introduction to Theoretical Background

§7 Why Phenomenology?

This thesis is a phenomenology. As such it draws together a specific tradition for itself as the condition of its possibility. As a piece of academic writing and as a phenomenological enquiry there devolves to it a specific tradition of philosophical and methodological approaches and productions. It also arises from a current fashionable upsurge in phenomenological research. The call of the return to the things themselves is seductive. The rise of phenomenology since the early 1990’s is part of a slow-growing wider trend in Humanities scholarship in reaction against the perceived theoretical excesses of poststructuralism. And so, along with the tons of paper and trillions of bytes of information produced on the subjects of textuality, sexuality, race, gender, the modern, rhetoric, representation, hegemony, culture and narrative, there are ever-burgeoning tons of paper and trillions of bytes of data being produced on situations, experiences, emplacement, intersubjectivity and embodiment. Some of these latter works share common approaches and presuppositions, but the primary quest and appeal of phenomenology, “to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself” (Heidegger 1962: 58) means that “’phenomenology’ neither designates the object of its researches, nor characterizes the subject-matter thus comprised’ (59). Instead, phenomenology, in order to be considered as such, must “grasp its objects in such a way that everything about them which is up for discussion must be treated by exhibiting it directly and displaying it directly” (59). Consequently, “any exhibiting of an entity as it shows itself in itself, may be called “phenomenology” with formal justification” (59).

This general aim allows for styles of research as different as Husserl’s logic and intentional analysis, Bachelard’s poetics and psychoanalyses, Merleau-Ponty’s psychology and ontology, Dufrenne’s aesthetics, Lingis’ essays, Scheler and Levinas’ ethics, Schutz’s sociology, Heidegger’s early hermeneutics and late poetic meditations, Spiegelberg’s group discussions, Marcel’s spiritual reflections, Chrétiens and Henry’s theology, Giorgi’s psychotherapy, Varela’s cognitive science, Irigaray’s elemental logics,
Casey and Seamon’s geographies, and for more as yet unthought possibilities, explored by a newly motivated army of phenomenological enquirers going out to inhabit, illuminate and let show the mysteries of the world on their own terms. They can all, with Heidegger’s imprimatur, be rightfully considered as phenomenology. Each phenomenological investigation unfolds in ways that are determined by the ways the phenomena under study show themselves, so the modes of the apprehension and description of the showing must reflect these specific variations.

There is further variation in the ‘who’ of the investigator. Showing is always a showing-to. Because the specific letting-show is allowed to the object by a particular enquirer to whom the phenomenon is showing in a particular place and time, it can be carried out on the basis of entirely different philosophical presuppositions and beliefs, as long as the aim is a direct exhibition and display of the phenomena as they show themselves. As different phenomena show themselves through the specificity of their appearances, which are appearances to and for a specific investigator, each separate phenomenological enterprise must belong to, and to some extent be formed by, its viewpoint on the object. It must attempt to let show the object’s showing of itself. Any attempt at a letting show, however rigorous, thorough and complex, is adumbrative, an abschattung, or more accurately, a complex of multiple abschattungen, or partial perceptions from specific viewpoints on the phenomenon which shows itself. I would expect, for instance, that a phenomenological description of being in an audience written by a dancer whose practice had become informed by an understanding of Merleau-Ponty would be very different to one written by a Husserl scholar with a speech impediment and a belief in objective essences. Even more pointedly, for example, Heidegger’s reorientation of Husserl’s Cartesian quest is a manifestation of such profoundly different ontological presuppositions and teleological aims, that it seems astonishing to think that one could have emerged directly as a further investigation of some openings suggested by the other.

There is also a tradition in phenomenology of a continuing attempt to define itself in terms of what its aims and methods can or should be. Merleau-Ponty himself, in answer to his own question: “What is phenomenology?”, takes two lines to acknowledge that “the fact remains that it has by no means been answered” (Merleau-Ponty 1962: vii). Consequently, it is absolutely necessary for this writing to define very precisely why it
declares itself to be a phenomenology, how it is a phenomenology, what it has in common with some phenomenologies, and how it differs from others. This comes down to two principal theoretical questions: What are the specific names, concepts, beliefs and practices gathered together, focused and instituted as the tradition which devolves to this study as its condition of possibility? And, how does this study emerge as a possibility of those conditions which it gathers together, focuses and institutes, perhaps only through its own coming into being?

The tradition which this phenomenology draws together for itself unfolds around key concepts and methodologies. First, the story of the development of four key concepts of intentionality, reduction, intersubjectivity and transcendence in the work of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, the existentialists and later philosophers needs to be drawn together and laid out. Second, the methodological and practical interpretations of these key concepts by researchers in the fields of psychology, geography and other disciplines, as applicable to the specific methodologies and practices employed in this study, need to be detailed, explaining why and how some of these practices have or have not informed this research. It then needs to be shown how the practices and methodologies used in this study unfold as practical understandings of the phenomenological tradition of philosophical and methodological writings, researches and procedures which it draws together for itself.

But none of this addresses the question of why I have chosen to use a phenomenological approach to the study of the area traditionally referred to in Performance Studies, Theatre Studies and Reception Studies as the Audience and the Spectator.

Simply, as I have mentioned, the promise of phenomenology to get back to the things themselves, to let the object of the study determine the manner of its study, is too seductive to resist. I have spent many years studying disciplines in institutions; disciplines in which the terms, the methods and the procedures are given and accepted with little question and which fit the objects of study to their own agenda in order to defend positions and prove points; disciplines of social science, of gender studies, of postcolonialism, of ideology critique; disciplines which, in the service of very specific and transparent power, prestige and property gain for their proponents, allies and
beneficiaries, wield their methods as weapons of a social war; disciplines which apply their tried and tested methods of bringing the objects of their study to heel, proving the same points (perhaps necessarily so) over and over again. Certainly, these disciplines are combative. They understand themselves as deriving their worth and virtue by fighting against naturalized, taken-for-granted power and interest positions masquerading as objective knowledge. But I am not interested in bringing pre-ordained schemata to the audience to find genderedness or cultural hegemony of any sort lurking in the aisles and the unspoken spaces between the seats. Instead, in a culture which has so successfully interpreted the world through the idea that survival depends on greed in the form of competition, found putatively evident even in the behaviour of amoebae and plants, as the ultimate truth of life; in a culture in which individual ownership, particularly of buildings and land, has become a sacrament; in which the highest aim of democracy is to make everyone an individual proprietor; from within this culture, I remain intrigued at the incongruity of the persistence of the phenomenon of gathering to witness, and at the call that there is somehow something of me that feels responsible for every human being, whether or not they belong to the same nation, gender, race or belief system as me.

And more prosaically, I found nothing in these well-worn social scientific methodologies that seemed capable of touching the phenomenon which I vaguely intuited underlying the gathering together in audiences. I suspected that this was because the phenomenon of gathering in audiences is transcultural and transhistoric. People have always gathered to witness. In families to bear witness to their ancestors, as nations to bear witness to their conquering heroes, as believers to bear witness to their gods, as fans to their entertainers, as students to their teachers, as technologically proficient humans to the first steps of one of their kind on the moon. To birth, to death, to marriage, to glorify, to enshrine, to harvest, to condemn, to assent, to judge, to enjoy—in every climate, in every culture, at all times, humans have gathered to witness. And the separate social sciences: anthropology, sociology, gender studies, culture studies, psychology and market research, were all too limited in the scope of their sphere of application and in the specificity of their methodological approaches, to be of use in the general, broad and in-depth study of the specific phenomenon that was modestly beginning to show itself to me. Phenomenologically, these worldly sciences were not sufficiently fundamental or
transcendental in their aim.

I wanted to address the question of what it means to be in an audience, to get at the experience, irrespective of the nature of the event for which the audience had gathered. I wanted to find out what happens when people come together in the face of something that they share an orientation towards. Because of the experiential nature of the study, and because it was about taking up an attitude towards something from within it, phenomenology, with its emphasis on being-in and intentionality, seemed perfectly suited to the task.

But more importantly, after years of learning how to use methods which aim at fitting the object into their own plan, I wanted to learn how to let things be, to let them come to me.

Finally, I should acknowledge the definition of phenomenology which I understand as the single guiding methodological principle of the thesis, from Mikel Dufrenne:

\[ \text{a description which aims at an essence (Dufrenne 1973: xlviii).} \]

§8 Audience in Itself

Phenomenology is not primarily a theory, but an orientation of approach, a methodological attitude. An attitude proceeding from the ontological presuppositions and modes of dwelling of the phenomenologist, suspended to whatever extent is possible, in an attempt to let the object under examination show itself from itself as what it is according to its own parameters. A fine balancing act.

My job is to allow the phenomenon of being in audiences, all audiences, any audiences, to show itself in its essence in its most general generality at its most fundamental transcendental level.

I must disregard, for the moment, the fact that I am going, with this particular friend, to this Thursday night performance of this production of this *Troilus and Cressida*, written by this William Shakespeare, performed by this Bell Shakespeare Company at this Playbox Theatre, at this Sydney Opera House, turning rather to reveal “an essential structure, which is part of an all-embracing constitution” (Husserl 1999: 93) of what it is that we do when we go into audiences.
This requires the difficult task of holding the given individual performance at bay, and turning the attention to the audience in itself; to its contours, its ripples, eddies, ebbs and flows of attention, contagion, applause, laughter, its densities and magnitudes, its holding together, its times and places. The pull to talk about performances, and to subordinate audiences to performances, as though audiences were passive receptacles, is strong. This is why phenomenology is necessary. The phenomenological reduction is specifically aimed, through the epoché, at the suspension of the taken-for-granted, to reveal phenomena in their own right and essence. In any given instance of description, it is entirely necessary to take the performance out of the picture, except to the extent that it is constituted by its audience. To stay, as far as is possible, in Audience. And to speak of it from within it.
B. A Genealogical Essay on Intentionality

How is the life of the soul, which is through and through a life of consciousness, the intentional life of the ego, which has objects of which it is conscious, deals with them through knowing, valuing etc.—how is it supposed to be seriously investigated if intentionality is overlooked (Husserl 1970: 2).

§9 The Connotational Ambit of the Term ‘Intentionality’

The historical and interpretive scope of the conceptual field gathered by the terms intend, intentio, intendo, intention and intentionality is wide, dispersed and incoherent. A story of Greek philosophers, their Arabic and Roman translators and commentators, schoolmen, psychologists, phenomenologists, positivists, analytic philosophers, logicians, brain scientists, cognitive scientists, functionalists, materialists, existentialists, gods, souls, forms, ideas, phantasms, errors, minds, images, representations, essences, noemata, acts, enjoyment, elements, bodies, susceptibilities, relations, reductions, constitutions, processes, propositions, stances, sentences, references, understandings, arcs, threads, webs, latencies, movements, neurons, knots and situations. Attempts to discover consistencies and continuities in definition and usage across these diverse objects, concepts and genres of study proliferate but fail to sustain. It seems that the only common ground in all of these different interpretations and conceptualizations is that they all concern attempts to account in some way for some aspect of the how, the what and the whereby with which the world is apprehended or lived by persons. Perhaps the only common ground shared by all these theories and philosophies is that they all posit intentionality as a basic structure of mentality, and they all constitute this in some way,

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This is an edited version of a longer essay. The full version contains more detail in all areas, particularly the sections on analytic and ancient philosophies, giving a more complete genealogy, and drawing more connections, confluences and congruences between the various disparate regions of the field. In its current form it has been trimmed for the sake of relevance to this thesis, to show what intentionality means in the phenomenological tradition, first to demonstrate certain theoretical presuppositions of the thesis and second to present these developments of the phenomenological tradition to a wider performance studies audience outside of schools of philosophy.
implicit or explicit, as a comportment of aboutness, amongness or directedness towards the things of the world.

Daniel Dennett and John Haugeland, both eminent scholars in the study of intentionality within the Anglo-American analytic tradition of the philosophy of mind, attempt clarification.

The term was coined by the Scholastics in the Middle Ages, and derives from the Latin verb intendo, meaning to point (at) or aim (at) or extend (toward). Phenomena with intentionality point outside themselves, in effect, to something else: whatever they are of or about….Brentano claimed that intentionality is the defining distinction between the mental and the physical; all and only mental phenomena exhibit intentionality. (Dennett & Haugeland 1987).

At the risk of meandering into unnecessary philologizing, I would also point out that the OED (1981: 373) brings the word ‘intend’ into English from Latin and Old French, already muddled with a confusion of senses.

F. entendre in 1415th c. also intendre, to stretch, extend, strain, direct one’s thoughts or faculties, to hear, understand, expect, occupy oneself; L. intendere, to stretch out or forth, to strain, direct, spread out, increase, turn one’s attention, purpose, endeavour, maintain, assert; in med.L also, to understand, interpret.

The extensive and complex development of senses in L. and OF. is reflected also in English. But the chronological appearance of the senses here does not accord with their original development…an attempt at chronological order would only end in chaos…the history of some senses is obscure…the sense of early quotations is also often difficult to determine (373).

Unsurprisingly, this definitional uncertainty has been carried forward and compounded in contemporary usage, with grey areas and inadequate interpretive stabs proliferating between languages, between disciplines, between times, and between individual thinkers. And so the question of intentionality, in whatever disciplines the term is used, is always posed as a problem to be solved. Otherwise it would not be worth writing about.
Intentionality is a theme of this thesis. Audience is fundamentally intentional. This is a phenomenological inquiry and as such works with a very specific and limited concept of intentionality, derived by Heidegger and the existentialists from Husserl, as what happens how and when persons come together and apprehend themselves, each other, and the things of the world. For phenomenology, by dint of its emphasis on the co-constitutive relations between subject and object and its aim at the return to the things themselves, intentionality is a founding moment. Husserl was unambiguous: “Intentionality is the title which stands for the only actual and genuine way of explaining, making intelligible” (1970: 168).

Consequently, this study, as phenomenology, as intentional analysis, must know where it stands in relation to and how it uses the concept of intentionality. So it is appropriate to give a brief overview of the diverse conceptual field drawn together by the term, partly to focus the tradition of thinking of which this writing understands itself as an expression, and partly to sharpen the definition of what the word intentionality means, or more pointedly, does not mean, in this context.

I draw no strict temporal lineage of thinkers and schools and give little critique, but merely aim to lay out some of the more important conceptual co-ordinates in the field. Whilst I realize that this impoverishes and betrays the dense and rich thematic weave of the study of intentionality, this essay must remain a necessarily partial survey of a proliferation of usages and definitions. Many books have been written on single fine points in the whole field I lay out piecemeal here. Questions of the relative merits of one or another scholar’s interpretation of a medieval translation into Latin of a commentary by an Arabic philosopher based on an earlier translation of Aristotle into Arabic from a Latin translation of the Greek, or of whether a particular sentence meets the necessary conditions of failure of substitutivity of terms or referential opacity to be considered truly intentional; or whether intentionality is an ens tertium, a third and separate term from subject and object with the ontological status of pure relation, will unfortunately have to be bypassed here.

The structure of the essay is simple. I discuss Brentano’s founding gesture, pass briefly
through the ways in which intentionality is discussed in analytic philosophy, medieval studies and classical studies, and give a more detailed conceptual history of phenomenological uses. It is by no means complete or systematic. Such an undertaking would be foolish in this context. I attempt to offer as little interpretation as possible and reveal scant new insight into the ground covered. Rather, I seek merely to draw a rough outline of the field, name a few important names, indicate a few key concepts, reiterate certain points, and note some unexpected connections and possibly interesting diversions arising from this odd little corner of the odd little world of philosophy; all with the aim of drawing a line of connection through particular aspects, to furnish the basis on which the approach taken here to the question of Audience becomes possible and might proceed.

§10 Brentano’s Paragraph.

Here something utterly new enters the world (Spiegelberg 1981: 21).

It is customary in what Victor Caston has called the “standard narrative found in encyclopedias and handbooks” (Caston 2001: 23) to begin any discussion of the genealogy of the concept of intentionality with this passage from Franz Brentano’s *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, where he focuses the problem for the first time.

Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on (Brentano 1973: 88).

This tortuous definition, with its complex, multiple negative constructions, its ontological and historical assumptions, its immanences and objects, its “though not wholly unambiguously”, furnished (though not without a good deal of interpretational doubt and controversy) the condition of consciousness as unanimously agreed upon by all
phenomenologists up until Levinas (whose work nevertheless draws its focus in contrast to the concept) and by many other, though by no means all, philosophers and students of mind: *all consciousness is consciousness of something.*

Husserl gives a clear assessment of his view of Brentano’s importance.

> Many people view phenomenology as a continuation of Brentano’s psychology. However highly I estimate this work of genius, and however strongly it (and other writings of Brentano’s) has affected me in younger years, it must still be said that Brentano has remained far from a phenomenology in our sense...Nevertheless he has gained for himself the epoch-making service of making phenomenology possible. He presented to the modern era the idea of *Intentionality,* which he derived out of consciousness itself in immanent description (Husserl 1982a: 59).

I would venture in passing that this “epoch-making” impact on Husserl was so great, not only because of the foregrounding of intentionality, but also because of its derivation “out of consciousness itself in immanent description”. Both of these innovations are fundamental to the project of phenomenology. In Husserlian terms the aim of this thesis is towards transcendental intersubjective Audience through the constitution of the particular intentional structure of audiences, by way of immanent description from within the phenomenon. Brentano’s paragraph and Husserl’s assessment of it are foundational moments of this work.

Brentano’s *Psychology,* published in 1874 in Leipzig, when fledgling schools of experimental psychology were springing up across Europe, sought to clarify the fundamental philosophical concepts underlying the new psychologies and establish a truly scientific psychology.⁴

Psychology had, until the Nineteenth Century, been the concern of philosophy; the object of theories of mind and epistemology, rooted primarily in Aristotle’s *De Anima.* The

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⁴ Although he began his career as a commentator on Aristotle, a few titles from his published output, *On Several Senses of Being in Aristotle, The Origin of Knowledge of Right and Wrong,* and *The Psychology of Aristotle,* reveal a juggling of attention between philosophical and psychological concerns.
works of Locke, Hume and Kant loomed large. Brentano’s *Psychology* emerged from contact with the ideas of his contemporaries, Mill, Lotze and Spencer, his admiration for the positivist philosophy of Comte, and the pioneering psychological work of Helmholtz, Fechner, and Wundt (the last of whom was, not uncoincidentally, the founder of the first laboratory of experimental psychology, and Chair of Philosophy at Leipzig during Brentano’s tenure there).

Brentano found

> nothing to prevent us defining psychology in the terms Aristotle once defined it, namely as the science of the soul...just as the natural sciences study the properties and laws of physical bodies...psychology is the science which studies the laws and properties of the soul (Brentano 1973: 5).

The key was to isolate mental and physical phenomena according to their characteristic qualities. He discovered that “the intentional in-existence, understood as the reference to something as object, is a distinguishing feature of all mental phenomena” (1973: 97).

The debates sparked by Brentano’s paragraph continue: classical and medieval scholars argue over what *intentio* might have meant to whom, analytic philosophers and ontologists argue over the status of mental representations and references, the question of immanent inexistence, leading to the so-called *Immanenzkrise* among his immediate followers (Hedwig 1979: 331), and motivating his student Husserl to elaborate the *noetico-noematic constitution* of consciousness, still fuels debates between objectivists, realists and idealists.

And the use of ‘empirical’ in the title of the *Psychology* is not the ‘empirical’ of contemporary psychology—the methods of observation and measurement in experiment, derived from the physical sciences, providing scientific assurance and authority. Brentano had something very different in mind: “My standpoint is empirical; experience alone is my teacher” (Brentano 1973: xv). In a chapter on the experiential basis of his work, the direction is clear, “Inner perception of our own mental phenomena, then, is the primary source of the experiences essential to psychological investigations” (34).

The description of experience and the thematizing of the concept of intentionality
constitute Brentano’s “fundamental contributions to the development of phenomenological philosophy” (Spiegelberg 1976: 49), Husserl’s “epoch-making” moment, and the condition of possibility of the thinkability of going into audiences and describing what happens there for me.

§11 Some Types of Intentionality Relatively More Distant from the Concerns of this Thesis

a) The Analytic Tradition

The most prevalent school of philosophy in the English speaking world, productive of by far the greatest tonnage of paper and terabytes of data on the subject of intentionality, is predicated on the assumption that whatever we are doing when we are doing the confoundingly miraculous complex of activities which we have come to call thinking can be accounted for, contained and explained as a matter of syntax and semantics, and consequently be represented by logico-linguistic algorithms.

* * *

This strange tale begins with the representational system of propositional calculus devised by Gottlob Frege, who “founded the modern discipline of logic by developing a superior method of formally representing the logic of thoughts and inferences” (Zalta 2004: 2). Questions of the representability of things by thoughts, and the representability of thoughts as logical sentences, are still a major concern of analytic philosophy.

Frege did not write specifically on intentionality, but his opening up of the potential to study mental phenomena in terms of the sentences we use when speaking and thinking of believing, desiring and other mental relations, and his subsequent distinction between Sinn and Bedeutung (Sense and Reference), reveals subtle differences and nuances in understandings of what happens between subject and object, between what we perceive, what it means to us and how it means to us.

Without offering this as a definition, I call a 'thought' something for which the question of truth can arise at all. So I can say: thoughts are senses of sentences, without wishing to assert that the sense of every sentence is a thought. The thought, in itself imperceptible by the
senses, gets clothed in the perceptible garb of a sentence, and thereby we are enabled to grasp it. We say a sentence expresses a thought (Frege 1997b: 327-328).

And so the study of thoughts through the analysis of sentences becomes thinkable. Thought, now perceptible in its new garb, begins its strut down the catwalks of analytic philosophy; and one fundamental definition of aboutness is laid down: thought’s “grasp” of the world.

In address to specific problems with Frege’s work, Bertrand Russell (1905; 1980) develops the concept of propositional attitudes—relational mental states in which persons are connected to propositions through the taking up of an attitude to the contents of a perception or a thought or an imagining.

Encyclopedia Britannica defines it.

Propositional Attitude: Psychological state expressed by a verb that may take a subordinate clause beginning with “that” as its complement. Verbs such as believe, hope, fear, desire, intend, know, all express propositional attitudes (2004).

Roderick Chisholm married Brentano with Frege. In two early works, Perceiving (1957), and ‘Sentences about Believing’ (1956), he set out to add precision to Brentano’s project of distinguishing the mental from the physical, using Frege’s logico-grammatical framework. He formulated the idea of intentional sentences, which describe purely mental acts in the referentially opaque world of human desires, beliefs and hopes, and attempted to lay out criteria according to which a sentence might be considered intentional.

Jaegwon Kim credits Chisholm’s achievement as having introduced the Problematik of intentionality into analytic philosophy, making it a central area of research in philosophy of mind and language...our current use of “intentional” and “intentionality” derives from, and is continuous with, Chisholm’s early work on the special character of intentional and psychological phenomena (Kim 2003: 650).
A postgraduate logician, a specialist in intensionality with an ‘s’, assured me that I should read Jerry Fodor’s 1985 article ‘Fodor's Guide to Mental Representation: The Intelligent Auntie's Vade-Mecum’, to get the whole story on current debates on the question of intentionality with a ‘t’ in analytic philosophy. With politely-barbed, self-deprecating nerdy philosophical humour, written and thought with admirable detachment and rigor, Fodor taxonomizes analytic philosophers as a bunch of squalling children in a playroom, arguing about what a mind might be, what it might be made of, and how it might work.

Intentionality is subsumed under the wider issue of the *Representational Theory of Mind*. The key issues seem to be: a) whether propositional attitudes (usually glossed as beliefs, desires and other mental states) are real, causative, and semantically describable and evaluable, or mere useful fairy tales; b) if so, what relationships, if any do they bear to physical states and processes, particularly in the brain; c) how, and to what extent might propositional attitudes be useful in describing, predicting and explaining behaviour of cognitive systems; d) how do propositional attitudes bear their semantic and causal relations to propositions, to each other and the behaviour of organisms and other intentional systems (how does mental representation represent, if at all)?

Fodor’s “sightseeing…tour of an intellectual landscape” (1985: 96) surveys, at the one extreme, common sense belief/desire folk psychologists who believe in and work with the reality, causality and consequent efficacy of propositional attitudes, assessed in terms of *satisfaction conditions* rather than the truth values of non-attitudinal propositions; to instrumentalists who believe that “while there are strictly speaking no such things as beliefs and desires” (96), they are not only useful ways of talking about and predicting behaviour, but provide a “feasible explanation of how rationality is achieved” (79); to ambivalent, anti-realist, functionalist, cognitive scientists who do not strictly believe in beliefs and desires or *mental representation* at all, but work towards and anticipate the

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5 The same logician, a brilliant young man with a fine career in modal logic ahead of him, took great pains to impress upon me the urgency of not construing any unnecessary or flippant relations between the ‘s’ and the ‘t’ varieties of intent/sionality. More below.
possibility of a plausible level of explanation of functional mental states by neurological science; to hard-line eliminative materialists, who believe that any consideration of beliefs and desires is simply lazy bad science. Within and between these major positions, he notes disagreements on finer points of the main arguments between nominalists, externalists, standard realists, two-factor theorists, functional role semanticists, associationists, behaviourists, and others, arguing about types, tokens, assertions, monadicity, inferential relations, non-contingent properties, parallelism, isomorphism, truth conditions, the productivity of causal roles, content relations, sub-sentential constituents, referential opacity, mental processes, intelligence (artificial and otherwise), Turing machines, and more.

Although Fodor states his intention in this paper as a “wish to make as much of the consensus as I can explicit…in order to provide new participants with a quick guide to the game” (76), I suspect that it would take a Bourdieuan anthropological sociology of a department or conference of analytic philosophers to find out what these people think it is they are actually doing. If I may be so bold.

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Daniel Dennett has produced the most accessible, widely read writings on intentionality (1981; 1996). For him, minds are fundamentally a matter of more or less complex intentional (or apparently intentional) systems of prediction and actions taken in relation to things, ideas and organisms.

Dennett posits intentional systems and the intentional stance. An intentional system is defined as “a system whose behaviour can be—at least sometimes—explained and predicted by relying on ascriptions to the system of beliefs and desires (and hopes, fears, intentions, hunches,…)”. We can think and act as if a chess-playing computer “wants” to win; that the mouse “fears” the cat and “desires” the cheese; the cheetah “hopes” it will catch the gazelle. This taking up of the intentional stance towards minds allows us to make tolerably acceptable and useful explanations of behaviour. (Dennett 1981: 1).

The intentional stance is the most sophisticated but the most uncertain of a hypothesized trio of possible stances that an intentional system may take up in relation to another or to things, ideas and states of affairs. The most basic and “safest” of the stances is the
physical stance, from which “our predictions are based on the actual physical state of the particular object, and are worked out applying whatever knowledge we have of the laws of nature” (1981: 2).

When “the number of critical variables in the physical constitution of the object” (1981: 2) becomes so overwhelming, it may be productive to adopt a “fancier style of prediction from the design stance”. From the design stance I do not need to know the actual physical laws which make the actions of the system possible. I trust that if I press a few buttons in a particular order my alarm clock will wake me up in the morning. “I simply assume that it has a particular design” (1996: 29).

It is worth noting that Dennett’s article ‘Intentional Systems’ begins and ends with reference to Brentano’s thesis of the intentional as “the mark that sunders the universe in the most fundamental way: dividing the mental from the physical” (1981: 13).

* The degrees and kinds of relatedness or non-relatedness between intensionality with an ‘s’ and intentionality with a ‘t’, are apparently the subject of much debate. I remember the youthful certainty, relish and vigour with which my acquaintance the brilliant young postgraduate logician triumphantly demonstrated (exactly how I cannot remember), that any link between the two was “at best weak”.

It seems to me that the ‘s’ species is best understood in opposition to extensionality. Roughly, very roughly, the extension of a term is the thing or things to which it refers. Intensionality arises as the ways in which a term refers in referentially opaque contexts where substitutions of terms fail and truth values remain indistinct. The supposed fact that propositional attitudes, with their necessary recourse to satisfaction conditions, rather than truth-values, meet these two criteria, has led some thinkers to posit them as a specific subset of propositions exhibiting intensionality.

* Eliminativism stands at the furthest reaches of the study of intentionality from the concerns of this thesis.

Briefly, one species of eliminativism has its genesis in the writings of W. V. O. Quine,
who, in two seminal works, ‘On What There Is’ (1948), and *Word and Object* (1960), developed the case for doing away with intentional objects and states. The other, dominant, and much tougher, school of eliminativist thinking is exemplified by the work of Patricia and Paul Churchland, for whom concepts such as mind, consciousness, and rationality, are mere ghosts of language, concepts without any real content. (Churchland, 1986). For these people, the brain contains all the answers.

Finally, apologies to Messrs. Sellars, Searle, Chalmers, Dretske, Davidson, Kripke, Wittgenstein, Putnam, Strawson, Rorty, and Ryle, maybe even Ludwig, Tye, Davies, Flanagan, Burge, and Siewert, and undoubtedly others of whom I have never heard, who have made significant contributions to this region of the field, but time is short and I’ve got other things in mind.

* In spite of my firmly held belief that partisanship is the enemy of open inquiry, I have to acknowledge that I find it strange and even a touch disturbing that so many of the finest minds and most powerful thinkers of the great empires of Britain and America have fallen for the seduction of subsuming thought to grammar, to questions of syntax and semantics which rob the life out of even the utterances they were originally designed to describe.

I have no choice but to agree with Sartre’s understatement.

> To be sure, the parallel between grammar and thought is in many cases more than doubtful; in fact, the question should be revised completely and the relation of language to thought studied from an entirely new approach (Sartre 1984: 535).

**b) Ancient and Medieval Theories**

The only thing the Scholastics and Husserl might have in common with regard to intention is, perhaps, the connection with mental acts in general…at any rate, we cannot speak of a common Scholastic and phenomenological concept of extra-practical intention (Spiegelberg 1979: 12).

After Brentano’s paragraph, the next most important plot point in Victor Caston’s
"standard narrative" (Caston 2001: 23) of the history of intentionality is Herbert Spiegelberg’s 1936 essay, ‘‘Intention and Intentionality’’ in the Scholastics, Brentano and Husserl’ (Spiegelberg: 1981), an attempt to “work out more clearly the systematic problems that stand behind the historical development” (1981: 3) of the terms intention and intentional (intentionality).

He first contends that the two terms, though interrelated, are products of sufficiently divergent genealogies to necessitate separate examination, “despite the fact that in some places this differentiation is difficult to maintain” (3).

His second differentiation, less difficult, more spurious, and less interesting for the purposes of this thesis, is between ‘practical’ and ‘extra-practical’ intention; the former referring to the everyday usage as a willed intention by an agent to achieve some result or outcome, and the latter to the philosophical usage designating directedness towards, aboutness and relatedness.

These all too clean distinctions need to be called into question. Scholars as diverse as Levinas and Dennett have pointed to the complex web of assumptions and dependencies underlying the split between these two usages.  

However, for Spiegelberg the distinction stands and is useful. His rough genealogy begins with the claim that the extra-practical intention is “demonstrably” derived from the Scholastics, pinpointing its roots in the work of Averroes and Avicenna, medieval Arab commentators on Aristotle, for whom the Latin intentio corresponds with the Arabic ma’na, denoting “sense, meaning, idea, concept, matter” (5). This development traces forward through Aquinas, Scotus, William of Ockham and other Scholastics, from meanings of ‘concept’ or ‘content’, through a variety of indistinct and unsystematic usages to the actus intellectus of Scotus, which seems to prefigure the concept of mental

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6 Levinas is to the point: “The Medieval term intentionality, taken up by Brentano and Husserl, does indeed have in scholasticism and phenomenology a neutralized meaning with respect to the will. It is the teleological movement animating the thematization that justifies the recourse, however neutralized it may be, to voluntarist language. The Meinen in its identifying statement is cancelled when it is translated by aim” (Levinas 1981: 189, n. 24).
act in Brentano and Husserl.

The brief survey Spiegelberg gives of these developments has led to consternation among specialist Ancient and Medieval scholars, who have found all manner of misconceptions, misreadings and inaccuracies in the account. As Joós observes, much of the uncertainty, difficulty and debate surrounding these interpretations stems from the fact that although all of these Medieval philosophers used the term *intentio*, none of them wrote *ex professo* on the subject, and there appear to be huge divergences between their own various usages (Joós 1989: 43).

Although Spiegelberg credits Husserl, in his appropriation of Brentano’s term, as “the first to separate the concept of intentionality from the notion of immanent inexistence and…reinterpreted it, as relatedness to, direction toward, the object” (Spiegelberg 1981: 16), he goes on to criticize Husserl’s confusion between “intention as directedness and intention in the sense of constituting an object” (18).

Once again, it seems to me that the problem is not Husserl’s confusion, but the attempt to draw a clear-cut distinction. The fine-grained relational tissue of connections between constitution, pointing at, agency, mental acts, and the question of how the world comes to us as we come to it, requires, to find its measure, a more delicate touch than a heavy-handed this or that approach.

Spiegelberg concludes:

> the differences in meaning have become so far reaching that all that remains is a sameness of label, and…terminological agreements between medieval and modern, between Scholastic and phenomenological philosophy, must be treated with extreme caution, in the interests of both, and in the interests of the subject matter itself (1981: 19).

§12 *The Phenomenological Tradition*

a) Husserl—Intentional Analysis: Noema and Noesis

It is hard to imagine how anything could justify calling itself phenomenology without reference, implicit or explicit, to the work of Edmund Husserl, despite the fact that his
overtly Cartesian aim of establishing a “radically genuine, ultimately…all embracing science” (Husserl 1999: 7), through which “we can reach the absolute being and process in which the being of the world shows its ultimate truth” (52 fn.) sounds markedly at odds with the Twentieth Century perspectivists who populate the history of phenomenology.

Although I think it is safe to say that Husserl never fully achieved his lofty aim, he did, in the rigorous devotion of his life to the cause, and in the effect of his work on subsequent thinkers, open up pathways towards a complete rethinking of what it means to be human and how we inhabit the worlds in which we live. Among Dorion Cairns’ list of 27 of Husserl’s major contributions to philosophy, he credits:

- analysis of the general structure of the conscious act and its intentional correlate—the object as it is posited with its objective sense and in its manner of givenness… Analysis of the horizon of acts predelineated by the given act, especially the horizon of acts intending the object as identical (Cairns, 1939: 236-237).

Intentionality, as the defining moment of consciousness, was important to Husserl’s ultimate goal of a knowledge of the world grounded in “apodictically evident certainty” (Husserl 1999: 16); first, methodologically, as the constitution of the way through which the given evidence of anything is apprehended and ascertained; and second (precisely because of the former), as a phenomenon in itself which must necessarily be made clear in order for phenomenological inquiry to have any basis.

In a Husserlian sense, the aim of this thesis would be the clarification through intentional analysis of the noetico-noematic constitution of audiences to reveal the transcendental structure of Audience, considered in terms of the eidos gathering to witness, essential to all activities considered here as audiences. Some definition is necessary.

By means of the phenomenological reduction, the phenomenologist, in the role of “non-participant onlooker at himself” (37), can clarify the noetico-noematic constitution of intentionality.

I, the meditating phenomenologist set myself the all-embracing task of uncovering myself, in my full concreteness—that is, with all the intentional correlates that are included therein (38).
The distinction between and correlation of *noesis* and *noema* are central to Husserl’s understanding of intentionality and the core of his gift to philosophy. In one sense the *noetico-noematic doctrine* emerges from Brentano’s *Immanenzkrise*. Husserl is known to have attended Brentano’s lectures and copied his notebooks (Hedwig 1979: 333). From Brentano’s insight that all consciousness is consciousness of something, Husserl derived the idea of a *correlative constitution* of intentionality through which objects become objectivated by objectivating acts. In another sense the doctrine is a solution to “the problem of identity as stated by Hume” (Gurwitsch 1966: 125-131). Hume’s explanation of the way in which we take an object to be identical through separate perceptions of it, by *resemblance* and forgetting of difference, offers no adequate explanation of how the identity or sameness of the object endures. Gurwitsch contends that Husserl’s theory of the noetico-noematic constitution of intentionality gives “the only (solution) that exists” (131).

Over-simply put, the *noesis* is the perceptual (or other intentional) act itself, and the *noema* is the ideal referential core which unifies the multiplicity of separate acts into a given consistent meaning.

Husserl takes perception as an exemplary instance of mentality because it is the “primal experience from which all other experiencing acts derive a major part of their grounding force” (Husserl 1982a: 82-3). So through the study of perception, with its obvious intentional structure, it is possible to clarify the general structure of intentionality and consequently consciousness itself.

Gurwitsch evaluates the noetico-noematic constitution as “a totally new and radically different…conception of mind”. He understands *noeses* as “psychological events occurring at certain moments in time… acts of meaning apprehension” (Gurwitsch 1982: 60). Each act is one perceptual moment, one adumbration or *profile* (*Abschattung*) in a possibly infinite series of potential viewpoints. Each noesis, although it occurs from a particular standpoint, aims at the same object. The meaning it apprehends (this towel, this house, this state of affairs) persists as identical throughout the separate acts through the *noema*, a kind of ideal concretizing principle, allowing unity and meaning to the partial perceptions.
Consciousness must be defined as a noetico-noematic correlation, that is to say, a correlation between items pertaining to two heterogeneous planes: on the one hand the plane of temporal psychological events, and on the other hand that of atemporal, unreal, that is to say, ideal entities that are the noemata, or meanings understood in the broader sense…correlated items demand and require each other (Gurwitsch 1982: 65).

The methodology of this thesis owes much to Husserl’s innovations in intentional analysis and immanent description as reduction. Husserl’s clarification of the minutiae of the correlative structure of perception and other mental states and attitudes is where the possibility of the thinking of this thesis begins. If this thesis were entirely a Husserlian intentional analysis, it would conceive the constitution of an audience as a complex group noetico-noematic relation. The relationships between audiences and the performances which require them for completion, between the individual audience members, between the audience members and the place, time, historical and social conditions in which they gather, would become apprehendable as intentionalities which could be peeled away through intentional analysis, revealing radical insights into the total phenomenon of what it means to be in Audience.

In closing, it is sobering to note that the Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy dismisses the whole idea of noesis and noema with, “although commentators have suggested various interpretations, there is no agreed reason to think that anything answers to these terms” (Blackburn 1996: 263).

b) Heidegger—Being-in-the-World

Heidegger enters the field of the study of intentionality with a complete recasting of the question in the context of a “more fundamental formulation” of the “ontological constitution of perception” (Heidegger 1982a: 49-50), in order to deal with the unquestioned flaws he finds in the ontological categories underlying the work of Kant, and the whole "undeviating continuity of tradition" (117) of Western philosophy.

7 Italics in original.
With Kant, and already long before him, the stock of ontological categories handed down from antiquity had become routine, deracinated and deprived of its native soil, its origin no longer understood (117).

Heidegger’s relationship with Husserl, their agreements and disputes are well documented. Levinas adjudges the worth of the relationship to the history of phenomenology in practical terms.

The intense philosophical life which runs through Heidegger’s philosophy sometimes permits us to sharpen the outline of Husserl’s philosophy by accentuating some aporias, raising some problems, making certain views more precise, or opposing others (Levinas 1973: xxxiii).

Heidegger’s ontological project gave thought to a now obvious, but at the time unthought potential in Husserl’s theory of intentionality. Although Heidegger’s work was entirely rooted in questions opened by his former teacher's enquiries, he found him continually running aground on his own ontological categories. Husserl’s complex, persistent, confusing, groundbreaking research into the structure of consciousness and perception must remain, according to Heidegger, an ultimately ungrounded and ungroundable attempt to deal with intentionality, precisely because it proceeds from the unquestioned presupposition of a given subject relating to objects in a framework of the act of perceiving, the perceived, and the perceivedness of the perceived.

Consequently, Heidegger further radicalized the importance and value of the study of perception as an entry point to the study of being. It is through perception that we can allow the object to reveal itself to us in its being as what it is. This occurs because perception takes from the extant its coveredness and releases it so that it can show itself in its own self…perceiving is a release of extant things which lets them be encountered…Perceivedness, that is, the specific release of a being in perception is a mode of uncoveredness in general (70).

He reframes the subjective/objective approach to the question of perception, arguing that what we perceive is neither something in the subject that refers to an object, nor an ideal concretizing meaning principle, finding rather that “something like an understanding of
extantness is already implicit in the intentionality of perception...perception is directed toward the extant itself” (71). The directedness-towards of intentionality includes a “pre-conceptual” understanding of extantness which “belongs...to the nature of perceptual comportment”. This understanding does not need to be explicitly performed, rather it is “implicit in the basic constitution of the Dasein itself” (71). The concept of “belongs to”, with its assumption of primordial apriority, enables Heidegger to circumvent the subject/object problem because “the directional sense ...belongs to intentional comportment as the understanding of being belonging to intentionality” (113). Subject and object are not primordial categories. First, “we cannot decide anything about intentionality starting from a concept of the subject because intentionality is the essential though not the most original structure of the subject itself” (1982a: 65), and further,

the expression ‘relation of perception’ means, not a relation into which perception first enters as one of the relata...but rather a relation which perceiving itself is, as such...this relation, which we signify by intentionality, is the a priori comportmental character of what we call self-comporting (61).

So, in a traditional understanding, a perception would not exist without the presence of both relata. In Heidegger’s understanding, on the other hand, the intentional comportment of Dasein is not only always already there, but is “precisely the ontological condition of possibility of every and any transcendence” (65). Further, “it is precisely intentionality and nothing else in which transcendence consists” (64).8

This enables Heidegger to understand perception as just one manifestation (and not the most fundamental one) of the fundamental intentional/transcending structure of comportment. He lends his own formidable phenomenological descriptive power to the explication of other intentional structures. The intentionality of production, for instance, is a prior condition of perception, because “a thing's being produced is after all the presupposition for its capacity to be apprehended in perception” (113).9 The intentionality

8 As is discussed below in the section on transcendence, Heidegger subsumes the question of the perception of objects to the broader question of transcendence.

9 And, in passing, the ontology of the intentionality of production is the necessary precondition behind the
of perceiving an object, despite being based in a pre-understanding of the object's extantness in its givenness, is only one doorway to the understanding of its being. The object’s producedness underlies the possibility of its perception. The intentionality of production tells how the object comes into being. Heidegger also elucidates other intentionalities of assertion, respect and unveiling, as examples of other, possibly prior modes of intentional comportment.

This opens a very different path for this inquiry than might be given to this project by an understanding of Audience through its noetico-noematic constitution. In light of Heidegger’s discoveries, and in accordance with his directive that “[t]he aim is to uncover what is perceived in such a way that it exhibits itself in and of its own self” (69), the aim here is to reveal the intentional structures peculiar to Audience. My contention is that transcendental intersubjective Audience is the essence of a specific complex intentional situatedness—gathering to witness. This inquiry is conducted in and from the situation of audiences conceived as a directedness-towards-together from within. I wish to apprehend my involvement in the web of comportments which hangs me together with the other audience members in Audience, to reveal the ground of those comportments as they are experienced and lived from…,

c) ‘The Body’ of Existentialism

Herbert Spiegelberg characterizes existentialism as the “French phase” of phenomenology (1960: 425). Edward S. Casey, writes of “ten years of intensive and unusually productive philosophical activity in France” between 1943-53, “in which phenomenology assumed, irrevocably, a different direction and allure” (Casey 1973: xv).

This flurry of activity, based on a return to Husserl, leapfrogging back over Heidegger, but with Being and Time firmly in the back pocket, was a renaissance in French philosophy; a reinvigoration which claimed to recoup the rift between idealism and Bergsonian realism which had split the French philosophical scene for the previous thought of the madeness of the world by a God who made everything—of the need of the world to have been made. And unmadeness is the condition of God’s infinity and divinity.
hundred years. Sartre conceived it as a liberation from “the French philosophy that has moulded us (which) understands little besides epistemology” (Sartre 2002: 383).

Existentialism is a loose grab-bag of Catholics, atheists, Jews, communists, ethicists, ontologists, mystics, pessimists and freedom fighters who wrote diverse phenomenological works using different methodologies. But, as Casey notes again, they shared “an almost exclusive attention onto concrete and corporeal strata of experience” (Casey 1973: xvi). With existentialism, the idea of ‘the (human) body’, comes into focus as the main preoccupation of philosophy. And with the body conceived as the site of the primordial engagement with the world, the allure of realm of the sensible opens as essence and precondition, as the immersion from which thought, representation, consciousness and experience arise to appear.

i. Sartre—Empty Transcendence

The philosophy of transcendence throws us out on to the highway, in the midst of dangers, under a dazzling light (Sartre 2002a: 383).

Jean-Paul Sartre, the most quotable of philosophers, and the name which comes most readily to mind in association with existentialism, contributed very little redefinition or elaboration to the concept of intentionality. Rather, his use of the concept is axiomatic. He accepted Husserl and Brentano’s assertion that consciousness is fundamentally intentional. His differences with Husserl are primarily to do with the specific structures of relations of the ego, reflection and consciousness.

Oddly enough, his most thought-provoking contribution to the study of intentionality in particular is a gasping, excited, two and a half page love letter to the world in exaltation of Husserl. ‘Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea of Husserl’s Phenomenology’, written in 1939, early in Sartre’s career, claims for Husserl the achievement of throwing us “into the dry dust of the world, on to the plain earth, amidst things”. In this article, he encapsulates the understanding of the nature of intentionality implicit in the conception of consciousness which underlies his work in The Transcendence of the Ego and Being and Nothingness. You can hear him breathing between sentences as he defines intentionality as a bursting towards, a tearing out, a whirlwind, a flying, springing, “surpassing of
Simultaneously, in freeing things from “the malodorous brine of the mind”, Husserl has “restored to things their horror and their charm…(and) restored us to the world of artists and prophets”. The affective qualities of the things of the world are no longer “the sum of our subjective reactions”, but are properties of the things themselves restored to their own autonomy (383).

For Sartre, consciousness contains nothing, but is pure intentionality, totally transcendent, pure being beyond itself, absolute flight, utter refusal to be substance. It is empty, impersonal, a nothingness which “is no longer a collection of representations…it is quite simply a first condition and an absolute source of existence” (2002b: 405).

### ii. Merleau-Ponty—Operative and Motor Intentionalities

Maurice Merleau-Ponty hears the call of a “broadened notion of intentionality” (1962: xviii) from “an unthought-of element in Husserl’s thought” (1964a: 100), including and grounded in an always already but never completely constituted “pre-theoretical constitution…an operating or latent intentionality like that which animates time, more ancient than the intentionality of human acts” (165). Although this operative intentionality, this ancient pre-human towardsness, would be structured, like perception, as a “grouping of intentional threads around certain knots…it could not possibly reach completion in the intellectual possession of a noema” (165). It is a more primordial intentionality which “produces the natural and antepredicative unity of the world and of our life…our relationship to the world as it is unceasingly enunciated within us” (1962: xviii). This is not an intentionality which grasps objects, but the primary intentionality which we live, and of which thought and objectivity are but manifestations.

Heidegger discovered that primordial Being cannot be objectively grasped. Merleau-Ponty elaborates this approach: “the world is not what I think, but what I live through” (1962: xvi). The philosopher in this situation cannot critically analyze intentionality as though it were an apprehendable object, but rather can only “place it once more before our eyes and present it for our ratification”, as it is lived (1962: xviii). This is an important methodological presupposition of this thesis. Husserl’s method of immanent
description of phenomena as they are experienced, becomes valued as the means of access to allow life to show itself to itself. Dilthey’s call for a science by which “life grasps life” (Dilthey 1976: 181) gains a grade of clarity.

Operative intentionality is figured as an intentional arc “which projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physiological, ideological and moral situation”, and which consequently “brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensibility and motility” (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 136).

As with Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty’s innovations in thinking on intentionality arise and are developed in the context of an ontological rethink. I can posit the prepredicative or preobjective realm because “I am my body” (1964a: 5).

Whilst it is not my intention here to rehearse the well-worn interpretations of Merleau-Ponty’s ontology of the body, I do intend to use it in helping to clarify some of the mysteries and unthought-of elements in the question of what it means to be in Audience, so it does need to be explicated in a couple of features which make it germane to this project.

My body, in its operative intentionality, belongs to the realm of the preobjective apriori, and so enables me to

rediscover, as anterior to the ideas of subject and object, the fact of my subjectivity and the nascent object, that primordial layer at which both things and ideas come into being (1962: 219).

By beginning his ontological investigations with “the body”, Merleau-Ponty turns Brentano’s project of intentionality as the mark of the mental completely on its head. Extending Husserl’s concepts of Leib and Körper, Merleau-Ponty derives mentality as a consequence of my body’s ambiguous relationship with itself; it is not only constituted for me as an object among the other objects of nature, but is also the means by and through which I live. Consequently, my body can never be fully constitutable as an object for itself.

My body, always present for me, and yet involved...in so many objective relationships sustains their co-existence with it and communicates to them all the pulse of its duration...no longer
conceived as an object of the world, but as our means of communication with it, to the world no longer conceived as a collection of determinate objects, but as the horizon latent in all our experience (92).

So the question of intentionality becomes one of the sustenance of co-existence and involvement. The structure of the co-existences and involvements sustaining and sustained by my body in the intentional webs in which it is held is grounded in the fundamental distinction between the here of my body as the field within which my perceptive power is localized, and the there of the objects of the world. My body is as much there for me as it is the here from which I operate. By dint of its ambiguous status as both object for me and as the site from which I perceive, my body becomes construable as a “perceiving thing…the vinculum of self and things” (1964a: 166). And just as my own subjectivity and objectivity show up as “blurred” (167) in my body’s ambiguity, it must follow that because “the perceived thing rests upon the body…(which is) nothing less but nothing more than the things’ condition of possibility” (173), so the thing as the objective pole in relation with myself, equally and essentially can only be apprehended with the blur of indistinctness of its appearance. The objectivity of the object is as resistant to complete apprehension as is my body itself. As object, a thing, state of affairs or aim can never be more discrete than “the pole of my body’s operations…woven into the same intentional fabric as my body” (167). The object, as perceived, can never reach completion because it must always “reflect my own incarnation” (167).

Merleau-Ponty’s other main contribution to the history of intentionality is his concept of motor intentionality. Although he admits that pure motor intentionality is difficult to isolate or apprehend, because it is “concealed behind the objective world it helps to build up”, he is clear that motility is “basic intentionality” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 138). Because it is bodily intentionality it must be construed as an I can rather than an I know (137). Perception is no more knowledge of objects than movement is “thought about movement” or bodily space is “space thought of or represented” (137).

Our bodily experience of movement is not a particular case of knowledge; it provides us access to the world and the object...which
has to be recognized as original and perhaps as primary. My body has its world, or understands its world, without having to make use of my ‘symbolic’ or ‘objectifying function’ (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 140-141).

Sean Kelly attempts to elucidate the specific embodied logic of Merleau-Ponty’s motor intentionality as a form of understanding. He contends that such a bodily understanding as picking up a cup is “not an understanding I can have independent of my bodily activity with respect to it…my bodily activity with respect to the object just is my way of understanding it” (Kelly 2001: 15). However, because it is an understanding attained through lived “bodily sensitivities” rather than cognitive or reflective representations, it is not fully graspable: “motor intentional activity…essentially discloses the world to us…but cannot be captured in the process of doing so” (21).10

iii. Dufrenne—Pure Intentional Being

If the ordinary object invites us to transcend perception, the aesthetic object brings us back to it invincibly (Dufrenne 1973: 223).

In The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience, in description of the communion between the “spectator” and the work of art in the aesthetic object, Mikel Dufrenne, after Roman Ingarden, asserts that in the work of art, “the represented object keeps us clearly

10 A theoretical conception which appears adequate to the task of the description of what is going on in audiences is beginning to emerge. If we are fundamentally our bodies, and if those bodies are inserted into situations by means of different types of corporeal understandings, then, to get to the bottom of what is going on in any audience it is necessary to apprehend the modes of bodily insertion in audiences as the first task, and build a broadened conception not only of intentionality, but of understanding, action and meaning in the context of audiences, and not be blinded by received categories such as intellectual vs. emotional responses, and backwardly built-up impossible hermeneutic/semiotic reconstructions of supposed meaning processes that the ‘spectator’ might be undergoing. I have been criticized by proponents of these approaches on the basis that the transcendental phenomenological approach throws out the baby with the bathwater. I believe that it is necessary to throw out the baby, the bathwater, the bath itself, the word ‘bath’, the bathroom, the whole house and all of its plumbing. It is a comfortable and familiar house for those who dwell there, but the views are very limited and it is all built on a foundation of unworkable, ungroundable mistakes about what we are and how we operate. We need to find a way of beginning.
within the plane of the intentional”. Moreover, the aesthetic object is “the purely intentional object”, instantiating “purely intentional being” (Dufrenne 1973: 206).

However, Dufrenne conducts no deeper investigation or elaboration of the term intentionality per se, but takes it up as a given. His position is largely in accord with Merleau-Ponty’s couching of an intentional apriori in the sensible body. He elaborates a general theory of concrete embodied perception at the level of the sensible,11 in which intentionality is figured at times in a Husserlian language of abschattungen and noetic/noematic correlations, and at times in language reminiscent of Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger, “between the thing and the one who perceives it there is an understanding anterior to any logos” (1973: xlviii). This perception

is precisely the expression of this close bond between object and subject, a bond through which the object is immediately lived by the subject in the irreducible experience of an original truth which cannot be assimilated to the synthoses effected by conscious judgement (Dufrenne 1973: 220).

If there is anything different from his forebears in Dufrenne’s use of intentionality, it comes from his tendency towards emphasizing a kind of agency in the object.

I cannot say that I constitute the aesthetic object. Rather it constitutes itself in me in the very act by which I intend it, since I do not intend it by positing it as outside myself but by vowing myself to its service…instead of positing the object, consciousness embraces the object, which affirms itself in this embrace (232).

Although he appears at times to tend towards the priority of the object:—“the cosmological seems to have the initiative in comparison with the existential”—he holds firm to the contention that “we must refuse to give priority to either factor” (454). He suggests that in order to apprehend an object as objective, the subject performs “an act of

11 The use of the word sensible here is unfaithful to Dufrenne’s translator, Edward Casey, who translates le sensible as ‘the sensuous’, because of the obvious “misleading connotations” of the English word ‘sensible’, which would suggest a cognitive process of making sense, rather than the prior perceptual, concrete sensation of the body. I use “the sensible” throughout to remain consistent with Lingis’ translation of Levinas’ similar concept, which I use elsewhere in the thesis.
withdrawal…in that the totality formed by subject and object must be disintegrated in order that the intentional movement of the for-itself, by which it opposes itself to an object, can be accomplished” (346).

Dufrenne is drawn to this emphasis by his careful following of the intentional threads by which his subject-matter, the aesthetic object, essentially shared, is given.

Here again, the aesthetic object constitutes a privileged case in that it is doubly tied to subjectivity. First, to the subjectivity of the spectator, from whom it requires the perception necessary for its manifestation. Second, to the subjectivity of the creator, from whom it has required the activity necessary for its creation (Dufrenne 1987: 7).

Also, the aesthetic object is “capable of expression and contains within itself a world of its own that is completely different from the objective world in which it is situated…and is thus a quasi subject” (7). This gives rise to a thought to which “would correspond an object which would be at once subjective and objective” (444). The strict polarity of subject and object becomes tangled here and the explication reveals “the paradox of intentionality” (7). Subject and object, though distinct and irreducible, are nevertheless fundamentally correlative and requiring of each other. “The object exists both by means of and in front of the subject” (7). It becomes necessary to clear “the ground upon which rests the bond that unites them” (7).12

The bond is formed as a “consubstantiality…of an original communication” (7), and the literal definition of knowledge (connaître) as a mutual birth (co-naître). For all objects, but moreso for the aesthetic object,

intentionality is no longer an aim or mere intention toward but a participation with…not merely to be conscious of something but to associate myself with it…(in) an act of communion…we are dealing rather with the acquisition of an intimacy (1973: 406).

12 This question, once again, of the subjective object or the objective subject is not a radical reformulation of any sort, but seems to be an inevitable consequence of our ambiguous status for ourselves as Leib and Körper.
But unlike Merleau-Ponty and Levinas, who dig deeper to purge the paradox, Dufrenne’s approach attempts to lay out the constitutive threads of the apriori consubstantial intimacy.

The subject’s relation to the world is “constitutive on at least three planes”. The corporeal apriori (attributed to Merleau-Ponty), which “trace out the structure of the world experienced by the lived body”; the representational apriori “which determine the possibility of an objective knowledge”; and the affective apriori “which open up a world lived and felt by the deep self in the first person”. These three intentional modes are constitutive of “the three basic attitudes of the subject”, by which it “successively assumes a relation to the lived, represented and felt worlds” (445).

The clarification of these intentional attitudes does not constitute a significant uncovering of the unthought as radical as that achieved by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty in their relation to the work of Husserl, but is characteristic of Dufrenne’s patient phenomenological skill. He is as rigorous and steady as the Sartre of Being and Nothingness in the way he holds the threads of the paradox and follows them to their conclusion. His ability to bring together the diverse basic projects of other thinkers in the service of his aim is inspirational to this thesis.

Nevertheless, the most crucial import of Dufrenne’s work to this thesis lies elsewhere, through light shed by his concepts of witness, public and spectator. The value is threefold. First, his concentration on the experience of the spectator shows the way to the possibility of bracketing out the performance from the question of Audience, thereby revealing the world of Audience in its own right. Second, his concept of the ideal aesthetic object, which mediates the work and the spectator, gives rise to the thinkability of an ideal conception of Audience as a transcendence, neither the individual audience members nor the performance, but requiring and constitutive of both. And most importantly, his idea of witness as completion of the truth of the work is one of the major figures in the understanding of the constitution of Audience.

These two discoveries lay open and encourage an approach to the “purely intentional being” of the phenomenon of Audience in which we find ourselves immersed.
iv. Levinas – Before and After Intentionality

Levinas uproots intentionality. The intentional relation between a knowing subject and its object is not a fundamental given, but an achievement. He reverses it, finds its condition and supersedes it. Inspired by Heidegger, he “descends through the harmonics” of the history of phenomenology (Levinas 1983: 101), re-attuning minutely detailed overtones of temporality, knowledge and sensibility, changing the register of the question and going beyond it. Critique and questions abound in his wake. To what extent was he faithful to Husserl? How radical are his departures? Where is Heidegger lurking? Can he be called a phenomenologist or is he a structuralist?

But this is an absurd industry. Levinas himself had no such confusion.

Doubtless it is Husserl who is at the origin of my thinking. It is to him that I owe the concept of intentionality animating consciousness and especially the idea of the horizons of meaning which grow blurred when thought [la pensée] is absorbed in what it thinks [la pensé]…Horizons of meaning, which “intentional” analysis rediscovers when it focuses on the thought [la pensée] that “has forgotten” in reflection…Above all, I owe to Husserl—but also to Heidegger—the principles of such analyses, the examples and models that have taught me how to get at those horizons and how to look for them (Levinas 1998c: 123).

In Totality and Infinity, written in the middle of his career, and marking an ontological twist in his transition from existentialist to ethicist, from intentionality to responsibility, Levinas reduces Husserl’s conception of intentionality to its representationalist origins, and contrasts it with his own interpretation—the intentionality of enjoyment.

Levinas diagnoses as an “obsession”, the continual return in Husserl’s work of “the thesis that every intentionality is either a representation or founded on a representation” (Levinas 1969: 122). This is the inevitable consequence of Husserl’s “excessive attachment to theoretical consciousness” (123).

But for Levinas, representation is by no means an “unconditioned condition”. It is “bound to a very different “intentionality”” (126). Ontologically, there is an anterior mystery to plumb. And further, in the intentionality of representation, under the mastery of the
noema, the object “despite its independence...falls under the power of thought” (123). In the attempt to render the object as “an exteriority surrendering in clarity and without immodesty its whole being to thought” (124), “the object’s resistance as an exterior being vanishes” (124), as “the subject that thinks by representation...hearkens to its own thought” (126). The thing itself, in effect, vanishes. Or, as Levinas would have it, “the distinction between me and the object, between interior and exterior, is effaced” (124).

This must ring alarm bells for anyone attempting to get back to the things themselves. Levinas seeks remedy in a transcendental plunge to the subtendent, “wholly other” intentionality of enjoyment, to which the intentionality of representation is bound. To ground the thinking of the objectification of objects on a more tangible basis it is not enough to merely assume the reality of the world as there, given and taken-for-granted; it is necessary to “posit oneself in it corporeally” (127).

The intentionality of enjoyment, rather than effacing the object’s existence and submitting it to thought, describes “an ultimate relation with the substantial plenitude of being, with its materiality—embracing all relations with things” (133).

“Heidegger’s ontological phenomenology of equipmental contexture and the ready-to-hand requires a material, corporeal, sensible phenomenology which would account for the sensibility of the immersion and the handling. Here Levinas gives telling critique of Heidegger.

The implement has entirely masked the usage and the issuance at the term—the satisfaction. Dasein in Heidegger is never hungry. Food can be interpreted as an implement only in a world of exploitation. (134).

The concept of enjoyment is a characteristically existentialist materialist reduction to the sensible. The work of Levinas and Merleau-Ponty faces towards and feels its way into the realm of the sensible, simultaneously as it arises from it as a reduction of the enigmatic

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13 Noting that for Levinas there is a thematizing in the use of the word ‘dependence’ of the sense of ‘depending upon for its existence’. Dependence is a relation of condition and cause.
ground of its own possibility. Anterior to the purposive relations attaching the banging of the hammer on the nail to the upright of the frame of the house are the feel of the weight of the hammer and its trajectory, the smoothness of the handle, the seduction into the rhythm of the knocking, the satisfaction of a job done, the need for harbour from the elements, and the belonging of dwelling. These are the sensible prior grounds which nourish purpose, utility and cause.

The description of the intentionality of enjoyment interprets and marks out, in its tracing of the genesis of subjectivity and objectivity, an entry into the realm of the sensible. This is Levinas’ version of one of the great obsessions of phenomenology—the presubjective. Husserl’s pre-theoretical consciousness, Heidegger’s pre-conceptual understanding, Sartre’s non-reflective self-consciousness, Merleau-Ponty’s Urdoxa, Levinas’ il-y-a, all aim at the imaginability of an anterior ground on, of, or against which consciousness, Dasein, body-subject, and hypostasis become possible.

The components of Levinas’ intentionality of enjoyment are well-known. The primary human relation with the stuff of the world is sensible. It occurs as enjoyment of nourishing elements which we live from…

We live from “good soup”, air, light, spectacles, work, ideas, sleep etc…(Levinas 1969: 110).

These strange categorial bedfellows are “elements”. As lived from, elements are not primarily means to ends, need not be necessities, or fuel for the maintenance of existence, but nourishments which become me. Detached from their function in economies of cause and effect or ends and means, elements “are lived: they feed life”, provisioning life’s content and contentment in its joys, happiness, sufferings and privations. Nourishments “are contents which do not preoccupy it (life) only, but…”occupy” it, which “entertain it”, of which it is enjoyment (111).

In enjoyment the object becomes “my own energy, my strength, me” (111). Enjoyment is

\[14\] Alphonso Lingis, the translator of Totality and Infinity (Levinas: 1969) and Visible and Invisible (Merleau-Ponty: 1968), has most fully explicated this aspect of Levinas’ and Merleau-Ponty’s respective plunges into the materiality of sensibility in Sensation (1996), and Phenomenological Explanations (1986).
an alimentary structure;\textsuperscript{15} not an emotional or psychological state, “but the very pulsation of the I” (113). It “exceeds” being, “as a new glory above substantiality…a triumph inconceivable in the order of substances” (113), “a vibrant exaltation in which dawns the self” (118).

The direction of intentionality in living from..., is reversed. Sensibility as enjoyment is “not to be confused with the still vacillating forms of ‘consciousness of’…does not aim at an object” (111). Traditional phenomenological schemes of perception and objectification rely upon the grasping of an object across distance. In enjoyment, there is no distance. The intentionality of enjoyment is an involutary immersion or “bathing” in nourishing elements which are the ground from which the I emerges. As Nam-In Lee puts it, an apple may be grasped intentionally as “a three dimensional object in a perceptual world” which has the “same ontological status as other objects of natural scientific research…as an object of representational intentionality”. However, when we “eat it to still hunger” it is experienced as an element in which we bathe and from which we live (Lee 2003: 98).

In his later work, when the intentionality of enjoyment had completely undergone the transition to the ethics of the face, Levinas specifically addressed the limits of intentionality. He was continually concerned with cracking through to the irreconcilabilities, the proximities, the paradoxes, and the tantalizingly unrepresentable impossibilities that intentionality could not touch.

In ‘Non-Intentional Consciousness’ (1998c), intentionality is cast “in conformity with a venerable Western tradition—a privilege of the theoretical, a privilege of representation, of knowing, and hence, of the ontological meaning of being”. As knowing, as knowledge of this or that, intentional thinking, feeling, valuing, always correlative to its objects, “requires a taking, a seizure, a grip…and a possession” (Levinas 1998c: 125). It is reflection, reducing everything to itself, in the correlation between thought and world.

\textsuperscript{15} This alimentary structure might be seen to recall Sartre’s lamentation over Idealism in ‘Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea of Husserl’s Phenomenology’ (2002a), “O gastric philosophy!” But Levinas’ subtle phenomenological probings of the structure of subjectivity and objectivity make this a meal from an entirely different menu.
The correlation is the ratio in the rational.

The activity of thought triumphs over [a raison de] all otherness and it is therein, ultimately, that its very rationality resides. Conceptual synthesis and synopsis are stronger than the dispersion and incompatibility of what gives itself as an other, as before and after. (126).

And this before and after, this “dark context of the thematized world” becomes merely the not yet known which reflexive intentional consciousness could, if it willed so, bring to light beneath its “scrutinizing, thematizing, objectifying, and indiscreet eye” (128).

Here, interestingly for this little essay, Levinas restores the everyday voluntary intention to intentionality; the will, which Spiegelberg sought to sunder from the philosophical intentionality of the towardsness and aboutness of consciousness. For Levinas, consciousness is will, the will to know, to desire, to encompass, to understand. “In terms of intentionality, consciousness must be understood as a modality of the voluntary. The word intention suggests this” (127). And in the essay ‘Beyond Intentionality’:

[th]e ‘bestowal of sense’, constructed as knowledge, is understood in Husserl as a ‘wanting-to-arrive-in-one-way—or-another-at–this—or-that’, and reflection upon this thought as showing what thought wants to get at and how it wants to get there. Intentionality is thus an intention of the soul, a spontaneity, a willing (Levinas 1983: 101).

Husserl’s intentionality, for Levinas, is a closed contract between thought and Being. “Being is immanent in thought and thought does not transcend itself in knowledge” (106). The sphere of immanence and transcendence, of truth, reason, adequation, presence, representation, meaning, sense and knowledge, is the domain of willing intentional consciousness.

In truth thought thus moves out of itself towards Being, without thereby ceasing to remain in its own proper sphere, always equal to itself, never losing its measure, never exceeding it. Thought satisfies itself in Being…always within its own limits (105).

And the limited openness of this play of thought, of its immanence and its apparent transcendence, apparently allows no rupture.
Nothing turns up to contradict the intention of thought, nothing emerges from hiding to foil it; there is no chance of an ambush, planned or set up on the darkness or in the mystery of a past or a future refractory to presence (104).

But Levinas, in search of the rupture of immanence, asks the question of the outside, the beyond, the before and the after of thought, of its worlds and its objects, of existence and Being, an outside from where this ambush might be staged.

And of the before and after of intentionality, the dark context, which, in the attempt to be rendered clear to reflexive, intentional thought, can only be betrayed: “we have been seeking the otherwise than being from the beginning. And as soon as it is conveyed before us it is betrayed” (Levinas 1981: 6).16

Levinas asks: “However, does intentionality exhaust all the ways in which thought is meaningful? Does thought have meaning only through consciousness of the world?” (Levinas 1983: 106).

And, perhaps because of the tyranny of thematizing consciousness, perhaps because of the impossibility of representing the unrepresentable, the answer may be found in a “trace”, a “mark”, which “presupposes an otherness representable neither in terms of the correlations of knowledge nor in terms of the synchrony of representation” (106-107).

Here, in this turn to an otherness, the boldness of Levinas distinguishes itself. With a veiled reference to the necessary intersubjectivity of transcendental subjectivity, he claims that “as ‘pure selves’, different selves are, precisely, indistinguishable” (107). They are not collectable into a common genus or separable into differences of content, but “indiscernibles”, unsynthesizable, yet gathered together as “proximity, face-to-face and society” (107).

It is the face which commands a gathering—or a proximity—quite different from that involved in the synthesis which unites phenomena into a world. It commands a thinking that is more ancient and more

16 This betrayal is discussed further in its importance in the methodological approach of the thesis, at Section II. Methodology, §37 Conveying and Betraying, p. 177.
In this shift of focus from the knowing intentional subject to the ethics of the face, Levinas finds the prehistory, the “hither side” of the subject of thematizing consciousness. And to the habitual grasping eye of thematic understanding it is a strange zone. A zone of passivity, of initial summons, vulnerability, responsibility, exposure to affection, proximity, irrecoverable time, of the saying rather than the said, indiscernible to knowledge, irreducible to experience.

And to make this breach, this rupture in the immanence of a thought which is always thought of, Levinas turns to response to, responsibility for the other.

It begins with a summons. “The face itself constitutes the fact that someone summons me and demands my presence” (109). And in this moment of being called into question as responsibility for the other, in proximity, which “summons me, demands me, claims me” (Levinas 1998c: 145).

In this questioning; being put-in-question, but also put to the question, having to answer—the birth of language in responsibility; having to speak, having to say I, being in the first person. Being precisely myself (145).

So the third person, the accusative case, is the first case. I as an entity in the first person come forth as response to the summons of the face of the other. Before I will, before I intend, before I am an I that thinks, a consciousness that grasps worlds, an agent that acts, I am accused as obedience to the summons of the other. I am called from passivity, vulnerability and exposure by the proximity of the other as responsibility for and to the other.

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The work of Emmanuel Levinas finds manifold resonance in this thesis, first in giving shape to its primary method, of immanent description as writing from...; but also in terms of the object of the thesis, the transcendental intersubjectivity of the murky affective soup of Audience, its unapprehendability in its own right, its paradoxical relation to subjectivity, and its adumbrative appearances only as traces and marks on the bodies of individual audience members, in the sound of their applause, in the silence of attention, in
their stillness and their movement.

As with all these reiterations of the work of the great phenomenologists, I am aware I am rehearsing a lot of well-trodden ground, adding very little new light, if any, to interpretations now standard and commonplace at this level of study. By drawing together these lines of thought as I have, following relatively discreet strands through the work of different thinkers, I am merely, in Levinasian terms, delineating a philosophical milieu or element, from which this thesis draws possibility and nourishment.

§13 Audience and Intentionality

This journey, from Brentano’s original assertion of the necessity of mentality’s object, to the question of the representability of the relations implied by that assertion, to the nature and ontological status of those relations, to the positing of the limits of predication itself, is the ground from which the question of what it means to be in Audience becomes askable.

The story of the phenomenological development of the understanding of intentionality is haunted by the thought of fundamentality, the apriori, the elemental, the prepredicative, the prethetic. Transcendental phenomenology, as aim at essences, continually refines and deepens its attempt to clear the way down to structures of living; prior to experience, prior to the emergence of subject and object; a description of structures which would explain not only how and of what the subject/object distinction is a possibility, but which would attempt to describe the very structures from which life lives. And if, at the limit of this history, life first lives from..., rather than towards, then that from-ness is the precondition of any possible towardsness it might direct.

There is a tradition of questioning ontological presuppositions at work here. From Descartes to Kant to Husserl to Heidegger to Sartre to Merleau-Ponty to Levinas; a dense texture of agreements, questionings, refutations, disputations, overlaps and reinterpretations on point and supposition after point and supposition. I have tried to eschew partisanship in the pursuit of a rigorous endeavour to plumb and purify a clear base from which to ask questions of what we are and how we know. I have attempted, as dictated by the needs of my current project, in an albeit sketchy manner, characterized
more by what I have left out, based on the assumption that knowledge, perception, 
objectivity, and mental representation are all overlapping and interrelated genres or 
different conceptualizations of how we relate to, identify and contain everything that 
appears to be not us once we have effected the separation into self, to leave an expression 
of my own ontological presuppositions.

My ontological presuppositions underlie how I think a cup is a cup, an idea is an idea and 
an audience is an audience; whether it is something produced by a producer; whether it is 
something possessed and grasped, something internal or an exteriority, here or there; 
whether it is indeed a something. Phenomenology as it aims at essences, likes to believe 
it can reveal these structural foundations of how we get about in the world. And it likes to 
believe that it can reveal the fundamental pillars of what sort of a thing we, as humans, 
are.

What I am attempting to do by setting my work in this conceptual history is to frame the 
enquiry within a set of presuppositions, of fundamental questions concerning what I think 
I’m doing here, what can be done, what needs to be done, and how it might best be done. 

I want the enquiry to unfold from questions which emerge from audiences themselves; 
questions which puzzle, annoy and evade easy understanding. And I do not want to set up 
the safe, familiar, oppositional questions of individual/group, intellect/emotion, 
self/other, performance/spectator, and then try to reconcile the differences emerging from 
my own bad questions. My enquiry into a phenomenon which evades these polarities, or 
at least leaves too many oft-encountered unanswerable questions when processed through 
these categories, must begin with as clear a slate as possible in these areas. What I think I 
am studying and how I think I am studying it, is as much a reflection of my own 
ontological presuppositions as what I am having for dinner, what sort of a building I live 
in and what I think I will happen to me when I die. This is why Levinas gives us soup, 
light, air, spectacles and ideas considered as the same sort of stuff—elements: to break 
down and free up our over-differentiated received categories of understanding, and reveal 
their presuppositions.

There are many ways that this history of intentionality bears on this thesis. It appears 
obvious that being in audiences lends itself to being understood as intentionality.
Witnessing is a feature of Dufrenne’s pure intentional being. The towardsness of Audience to performance is undeniably intentional. It seems that Audience, as fundamentally mutual directedness towards, calls for intentional analysis, and might best be approached as intentionality. But the fit is almost too neat. Husserl’s noetico-noematic structure lends itself to the consideration of each audience member’s viewpoint as an adumbration of the total phenomenon of an audience’s apprehension of a performance. His concept of *immanent description* points towards a methodology. Heidegger’s ontological radicalization suggests the possibility of describing a primordial intentionality of Audience which, as ontological, gives itself in a manner different than a graspable thing might. Merleau-Ponty allows new conceptions of understanding that give us a realm prior to the naïve view that would reduce questions of Audience to insufficiently examined categories of emotional vs. intellectual responses, but rather as situated ability. Levinas shows how we might approach the others with us in Audience and gives the methodology its full concretion in the concept of *living from…*. Nevertheless, whilst some of these apparently obvious points of departure might bear following, and some might not, I cannot deny that it is the phenomenological tradition with its roots in the thought of intentionality which offers the most promising avenues with which to begin this work.

Now, before entering into audiences to test the applicability and appropriateness of these approaches, it is first necessary to examine the types of phenomenological reduction to gain access to the methodological specificities of how to perform intentional analysis from within the phenomenon; then to follow in-depth the history of the phenomenological study of intersubjectivity to gain a foothold or a measure of how we are with each other in Audience; and finally to unfold the phenomenological tradition of the concept of transcendence to approach how audience members go out to each other and to the performance, how Audience goes out to that which transcends it, and how witness give us the value that makes us *us*. 
C. Reduction—The Infinite Method

§14 A Mere Change of Attitude

Husserl’s great ephectic step back: performed by the meditating phenomenologist through the epoché; the suspension, bracketing, withholding, holding in abeyance, out of play, (or perhaps holding in play as conscious refusal) of the reality and the world of the everyday, to reveal its hidden structures. The methodological moment of phenomenology, the “mere alteration of attitude” (Husserl 2004d: 10) which, through diligent meditation, would lead the explorer step by step to ever greater clarity and purification of the apriori of thematizing consciousness, “in the service of striving towards the universal ideal of absolute perfection which lies in infinity” (12).

Much more work has been written about the reduction than has been brought back from within the reduction. It is a cliché to say that it is difficult and mysterious to understand, let alone perform. Here, for the sake of not boring the informed reader, and yet providing enough outline for the uninitiated, I will sketch the concept as briefly as possible, with particular emphasis on how it informs this work of immanent description.

According to Husserl, consciousness, in its thematizing grasp, its incessant intentional thinking, perceiving, using and valuing of the world, resides in the natural attitude. Naïve, blinded by the reflection of its own light shed back from the world and its objects, taking for granted the reality and presence of what is there as what it is, the natural attitude is the immediate and intuitive faith in reality and givenness: of the rising of the sun, the truths of science, the milk in my coffee, the chair that I am sitting on, the page you are looking at, and the person writing this. It is supported, in its insistence as a world of facts, by the verification of the apodictic intuitive evidential certainty assured by its thereness for all of us. Whatever different standpoints, opinions and doubts we may have, we share a primordial belief in the world and its reality, whether or not one of us has been abducted by aliens, cares for the rock which is our ancestor, finds a metaphor for life in the game of cricket or baseball, believes competition to be the essence of life, or is the reincarnation of Julius Caesar.

Intentional analysis, through reduction, aims at the taking up of the phenomenological
attitude, the reflective turn in which the underlying transcendent structures of the thinking, perceiving, using and valuing of the world, necessarily hidden in the natural attitude, would become progressively clarified. As each layer of immediately intuited evidence becomes the object of a further clarifying analysis, it reveals a deeper intuited stratum which then becomes the object of the next reduction, leading to ever clearer purified essence.

As I have stated, much has been written about the impossibility of the reduction, and as will be shown, the term and the specific method, but not the general aim, lost coinage immediately after Husserl, and has almost completely disappeared from contemporary phenomenology. The task here is not to continually bemoan and reiterate, in the wake of Merleau-Ponty, the impossibility of performing a complete reduction, but to place the impossibility of a complete reduction in the époché and perform the reduction anyway to whatever extent is possible in order to explore the limits of its do-ability and discover what the reduction, however incomplete, might yield.

§15 Four Reductions

Assuming as taken-for-granted Merleau-Ponty’s perspectivist (and, oddly enough, eminently Husserlian) assertion that, “the most important lesson which the reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction” (Merleau-Ponty 1962: xiv); and further, against the trend—as lamented in Husserl’s critique of Heidegger (Husserl 2004g)—towards dispensing with explicit reference to reduction in the work of later phenomenologists, it is necessary to acknowledge here the determining role played in this thesis by the direct application of Husserl’s different types of reduction, not only in terms of the approach to the object under study (to the extent that it can be conceived as an object), but also in the isolation and recognition of the object itself.

Quentin Lauer, in his fine-grained and close readings of Husserl, found “at least” six levels of reduction, each lending further clarity to the ultimate revelation of transcendental subjectivity (Lauer 1958: 50). There are many shifts, subtleties of light and shade in the terminology and categorization employed by Husserl in relation to the
reductions throughout different periods of his long career. His various adventures in the indeterminate and the obscure led to different arrangements in response to the needs of different contexts. There are however, clear to me, four different reductions which have, in their own ways, contributed to the clarification of the principal question with which I began this work: What does it mean to be in an audience?

I have extracted the following definitions from the drafts of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* article of 1927. As a relatively later work, the conceptual structure is more refined and definite than in earlier, occasional versions, having the benefit of more years of Husserl’s obsessive drive towards clarity. As an attempt to lay out in a nutshell, in its entirety, the whole methodological plan of phenomenology for the authoritative Encyclopedia, it draws sharp differentiations and parallels.

I have placed heaviest reliance on the second and most elaborated of the drafts, even though Husserl’s own original insights are so contaminated by Heidegger’s ruthless input. The challenge of the brilliant student revealing the flaws in the master’s grand claims makes for a dramatic read. From the triumphant tone of the first draft to the modesty of the final published version; to the “all pervasive basic mood of depression, a dangerous collapse of confidence in myself” which Husserl expresses in a letter to Pfänder (2004g: 1); the pressure of the rise of Heidegger, politically, intellectually and theoretically, tempers Husserl’s grand and absolute ambitions. The value of this process appears in the second draft as the necessity it places on Husserl to think through and more fully justify the presuppositions of his project in the context of the potted presentation to the Encyclopedia.

**a) Phenomenological Psychological Reduction (Phenomenological Reduction)**

The first step: the description (in the realm of its application to consciousness) of the

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17 In different places at different times, sometimes in the same piece of writing, Husserl uses different terminologies for the psychological and transcendental reductions. I have used the fuller names to avoid the confusion caused by the occasional use of the simpler ‘Phenomenological Reduction’ in designation of the first psychological step, because the word ‘Phenomenological’ is also, more often than not, used in the designation of the transcendental step.
‘how’ of perception, judging, willing and valuing etc. The first turn away from the intended objects of thematizing consciousness towards the “hiddenly functioning” (Husserl 2004a: 7) modes of their appearance in subjective life. The “comprehensive task (of) the systematic examination of the types and forms of intentional experience, and the reduction of their structures to prime intentions” (2004e: 4) to which “one lays out the essential structures of particular kinds of lived experience, their forms of interrelation and occurrence” (2004b: 9).

The phenomenological psychologist, freed by “Brentano’s great discovery” (2004b: 21) of intentionality, “unswervingly” directs their gaze towards the structure of the psyche purified of its objects in “refrain from any belief regarding the world…not permitted to make direct judgements about the perceived thing” (28), yielding pure psychic data, free of any psychophysical or objective impurities.

But this psychology, as psychology, remains naïve, standing, as a science of the natural attitude, “on the ground of positivity” (2004b: 30), remaining the natural attitude’s first turn away from its objects towards its own structure from within. The psyche to which it turns, though purged of its objects, is of and in the world of those objects. The “prime intentions” revealed in this turn, the objects of pure phenomenological psychology—the valuing, willing, perceiving, judging etc.—thus remain contaminated by their worldliness and must be purified further to reveal the parallel transcendent absolute structures of which they are formations.

b) Eidetic Reduction

The generality of meanings…is something felt as immanent in each individual case where a general name is understood…a new type of reference makes its appearance, in which we [do not] mean the intuitively apparent object…but the quality or form exemplified in the latter, which we understand in general fashion, as a unity in the sense of the species (Husserl, cited in Levinas 1973: 101).

All reduction, as enquiry into essence, is eidetic in aim and character. But Husserl gives us a species of reduction “connected with”, and emerging from the psychological reduction, which “discloses the essential interrelations of what has become accessible in
the (psychological) reduction” (Husserl 2004b: 14); a purer grade of clarification, specifically named in its own right as the eidetic reduction. A reduction which excludes not only the worldly objects of the natural sciences, correlate to consciousness, “but also…all purely psychological factuality” (2004a: 16). Within the eidetic reduction, the pure psychic data revealed by the first reduction “serves only as exemplar” (16), as the basis for the free variation in imagination of an infinite number of possibilities, precipitating the invariant form of the phenomenon; the “necessary typical form” (16), clarified from all possible and imaginable individual instances. That without which the phenomenon would no longer be what it is as what it is: the thingliness of all imaginable things, the cupness of any and all cups, the wishfulness of all the wishes that might be wished.

But these tautologies are unacceptable, admitting no clarity whatsoever to the definition of these essences “susceptible of stable distinction, unbroken self-identity, and strict conceptual apprehension”, as reduced from the “disorderly mixtures (and) lack of proper distinctions” of “the richest and best descriptions possible” given in the psychological reduction. (Husserl 1967: 115-116).

Emmanuel Levinas, very early in his career, combining Husserl’s work on eidetic essence from *Logical Investigations II* and *Ideas I*, takes up the task of collecting together Husserl’s observations on the essentiality of essence, as opposed to the individual or the merely general.

The essence of an object is its necessary structure: what makes it what it is, what makes any of its empirical characterizations a priori possible and comprehensible, or, in short, its principle.

For instance, in order to have a determinate intensity, tone, and pitch, a sound must have tone, intensity and pitch in general. They are a set of mutually and necessarily related characteristics which constitute the necessary structure of sounds (Levinas 1973: 109).

Asking the question of “the meaning of the necessity proper to the structure of objects” (109), Levinas finds in Husserl, first, a negative characterization of essence. For sound to be sound it depends on having the abovementioned qualities. Negatively characterized, if something does not have these qualities, it cannot be a sound; here essence is conceived
as “the objectively ideal necessity of an inability-to-be-otherwise” (Husserl, cited in Levinas, 1973: 110). Such necessity cannot be induced from empirical data according to the laws of science, nor deduced from propositions according to the laws of logic, but must be reduced according to “material laws...as a form of necessity...which has its foundation in the specific essence of the contents, on their peculiar nature” (110). They are intuited.

The intuition of material essences, such as “house”, “tree”, “color”, “tone”, “space”, “sensation”, and “feeling”, enables us to have a knowledge which is both necessary and material. For Husserl, direct vision of the necessary structure of essences seems to be the primary phenomenon of intellection (Levinas 1973: 110-111).

And the procedure of fixing intuitively apprehended material essences is *eidetic reduction*.

On the other hand, approached positively, there are qualities of objects which may be varied without limit.

Our imagination here is absolutely free; it is not limited by anything; and the object we consider remains concrete, i.e., capable of existing...the essence determines the limits between which we may vary its contents...the essence of an object seems to express the conditions that must be realized to make its existence possible (112).

So the set of predicates which constitute the essence of anything are the “privileged” qualities which cannot be varied without losing the condition of possibility of that object, “without compromising its possibility to exist” (112); the constants whose stability allows for the free and possibly infinite variation of all other predicates.

Consequently, *eidetic sciences investigate a new dimension of being: the very conditions of its existence, the structure of objects without which they could not exist* (113).

The descriptions given in the psychological reduction are further reduced to the fundamental determining conditions underlying the worldly existence of the object through the eidetic reduction. Thus, the eidetic reduction opens a path, from the ontic
world of the psychological in the natural attitude, into the ontological, paving the way forward into the absolute realm of the transcendental.

c) Phenomenological Transcendental Reduction (Transcendental Reduction)

The transcendental reduction is not a blind change of focus; rather, as the methodological principle of all transcendental method, it is itself clarified reflectively and transcendentally. In this way, one may say, the enigma of the “Copernican Revolution” is completely solved (Husserl 2004b: 39).

Phenomenological Philosophy is but developing the mainsprings of old Greek philosophy, and the supreme motive of Descartes. These have not died. They split into Rationalism and Empiricism. They stretch over Kant and German Idealism, and reach the present, confused day. They must be re-assumed, subjected to methodical and concrete treatment. They can inspire a science without bounds (2004e: 17).

And so, as hyperbolic in its intention as it is humble in the rigor of its application, Husserl sets the scope and aim of the “endless task” (Husserl 2004f: 5) of the transcendental reduction in phenomenology’s ultimate presuppositionless encompassing of the whole of Western thought.

Beginning with Cartesian doubt, which he dubs the first epoché, in which the whole perceived and understood world is reduced to the sole certainty of subjective existence; in correction of Locke’s brilliant but naïve psychologistic descriptions; and brought to the brink of possibility by Brentano’s groundbreaking discovery of the intentionality of consciousness, the reduction to the absolute realm of the transcendental offers up the ultimate and infinite (but therefore never ultimately clarifiable) clarification of “pure subjectivity as the source of sense and validity…the transcendentally pure ego…from out of the hidden functions of consciousness” (Husserl 2004b: 32).

“With one blow—by means of an all-inclusive theoretical act of will” (Husserl 2004b:33),18 every positivity, every question, every judgement, every experience, every

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18 Heidegger’s delightfully undermining marginal note here exclaims, “And this will itself!” (Heidegger,
sense, every validity of the whole world of the natural attitude is put out of play, placed entirely within the all-embracing transcendental reduction, so that

my “I” is seen directly in transcendently reduced inner experience…the absolute presupposition for all transcendence that is valid for “me”…positable with all its intentional correlates…the most fundamental and primordial experiential ground for transcendental exploration (2004b: 35). 19

But the question must be asked: how, if at all, this crossover to the transcendent is any different from, any more fundamental and primordial than the psychological reduction?

As mentioned, the psychological reduction is performed in and of the world in its everyday worldliness. As psychological method, it remains, at all times, a positive science. In our everyday life, in all our projects and knowledges, we are always necessarily living in the realm of the positive. Transcendental reduction in practice, therefore, must become “a kind of transformation of one’s whole way of life” (2004b: 37).

The pure psychic data purified by the psychological reduction needs to be, consequently, reinterpreted transcendentally, purified of all worldly sense. The content remains the same, but in the first reduction, the psychic, worldly ego is revealed in its worldliness, in all its “psychological peculiarities”, whereas in the second, with all worldliness purged, “in keeping with the change in reductive focus” (2004b: 35), the psychic ego is reduced to the transcendental ego in all its “transcendental peculiarities”. The realm of the

19 Heidegger is again sceptical. “Positum! Something positive! Or else what kind of a positing is this? In what sense [can one say] that this posited-something is – if it is supposed to be not nothing but rather in a certain way everything?” (Heidegger, cited in Husserl 2004b: 35). This moment in Heidegger’s critique, this something that is in being but is not positive, haunts the history of phenomenology, ghosting in out of appearance as a possibility until Levinas attempts to face it squarely and concretizes it in all its recalcitrant silence, in all its slipperiness as “a beyond that is the break-up of presence” (Levinas 1983: 110). The possibility of the essence Audience, conceived as prior to a group of people present somewhere at a given time making up an audience, opens in this moment.
psychological is psychology, the realm of the transcendent is philosophy.

The transcendental reduction renders consciousness in philosophical terms. It is heir to the tradition of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Kant, Locke, Hume and Hegel; to the tradition that tells the story of form, substance, matter, truth, knowledge, cause and effect, the absolute, the infinite, time, space and being. And to this devolution, it embraces and offers

the proper form and the means of their solution (to)…metaphysical, teleological, ethical problems, and problems of the history of philosophy, the problem of judgement, all significant problems in general, and the transcendental bonds uniting them (Husserl 2004f: 6).

d) Intersubjective (Primordial) Reduction

Of all the reductions, this is the most pertinent to the object of this thesis. To the extent that it is possible to intend anything thinkable as transcendental Audience, conceived essentially as Gathering to Witness, in light of what might be primordially disclosed as and by those terms, the primary question of this thesis is the reduction to intersubjectivity.

In the Encyclopedia Britannica articles, Husserl, although hinting that the transcendental realm is somehow fundamentally intersubjectively constituted, almost offhandedly mentions that both the psychological-phenomenological and the transcendental-phenomenological reductions need to be carried out at two levels, “correspondingly divided into the egological and the intersubjective reductions” (Husserl 2004b: 9): the egological, in which the psychologist or the transcendental meditator examines the proper sphere of their own consciousness, “which then requires a necessary expansion by means of the intersubjective reduction” (13), into the sphere of community of which they are a member.

In this, the intersubjective reduction is almost written off as the necessary plural form of the egological level of the reductions, the psychological we to the psychological ego and the transcendental we to the transcendental ego. However, on closer inspection the situation is found to be less simple and more troubling.
In the fifth *Cartesian Meditation*—widely and incorrectly held, until recently, to be Husserl’s last and most detailed word on the intersubjective reduction—the difficulty of the task begins to emerge.20 Here, in remedy to the problem of solipsism, Husserl “inserts an audacious methodological decision even more paradoxical than the problem to be solved” (Ricoeur 1967: 118). With an apparently, but arguably Cartesian gesture,21 necessitated by the ultimate unknowability and unexperiencability of the inner life of the other person, he introduces the famous “primordial reduction”, a second reduction conducted from within the transcendental reduction, a “peculiar kind of epoché…to my transcendental sphere of peculiar ownness” (Husserl 1999: 93), excluding all that does not pertain to the pure realm of “my concrete being as a monad” (94). “I delimit…what is peculiarly my own” (95). All that is alien—Nature, the Objective, others, cultural and spiritual predicates, everything worldly—“vanishes completely” (96), except to the extent that I find it intentionally constituted within me in my perceptions, apperceptions and

20 Since the late 1990’s a number of scholars have spent periods of research in the Husserl Archive at Leuven, Belgium, working with manuscripts unpublished in Husserl’s lifetime and as yet untranslated into English: Volumes XIII-XV of the Husserliana, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjectivität* (Husserl 1973). Notable are the works of Dan Zahavi, who has documented Husserl’s references to the apriority of intersubjectivity and written widely on the subject from many different perspectives, (Zahavi 1996; 1997; 2001; 2002; 2003) and David Vessey who has advanced the understanding of the relationship between intersubjectivity and temporality (Vessey 1995; 2001). These researches have revealed Husserl’s continuing dissatisfaction with his work on intersubjectivity and his increasing emphasis on it towards the end of his life. As Zahavi observes, “Husserl’s final words on the question of intersubjectivity are not to be found in the *Cartesian Meditations*” (Zahavi 1997: 305).

21 The fact that Husserl himself entitled the meditations *Cartesian* should presumably be enough. But scholars have argued the ways in which this title is meant to be interpreted. How are the meditations Cartesian? Most accept it on face value. Peter Reynaert, representative of the dominant view: “The approach of the Meditations is certainly Cartesian” (Reynaert 2001: 214). Søren Overgaard, on the other hand, argues that the reduction to the sphere of ownness is not to be interpreted as motivated by the need for the Cartesian certainty of the cogito, but rather, like the transcendental reduction itself, the primordial reduction “guards us from arguing in vicious circles”. For Overgaard, all the reductions “are – properly understood – not Cartesian tools but wholly in the service of transcendental phenomenology” (Overgaard 2002: 218).
habits. So the first step in the intersubjective reduction, in the solution to solipsism, is, paradoxically, the reduction to absolute solipsism.

In the primordial reduction I perceive first the body of another person, constituted for me as nothing but “a product of my sensuousness” (Husserl 1999: 109), a thing-body, Körper, apprehended as any other object “over there”, as it would be available to the natural sciences, over against Leib, my own subjectively experienced body. This duality, according to which I am a physical thing, an object of nature, which nonetheless governs itself as a functioning organism, conditions the next stage of analogizing apperception of another person. Husserl’s logic:

[l]et us assume that another man enters our perceptual sphere. Primordially reduced, that signifies: In the perceptual sphere pertaining to my primordial Nature, a body [Körper] is presented, which, as primordial, is of course only a determining part of myself: an “immanent transcendency”. Since, in this Nature and this world, my animate organism [Leib] is the only body [Körper] that is or can be constituted originally as an animate organism [Leib] (a functioning organ), the body [Körper] over there, which is nevertheless apprehended as an animate organism [Leib], must have derived this sense by an apperceptive transfer from my animate organism, and done so in a manner that excludes an actually direct, and hence primordial, showing of the predicates belonging to an animate organism [Leiblichkeit] specifically, a showing of them in perception proper. It is clear from the very beginning that only a similarity connecting, within my primordial sphere, that body [Körper] over there with my body [Körper] can serve as the motivational basis for the “analogizing apprehension” of that body (Körper), as another animate organism [Leib]. (Husserl 1999: 110-111).

But this “pairing” is only a resemblance, a “similarity, connecting…that body over there with my body” (Husserl 1999: 111): an empty intentionality; “the supposition, the empty

22 I have inserted the terms in brackets into Cairns’ less than adequate translation to highlight the logic of this process in terms of the constitutive play of Leib and Körper.
anticipation, of an alien life” (Ricoeur 1967: 127). To make the leap from the apperception of another Körper to the full appresentation of another Leib, Husserl introduces the concept of “harmonious behaviour” (Husserl 1999: 114).

The experienced animate organism [Leib] of another continues to prove itself as actually an animate organism, solely in its changing but incessantly harmonious “behaviour” (Husserl 1999: 114).

By this means, the “verifiable accessibility of what is not originally accessible” (114) is attained. But still, this verification occurs in the sphere of my own monad, verified by my own original experience. The other is constituted as other within me. Only I am truly verifiable to myself. The verifiability of the other is dependent not only on his own harmonious behaviour, but on the concordance of that behaviour with my own.

By this stage, corporeal resemblance verified by harmonious behaviour similar to mine yields

the Other...appresentatively apperceived as the “Ego” of a primordial world, and of a monad, wherein his animate organism [Leib] is originally constituted and experienced in the mode of the absolute Here, precisely as the functional centre for his governing. (Husserl 1999: 117).

Then, with the other person “liberated”, as Ricoeur would have it, as another Ego, appresentatively transferred “into another life in imagination and in sympathy” (Ricoeur 1967: 129), I am able to make the movement into the other point of view as if I were there through empathy, or feeling-into the other person.

Thus the problem stated at first as...the “thereness-for- me” of others...as the theme of a transcendental theory of experiencing someone else, a transcendental theory of so-called “empathy”...is much greater than at first it seems, that it contributes to the founding of a transcendental theory of the Objective world...Objective Nature...thereness-for-everyone...all cultural Objects (books, tools, works of any kind and so forth) which moreover carry with them at the same time the experiential sense of thereness-for-everyone (that is, everyone belonging to the corresponding cultural community) (Husserl 1999: 92).
The establishment of another person as another person, then, is only the beginning of a much bigger enterprise. It opens on to the question of how we share a world and a Nature in common, and how these worlds and this Nature correlate to our communities. So then, how, Husserl must ask, does this leap from appresented other to objective world to cultural community occur? For Ricoeur,

Husserl’s originality lies in this methodological progression from solipsism to community…what is important in Husserl is not what he says about community but how his analysis advances step by step toward community…that which is first for the sociologist or anthropologist is last for the phenomenologist (Ricoeur 1967: 135-136).

In their apperceived fullness, the other, “existing for themselves precisely as I exist for myself” is in “intentional communion” with me, in an “essentially unique connectedness, an actual community and precisely the one that makes transcendentally possible the being of a world, a world of men and things” (Husserl 1999: 128).

This is the hardest step to understand. But for Husserl “it is no longer an enigma” when viewed in the light of “any other synthetic identification” (1999: 126), such as the noema or lawful mathematical, geometric theorems—omnitemporal forms. The key to the solution is time—the institution of a shared common time. It is through a synthesis of my “living self-experience” with the identification of “an animate body of someone else” through its successive temporal phases, and also a common experience of a shared “Nature, given and verified primordially (with pure sensuous originality) and at the same time appresentationally” that a common time-form…” is primally instituted. It is this “temporal community” which gives the indissoluble “constitution of a world and a world time” (128).

Once this difficult phase of the explication has occurred, the higher levels of community “offer relatively minor difficulties” (129). In the sense of being in community, viewed at the psychological level, “there is implicit a mutual being for one another which entails an objectivizing equalization of my existence with that of all others” (130). The other experiences me as an other for him, just as I experience him as an other for me. In a plurality of others, each experiences each other one as correlate to themselves and their
other others. So that “openly endless Nature itself then becomes a nature that includes an open plurality of men…as subjects of possible intercommunion” (130).

Finally and necessarily, at the transcendental level:

> to this community there naturally corresponds, in transcendental concreteness, a similarly open community of monads which we designate as transcendental intersubjectivity (130).

And this question of transcendental intersubjectivity is the founding idea of this thesis. There is obviously much that is problematic about Husserl’s primordial reduction.23 Objections, clarifications and developments, from Schutz, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Heidegger and Levinas will be discussed in the next section, in prelude to discussion of some exciting recent returns to the far more intriguing question of transcendental intersubjectivity; but it should be noted that Husserl’s model still stands as the basis from which all subsequent phenomenological work on intersubjectivity proceeds. And moreover, the emergence of a transcendental community of others is the origin of *transcendental intersubjectivity*, of which Audience is a primary form.

§16 *Reference to Reduction in Phenomenology Since Husserl*

I think that, in spite of everything, what I do is phenomenology, even if there is no reduction, here, according to the rules required by Husserl; even if all the Husserlian methodology is not respected (Levinas, 1998d: 87).

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Despite Husserl’s “absolute inner certitude that the phenomenological reduction and the transcendental constitutive structuring of philosophy would mean a “Copernican” revolution for philosophy” (Husserl 2004g: 2), the reduction, to which he had devoted so much of his time, receives little, if any, extended study or development in the work of either his immediate successors or later generations of phenomenologists. Rather, it appears that the reductive gesture or impetus becomes almost naturalized and taken-for-granted. Almost an embarrassment, the mad methodological uncle that no-one talks about, it nevertheless persists, haunting phenomenology.

Study of reduction in the work of phenomenologists since Husserl needs to be approached from two standpoints. First, in terms of the little that they actually wrote (much of it disparaging or dismissive) on the subject; and second, in demonstrating how the reduction can be found hidden as unacknowledged presupposition, approach or gesture underlying the work of the great phenomenologists.

The contention is that whether or not phenomenologists acknowledge the reduction, think of it as impossible, or attempt to perform it according to the letter of Husserl’s law, or whether they think it is a worthwhile way of characterizing what they are doing, they are all, as acknowledged by Levinas, performing it to some extent in some way in the sense of clarifying and purifying the conditions by which phenomena appear, and they are all doing so by suspending the acceptance of the taken-for-granted in an attempt to turn towards and encounter its condition. Levinas calls it “the dominant trait…proceeding back from what is thought toward the fullness of the thought itself”, common even to those who no longer call themselves phenomenologists, reduction remains “the Husserlian novelty…a lasting acquisition for everyone” (1998d: 87).

First and foremost, Heidegger, who Husserl accused of surrendering “both the method of my phenomenological research and its scientific character in general” (Husserl 2004g: 3), completely dispensed with discussion of the reduction in Being and Time, a book which Husserl dismissed as “newfangled” and “based on a gross misunderstanding” (4-5). For his part, in two paragraphs in the Basic Problems of Phenomenology, Heidegger ontologizes and reclaims the reduction, and then dispenses with Husserl’s use of the term.

Apprehension of being, ontological investigation, always turns, at
first and necessarily, to some being; but then, in a precise way, it is
led away from that being and led back to its being. We call this basic
component of phenomenological method…phenomenological
reduction (Heidegger 1982a: 21).

And even though, in light of Heidegger’s whole project, this seems to be a core moment,
he specifically states that it is “not the only basic component of phenomenological
method; in fact it is not even the central component”, but a “merely negative
methodological measure” (21): a criticism certainly aimed directly at his former teacher.

He gives a three line definition of Husserl’s life-defining methodological discovery, and
then chides:

like every other scientific method, phenomenological method grows
and changes due to the progress made precisely with its help into the
subjects under investigation. Scientific method is never a technique.
As soon as it becomes one it has fallen away from its own proper
nature (21).

And with that, further mention of the reduction disappears from his work.

Thomas Busch, in two articles, ‘Sartre’s Use of the Reduction: Being and Nothingness
Revisited’ (1980) and ‘Sartre: The Phenomenological Reduction and Human
Relationships’ (1975), digs into Sartre’s work and comes up with ways in which it
apparently participates in and unfolds as reduction. He concentrates on Sartre’s concept
of the “purifying reflection” (1975: 57). But, once again, Sartre’s own references to the
question are few and disparaging.

There is no reason, no ‘motive’ for exercising the epoché…no longer
a miracle, an intellectual method, an erudite procedure: it is an
anxiety which is imposed on us and which we cannot avoid (Sartre
2002b: 403-404).

Merleau-Ponty, who seems to have been driven to some extent by a desire to restore
Husserl’s importance after Heidegger’s rise as the dominant voice in phenomenology,
gave us the famous dictum:

[It]he most important lesson which the reduction teaches us is the
impossibility of a complete reduction (Merleau-Ponty 1962: xiv).
This occurs in a two paragraph-long discussion of reduction in the introduction of his *Phenomenology of Perception*, in which he proclaims the centrality of reduction, not only for phenomenology, but for the whole of philosophy. He rhapsodizes as consciousness, having refused its usual complicity in the everyday, “steps back to watch the forms of transcendence fly up like sparks from a fire” (Merleau-Ponty 1962: xiii).

He locates reduction at the birth of the philosophical quest,

> The philosopher...is a perpetual beginner...he takes for granted nothing that men, learned or otherwise, believe they know...philosophy itself must not take itself for granted...it is an ever renewed experiment in making its own beginning (Merleau-Ponty 1962: xiv).

And then, in defence of Husserl against Heidegger, he claims “Heidegger’s ‘being-in-the-world’ appears only against the background of the phenomenological reduction” (xiv), and prefigures a later discussion in the essay ‘The Philosopher and his Shadow’ (Merleau-Ponty 1964a), credit ing reduction with the revelation to consciousness of “its own dependence on an unreflective life which is its initial situation, unchanging, given once and for all” (1962: xiv).

In the later essay, Merleau-Ponty characterizes the reduction as “an enigmatic possibility for Husserl” (1964a: 161) and discusses the tension between the natural attitude and the phenomenological attitude.

> The truth is that the relationships between the natural and the transcendental attitudes are not simple, are not side by side or sequential, like the false or the apparent and the true. There is a preparation for phenomenology in the natural attitude. It is the natural attitude which, by reiterating its own procedures, seesaws in phenomenology. It is the natural attitude itself which goes beyond itself in phenomenology—and so it does not go beyond itself (Merleau-Ponty 1964a: 164).

He then seats this apparent paradox of the reduction at the beginning of his own philosophy, in the human body, which, for itself, is both subject and object. So, similarly to Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty retains the impulse of the reduction as a foundation stone of his work, but offers it very little development as a method beyond the observation of its
imperfectability. Once again, the possibility of the reduction opens the ground of the enquiry and then quickly becomes taken-for-granted and forgotten.

Admittedly, there are a number of fragmentary references to reduction in Merleau-Ponty’s unfinished work: “the passage from philosophy to the absolute, to the transcendental field, to the wild and ‘vertical being’…is the reduction itself” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 178), and the last proposed chapter which attained some semblance of finished form was actually entitled ‘The Reduction to the Preobjective’ (156), but this work, which promised to carry forward a conscious attempt to restore the reduction to methodological centrality, remained unfinished.

Levinas, another who was always ready to redeem Husserl’s value from the Heideggerian critique, takes a similar position, and also requires treatment in terms of the difference between what he specifically but briefly wrote on the reduction, and how his work participates in the gesture of the reduction.

Husserl will have taught us that the reduction of naivety immediately calls for new reductions, that the grace of intuition involves gratuitous ideas, and that, if philosophizing consists in assuring oneself of an absolute origin, the philosopher will have to efface the trace of his own footsteps and unendingly efface the traces of the effacing of the traces, in an interminable methodological movement staying where it is (Levinas 1981: 20).

On the one hand, in Otherwise than Being, Levinas directly identifies his own work with the reduction: “the reduction is reduction of the said to the saying beyond the logos, beyond being and non-being, beyond essence, beyond true and non-true (1981: 45). Similarly, “[t]he movement back to the saying is the phenomenological reduction” (53).

On the other hand, Bettina Bergo, a translator of Levinas, coins the term “Levinas’ Reduction” for the movement in his work toward a pre-synthetic phenomenology. It attempts to move behind Husserl’s passive synthesis of internal ‘time’ consciousness. Levinas is describing a pre-representational occurrence, which we cannot call experience (even as ‘Erlebnis’) if ‘experience’ involves consciousness. Levinas pursues a pre-discursive, proto-experience, which is affective and excessive, and whose description invariably comes out as a
paradox (Bergo 2003: 2).

This illuminates both facets of Levinas’ relevance to this discussion of the reduction. First, it captures Levinas’ debt to Husserl, in the very turning of the self towards itself, by which “subjective life will reveal its transcendental dignity” and ask the question “of reanimating—or…reactivating—this life in order to reach, under the name of indubitable being, the living presence. It is a question, in presence, of rediscovering life” (Levinas 1998a: 27).

And at the same ontological register as this “transcendental dignity”, this “living presence” of Levinas, and this “wild being”, this “preobjective” of Merleau-Ponty, this thesis intuits transcendental intersubjective Audience, which, for the purposes of its clarification, needs to be turned towards, to be revealed in its concretion through reactivation and reanimation.

The results of a set of preliminary Reductions, Psychological, Eidetic, Transcendental and Intersubjective, describing how the object of the study came forth and gave the parameters, limits and operators of its apprehension, can be found below in Part IV Phenomenology of Audience, Section A. Preliminary Reductions.

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24 Indeed, the Levinas article to which I refer in this paragraph is subtitled ‘Starting from Husserl’.
D. Intersubjectivity

§17 Overview of Intersubjectivity

*Here we have the only transcendence which is really worth its name,*
and anything else that is also called transcendent, such as the
*objective world,* depends upon the transcendence of foreign
subjectivity (Husserl, cited in Zahavi 2001: 159).

The study of intersubjectivity is not limited to phenomenology. The term arises throughout psychology: in the social psychology of George Herbert Mead (1934), developmental psychology (Stern 1985), psychoanalysis (Stolorow et. al. 1987), and is in increasing use, with strong phenomenological overtones, in nursing, psychotherapy, and palliative care. In philosophy there is much current interpretation of the intersubjective dimensions in American pragmatism, particularly applied to the work of William James, Santayana, Cooley (Schutz 1953: 410), John Dewey (Garrison 1995) and Mead (Joas 1985), with repercussions into studies of pedagogy (Biesta 1995). The term is central in the social and language philosophy of Jurgen Habermas, who works from the basis of ‘linguistically established intersubjectivity’ (Habermas 1984: 396), and the apriority of intersubjectivity: “Individuality forms itself in relations of intersubjective acknowledgement and of intersubjectively mediated self-understanding” (1994:152-153). Karl-Otto Apel’s discourse ethics and transcendental semiotics lean heavily on theories of intersubjectivity (Apel 1994). There is also a trend, in the wake of a rebirth of interest in Sartre, towards extracting the intersubjective from Hegel (Honneth 1995).

However, the term and the concept have been more fully developed and widely applied in phenomenology than anywhere else, and the use of the term here, as a transcendental essence, is entirely phenomenological, so any further consideration of these other usages would be of no value to this study.

§18 Gathering with Others

*Gathering with others as belonging* belongs to the ontological constitution of all pack, herd, social and swarm animals (and in some cosmologies, to forests, mountains and
other geological features) which, for safety, for comfort, for nourishment, for procreation, for production, all gather in some way with others, which, differential capacities for recognition of alterity notwithstanding, are perceived as having some sameness to which they belong; belonging together as their own family, tribe, pack, hive, herd or nation. Relations with others of the same group are a condition of animals that pack, flock and swarm; as basic and necessary as food.

A human is gathered with others of its own kind as a person, as a family member, as a friend, a team player, a customer, a boss, as a citizen, as a fellow traveller, as an enemy. We are born from the first in most intimate relation with another person upon whom we rely for our nourishment, and against the separation from whom our self begins to emerge. We are held in relationships, momentary or enduring, with role models, children, shopkeepers, colleagues, lovers, bank managers, police and total strangers. Who we are belongs to those relationships. However seductive the private depths of solitude in which I luxuriate as my unassailable self, my windowless monad, however mine this beam I shine on the world, my sense of myself is only as it is in the hold of the particular webs of relationships in which it consists. My sense of myself gathers as and according (although not exclusively) to its belonging to these relationships. My gathering with others continually affirms, refreshes, qualifies, breaks and nourishes itself.

Despite Husserl’s strictly methodological move of beginning with the sphere of absolute ownness in the primordial reduction in his account of intersubjectivity, he ends with the primacy of shared Objective nature. Similarly, Heidegger for whom “being-in-the-world has the basic constitution of being-with” (Heidegger 1985: 241), Merleau-Ponty, who never got the chance to put much flesh on intercorporeality, and Levinas, for whom the awakening call of the other is the original moment of subjectivity, all shared in the belief in the fundamental apriority of belonging with others as the condition of subjectivity. It is an axiomatic belief, not only for phenomenology, but for much of psychology, sociology and anthropology.25 My sense of myself is joined, submerged, in, with, of, from, among

25 Notably George Herbert Mead hallmarks his social psychology with the apriority of intersubjectivity. The individual, according to Mead, “can enter as an object [to himself] only on the basis of social relations and interactions, only by means of his experiential transactions with other individuals in an organized
and dependent upon relations with others anterior to its possibility.

A phenomenology of being in Audience with others inevitably opens out onto this line of questioning. Without wanting to revert too much to questions of the social function of audiences, there seems to be a nourishment, refreshment and reassertion of these primary intersubjective bonds in the going out together-towards, complex, multi-directional intentionality in which audience members join for the shared purpose of witnessing.

As much as an audience, in its primary purpose of witnessing is fundamentally intentional, it is also, in its gathering, fundamentally intersubjective. So the consideration of the history of how phenomenology has conceived of intersubjectivity is an essential requirement of this thesis.

§19 Transcendental Intersubjectivity

The intrinsically first being, the being that precedes and bears every worldly Objectivity, is transcendental intersubjectivity (Husserl 1999: 156).

It is not possible to insert intersubjectivity somewhere within an already established ontology; rather, the three regions ‘self, ‘others’ and ‘world’ belong together; they reciprocally illuminate one another, and can only be understood in their interconnection (Zahavi 2001: 151).

The primary hypothesis of this thesis is that an audience is something other than a room full of people observing something; that any particular audience, all audiences, are instances of the transcendental intersubjective phenomenon—Audience, designated here (admittedly clumsily and open to criticism of delusions of grandeur) with a capital A, merely for the purpose of differentiating it from an audience, any audience, all audiences, the audience, or this or that particular audience. It is the fundamental underlying essence of any and all audiences, the condition in which theatre-goers in their auditoriums, reality TV show viewers in their separate homes, football crowds on the terraces and around social environment" (Mead 1934: 225). This is symptomatic of a thread running throughout American Pragmatist philosophy from Peirce and James onwards.

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screens in pubs, the faithful kneeling together in prayer, Torajan mourners sacrificing buffalo to accompany the recently departed to Puya,26 and friends and lovers sitting on balconies and on the sides of hills watching the sun go down, participate together, having been gathered to offer completion to that which calls for witness.

Husserl gives a precise definition of this conception:

a complicated intentionality which, in spite of its indeterminacy, is covalid and anticipated...every other ego is already intentionally implied in advance by way of empathy...it becomes evident that there is no separation of mutual externality at all for souls in their own essential nature. What is a mutual externality for the natural-mundane attitude...is transformed in the epoché into a pure, intentional mutual internality...to which he belongs in advance within the horizon of every other subject (1970: 255-256).

So Husserl gives us not only us the primordial reduction as the explanation of the encounter with the single other person, but also posits the open transcendental intersubjectivity to which we belong in advance, and which finds concrete manifestation in Audience.

It is not the job of this thesis to prove the existence of this transcendental intersubjective phenomenon, but to catch it as it is lived in audiences, to steal glimpses of it, perhaps to demonstrate it, in full awareness that, as transcendental, as hidden from consciousness, any attempt to stare it down, to grasp it, to encompass it, can only betray it, can only present a trace of a memory, the very fleshing out of which transforms it into something which it is not. It is not even something which might be experienced, for experience presupposes consciousness. This transcendental intersubjectivity is silently and blindly lived, a properly unapprehendable apriori condition, subtending, excessive of, and transcendent to knowledge. It does, however, appear, if the listening, the attending, the waiting, the attunement, are painstaking and diligent enough, in the living of it, in

26 In the planning stages of the work I had planned to do some fieldwork to examine the specific gathering to witness in the funeral ceremonies of the Toraja people on the Indonesian Island of Sulawesi. Unfortunately, the funding for this part of the project was refused.
flashing glimpses of its edges, which crackle momentarily in a spatter of applause or laughter, a shared sigh or stillness, or the celebratory buoyancy on an anthemic chorus.

It is almost as if it is necessary to tiptoe around the phenomenon, to avoid saying too much for fear of missing or misinterpreting it, to work together in and from it as a group, seeking the reassurance of each others’ shared nods and glances as our research falters on, always spending more time listening, sitting quietly together in audiences, sneaking up on ourselves and catching ourselves in the act of being in Audience; because as soon as the attention turns back to thematize the living of the phenomenon, it ceases to be what it was and slips away at one remove.

Consequently, to provide ballast where there can be no proof, to shed light on a phenomenon which turns away modest under the intentional beam, to provide a ground where that which cannot be grasped might be allowed to show something of itself, there are some fundamental questions which need to be asked:

1. What does the term Transcendental Intersubjectivity, as used here, designate? What is its constitution? Of what order of being is it a formation?
2. What gives us reason to posit its existence? Which hitherto unanswerable questions or paradoxes might find resolution through its positing?
3. How is Audience transcendentally intersubjective? How does it differ from other manifestations of Transcendental Intersubjectivity?

First, it will be necessary to give a rough outline of the origin and use of the concept of transcendental intersubjectivity in the phenomenology of Husserl and a brief history of the debates surrounding the term and concept among his successors.

Second, to show how the term, or the conceptual ambit which it projects, has been understood and applied in phenomenological studies, notably in Scheler’s work on the person, Stein’s constitution of empathy, Schutz’s social phenomenology, Heidegger’s *being-with*, Sartre’s study of the concrete Other, Merleau-Ponty’s intercorporeality and Levinas’ ethics. And third, to take a brief survey of the recent surge of interest in intersubjectivity in phenomenology.

And then the task must proceed, roughly according to the strategy of Husserl’s
reductions, from an intentional analysis of audiences in the everyday lifeworld, through
eidetic reduction in free imaginary variation to seek invariant essences, and on to the
constitution of those essences in the universal terms of the transcendental realm.

§20 Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity

a) Note on Zahavi

I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to the work of Dan Zahavi in this section.
This prolific and profound thinker has, over the last ten years, produced a clutch of books
and articles concerning the phenomenology of intersubjectivity, which have had the
threefold effect of recuperating and foregrounding the development and structure of the
tradition of phenomenological studies in the area, reinterpreting Husserl’s original
intentions in the context of the work of his followers and heirs, and reinvigorating and
pushing forward our understanding of how we are together.

I derived confirmation and validation in the direction my work was taking when I
accorded with my own summaries of the contributions of the various thinkers in the field,
and provided me with a means of verification, against which I could assess my own
findings.

Also, further exploration of Zahavi’s work provided avenues into definitions and
understandings of Audience which would not have been possible without his clarification
and elaboration of the idea of Transcendental Intersubjectivity in the work of Husserl.

b) Husserl—There For All of Us

Who are we, as subjects performing the meaning- and validity-accomplishment of universal constitution—as those who, in
community, constitute the world as a system of poles, as the

The question of intersubjectivity haunted Husserl’s work from the beginning. David
Vessey has pointed out Husserl’s comment: “my lectures at Göttingen in 1910-11 already
presented a first sketch of my transcendental theory of empathy” (Husserl, in Vessey
as early as Ideas I, published in 1911, the noetico-noematic constitution of objects presupposes possible viewpoints other than my own; the first volume of the manuscripts, Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität XIII covers writings on the subject from the years 1905-1920. However, it was not until Ideas II, last edited in 1928, the Formal and Transcendental Logic and the Cartesian Meditations of 1929, and the Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology of 1934-1937, that the question fully emerged. The extent to which it preoccupied his later years is attested by the last two volumes of manuscripts published in the Husserliana XIV-XV.

Apart from the attempt of the Cartesian Meditations to account for the encounter with and constitution of the perceptually given other person, which I have outlined in the previous section on reduction, there is a dimension of Husserl’s theory of intersubjectivity far more pertinent to the concerns of this thesis: Everyone, in his commerce with others within his world-consciousness, at the same time has consciousness of others in the form of particular others; that in an amazing fashion his intentionality reaches into that of the other and vice versa; that thereby one’s own and others’ ontic validities combine in modes of agreement and discrepancy; and that always and necessarily, through reciprocal correction, agreeing consciousness of the same common world with the same things finally achieves validity…the consciousness of one and the same world for all, all those who are known and not known, all subjects that could ever possibly be met (Husserl 1970: 254).

This “amazing” and taken-for-granted fashion in which we apparently bleed into each other

27 Dan Zahavi has comprehensively developed this argument in his article, ‘Horizontal Intentionality and Transcendental Intersubjectivity’ (1997).

28 There have been a number of attempts to put the relative importance of the Cartesian Meditations into perspective in the full body of Husserl’s work. Zahavi is unambiguous: “Husserl's final words on the question of intersubjectivity are not to be found in the Cartesian Meditations (1997: 305). Schutz cited Fink’s assertion that the goal of the Cartesian Meditations was “not a thematic interpretation of ‘empathy’, but an exposition of the transcendental reduction” (1966: 55).
other in the “same common world”, 29 this “confluence of intersubjective intendings” (Ricoeur 1967: 50), the explanation of which left Schutz so dissatisfied (see below, ‘Schutz’s Objections’), is one of the main concerns of this thesis. The question of the intersubjective genesis of objectivity is vital here, not least because the foundation of mutual objectivity is the kernel of the intentional structure of being together-towards—the intentional moment of Audience. Audience is a dwelling in, a revelation of, an arising from a primary belonging which is not only a belonging together but a mutual belonging to objects that are there for all of us: a fundamentally intersubjective intentional phenomenon. The belonging-together in Audience is a primary instance of “a single unity of intentionality with the reciprocal implication of life fluxes of the individual subjects”, which is not to be understood naïvely as a “mutual externality” but as “an intentional mutual internality”; the strange eventuality that we, who are so comprehensively excluded from each others’ inner experience, can share a world of agreed reality is explicable by our internality to a “single unity of intentionality” (Husserl 1970: 257). Sartre catches it well.

For Husserl the world as it is revealed to consciousness is intermonadic. The other is present in it not only as a particular concrete and empirical appearance but as a permanent condition of its unity and richness. Whether I consider this table or this tree or this bare wall in solitude or with companions, the Other is always there as a layer of constitutive meanings which belong to the very object which I consider; in short, he is the veritable guarantee of the object’s objectivity (Sartre 1984: 316).

29 I can hear the objections of my co-supervisor, J. Lowell Lewis, an anthropologist; objections of cultural relativity. I would simply offer at this point that the confrontation with someone from a different culture, different language group, different gender, different football team, becomes, phenomenologically speaking, a process of working out step-by-step, in good faith, in the face-to-face encounter, some ground of mutuality, in an ever-increasing agreement and conflict of understanding. But I would stress that there must be some given apriori ground of shared intersubjective human commonality on which this process might occur. The important point here is not to do with relative power differentials in the lifeworld, but the potentiality of recognition.
The ground of certainty is not *cogito ergo sum* but *cogitamus ergo est*.

The intersubjective basis of objectivity is an increasingly recurrent theme in Husserl’s work. In *Ideas II* he pays particular attention to “the transition from solipsistic to intersubjective experience”, with the suggestion that the solipsistic subject is actually an abstraction and that we need to pay attention to the concrete fact that “the experiencing subject is, in truth, *not a solipsistic subject*, but is instead one among many” (1982b: 83). He demonstrates that the verification of the identity of things occurs intersubjectively, and asks how does “the relation to a multiplicity of people….enter into the apprehension of a thing…as Objective and actual” (85).

The intersubjectivity in which all objects are apprehended ‘Objectively’ as things in the one Objective time and one Objective space of the one Objective world. In every case the exhibition of any apprehended Objectivity whatsoever requires a relation to the apprehension of a multiplicity of subjects sharing a mutual understanding (86).

Mutual understanding is the ground on which each subject’s own separate perceptions can be validated as apprehending the identity of the “true thing…that maintains its identity within the manifolds of appearances belonging to a multiplicity of subjects” (87). And for an Object, physical or ideal, to be objective, to exist independently of any individual subjective dependency, to be known for what it is by any cognizing subject, any subject must, if they are to know that object in its truth, “stand in a relation of empathy to the other cognizing subjects, and for that he must have Corporeality and belong to the same world etc.” (87). “Only through mutual understanding is there the possibility of knowing that things seen by the one are the same as those seen by the other” (90).

The intersubjective validation of Objectivity extends as the basis for all human activities. “Nature is an intersubjective reality and a reality not just for me and my companions of the moment but for us and for everyone who can have dealings with us about things and about other people” (91).

For this to hold true, for the shared apprehension and mutual understanding of objects, the intersubjective validation must be constituted as law: “The thing is a rule of possible
appearances...a reality as a unity of a manifold of appearances connected according to rules" (91). And these rules must hold to be universally binding.

The physicalistic thing is *intersubjectively* common in that it has validity for all individuals who stand in possible communion with us. The *Objective determination* determines the thing through that which belongs to it and must belong to it if it is going to be able to appear to me or anyone else in communion with me ...The determinations of space and time are common, as is common a lawfulness...a unitary rule for all the appearances, of the intersubjective community, which constitute the same thing (92).

And so, similarly to the noetico-noematic constitution of temporal objects, as regulated by omnitemporal formal noematic constants, and analogous to the constant ideal logical truths and theorems of mathematics and geometry against which the shifting flux of experience comes to meaning, the laws of the intersubjective constitution of objectivity are guaranteed by the lawfulness of common space and time.

The *Objectively real* is not in my “space”, or in anyone else’s as phenomenon (“phenomenal space”) but exists in the *Objective space*, which is a formal *unity* of identity in the midst of the changing qualities (92).

So the voting off of the undesirable house member or the less popular performer on the reality TV show stands the audience members in a relation of empathy, reassured of the identity and reality of the qualities that hold as desirable to the community, lawfully regulated by the common spatio-temporal intersubjective constitution. And likewise the faithful intersubjectively reassure themselves and each other of the infinite glory of their Lord in the faith to which they, in place and span of their mortal dwelling, bear shared witness, in measure of the eternal omnipresence of their creator. And the effigies of ancestors in Toraja, on the island of Sulawesi, who are included in conversations and spoken of as participants in family activities, and who have meals set for them at the table with the living, join those ancestors to the common time and space of the living.

And thereby, according to Husserl, the phenomenological investigation of the intersubjective verification of objectivity has revealed that “individual differences stand out from a fundamental set of common experiences and lead to the distinction between
determinations which belong to the thing “itself” versus ones that are merely subjectively conditioned” (94).

We sit in auditoriums and lecture halls or around TV sets, stand in stadiums and kneel in places of worship, side-by-side, more or less con-centred, more or less proximate, in shared responsibility to that which calls for witness, that which, by its demand, cuts through us, envelops us, joins us in the shared purpose of the offering of completion. I know and you know that we are at a performance of Troilus and Cressida at the Opera House; you may have seen a prior production, I may have not; I may think he was an insufficiently compelling Troilus, you may think he was boyishly coy; our friend who does not speak very good English may have seen a spectacle of movement and color which we may have missed. I may think the Aboriginal girl only made the final of Australian Idol because of her race, you may think she had a tougher and raunchier voice than the others. You may think the full-forward of your team is leading too early, I may think the full-back is cleverly leading him under the ball. You may say that the contemporary performance piece was like a puerile rock video, I may have followed a bead of sweat down a performer’s cheek, and our teenage friend might have thought it was “really weird but cool”. We are gathered to witness. Irrespective of the nature of the performance, of our good faith, our bad faith, whether with knowledge or in ignorance, as partisan or opposed, we are in Audience, in an intentionality of together-towardsness demanded and shaped by the performance, the time and place and situation of the performance, and the others around us. But whether we are a throng or a small group, whether we are transfixed or distracted, whether we are in the same room or dispersed, it is the specific intentionality of the relation to each other through the object that gives us the transcendental intersubjective ground of Audience.

c) Scheler—The Performance of “The Person”.

For we certainly believe ourselves to be directly acquainted with another person’s joy in his laughter, with his sorrow and pain in his tears, with his shame in his blushing, with his entreaty in his outstretched hands, with his love in his look of affection, with his rage in the gnashing of his teeth, with his threats in the clenching of his fists and with the tenor of this thoughts in the sound of his words. If
anyone tells me that this is not ‘perception’, for it cannot be so, in view of the fact that a perception is simply a ‘complex of physical sensations’, and that there is certainly no sensation of another person’s mind nor any stimulus from such a source, I would beg him to turn aside from such questionable theories and address himself to the phenomenological facts (Scheler 1954: 254).

Scheler’s theories relating to intersubjectivity were based on his idea of the Person, “sharply” differentiated from the I. The Person manifests through the performance of acts “in which he lives and by which he experiences himself”. Acts are not psychological events or bodily functions like seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling or attending. They can never be grasped as objects for others, so the Person is likewise not an object for apprehension. Persons and their acts can only be experienced by others through “co-performance, pre-performance or re-performance” (Schutz 1942: 325-326).

The Person does not exist, except in the performance of his acts. Any attempt to objectify the Person or his acts—be this objectifying a perceiving, thinking, recollecting, expecting—transforms his existence into a transcendental idea (1942: 327).

The central methodological orientation of this thesis, of writing from..., rather than about, in order to show something of Audience not as an object but an apriori lived condition, an ideal formation, is of the same ontological register as Scheler’s Person and its acts, which cannot be encompassed or circumscribed as an object of study, but must be lived or performed.

Also, the quote above, concerning the perceived joy in the laughter, the threat in the fist etc., suggests the possibility of adequate explanations based in a metakinetic perceived immediacy of contact, in anticipation of Merleau-Ponty’s observation of “the primordial phenomenon of the body-for-us” (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 351). This points towards an approach to the question of what is going on in audiences based in the evidence presented by the phenomenon as it appears to give itself, rather than in highly theoretical semiotic systems based in the belief that we read our experience through the mediation of signs.

In Audience, the joy in the laughter hangs in the air, crackles through the room and envelops, the buoyant roar of the crowd and the victory of our team is our victory
expressing itself immediately, and the shared faith holds the bowed heads of the faithful whose eyes do not need to meet to experience each other’s submission in the face of the almighty.

These shared affective contigions are tangible and immediate and belong to none of us, yet cut through us all. We belong to them.

d) Empathy

Zahavi points to the central role of empathy in Husserl’s intersubjective reduction, as an answer to the problem of the argument from analogy, which holds that I infer that there is another person like me in that other body over there. He refers to empathy as a “unique and irreducible form of intentionality” (Zahavi 2001: 153), requiring its own intentional analysis. Husserl performs this analysis in detail in Ideas II (1982b:170-175) and Cartesian Meditations V (1999:89-151) as an intentionality of co-presence and appresentation. Whilst there is an analogical element in Husserl’s work, it is: “a process that involves analogy…not inference by analogy” (Schutz 1966: 62). Evan Thompson differentiates it from pure inference by analogy, because it is not ultimately “reducible” to inference; it is empathy which differentiates the Husserlian analysis (Thompson 2001: 16).

The term empathy is confusing. As Zahavi explains, it “has occasionally been taken to constitute the phenomenological approach to intersubjectivity” (Zahavi 2001: 153). Husserl himself at times refers to the whole process of intersubjective constitution as empathy, and at other times uses the term in a more limited fashion to specifically designate the moment of the process in which I apperceive the other person as an alternate here from which I might imagine his perspective.

It is well documented that the term was coined by the American psychologist, Edward Titchener, as a translation of the German Einfühlung (feeling-in), from the aesthetic psychology of Robert Vischer, who sought an explanation for the capacity of works of art to express emotion. Einfühlung was suggested as an unconscious process by which the viewer invests the work of art with its affective content (Gauss 2003: 86). Husserl encountered the term in the Ästhetik of Theodor Lipps (Sawicki 1997: 123) and used it to
describe steps in the process by which another person becomes knowable.

Husserl’s primary use of the term “in-feeling” is logical, not aesthetic or emotional. In-feeling delivers only that component of someone else’s experience that could be experienced in principle by anyone at all. I’s are interchangeable. In effect, the act of in-feeling is supposed to filter out whatever was owing to the particular individual who had the first experience (Sawicki 1997: 125).

The major work in the phenomenology of empathy was produced by Edith Stein in her dissertation of 1916, *On the Problem of Empathy*, written under Husserl’s direction, but notably preceding the *Cartesian Meditations* by fifteen years, and foreshadowing many key moments of Husserl’s description of the constitution of the other person. Stein lays out a schema of different levels and types of empathy, active and passive, in a detailed phenomenological description of “the experience of feeling led by an experience that is not one’s own” (Thompson 2001: 16). In a nutshell, for Stein there are three stages of empathy: 1) The direct experience of the other person, similar to Scheler’s recognition of “another person’s joy in his laughter…his sorrow and pain in his tears” (Scheler 1954: 254); 2) Imaginary transposition of myself into the position of the other, which accords with Husserl’s empathetic moment; and 3) The consequently clarified return to the original experience which caused the other person’s state in the first place.

The empathic situation is partially reversible in that I can have an intuition of the other person’s experience of me; a crucial moment in the formation of my self identity, born in recognition of the other’s recognition of me (Stein 1989: 10-11).

Stein’s and other early approaches to intersubjectivity are characterized by the concentration on the one-on-one relation with another person. The debates which took shape in later phenomenology became more affected by the observation that we always exist in community with others, and by discussion of the relative ontological primacy of the we, after Heidegger’s *mitsein* (Being-with), posited as a fundamental apriori of the possibility of the individual subject.

e) Schutz’s Objections

As long as man is born of woman, intersubjectivity and the we-
relationship will be the foundation for all other categories of human existence (Schutz 1966: 82).

Alfred Schutz is the great social phenomenologist of the lifeworld. He believed that although intersubjectivity is “the fundamental ontological category of human existence in the world” (82), it could not be accounted for within the transcendental sphere. He chose to conduct his studies at the level of the psychological–phenomenological reduction, eschewing, though not denying the importance of the transcendental reduction, claiming in a letter to Husserl, to

> have dealt exclusively with the problem of intersubjectivity in the natural attitude and given up the solution or…explanation of the transcendental problems…nothing but an attempt to transfer your fundamental recognitions to the much more modest, but as ever not explored field of work in sociological sciences (Schutz, cited in Hamauzu 2004: 3).

He wrote ‘The Problem of Transcendental Intersubjectivity in Husserl’ (1966), presented as a paper at the Husserl-Colloquium in Royaumont on April 28, 1957, in response to the “extraordinary difficulties” he found connected with “each of (the) steps” of the argument of the fifth *Cartesian Meditation* (Schutz 1966: 55). He submitted Husserl’s arguments from that book, as well as some from *Ideas I &II* and the *Krisis* to a ruthlessly detailed and painstaking critique, finding it

> doubtful that Husserl’s attempt to develop a transcendental theory of experiencing others (empathy) as the foundation for a transcendental theory of the objective world was successful, and what is more…doubtful that such an attempt can succeed at all within the transcendental sphere (55).

He finds at least thirty objections which come down to four main categories:

1. Concern at the change in the definition of constitution. In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl characterized the transcendental subjectivity as *constituting* the Other within itself, whereas his earlier works had attempted to explicate the *constitution of* the operations of the transcendental subjectivity. “It has changed from explication into creation” (83). For Schutz this new-found creative role was inexplicable and untenable.
2. Questions over the actual performability of the primal reduction. "Perhaps it cannot be carried out at all" (66). He found a number of anomalies in Husserl’s attribution of what belongs to the sphere of ownness and what does not, as well as unquestioned presuppositions that prove these attributions logically impossible.30

3. An unacknowledged and unexplored presupposition and priority of a “we-stratum” underlying steps in the process: a stratum for whose genesis the process was supposed to account. There is no explanation of how our separate worlds coincide in the objective world, or of how empathic transfer of mental and sensible qualities occurs.

4. Unexplained leaps and gaps between solitary and social levels of explanation, including “excessive metaphorical usage of inadequate terms” (73), and even stretching to “the completely untenable theory that social communities correspond to personalities of a higher order” (80).

Schutz’s thorough working over of the problems encapsulates the history of objections to Cartesian Meditation V, which held sway until the recent generation of phenomenologists, who, working largely from the unpublished manuscripts, began the clarification of Husserl’s own doubts about his published work in the area of intersubjectivity. A remarkably prescient Schutz pre-empts this development. “Perhaps the unpublished manuscripts on intersubjective constitution can provide an explanation. The present study does not go beyond the published material” (78). Ultimately, Schutz, 30 Husserl did not establish with any absolute certainty a list of which phenomena belong to which sphere of the own and the other in the primordial reduction. The doubts that Schutz raises concerning what belongs in or out of the epoché: what can be excluded from it, what can be included in it, are indicative of the ever-present uncertainty, when performing any of the reductions, as to which phenomena belong to which level of reduction. For instance, when in Audience, the psychological structures of the ways in which I am there to view, perceive, interpret, judge, think about, respond, and feel in relation to the play, the football match or the sermon, obviously belong to the psychological realm. But does the more opaque, obtuse, lateral, passive, though nevertheless intentional relation to the other people in the audience belong to the transcendental reduction? Or perhaps this is the wrong question. More accurately, should it be viewed not as a case of which phenomena are the concern of which reduction, but rather, as merely a matter of a change of attitude towards whatever phenomena are under scrutiny.
who was, after Heidegger, Husserl’s second great hope for a deserving successor to carry his life’s work forward, proved almost as recalcitrant and dismissive as the latter, damning the primordial reduction as “a desperate attempt to escape from the appearance of solipsism...(but) it is precisely this attempt which gives rise to that appearance” (82). And finally:

[we] must conclude that Husserl’s attempt to account for the constitution of transcendental intersubjectivity in terms of the operations of the consciousness of the transcendental ego has not succeeded (82).

f) Heidegger—Fundamental Mitsein

The tool I am using is bought by someone, the book is a gift from..., the umbrella is forgotten by someone. The dining-table at home is not a round top on a stand but a piece of furniture in a particular place, which itself has its particular places at which particular others are seated every day. The empty place directly appresents co-Dasein to me in terms of the absence of others (Heidegger 1985: 239).

Heidegger deals directly with intersubjectivity in the *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena* (1985) in the context of a “critique of the thematic of empathy” (237). In a dozen or so rich pages of logic he sets out to refute Husserl’s approach to intersubjectivity and replace it with an analysis based on the primordiality of co-Dasein (*mitdasein*).

The primordial reduction is specifically rejected.

Neither have we, let it be noted, assumed a starting point for our analysis such that we said: first I am alone in the world, or first only the ‘I’ is given without the world. With the rejection of this approach and the uncovering of being-in-the–world, there can be no question of the isolation of the I...‘I am in a world’, would be essentially more appropriate than...‘first a bare subject exists without a world’ (237-238).

Instead, he begins characteristically with equipmentality and the intentionality of production: “In the work...the material...and the tool, there are others...for whom...by whom...*there with* [the craftsman]” (237). Paper clips, houses, the internal combustion
engine, personal computers, the internet, all presuppose a world of more or less anonymous others. It is a fundamental feature of these things that they refer, in their function, in their production, in their materials, to other persons. The things we do: our work, our pleasures, our daily concerns in the world, are done at the order of others, after the example of others, with equipment predetermined by others, for others, with others, and could well be done by others. Zahavi is succinct: “Dasein is essentially social from the very start” (2001: 154).

Dasein, being-with-others and being-in-the-world are co-original, internally related, mutually interdependent. “As being-in-the-world, Dasein is at the same time being with another—more rigorously, ‘being-with’” (Heidegger 1985: 238). There is no order of priority here, but radical equiprimordiality.

Further, there is no requirement for another person, body, Leib or Körper to be present. Being alone is merely the absence of another person, a lack or insufficiency, which, as such, merely proves the primordial givenness of being-with. Being alone is merely a deficient mode of being-with. And conversely, the presence of another person is no guarantee of not being alone.

Even when ten or more are on hand, Dasein can be alone, inasmuch as being-with-one-another is not based upon having similar specimens of subject-things on hand together (239).

This insight not only points towards the necessity of a study of intersubjectivity which is not based on the I-Thou relation, or the face-to-face contact with another person, but more importantly here, gives a lead to the intentional structure of audiences, providing a clue to the mode of being of Audience. “The co-Dasein of others right in everydayness is characteristic of in-being as absorption in the world under concern…in which everyone dwells” (239). This threefold structure is precisely the immersed together-towardsness of Audience. Side-by-side rather than face to face, towards that which calls for witness, immersed, absorbed in the world of the work. And moreover, Audience is not about a group of people in a room together. Temporal and placial factors of Audience are variable; audiences can be more or less dispersed over time and place. It is the concernful co-absorption of gathering to witness that constitutes audiences as audiences and that
g) Sartre’s Critique—The We-Subject

We encounter the Other; we do not constitute him (Sartre 1984: 336).

Sartre, in a characteristic realist-existentialist move, places the concrete encounter with the other before being-with. He complains that the concrete embodied other person who we encounter has disappeared from Heidegger’s account. Zahavi interprets: “our being-for others must be understood as an existential dimension which only arises in and through the concrete encounter with factual others” (Zahavi 2001: 158).

Sartre characterizes Heidegger’s mitsein as a relation which “is not a frontal opposition but rather an oblique interdependence” (Sartre 1984: 331).

The empirical image which may best symbolize Heidegger’s intuition is not that of a conflict but rather a crew. The original relation of the
Other and my consciousness is not the you and me; it is the we. Heidegger’s being-with is not the clear and distinct position of an individual confronting another individual; it is not knowledge. It is the mute existence in common of one member of the crew with his fellows, that existence which the rhythm of the oars or the regular movement of the coxswain will render sensible to the rowers and which will be made manifest to them by the common goal to be attained (1984: 332).

He accuses Heidegger of trying to pass off “a simple affirmation without foundation” (333). Questioning the basis of the claims to the fundamentality of the being-with-and-in, and fearing a fall into monism, he accepts that there are “certain empirical states of our being—in particular that to which the Germans give the name Stimmung— which seem to reveal a co-existence of consciousnesses rather than a relation of opposition” (333), but puts forward his own view of the priority of the face-to-face ethical structure of being-for others, claiming that “the being-for-others precedes and founds the being-with-others” (537).

Thus the relation of the mit-sein can be of absolutely no use to us in resolving the psychological, concrete problem of the recognition of the Other. There are two incommunicable levels and two problems which demand separate solutions (334).

I agree with Sartre that there are two levels at work here. I offer nothing to the question of the relative priority, fundamentality or communicability of the two phenomena, and overlook the perhaps pointed use of “empirical” in relation to mitsein, but insist that the transcendental intersubjective phenomenon of Audience is most effectively approached through Heidegger’s structure of being-with-and-in, precisely because audience members are with each other for the performance.

31 In the 1984 edition of Being and Nothingness there is a translator’s note: “Literally ‘pitch’ or ‘tuning’. Perhaps the nearest English equivalent is ‘sympathy’ in its original Greek sense of feeling or experiencing with”. In Being and Time, Macquarrie and Robinson usually translate stimmung as ‘mood’, sometimes ‘being-attuned’ (Heidegger 1962: 172 fn.). In the audience groups (see below, pp. 209-218) we used Herbert Spiegelberg’s rendition, ‘attunement’.
I accept, with Sartre, that the look of the other makes me a spatialized, temporalized object in the world (357), something that is somewhere at some time among things for somebody else, and that it this existence of myself as an object for others that gives me to myself and gives them to me, and that I know that there are other subjects because I am an object for them; and I can find here a basis for positing a co-subjective entity in Audience—a co-subjective orientation towards in validation or offer of completion of that object to which we bear witness. And further, that this reveals Audience as

a living and undifferentiated transcendence…(which) projects its projects, whatever they are, in connection with other transcendences experienced as real presences similarly absorbed in projects identical with my projects…then I have the experience of a common transcendence directed toward a unique end of which I am only an ephemeral particularization (548-549).

This is Sartre’s most pertinent contribution here: the We-subject. This concept has already done some of the basic work for us, of explicating the intentional analysis of together-towardsness. The “double objectivizing apprehension of the object transcended in common and of the bodies which surround mine” (549), is “likely” to give me the experience of being part of a We-subject. It is a question of rhythm. He writes of the march of soldiers, the rhythmic work of a crew.

It is I who produce this rhythm. But at the same time it melts into the general rhythm of the work or of the march of the concrete community which surrounds me. It gets its meaning only through this general rhythm;...Yet the enveloping of my rhythm by the rhythm of the Other is apprehended “laterally”. I do not use the collective rhythm as an instrument; neither do I contemplate it—in the sense which, for example, I might contemplate dancers on a stage. It surrounds me and involves me without being an object for me…I slip my transcendence into its transcendence (549).

This double objectivizing apprehension captures the specific intentionality of Audience very clearly. I can find no better description of the phenomenon in which I find myself involved in Audience. The play of my subjectivity simultaneously, doubly but differently absorbed in both that which requires witness and the lateral relation of those with whom I
am gathered.

Sartre insists, in harmony with Schutz, that this is no ontological “real unification” (549) of subjects, that the lateral coming together is in no way “a real apprehension of subjectivities” (550). To support his notion of the primacy of the for-others in relation to the with-others, and his opposition to Heidegger’s equiprimordiality of world, others and subject, he insists that we can gain no access to anything ontological through this mode of enquiry: “no upsurge of real and concrete being” (550). It can only ever be a “secondary and subordinate experience” (552). His criteria for making this judgement are: first, that this is no real breach of the radically separated subjectivities, and second that the Other must be pre-given for me to enter into a joint task. It is only through concrete others in given worlds that a We-subject can become apparent.

But he is so intent on providing a radical solution to the problem of the solipsism of the individualized self, alienated in the world, that he vehemently opposes any attempt to prioritize an anonymous shared subjectivity, mitsein, world, or anything else which might be seen to mediate between the forlorn, mutually unfathomable separated souls.

This insistence on the illusory nature of the we, that ultimately there is no true shared experience, but only “a purely subjective impression which engages only me” (551) is the limit of Sartre’s applicability to this thesis. It is my contention that the very real and concrete repercussions of the ways in which I am with others, mediated by the places, things and shared worlds of understanding are fundamentally constitutive of my experience of being in audiences, to the extent that my subjective sovereignty appears to me as a persistent and tyrannical illusion.

But, once again, my task here is not to offer anything to this debate, but merely continue the job of this thesis, turning towards the things themselves, audiences, beginning with the psychological reduction and taking whatever is thereby revealed to the transcendental turn of attitude, to the best of my understanding of these processes.

However, there is a warning here from Sartre which should be heeded. The limits which he perceives as justification for his position should be taken fully into account, whether or not the conclusions he draws from them are held to be warranted.

We should hope in vain for a human “we” in which the
intersubjective totality would obtain consciousness of itself as a unified subjectivity. Such an ideal could be only a dream produced by a passage to the limit and to the absolute on the basis of fragmentary, strictly psychological experiences (553).

Whether or not these experiences are strictly psychological, there is no doubt that they are fragmentary, incomplete, fleeting and only apprehendable in secondary appearances. Because it is precisely the absence of the others, the way in which they escape me, that is revealed to my concrete experience, because I can only have concrete experience of their transcendence from me, I cannot have a fulfilled intention of them. How can I have a full intention of something that turns away as I turn towards it, a something whose turning away is my turning towards it? How can I know it? Audience, to the extent that it is constituted as a multiplicity of operations of my experience and that of the other audience members, appears as transcendent because I cannot fully grasp my own apparently interior hiddenness, because my turning towards myself always leaves a part of me turned away from myself, because the others are always so utterly impregnable, the multiplicity of them, that which is more than the multiplicity of them, the ways it escapes, the waves of mutually affective contagion, the eddies, the ebbs, the flows, the complex interactions and passivities; it is impossible to lay out the full intentionality of Audience, to put a pin through its thorax, to measure its wingspan, to stake out its legs, to dissect its membranes; it is something that must just be lived, reported back from, catching glimpses of whatever moments of it can be caught, trying to bring them back from inside it, and then standing back and marvelling at the mysteries that flicker there.

Any pretension I may have in this thesis of being able to provide more than glimpses into the hidden world of Audience, or of any other transcendental intersubjective phenomenon, must be avoided at all costs as pompous and illusory. And this is where Merleau-Ponty and Levinas provide avenues where Sartre’s fastidious and superstitious avoidance of anything that vaguely smells of mysticism prevents ingress.

h) Merleau-Ponty—The Intercorporeal Sentient in Itself

Not only have I a physical world, not only do I live in the midst of earth, air and water, I have around me roads, plantations, villages, streets, churches, implements, a bell, a spoon, a pipe. Each of these
According to Ted Toadvine, Merleau-Ponty’s theory of intersubjectivity should be interpreted as an attempt at “maintaining both horns of the intersubjective dilemma” (Toadvine 2000: 200); to reconcile the solitary subject and the transcendental intersubjectivity as “two ‘moments’ of one phenomenon” (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 359).

Merleau-Ponty deals with the matter in a chapter of the *Phenomenology of Perception* entitled ‘Other Selves and the Human World’ (1962). He begins with the givenness and ubiquity of the “already present” cultural world in which I find myself immersed; a world there for me apriori in the cultural objects arrayed before me, as an “Objective Spirit” dwelling in them. But along with this deposited cultural, historical intersubjective spirit, he feels “the close presence of others beneath a veil of anonymity”. The question of how a personal identity can be deposited in a cultural object, of “how an object in space can become the eloquent relic of an existence”, plunges him into the paradoxical irreconcilabilities of the one and the plurality, the absurdity of the plural I, the multiplicity of I’s, the general I, I’s which cannot, by their nature, be “grasped in the mode of Thou”; and in characteristic fashion, he finds the solution in the human body: “The very first of all cultural objects, and the one by which all the rest exist, is the body of the other person as the vehicle of a form of behaviour” (348).

He locates the roots of the solipsistic interpretation in “objective thought”, for which the human body is

> a province of the world…that object which the biologist talks about…that conjunction of processes analysed in physiological treatises, that collection of organs shown in the plates on anatomy (349).

According to this interpretation, the body of the other “is not inhabited, but is an object standing before the consciousness which thinks about it or constitutes it” (349). Like my own body, it is held, as consciousness in its engagements with its own intentional correlates, in a system to which I can have no access. I can only directly apprehend it as constituted for myself within my own consciousness.

> Insofar as I constitute the world I cannot conceive another
consciousness, for it too would have to constitute the world and, at least as regards this other view of the world, I should not be the constituting agent (350).

So, “there is no place for a plurality of consciousnesses in objective thought” (349-350). However, once my body and the world are no longer conceived according to the physical sciences, as objects in a functional relationship represented by “clusters of physico-mathematical correlations”; once my body is conceived “as a potentiality of this world…because my body is a movement towards the world, and the world my body’s point of support” (350), then “the perception of other people and the plurality of consciousnesses no longer present any difficulty” (351). In short, once the question of consciousness and world is no longer asked as an epistemology of how subjects might come to know objects, and replaced by an ontology of a first-person lived experience of the body, or as Toadvine puts it “a more primordial ‘phenomenal’ body” (Toadvine 2000: 197), and I apprehend myself “at grips with the world”, then I am able to ask, “If my consciousness has a body, why should other bodies not ‘have’ consciousnesses?” (351).

And to explain the recognition of another body, without the need for recourse to analogic inference or Husserlian pairing, Merleau-Ponty posits “a primordial phenomenon of the body-for-us” (351). In support, he cites the example of a baby of fifteen months, “which opens its mouth if I playfully take one of its fingers between my teeth and pretend to bite it” (352). The contention is that the baby immediately perceives its own intentions in the body of the biter, and the biter’s intentions in its own body. Gail Soffer interprets this apparently unlearnt innate behaviour as the expression of a correlation between an inwardly, kinaesthetically experienced behaviour and an outwardly viewed behaviour…which has led some psychologists to posit that some correlations between visual and kinaesthetic schemata are ‘hard-wired’ in the brain (Soffer 1999: 156). She is not alone among Merleau-Ponty scholars and neurophenomenologists in citing the work of Meltzoff and Moore (1977, 1997) on mimetic behaviour in infants, in support of theories positing an apriori corporeal intersubjectivity. Merleau-Ponty describes it as a system.

Between my consciousness and my body as I experience it, between this phenomenal body of mine and that of another as I see it from the

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outside, there exists an internal relation which causes the other to appear as the completion of the system (352).

Consequently, we need no longer conceive of ourselves as trapped in immanent isolation from each other as solipsistic consciousnesses, but need merely recognize the truth of transcendence. Just as the world “outruns” us, we outrun ourselves and each other. The problem of solipsism is not in our ability to experience the other, but in the mistake of overrating the access we have to ourselves. We know, according to the noetico-noematic constitution, that

our perspective views...slip into each other and are brought together finally in the thing...in the same way we must learn to find the communication between one consciousness and another...in the one single world in which we all participate as anonymous subjects of perception (353).

Merleau-Ponty provides a telling case for the existence of this pre-personal anonymous transcendental intersubjective modality which I am positing as the fundamental ontological precondition of being in audiences. In Audience I certainly experience a “miraculous prolongation of my own intentions”, in an “anonymous existence” in which “we are collaborators...in consummate reciprocity...perspectives merge into each other, and we co-exist through a common world” (354).

But despite the fact that I am aware that I am not the author of the cultural and social world I enter, that I live it before I conceive it as an object, that through language I am more determined than expressed, that my thoughts and emotions and judgements belong to and emerge from a prior fabric of which my I is made, that I am “submerged in generality” (358), I still nevertheless experience myself as an “indeclinable” and “insurmountable” solipsism. I am always the constituting agent of my experience. I cannot have the other’s experience, I cannot have a general experience, I can only have my own experience. And in my own experience the things and other people of the world are arrayed before me in my solitary perspective as separate transcendent entities.

In this contradiction, Merleau-Ponty finds the central problem of transcendence.

Whether we are concerned with my body, the natural world, the past, birth or death, the question is always how I can be open to
phenomena which transcend me, and which nevertheless exist only to the extent that I take them up and live them (363).

This is the “ambiguous life in which the forms of transcendence have their Ursprung” (363); the contradiction at the root of all communication, all knowledge.

And, as Toadvine reminds us, Merleau-Ponty declares, in another setting, that the cogito and the anonymous contact with others

**seem to exclude each other... they are bizarrely allied; in the end, it is impossible to save one at the expense of the other: both vary in the same sense. Hence, to solve the problem, one must not eliminate the initial opposition. Theoretically, it is insurmountable (Merleau-Ponty, cited in Toadvine 2000: 200).**

So, the phenomenological description leaves a “transcendental contradiction”. But it is a contradiction which Merleau-Ponty contends is “the very condition of consciousness... at the very heart of time and all relationships” (cited in Toadvine 2000: 202). And further,

- [If we rediscover time beneath the subject, and if we relate to the paradox of time those of the body, the world, the thing, and others, we shall understand that beyond these there is nothing to understand (1962: 365).]

In Merleau-Ponty’s late and incomplete work, feeling his way around the contours of his ultimate ontological category of the flesh, he comes to something like a notion of the transcendence of Audience, when he posits “a Visibility, a Tangible in itself” in which all seeing and all seen, all touching and all touched are immersed and surrounded, where “I feel myself looked at by the things, where my activity is equally passivity”. This is the “generality of the Sensible in itself”, neither matter nor mind, nor substance, nor psychic material, nor spirit, nor a fact, nor sum of facts, but something like an element, a condition, “a general thing midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea” (1968: 139). And if this domain, as the ground of subject and object, perceiver and world, audience and performance, “traverses me and constitutes me” then it can traverse, animate other bodies as well as my own” (140). This is the basis for an “intercorporeity” of transcendental intersubjectivity (141).

Merleau-Ponty extends his famous appropriation of Husserl’s question of which hand
does the touching and which is touched when we join our own two hands together, to the handshake between two people, as the two different sides of a reversible intercorporeality. He asks: “why would not the synergy exist among different organisms, if it is possible within each?” (142), and argues that if we take away self-contained consciousness as “the primordial definition of sensibility”, and consider rather that each individual is bound to every other

in such a way as to make up with them the experience of one sole body before one sole world, through a possibility for reversion, reconversion of its language into theirs, transfer, and reversal, according to which the little private world of each is not juxtaposed to the world of all the others, but surrounded by it, levied off from it, and all together are a Sentient in general before a Sensible in general (142). 32

Then we gain access to

an intercorporeal being, a presumptive domain of the visible and the tangible, which extends further than the things I touch and see at present (143).

This intercorporeal being is transcendental intersubjectivity, as the condition of possibility of subjectivity, consciousness and object. It is the apriori ground on which shared perception and meaning become possible.

It suffices that I look at a landscape, that I speak of it with someone. Then, through the concordant operation of his body and my own, what I see passes into him…invades his vision without quitting my own, I recognize in my green his green…there is no problem here of the alter ego because it is not I who see, not he who sees, because an anonymous visibility inhabits both of us, a vision in general (142).

Audience occurs at the level of this “anonymous visibility”, this “vision in general”,

by virtue of the fundamental fission or segregation of the sentient and

32 Beata Stawarska has argued against the viability of this analogous extension, citing the fundamental differences between the experience of my own body as opposed to the experience of someone else’s body (Stawarska 2002).
the sensible which, laterally, makes the organs of one body communicate and founds transitivity from one body to another (143).

This is the most searching extrapolation of both Husserl’s structure of the intersubjective validity of the object as common Nature, and Heidegger’s radicalizing of it as the equiprimordial givenness of self, other and thing. Merleau-Ponty goes further than any other thinker towards positing an apriori transcendental intersubjectivity as the condition of possibility of the individual and the other. And the founding of this realm in the study of intentional perception, as its ground, makes it proper to the study of audience. This structure described by Merleau-Ponty belongs to Audience, is Audience. It is the ethereal soup, the atmosphere from which selves derive their nourishment through bearing witness towards with others.

i) Levinas—Primordial Obsession

The work of Emmanuel Levinas encompasses and supersedes the whole phenomenological tradition of the study of intersubjectivity. His assertion of the irreducibility of the face-to-face relation in the question of the other, of the moment of the call to responsibility to and for the other as the moment of subjectivity, of ethics as prior to ontology, makes intersubjectivity a principal question in his work.

However, as would be expected in a thinker of Levinas’ originality, the question is completely recast, in an attempt to remedy the irreconcilabilities and aporias of the previous approaches.

At first glance, Levinas’ assertion that the self is summoned forth as a response in subjection to the call of the other appears to accord with Sartre’s ideas of the for-the-Other and the concrete encounter with the other person as the prior condition of Being-with. No doubt, Levinas’ early work stems from and contributes to the same existentialist philosophical milieu as Sartre, but Levinas’ moment of responsibility, and his interpretation of the face-to-face encounter occur at a primordial level, not as a meeting of pre-formed subjects, but as their coming forth.

Without rehearsing the arguments in too much detail here, for Levinas, “the face to face remains an ultimate situation” (1969: 81). What is irreducible, what cannot be nullified or
totalized is the separation and ipseity that underwrite the irreducibility of the face to face.

“Separation is first the fact of a being that lives somewhere, from something” (216), with “the inevitable orientation of…’starting from oneself’ towards ‘the Other’” (215).

The face to face is a final and irreducible relation which no concept could cover without the thinker who thinks that concept finding himself forthwith before a new interlocutor; it makes possible the pluralism of society (291).

So the other person is not something perceived by an I, but rather the precondition of that I: that before and in response to which the I takes its stand.

This sets the fifth Cartesian Meditation with its primordial reduction, the debates concerning the relative primordiality of the plurality as opposed to the self and of the transcendental we as opposed to the concrete experience of the other, and the question of whether it is possible to apprehend this we at an ontological transcendental level, into a perspective from which Levinas can claim: “the face to face both announces a society, and permits the maintaining of a separated I” (68).

He refers to the primordial reduction, with its basis in the perception of the other as “this optical interpretation”, and posits as a remedial direction Durkheim’s “characterizing of society by religion” (68). According to Levinas this means that

I relate to the Other only across Society, which is not simply a multiplicity of individuals or objects; I relate to the Other who is not simply a part of a Whole, nor a singular instance of a concept. To reach the Other through the social is to reach him through the religious. Durkheim thus gives an indication of a transcendence other than the objective (68).

And this is key to Levinas’ approach: “a transcendence other than the objective”. “Absolute experience is not disclosure” (67). The other is not an object of my knowledge which can be disclosed through cognition, but a self-revelation which “presents itself as independent of every subjective movement…the interlocutor, whose way consists in starting from himself, foreign and yet presenting himself to me” (67). Rather than an object of knowledge, the other is a “an event, a shock” (68) which remains “unexplored and unexplained” (69), and this shock occurs as the act of saying.
The other is maintained and confirmed in his heterogeneity as soon as one calls upon him…The invoked is not what I comprehend: he is not under a category. He is the one to whom I speak—he has only a reference to himself; he has no quiddity (69).

Levinas’ uncompromising drive towards the rethinking of fundamentals, inspired by the example of, but surpassing Heidegger, completely recasts the question of intersubjectivity in the context of the critique of the limits of the objective knowledge of thematizing consciousness.

He criticizes the form of the mitandersein, with its structure of being-in-with, where selves are with each other mediated by their shared objects, as beginning with Plato’s Republic.

It is the collectivity that says ‘we’, that, turned toward the intelligible sun, toward the truth, feels the other at its side and not in front of itself. This collectivity necessarily establishes itself around a third term, which serves as an intermediary…It is a collectivity around something common (Levinas 1987: 93).

He explicitly repudiates the Heideggerian ‘with’, apparently in line with Sartre and Schutz, as “anthropologically incontestable” and playing “no role in the drama of being or in the existential analytic” (40).

I hope to show, for my part, that it is not the preposition mit that should describe the original relationship with the other (41).

Rather than the transcendence of the object from the subject, or the transcendence of subjects together around shared objects, he claims his attempt to “find the temporal transcendence of the present toward the mystery of the future” (94). And this is the methodological thrust of this thesis. To speak from the phenomenon of Audience, to allow it to present itself, not as a knowable object laid out in its co-ordinates for dissection and inspection, as a shared third term between subjects, but to allow evocations to emerge from it, to speak it.

It would, however, be a dry, and ultimately futile exercise to attempt to draw lines of convergence and disparity between the thought of Levinas and the other thinkers mentioned here. Whether or not this particular thought is redolent of Sartre, that assertion
in harmony with Husserl, or this observation harmonious with Heidegger in this way but not in that, is not the point here. Rather, the aim is to draw rough hints and suggestions from the conceptual worlds laid out by these thinkers, as clues which might evoke something or help me to catch a glimpse of the phenomenon I intuit when I say the transcendental intersubjective essence Audience.

And I would propose that this Audience, this phenomenon which blurs and effaces the distinction between singular and plural, and which, in its essence, in the condition of its eventuation, in its enactment, in its presentment, in its saying, does emerge primordially as transcendental intersubjectivity; this phenomenon which I necessarily betray but in some manner convey in speaking of it (Levinas 1981: 194), can be approached in terms similar to those with which Levinas seeks to find his way in the mysterious before and beyond of subjectivity. But the question needs to be asked: is it possible to extend or import or parallel Levinas’ inventions of the an-archic, of proximity, of his account of “the contradictory trope of the one-for-the-other” (100), to the likewise contradictory realm of transcendent Audience? Can transcendental intersubjective Audience be described in terms of Levinas’ project of the coming forth of the subject?

Not able to stay in a theme, not able to appear, this invisibility which becomes contact and obsession is due not to the nonsignifyingness of what is approached, but to a way of signifying quite different from that which connects exposition to sight. Here, beyond visibility there is exposed no signification that would still be thematized in its sign. It is the very transcending characteristic of this beyond that is signification (100).

Certainly, Audience is neither a signifier nor a signified; but a condition of signification, unthematized, beyond visibility. It is transcendence, passing over: towards the performance; of, escaping from and exceeding the individual audience members in their relation to the performance and each other. Responsibility to and for the performance, in answer to the demand of its call for completion in gathering to witness.

If such an analogy were possible, would the relations holding in Audience, if perhaps not approachable as a primal ontological entity, then be encounterable as a proximity? Perhaps Audience is necessarily irreducible to consciousness and thematization because
consciousness and thematization are the objectivating concern of a subject; whereas Audience, with its lateral side-by-side relation, must necessarily remain unthematized in its primary work of witnessing, perhaps utterly incommensurable with the arche of thematization, unresolvable into images, blocking all schematism, not a known or knowable object, but an approach, a mutual susceptibility (100).

Certainly, the audience members are for the performance, as the performance is for the audience members (a specific and overtly intentional relation in which we are all engaged) but is the measure of Audience to be found, not in an intentional structure, but in my immersion in, my responsibility to, and my obsession by the audience I am in?

There is nothing said in my relation to the others in Audience—it is the means by which the signification occurs, the sayability of the said. Certainly the performance is a saying of a said which demands our gathering, but our gathering is, in itself, an excess of responsibility among strangers, not a representation of others, but a shared response to a demand, an assignation, an obligation “anachronously prior to any commitment” to any particular performance (100-101).

The relation to Audience is obsession: “irreducible to consciousness” (101). It is the prior condition of the act of bearing witness. The relationship to Audience is not an act, not a thematizing, not a position (not everything that is either in or affective upon consciousness is posited by consciousness). Rather, I am obsessed by Audience. The obsession of Audience is the immersion. Obsession is to set down before, to lay siege, to beset, assail, harass, haunt, to move or actuate from without. Audience members are not synthesized by Audience, they are obsessed by Audience, but whilst remaining in their separation, ultimately unsynthesizable. Audience presses on me, devours me, overwhels me, buoys me and ultimately spits me out, triumphant in my newly charged subjectivity. I do not merge with these others into a Whole. I become myself through my obsession by Audience.

The relation of an audience member to Audience is obsession. It is not the taking up of an orientation towards a content by an intentional aiming consciousness, but gives the form in which the audience member is affected. It is a defection from consciousness, an other side of consciousness: “no doubt a passivity—but it is a passivity beneath all passivity”
A passivity in which I am besieged, haunted, and from which I am ultimately given shape and movement; a demand by which I am given to the performance and given back to myself by the performance.

But then again, maybe this is an untenable analogy. A paraphrase amounting to nothing more than a perversion of Levinas’ description of an entirely different realm, which even in its proper matter of the claim to the ground of the before and the beyond of the coming forth of the subjective/objective distinction, is widely agreed by many eminent philosophers to have no basis in reality whatsoever.

However, before dispensing with the analogy, it is necessary to examine the specific transcendences of Audience, to follow what passes over from and to where and whom in what manner. And then a fuller judgement of the worth of what might be revealed by this analogical strategy will become possible.

j) Current Directions

In fact, the categories transcendence, objectivity and reality as well as the categories immanence, subjectivity and appearance are all constituted intersubjectively (Zahavi 2001: 160).

The tendency in recent phenomenology, informed by study of Husserl’s unpublished manuscripts, and perhaps in address to perceived enduring misinterpretations of his position in the Cartesian Meditations, is to emphasize the priority of intersubjectivity. This intersubjective turn is predicated on the undeniable fact that we are never alone. Even if there is nobody around, it is a deficiency, an absence of others. At the very least, whether we cooperate with them or whether we are in conflict with them, whether we are shy or whether we are outgoing, whether we are politicians or Buddhist monks, lighthouse keepers, hermits or entertainers, they are there, as possibilities or actualities on the perceptual horizon, in our tools, our values and our institutions, if not with us, or engaged in the same tasks, then alongside us, haunting us. The solus ipse is an absurdity, solitary confinement, an effective method of torture. Zahavi observes that “already prior to my concrete perceptual encounter with another subject, intersubjectivity is present as co-subjectivity” (2001: 156), and he finds Husserl questioning, sounding remarkably Heideggerian: “When empathy occurs, is perhaps community, intersubjectivity, likewise
already there, and does empathy then merely accomplish the disclosure of it?” (Husserl, cited in Zahavi 2001: 156).

Dan Zahavi has conducted the most wide-ranging and penetrating study in this area, but many others are making pertinent contributions.33 Viewed in the context of the arguments already outlined in this section, the main trends of agreement in the recent work tend towards the a transcendental/ontological priority of intersubjectivity over subjectivity in the constitution of objectivity, and in the question of the relative priority of the pregiven multiplicity of others over the one-on-one concrete encounter. There is also a tendency to take as granted the way in which I am an other for others as a crucial moment in the genesis of subjectivity. And this thesis holds these presuppositions to be the underpinning of the posited existence of its object, Audience. It proceeds from the hypothesis that there is a an underlying open transcendental intersubjectivity on which multiple subjects are called to their subjectivity by their mutual recognition of their objectivity to each other and their mutual constitution of objective time, space, nature and reality.

In the article ‘Horizontal Intentionality and Transcendental Intersubjectivity’, Dan Zahavi conducts an incisive survey into these positions. He begins, in defence of Husserl, by stressing the purely “methodological reasons” (1997: 304) for the primordial reduction, in the progress from the transcendental reduction to “a phenomenology of transcendental intersubjectivity” (Husserl, in Zahavi 1997: 305), noting Husserl’s intention
to demonstrate that my perceptual experience (constitution) of the other is only possible if a certain kind of intersubjectivity is presupposed…it will be argued that intersubjectivity must already be at play prior to my concrete experience of the embodied other (305).

33 There are exciting developments in the area of Neurophenomenology and Consciousness Studies. Gallese (2003), Depraz (2001), Thompson (2001, 2002) pull together different disciplines and knowledge systems to point towards intercultural considerations and psychophysical grounds in the study of intersubjectivity. Vessey (1995, 2001) explores the priority of relations between time and intersubjectivity. McKenna (2003) foregrounds the importance of my status as object for the other. Rodemeyer (2006) conducts a detailed analysis of Husserl’s positions, particularly from his later unpublished work, on the temporality of intersubjectivity, to understand the foundation of the subject. This list is a small sample of work in the area; the pace of publication of emerging work on intersubjectivity continues to pick up.
Zahavi goes some way to revealing the underpinning intersubjective structure of the noetico-noematic constitution of objects, pointing to that system’s dependence on the co-presence of other apperceiveptive profiles, finding that they must be co-present, and so must not be thought of as other profiles that I might take up at another time, or that I might imagine myself taking up, and comes to the conclusion that these other co-existing, co-present apperceiveptive profiles could only be occupied by another possible consciousness, there at the same time, “thus, our horizontal intentionality seems to imply a reference to intersubjectivity, since the co-intended profile must be understood as the noematic correlate of the possible perception of an Other” (310-311). Moreover, the reference is not to a single other profile, but to a “vast if not infinite plurality” (311) of profiles, and therefore of possible other subjects. Horizontal intentionality could not depend on the presence of

the factual and concrete experience of the Other...since every perception of an object (also one undertaken in isolation) presupposes a reference to the continual co-validation of intersubjectivity...to the perceptions of a plurality of possible subjects, or as Husserl calls it, to the open intersubjectivity (311-312).

Provided that the subject in its very subjectness is directed towards objects, provided that in every experience of objects a certain aspect is present and the others are appresented, and provided that this appresentation can only be accounted for phenomenologically through a reference to a plurality of possible subjects, the consequence is that I, in my being as subject, am referred to others, regardless of whether I experience them concretely or not. Intentionality is apriori dependent on Husserl’s open intersubjectivity.

Thus everything that stands before me in experience and primarily in perception has an apperceptive horizon of possible experience, own and foreign. Ontologically speaking, every appearance that I have is from the very beginning a part of an endless, but not specifically realized totality of possible appearances of the same, and the subjectivity belonging to this appearance is open intersubjectivity (Zahavi 2003: 239).

And so the question is asked anew.

Is our concrete bodily experience of the other the condition of
possibility for the kind of open intersubjectivity that we have discovered in our horizontal intentionality, or is it the intersubjective openness of our horizon that enables us to perceive concrete embodied Others (313)?

Eighty years after Heidegger raised the possibility of an apriori being-with, sixty years after Sartre thought he had successfully refuted the suggestion, fifty years after Schutz turned away from the possibility of a transcendental dimension of intersubjectivity, the question is still alive, and the answer apparently lies in Husserl’s unpublished manuscripts.

In relation to this thesis, the question goes to the very possibility of the existence of the phenomenon which I am proposing as the object of the study: Audience as a transcendental intersubjective essence, a manifestation of open transcendental intersubjectivity.

Husserl apparently employs both approaches. There are many references in his work, particularly in reference to the primordial reduction, to “an expansion of our intersubjective world-horizon…due to our iterative experience of co-subjects together” (cited in Zahavi 1997: 313), suggesting an accumulation of actual concrete experiences of others, but, according to Zahavi, this accumulative approach gives no evidence of a constitutive apriority in relation to open intersubjectivity because it presupposes a species of objectivity which depends, in its constitution, on intersubjectivity (313).

Also, as David Carr points out, Husserl himself, by the time of the *Krisis*, was already aware that

he has presupposed this transcendental intersubjectivity all along. The world as he has discussed it so far, from the pre-given, prescientific life-world to the mathematized world of physics which is built upon it, is a world for all, an intersubjectively constituted world (Carr 2002: 121).

And further, that

[i]f phenomenology is to be complete, it is not enough simply to tacitly assume transcendental intersubjectivity, much less simply to assert its existence, dogmatically or metaphysically. Instead it must be
subjected to a phenomenological description, just like anything else; and that means asking how it is given or constituted (123).

There are also, in Husserl, references to the concept of myself as an object for the other, so important to Sartre, through which I experience myself as being experienced by the other, leading to my realization that I am only one among others, a somebody, anybody, a replaceable counterpart. However, once again Zahavi contends that despite Husserl’s assertion that this is the moment of objectivity: “only after having experienced the Other as someone, and myself as a mere somebody, is it possible for me to constitute objectivity” (Zahavi 1997: 314), that his phenomenon “neither explains nor founds the kind of intersubjectivity implied in our horizontal intentionality”, but in fact presupposes, in the same way as the accumulative explanation, a prior constitutive reference to intersubjectivity (315).

Zahavi reports, from his study of the late manuscripts, that Husserl remained ambiguous to the end. Although the latter grounded “the unthematic experience of the co-functioning Other” (which sounds precisely like a description of the experience of other audience members) in the study of the concrete experience of the other, “he (Husserl), at the very least, came to question whether or not this approach was phenomenologically adequate” (316).

There is a complex and subtle interplay between the concrete experience of the other and the open intersubjectivity. It seems that, on the one hand, the anonymous open intersubjectivity cannot be thematized without reference to the concrete experience of the other, but the others are always already co-present and co-functioning as a condition of possibility of intentional thematization itself; and on the other hand, that the conscious experience of concrete others, as an intentional experience, is dependent upon the open intersubjectivity. It seems that perhaps Heidegger’s solution of being-in-and-with, with its characteristic hermeneutic circularity, is the most accurate description, and can rightfully make a claim to irreducibility.

Zahavi concludes that these phenomena are two of three irreducibly different fundamental types of transcendental intersubjectivity. The first, the open intersubjectivity, is a formal structural feature of intentionality; the second, the concrete intersubjectivity,
is the condition of possibility of the constitution of objectivity; and the third, a “generatively handed down normality, conventionality and tradition” (317 fn.). Zahavi’s contention is that whilst none of the three are entirely reducible to the others, the second and third are in some way founded on the first.

What has been demonstrated is ‘merely’ that the concrete experience of the Other takes place within a constitutive dimension already pervaded by intersubjective references, that is, that intersubjectivity is already at play prior to my concrete experience of the embodied other (318).

For my purposes in this thesis, Zahavi’s impeccable scholarship and acute intuition provide a validation of my contention that the intentionality of any audience, characterized by audience members gathered in unthematized lateral connection, in more or less proximate relation with each other, with the mutual orientation towards that which calls for witness, cannot be understood as an additive agglomeration of separate intentionalities, but consists in an unthematized, perhaps largely unthematizable prior transcendental intersubjectivity, in which the separate subjectivities are affectively immersed, and from which they respond. And, substantively, this intersubjectivity is a system of formal, “structural references to the perceptions of possible others” (Zahavi 1996: 52), functioning co-constitutively as a horizon, irrespective of whether there are actual others present in the same place as me at the same time, as the intrinsically intersubjective ground of all my experience.

And that against the orientation towards that which bears for witness, in the silent, still darkness, in the roar of the throng, in separate living rooms, the job of this thesis is to say Audience as transcendental intersubjectivity, to allow its showing as it might show itself from itself in the fullness of its transcendence.

§21 Intersubjectivity in Audience—Others and The Other

The history of the phenomenological study of intersubjectivity unfolds as a battle on two axes. First the question of the relative priority of a pregiven prepersonal intersubjectivity as opposed to the face-to-face encounter with the concrete Other. On the one hand Husserl’s primordial reduction to ownness, the perception of an other from my own
solitude, Sartre’s Being-for others in the concrete one-on-one encounter, and Levinas’ subjectivity summoned in responsibility for the other; and on the other hand Heidegger’s equiprimordiality of Being-in-and-with, and Merleau-Ponty’s flesh of the Sensible in itself. The other axis of debate argues the relative ontological/ontic status of these two manifestations. Schutz admits the givenness of apriori intersubjectivity in the vein of Heidegger, but with no proven ontological apprehendability, and Levinas lays claim to a domain more primary than Being itself, in which the face-to-face encounter occurs. I do not wish to enter these debates, but merely to assume a position that suits the matter at hand. Certainly, there are face-to-face individual relations in which we find ourselves, but equally we are among groups, families, clubs, tribes and swarms of other people, most of whom remain anonymous. Phenomenologically speaking, and without the need of recourse to any pre-ordained sociological schematics, I simply find myself originally among a plurality of others, who, as individuals, I will never face, but with whom, alongside whom, I am subject to shared imperatives and affective contagions. And in particular for the purposes of this study examining the effect of other people with whom I specifically do not literally come into direct and face-to-face relation. It is necessary, while receiving inspiration and guidance from the findings of earlier studies in intersubjectivity, to bracket them off to allow the description of the fundamentally lateral affinity of co-immersion with others in audiences to show itself as what it is, and thereby provide clear access to the transcendental realm of Audience.

Maybe I will find that the underlying structures of the I-Thou relation constitute the bedrock of my experience of the plurality, that the sharedness is merely an opaque complexifying of multiple I-Thou relations. But I must begin in maintenance of the integrity of the thing itself and of how it calls to me in my best and most thorough painstaking listening. And it appears at this stage that the findings of studies into the Other do not attune with what I find happening for me in Audience. It appears that the roar that buoys me as the full-forward kicks the winning goal after the siren, the solemn dignity of the crowd filing past the coffin of the dead pope in the Vatican, and the shared awe as the blood red sun dips and liquefies into the ocean, are phenomena of an entirely different order, neither simply multiple nor plural, but profoundly transcendental; and that the question of my one-on-one relation with another person, though likewise
transcendental, is, if not a different question altogether, then a question which needs to be held in abeyance until the description demands its return. More important is the way in which my own subjectivity becomes attenuated in Audience, as I turn towards the performance and away from my fellows.

Fortunately, Husserl, towards the end of his life, left a clue to the domain of which Audience is a manifestation. After the primordial reduction has left us with the validity of the world for all of us, this world becomes a phenomenon in its own right.

What remains now, is not a multiplicity of separated souls, each reduced to its pure interiority, but rather: just as there is one sole universal nature as self-enclosed framework of unity, so there is a sole psychic framework, a total framework of all souls, which are united not externally but internally, namely through the intentional interpenetration which is the communalization of their lives (1970: 255).

This unity, which is neither the one-on-one, nor the aggregated plurality of the many, this framework of intentional interpenetration, is discovered in the transcendental reduction and as such exists prior to the everyday. In remarkably Levinasian tone, Eugen Fink, in response to Schutz, cites a late unpublished manuscript of Husserl which indicates the ontological level at which this phenomenon occurs.

There is a primal life which is neither one nor many, neither factual nor essential; rather, it is the ultimate ground of all these distinctions: a transcendental primal life which turns itself into a plurality and which produces in itself the differentiation into fact and essence (Fink, in Schutz 1966: 86).

Dan Zahavi provides an interesting slant on this question, critiquing empathic explanations of intersubjectivity in a discussion of Heidegger.

Even if it (the empathic approach) does not commit the same mistakes as the argument from analogy, it does misconstrue the nature of intersubjectivity, since it takes it to be first and foremost a thematic exchange between two individuals...In contrast, as Heidegger points out, the very attempt to thematically grasp the experiences of others is the exception rather than the rule. Under normal circumstances we understand each other well enough
through our shared engagement in the common world (Zahavi 2001: 155).

This is not to say that the primordial reduction is useless, or that Sartre’s interpretation of what happens in the conflicting or open contact with another person is wrong, or that Levinas’ bold insight of the subject stunned into itself in obsession by the other is not dazzling in the light it shines onto previously unrealized moments of subjectification. I could not have experienced the object of the thesis without this moment of revelation from Levinas. I am not saying that the relation to the group comes before the relation to the single other person. I have learned from Levinas that the temporality of the apriori refuses chicken and egg debates over what came first. Questions of the relative apriority and origin of social and individual factors in subjectivization are misunderstood when viewed in terms of the linear temporality of ontologies of cause, effect and production.

All questions concerning the realm of subject formation need to be approached in terms of a pre-original, an-archical past, irrecoverable, on the hither-side of the presentable (Levinas 1981: 10). The time of the subject’s coming to itself is “unrepresentable, immemorial, pre-historical” (38), so questions concerning the order of priority of self, other and society must remain unanswered, unanswerable and ultimately, best unasked.

Again with Levinas, Audience is similarly not something that we might “recuperate…coagulate…into a ‘something’, thematize, ascribe a meaning” (37). Although Levinas’ ethics turns on the crucial moment of the obsession by the facing of the other, whereas this thesis begins immersed in the murky soup of Audience, in which the faces point away from me, with me, towards something else, and the call for response comes from elsewhere, the moment, the time, the transcendent ground, and the foggy atmosphere in which the object of this thesis can approach thinkability, are all given by Levinas’ bold and strange adventure.

The others are there all around me in an audience, but we are all turned away from each other. To the extent that intentionality maintains its relation to intention, to will, my relation to the other audience members is not intentional. The will that brought us all here seeks its own dissolution in Audience, as a co-functioning intentional co-presence towards the world, towards the performance, rather than an object of an intentional relation. A passivity. A passive leaking into each other through the object. In some
circumstances, to turn to each other would breach the fabric of the audience we are in, in other circumstances we might acknowledge our shared awe or appreciation. But the other we turn to is not the co-functioning co-constituting other: “the anonymously co-functioning other embedded in the horizontal structure of intentionality…can never be the other that (I) experience concretely” (Zahavi 1996: 222). We are together apriori in the transcendental intersubjectivity whether we acknowledge each other or not; we affect each other whether we turn to each other or ignore each other, whether we are close or dispersed, perceptible to each other in the same room or spread across distances of time and place.

Arguments as to the priority of one-on-one or prepersonal intersubjectivity, or of relative degrees of ontological depth are of no use here. The description begins with the thing itself, and in this case the thing in itself is the mundane experience of sitting or standing, side-by-side together with strangers or familiars in the towards orientation of witness.

And Husserl sheds a clear light on this phenomenon.

As mundane experience, my experience (thus already each of my perceptions) not only includes others as mundane objects, but constantly includes them, in existential co-validity, as co-subjects, as co-constituting—and both are inseparably intertwined (Husserl, cited in Zahavi 1996: 58).

In Audience, conceived as a specific concretion of transcendental intersubjectivity, my perceptions are utterly shot through, permeated, saturated with the intentions and perceptions of others, inextricably intertwined, whether I am alone in the auditorium or lost in a throng. I cannot bear witness alone, and I certainly cannot gather alone, even if my last living counterpart has died in a plague which has exterminated all other humans. To the end of my days my life will be infused with what they might have said or done.

§22 Audience as Intersubjective Verification

How does Audience make something there for-all-of-us? Is it a hothouse potted version of the for-all-of-usness which gives the objective world? Do we go to verify, affirm that the world, the god, the values, the belonging is there for-all-of-us; to assert and
underwrite our belonging to the same world?

The proof of my intuition of anything is in the fact that the object is there for-all-of-us. If we can come to some mutual recognition of each other’s cognition, we approach the truth. The proof is in the object. I only know what it is because you know what it is.

Audience offers proof. An audience says yes, even if that yes is a no. Yes this God is truly there for-all-of-us. This is our team. This is not a good game. We all know that the coach needs to do this or that to stop us losing. The director has not captured the playwright’s intention here. We loved the dictator who is lying in this coffin. And it is in our mutual loss, our shared exaltation and triumph, in our judgement that we are attending a fine performance of *Macbeth*, or a dull movie, or a moving service by an evangelical preacher, that shows our values back to us, that tells us who we are, that we belong. And in this belonging or not belonging I am reflected back to myself from the performance as one of the others or as different from them. Audience affirms belonging or non-belonging, the there for-all-of-us or not.

Husserl observes an “alteration of validity through reciprocal correction”, that occurs in community. Our separate experiences come into contact and a “harmony of validity occurs, [establishing what is] normal” (1970: 163). And even when discrepancies show themselves, there is an acknowledged possibility that accord might be reached, even if that accord is merely begging to differ. If I think the actor plays “a great Lear” and you think he is insipid, we both affirm the possibility of “a great Lear”. We reaffirm the world of already shared experience as we unfold the horizon of the possible. And this is why we need to keep going back to immerse in Audience time after time; we need to continually reaffirm and reassess our faith, our tastes, our judgements, our belongings. And we can only attain this reaffirmation in communion with the others who share our values.

And it is the shared objectivity of the world in which we find ourselves that guarantees our belonging-together.

When I discover that the object I am currently experiencing is also perceived by another, my relationship to the object is changed. Only insofar as I experience that others experience the same objects as myself, do I really experience these objects as objective and real. The
intersubjective experienceability of the object testifies to its real
transcendence—or to rephrase the point negatively: That which in
principle is incapable of being experienced by others cannot be
ascribed transcendence and objectivity…(Zahavi 2001: 159-160).

If I do not submit myself to Audience; if I do not go with others to affirm the reality and
values of our world; if I do not attend seminars, turn on the TV, go to the opera or to rock
concerts, or church or Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, or to my family ceremony; if I
do not gather with others to bear witness, I do not know who or what I am.
E. A Note on Transcendence

§23 Stepping Over

We define the philosophical concept of transcendence following the pattern of the original meaning of the word and not so much with regard to the traditional philosophical usage, which besides is quite ambiguous and indefinite (Heidegger 1982a: 298).

As Heidegger observes, the terms *transcendence* and *transcendental*, have been used in a number of different and indistinct ways in the history of Western philosophy, but with his characteristic ability, paralleled in the history of phenomenology only by Levinas, to point the way to the hiding places of essence, he reveals a connotational core of constituting and constitutive overlap from and around which the shifting meanings of the terms emanate.

Heidegger makes return to the “original meaning” of the word, according to which “transcendere signifies literally to step over, pass over, go through, and occasionally also to surpass” (1982a: 298).

From Plato’s *forms*, Aristotle’s *transcendens* as the ultimate genus, to Kant’s *noumenon*, to Husserl’s thing in itself, to time itself, the transcendent is that which is beyond, that which exceeds the human; whether understandable or not, graspable or not, experienceable or not, the transcendent is other; as Heidegger puts it: “the being that lies beyond, the otherworldly being. Frequently the term is used to designate God” (298).

§24 Some Meanings of Transcendence

a) The Transcendence of the World

In Husserl’s noetico-noematic constitution, transcendence becomes mundane: “neither the world nor any worldly Object is a piece of my Ego…This ‘transcendence’ is part of the intrinsic sense of anything worldly” (Husserl 1999: 26). It is the object, the world, the other person that is transcendent. I can only ever apprehend a profile. The object in-itself transcends me. I do not contain it. Rather, the transcendent object is the *correlate* of the transcendental Ego.
In one sense this objective transcendence of things is a solution to the problem of Brentano’s immanent inexistence of the object. The object is not an immanent mental content of a noetic act of perception, but as given noematically through all possible meaning-bestowing acts, transcends each individual act. The noema is a concrete ideal transcendent object.

The intentionality of consciousness figures here as the original transcendence of the world. The correlation between subject and object, between world and my experience of it. The opposite of immanence—anything that is not in me is transcendent to me.

Levinas writes of the intentionality of the transcendence of the object as intentional transcendence, distance and accessibility, the opening of the gap between thought and its objects, already grasping, a seizure (Levinas 1999: 3).

Zahavi emphasizes the fundamental intersubjectivity in this type of transcendence. The object not only transcends me in-itself, but through its thereness-for-others. It is also their object. Moreover, it can only appear to me as the object it is, in its full transcendence through the validity offered it by others. “The intersubjective experienceability of the object guarantees its real transcendence” (Zahavi 2003: 236). So consequently, objective transcendence is fundamentally intersubjective. “Only insofar as I experience that Others experience the same objects as myself do I really experience these objects as objective and real” (236).

So the things of the world are doubly transcendent. First, I can never have, possess, perceive, grasp the whole of the object in its entirety. It is only ever mine from my viewpoint. Something of it will always elude me. However, when I experience that the object is also experienced by others who are transcendent to me, it gains an objectivity and a reality which “cannot any longer be reduced to its mere being-for-me”. It gains “an autonomy of being that transcends my finite existence” (237).

b) The Transcending Subject

Heidegger turns this all around, concentrating transcendence in his ontological mutation of Husserl’s Transcendental Ego: Dasein. Transcendence belongs to the essential nature of the intentional comportment of Dasein; the necessary condition of intentionality.
Intentionality transcends in its nature. Dasein, as being-in-the-world, is fundamentally transcendent. To be valid, this more radical assessment of transcendence and intentionality must be able to explain and contain traditional philosophical notions; so in this new light, the question necessarily asks itself: “what are we to understand by what is customarily called transcendence in philosophy?” (Heidegger 1982a: 162).

In the quest of gaining an understanding of “what Kant was seeking, at bottom, when transcendence moved for him into the centre of philosophical inquiry” (298), Heidegger acknowledges that “in theory of knowledge the transcendent is understood as what lies beyond the subject’s sphere, things in themselves, objects” (298), and scoffs at the idea that a thing can be transcendent to the subject “as if it had ever been inside” (299), and further denies that Dasein is transcendent only on the occasions it moves out towards objects.

If the world is transcendent, then what is truly transcendent is the Dasein. With this we first arrive at the genuine ontological sense of transcendence…the transcends, the transcendent is that which oversteps as such and not that toward which I step over…things can never transcend or be transcendent; rather it is the subjects which transcend, step through and step over themselves (Heidegger 1982a: 299).

He goes further, rooting the very possibility of selfhood in transcendence. “Only a being to whose ontological constitution transcendence belongs has the possibility of being anything like a self” (300). It is a fundamental formulation of self that it is aware of itself as differentiated from things that are not itself and things that are like itself. Ultimately, “The Dasein is the transcendent being. Objects and things are never transcendent” (300).

Transcendence, understood originally, is a temporal figure. The temporality of the transcendence of Dasein is “ecstatic-horizonal self-projection”. Dasein is being-in-the-world. As being-in-the-world, it is transcendent intentional comportment. Dasein is ecstasis; projection of and to the world. “The ecstatic character of time makes possible the Dasein’s specific overstepping character, transcendence, and thus also the world” (302). This is not the occasion to detail Heidegger’s intricate workings of the modes of the temporal ecstases of being-in-the-world. It is sufficient to note that the ground which
he finds underlying all the different concepts and usages of the term *transcendence* requires, for its full understanding, a temporal explication. More to the point here is the fact that it is Heidegger’s achievement to have found this ground of consistency for the different usages.

And it is also worth noting, in the context of a study of transcendental intersubjective Audience, Heidegger’s observation that “moreover this transcending does not only and not primarily mean a self-relating of a subject to an object; rather transcendence means *to understand oneself from a world*” (1982a: 299-300). In Audience, Dasein is out there beyond itself, is always a going out, is transcendent in terms of its giving over both to the immersion with the other Audience members and in its giving over to the performance, and yet it returns from Audience with itself not only intact, but reaffirmed and reassured. In Audience, Dasein affirms its fundamental transcendence.

c) Fundamental Transcendental Philosophy

The fundamental transcendentality of Dasein makes transcendence “the first condition of possibility of the understanding of being” (Heidegger 1982a: 323); of ontology as *transcendental science*, which, although not directly coinciding with Kant’s transcendental philosophy and Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology, allows explication of those projects “by means of the more original concept of transcendence” (323).

Heidegger’s Dasein belongs to a philosophical genealogy beginning with Descartes’ *ego cogito*. For Husserl, the birth of fundamental transcendental philosophy begins with Descartes.

> The Cartesian radicalism of presuppositionlessness, with the goal of tracing genuine scientific knowledge back to the ultimate sources of validity and of grounding it absolutely upon them, required reflections directed toward the subject, required the regression to the knowing ego in his immanence (Husserl 1970: 87-88).

This is the source of Husserl’s invention of Dasein’s closest ancestor, the Transcendental Ego: the fundamental constitutive structure which underlies and accompanies the empirical ego in the everyday world, as revealed by the transcendental reduction.
The common ground between Heidegger’s transcendental science of ontology, Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology, and Kant’s transcendental philosophy is the register or level of being at which they aim, and the all-encompassing nature of their task. Husserl praises Kant’s philosophy as

a great and systematically constructed scientific philosophy [that] appears for the first time since Descartes—a philosophy which must be called transcendental subjectivism (1970: 97).

Heidegger claims to have restored the “original sense and its true tendency” (Heidegger 1982a: 121) of the project described by Kant.

I entitle transcendental all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible a priori. A system of such concepts might be called Transcendental Philosophy (Kant 1961: 59).

Heidegger focuses this knowing ontologically rather than epistemologically, as a knowledge that relates “not to objects, not to beings, but to…the being of beings”, thus, “transcendental philosophy denotes nothing but ontology”. Kant’s transcendental philosophy “contains the conditions and first elements of all our knowledge a priori” (1982a: 128). This is the antecedent of the transcendental inherited by Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology, the “long-felt but constantly concealed dimension of the ‘transcendental’…the ground of experience” (Husserl 1982a: 100) revealed through the transcendental reduction.

I myself use the word ‘transcendental’ in the broadest sense for the original motif...which through Descartes confers meaning on all modern philosophies, the motif which, in all of them, seeks to come to itself so to speak—seeks to attain the genuine and pure form of its task and its systematic development. It is the motif of enquiring back into the ultimate source of all the formations of knowledge, the motif of the knower’s reflecting upon himself and his knowing life in which all the scientific structures that are valid for him occur purposefully (Husserl 1970: 97-98).

Heidegger’s own philosophy is rooted in the basic theme that “Being is the transcendens pure and simple...Every disclosure of Being as the transcendens is transcendental

All of these transcendental philosophies, of Descartes, Kant, Husserl and Heidegger, share a concern with the fundamental conditions, constitution, validities and structures by which the things of the world are given and apprehended, perceptually, ontologically, epistemologically, categorically, subjectively and objectively; and to the extent that these structures and conditions are not given in everyday apprehension of the world, but are transcendent and hidden, the transcendental philosophies seek to restore them to the understanding which they constitute.

d) Sartre’s Ego

Sartre needs a brief mention here for his work *The Transcendence of the Ego*, (1984), the main principle of which underlies and directs his more substantial phenomenology in *Being and Nothingness* (2002b).

> For Kant the transcendental consciousness is nothing but the set of conditions which are necessary for the existence of an empirical consciousness. Consequently, *to make into a reality the transcendental I*, to make of it the inseparable companion of each of our ‘consciousnesses’ is to pass on fact not validity (Sartre 2002b: 385).

This is veiled reference to Husserl’s transcendental ego, the descendant of Kant’s transcendental consciousness, the prepersonal ego of which every individuated self is a formation. The transcendance at which the transcendental reduction aims. But for the realist Sartre the ego is pure transcendence; so there is no need to posit the structure of the transcendental ego underlying the empirical ego.

> Phenomenology does not need to appeal to any such unifying and individualizing I…by intentionality consciousness transcends itself. It unifies itself by escaping from itself...The transcendental I therefore has no raison d’être (387).

So, as with most of his phenomenological work, Sartre effects a slight refiguring or tuning of transcendence, based on his indefatigable materialism, in agreement with Heidegger in some ways, with Husserl in others. His main contention is the utter emptiness of consciousness as pure transcendence, “absolute impersonal consciousness”
e) Zahavi—Primordial and Intersubjective Transcendences

Zahavi writes of the need,

for the sake of clarity, to make a fundamental distinction between two types of transcendence—a primordial, subjective or immanent transcendence on the one hand, and a genuine, true transcendence in the proper sense on the other—and to inquire into the sense of this distinction (1996: 26).

Primordial transcendence, in line with the definition of the primordial reduction, is the transcendence of the object, the world transcendent from me. This is characterized in its opposition to theories of immanence: “the reality of each…perceived thing cannot be understood as...a perceived complex of sensations in a perceiving consciousness” (Husserl, cited in Zahavi 1996: 30). An object is encountered, perceptually, operatively, instrumentally in any number of acts, and yet remains what it is. It is transcendent to the individual acts of apprehension, maintaining its identity throughout. “The transcendence of the object is only constituted at the moment in which its identity across different acts is ascertained” (Zahavi 1996: 30). But this subjective, primordial transcendence, maintained in relation to my own, and therefore immanent world, does not establish true objectivity. A “more genuine transcendence” (32), which goes beyond my own experience can only be accomplished intersubjectively, “for it is through the experience of others that we are led beyond our immanent sphere of ownness and arrive at the truly transcendent intersubjective world” (32).

The fact that everybody else experiences the world is the definition of its genuine intersubjective transcendence. It is there for others, not just for me. Objectivity is transcendent intersubjectivity, transcendent from my own experience of it in others experience of it. The experience of the world by others is utterly transcendent to my experience of it. The transcendence of the object is in the fact that it is there for others.

Zahavi prioritizes:

[any real transcendence, any actual transgression whereby subjectivity goes beyond itself, thereby rests upon the experience of
an other, an other that—since it transcends that which is essentially
proper to me—is the source of all transcendence (33).

And backs it up, citing Husserl:

[here we have the only transcendence that is genuinely worthy of the
name—and everything else that is still called transcendence, such as
the objective world, rests on the transcendence of foreign subjectivity

f) The Idea of Infinity

Correlation does not suffice as a category for transcendence (Levinas

The different concepts that come up in the attempt to state
transcendence echo one another (Levinas 1981: 19).

For Levinas, the relation of a subject to its object, of intentional consciousness to the
world, of the knower to the known, is not true transcendence, is unworthy of the
designation, is in fact a subjection or containment of the other to the same, a making
immanent. But his is an entirely transcendental philosophy. An emphasis on the prior
conditions and presuppositions, the bare bones and ligaments of Western philosophy. The
otherwise than being, as that which lies beyond, is pure transcendence. The attempt is to
surpass a phenomenology based in consciousness and its objects. To elucidate, like
Heidegger, a more fundamental transcendence—the transcendence of the entirely other,
of the absolute passing of irrecoverable diachrony. And he finds the nub of this
transcendence in

the situation described by Descartes in which the ‘I think’ maintains
with the Infinite it can nowise contain and from which it is separated
a relation called ‘idea of infinity’ (Levinas 1969: 48).

The idea of infinity, as an idea, is differentiated from other ideas, from mathematical and
moral notions for instance, because “its ideatum surpasses its idea” (49). Infinity is the
idea which thought, intentionality, representation, all the movements of the same by
which it subjugates the things of the world, cannot contain, cannot hold to account. It is
the transcendence par excellence: “Infinity is characteristic of a transcendent being as
transcendent; the infinite is the absolutely other” (49). Infinity is that which escapes any
idea we may have of it. It is essentially more than the thought which might think it. It is before and after the thought that thinks it. The thought that thinks infinity thinks that which exceeds itself.

So, importantly here:

[to think the infinite, the transcendent, the Stranger, is hence not to think an object. But to think what does not have the lineaments of an object is in reality to do more or better than think (49).

Thought makes present, holds its objects in hand, possesses them, brings them into the here and now, but infinity is the temporal schema of God, of the other, of a transcendence more transcendent than the measured distance between the knower and its object. Objective transcendence interiorizes the object, but “the idea of the Infinite designates a relation with a being that maintains its total exteriority with respect to him who thinks it” (50).

The idea of the infinite is approached through its trace in the absolute alterity of the face of the Other. Levinas’ response to the exigency that lead to Husserl’s detour into the primordial reduction—the absolute and fundamental unknowability of the flow of consciousness of another person—leads him to a far more radical approach. The other person is in a relationship with me. in which I do not contain them, a relationship from which they are absolved. Another person cannot become a theme for me, but is there for me precisely as unthematizable; pointing to “a beyond that transcends their comprehension” (Peperzak 1998: 117). They are a summons from a beyond before knowledge, before subjectivity, to which I must answer by becoming subject. They are an enigma, an epiphany, a revelation, a visitation; utterly transcendent. The face of the other reveals the idea of infinity, which is “transcendence itself, the overflowing of an adequate idea” (Levinas 1969: 80). Elsewhere Levinas defines the responsibility for the other as “that original imperative, that original transcendence” (1999: 33). The original moment of going across in which the subject is called into itself.

The other person ‘fulfils’ the transcending subject’s openness without being contained by it. The human other is the concrete figure of the separate yet related absolute and transcendent Infinite; the impossibility of being contained by thought. The other—either
human or divine – exceeds the interiority of thinking.

We appeal to a dimension and a perspective of transcendence as real as the dimension and perspective of the political and more true than it, because in it the apology of the ipseity does not disappear (Levinas 1969: 301)

Durkheim already in one respect went beyond this optical interpretation of the relation with the other in characterizing society by religion. I relate to the Other only across Society, which is not simply a multiplicity of individuals or objects; I relate to the Other who is not simply a part of a Whole, nor a singular instance of a concept. To reach the other through the social is to reach him through the religious. Durkheim thus gives an indication of a transcendence other than that of the objective (Levinas 1969: 68).

This is a way into the relationship that this thesis seeks with the essence Audience; a key methodological moment. The transcendence of Audience is an infinite transcendence. It cannot be pinned down and contained. It is a thinkability which overflows the thought that thinks it. It is multiply transcendent and transcendental. It transcends towards the performance, it transcends the individual audience member, it is in the lateral transcendence of the individual audience members in relation to each other, it is a fundamental transcendental structure of human relations in and with each other and the world, and it is ultimately unencompassable as an object, and can only be revealed as its expression rather than objectively reified.

Like “the name of God”, like the “extreme proximity of the neighbour”, like the Infinite which comes to pass, Audience as transcendence can only be revealed, confessed as “the stronger than me in me…beyond themes in a thought that does not yet think or thinks more than it thinks” (Levinas 1981: 156).

§25 Intersubjectivity as Transcendental

The transcendence with which the world (is) constituted consists in its being constituted by means of others and of the generatively constituted co-subjectivity (Husserl, cited in Zahavi 1996: 33).

Husserl gives clues towards dependencies and common ground between intersubjectivity
and transcendental philosophy. If the transcendental is to be truly “the absolute ground of being from which the meaning and validity of everything objectively existing originate” (Zahavi 2003: 234), then, as validity, as meaning, it must be fundamentally intersubjective. Zahavi credibly takes this consubstantiality of the transcendental and the intersubjective to the point where the transcendental reduction is precisely the revelation of the intersubjective dimension.

In other words, a radical implementation of the transcendental reduction leads with necessity to a disclosure of transcendental intersubjectivity…Husserl occupied himself so intensively with the issue of intersubjectivity, he was convinced that it contained the key to the philosophical comprehension of reality…an account of the constitution of objective reality and transcendence, as one of the most important concerns of transcendental phenomenology (Zahavi 2003: 234).

Intersubjectivity, at a transcendental level, as giver of validity, of meaning, constitutes reality and truth. Audience, as transcendental intersubjectivity has a constitutive function in and of the world. As we stand together in front of the world bearing witness to it, we constitute it as reality, valid for us all.

So Transcendental Intersubjectivity can be understood as transcendental in that it is pregiven, in that it is a condition of…; but it is also something that transcends, that is fundamentally internally transcendent, a transcendence among and between people, and again, it also transcends out to the world, from the world to the world.

§26 Transcendence and Audience

So, through the concepts of the transcendent and the transcendental, the intentionality of Audience is revealed as a transcendental intersubjective phenomenon: in its apriority, in that it transcends towards the performance, internally, in the transcendence of the individual audience members from and to each other and the performance, in the way it validates the world for us, and in the way it escapes thematization.

Ontically, an audience, any audience, is an intentional community. The key is to get hold of that intentional community, to describe the full intentionality of it, and then find the
transcendental dimension of that transcendent/transcending, constitutive/constituting intentional community.

Audience is dependent on the apriori existence of individual audience members, present together or not, for its occurrence. Yet it exists prior to individual audience members as the condition of possibility of their gathering to witness. Audience is fundamentally constituted as *going-out-towards*, and also, in this going out towards, it plays a constitutive role in that towards which it goes out. On the one hand, the going out towards that to which witness is borne is a constituting thematizing intentionality, on the other hand, the lateral relations between the individual audience members are constitutive and passive. And in this complex multidirectional structure, that to which we bear witness receives intersubjective validation as what it is. Whether or not we agree in our assessments of its worth and qualities, we attest, in our mutual constitution of it, to its existence as an object which holds itself up to us as something of lesser or greater worth and quality; a transcendentally intersubjectively validated phenomenon.

Audience is a transcendental intersubjectivity that transcends; of an order other than the individuals who are of it. I am of it, affected by it, but it exceeds, overflows me. It would exist here in this auditorium without me, before me and after me, but when I enter I co-constitute it as it constitutes me. I enter into a co-constitutive/constituting intertwining with it.

And once again, Heidegger, with his characterization of the nature of the being of Dasein,

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34 I emphasize here the difference between the traditionally held views of activity and passivity in reception theory. To the extent that individual audience members or whole audiences, as ontic entities, constitute the performance, they are understood here are entirely active, not passive receptors. The passivity to which I refer is Levinas’ “passivity more passive still than any passivity” (Levinas 1981: 185). The relation between audience members is passive in that it is a non-intentional lateral relation. In Audience, audience members leak into each other, overlap, while their intentionality is directed to the performance. This is not to say that there are not times at which the attention and intention of audience members are drawn to each other, but, more importantly, to describe a relation that is the ground of any and all contact between them, intentional or otherwise. A relation *prior to agency* which consists in their mutual being-called by the performance. The passive lateral *affinity* of the manifold audience. Pure proximity.
had already planted the signposts followed by Levinas in the revelatory mode in which immersion in Audience might be encountered and described.

When we say, actually wrongly, ‘the entity which has the mode of being of Dasein’, we cannot mean that this entity is something like a thing on hand in the world, which is first specifiable of itself purely in its “what” and which on the basis of this what-content now also has a specific mode of being just like a thing, chair, table, or the like. Because the expression ‘the entity of the character of Dasein’ always suggests something in the order of the substantiality of a thing, it is basically inappropriate (Heidegger 1985: 236).

Audience, similarly, cannot be apprehended in its “whatness”. It is not a substantial thing, a production, a psychological state, but a transcendent lived essence, “proximately concerned absorption” (Heidegger 1985: 238), encounterable only as immersion. It must be lived and reported from.

Zahavi, foregrounding the positive dimension of the impossibility of direct apprehension of other subjectivity gives another clue: “The self-givenness of the other is inaccessible and transcendent to me, but it is exactly this inaccessibility, this limit, which I can experience” (Zahavi 2001: 153). This elusiveness is the authentic experience of the other subject. What is tangible in my experience of the other’s subjectivity is its escape from me, its transcendence. Likewise, what is tangible in my experience of the transcendental intersubjectivity of Audience is its escape from me, its transcendence. It is not something which I can encompass, but a transcendence in which I am immersed, which cuts through me, permeates me, yet remains unthematisable, turns away, shading its face from full view. Like my view of the milky way galaxy as a cloudy sash across the night sky, I can only ever be one situated perspective, and a perspective from within, which will never give the whole shape, but which can be shaded and sketched in from the shared viewpoints of other planets. I cannot have a God’s eye view of Audience, I can only tell what it is like to be in it.

§27 Afternote

The picture of Audience that has emerged—or that remains in the shadows, showing only
part of its face—from this little conceptual, theoretical wander through these phenomenological basics, is very indistinct, pushing disturbingly towards idealism and spooks. But I think that the thing, the state, the event, whatever it is, that we go to be “in”, when we gather to witness—the barely felt pressures and intensities of the heat, the speed and the weight of the people around us, the ebbs and flows of the affective eddies, the mutual directness towards, the setting aside of special times, and the way we dress up for it—is specifically a straining towards the ideal and the hidden. It is the problem of the intersubjective and the orientation towards: of that which lies between, of distance and proximity. A problem which can only be approached from the standpoint of the subjective. I can only attain to anything like knowledge of these phenomena from the viewpoint of my orientation towards them from within my involvement with them. The real tangible fullness of the being-with, the being-among, the being-in, the being-alongside calls for description; in all its indiscernibility, its faint appearances, and its dogged recalcitrance.
III. Methodology
Those who have worked on methodology all their lives have written many books to replace the more interesting books that they could have written.

(Levinas 1998d: 89)
A. Preliminary Methodological Considerations

§28 What Sort of Knowledge

What sort of knowledge does this study seek to produce? Does it seek to lay out a representation of an observable, measurable, empirical object? Does it follow a thickening array of constitutive partial views? Does it want to speak of, from, or for its object, or simply be its expression? How does it conceive its relatedness to what it purports to be about?

First, it does not aim to take up an objective viewpoint from which a content might be laid out systematically in anatomical description of its articulations, relations and organization. Rather, it draws from a tradition begun by Descartes, radicalized by Husserl, and apotheosized in Levinas’ reversal of intentionality as living from..., a tradition in which the subjective dimension of all purportedly scientific knowledge needs to be taken into account in its validating of the certainty of the objective.

This tradition figures the intentional relation between a subject and its objects. The object is conceived of as transcendent to the subject, and the subject as transcending towards the object. Or, in Levinas’ reversal, a transcendence towards an object is lived as a transcendence from an element—from a place, a person, an attitude, a thing, a viewpoint, a situation, a time. If, as Heidegger insists, Dasein is constitutionally transcendence towards, then the subject must also be implicated in that from or as which transcendence goes out. And if Dasein is Being-in the-world, then the world is that from which transcendence, the principle of Dasein’s intentionality, erupts. To be in the world is to live from the world.

And if, as Levinas has shown, we live from the elements in which we are immersed, then it follows that we also perceive from, emerge from, produce from, know from and study from those elements.

So this is a study conducted from audiences. In its intentional structure, it takes the story told in the previous theoretical section of the thesis—the particular historico-conceptual drawing together of intentionality, reduction, intersubjectivity and transcendence in the
history of phenomenology—as its ideally lived element, into the experientially lived element of audiences, to enrich the soup, to report back on the experience, aiming at the extraction of the essence Audience, which it then feeds back into audiences from within.

Importantly, it is necessary for this work to take up a position in relation to its own ontological presuppositions. How I conceive of the object of the study is an instance of how I conceive of objectivity generally. What do I think an object is? How does this study have its object? How does this study express my own presuppositions of what and how I think things are? If this specific questioning orientation is not sustained as a part of the thesis, if it does not at least take the occasional glance at itself out of the corner of its eye, if will not stand as phenomenology.

Still, the question remains of how the relationship unfolds between this work in audiences and the history of phenomenology as detailed in the previous section. How does the detailed telling of some strands of philosophical history form and inform the inquiry? How does this history make the object available? I stated in the previous section that my intention was not to make a critique or a test of the ideas of the great phenomenologists, but to allow an activation of conceptual resonances. How far Husserl succeeded in the infinite task of revealing the absolute structure of consciousness, or whether Levinas actually points to anything other than his own linguistic phantasms beyond being, I will leave to others with a taste for such adventures. On different days I take different positions. Here, by drawing the lines I have drawn through their work, by making the connections I have made, I have sought to activate an inquiry. To bring some conceptual resonances emanating from the attunements and discords between their thinking, to some descriptions of how Audience appears to be given, in an attempt to hear some new questions and different understandings of a taken-for-granted phenomenon.

It would be possible for me to develop and adapt any of the approaches of the great philosophers as the basis of my methodology. I could do rude appropriations, figuring each individual audience member as one abschattung in a manifold, I could develop the idea of Audience as “good soup”, I could look at Audience as a potted version of Being-in-the-world. But there would be something forced and clumsy in such approaches, something partisan. I am not on anybody’s team. Rather, I am trying to let some
underlying tendencies in all these philosophies and concepts somehow infiltrate and illuminate the work at different times in different ways. I have dwelt, or meditated with, my experiences in audiences and my experiences with the concepts of these philosophers, and tried to get out of the way.

The story of intentionality, for instance—from its exploding out of a couple of references in the writing of one philosopher, Franz Brentano, in recoup of a few apparently indistinct and disparate uses in some medieval scholastics, from some forgotten senses under an everyday word to a conceptual history of what it means to think, desire, believe and be—is a good, thick, rich plot at which to wonder. But here, in this writing, I’m not seeking to apply or prove the concept or any particular version of it as the basis of the inquiry, I’m merely trying to allow it, and other concepts, to provide something of an understanding of what, how and under what circumstances audiences (which, as I have explained elsewhere, seem to me to seductively offer themselves to intentional analysis) come about and do what they do.

I have given great detail in the section on reduction of how that method has worked in different ways in the thesis. I have tried a Heideggerian bare-bones directedness. I have wondered about shifts between the intentional and design stances of the audience when something goes wrong in a performance. I have figured audiences as nourishing elements. I have assiduously avoided reducing the situation to logical algorithms and substitutions. I have tried to locate the intentional arc in my own audiencing. I have asked the question of the relations between individual audience members and whole audiences in the context of the history of the phenomenological debate on the question of the one-on-one relation in the concrete encounter with another person as opposed to an apriori transcendental intersubjectivity.

And through it all I have tried to allow constants and consistencies to emerge and suggest themselves. As I have played with the theory and sat in audiences, I have realized that I could describe my experiences in any number of ways. But, under the influence of Anthony Steinbock, I have eschewed attempts at “the mere depiction of matters of fact or even an expression of one’s own inner feeling states” (Steinbock 1997: 127), which would be merely the concretion of an unquestioned set of presuppositions, instead
preferring to construct an as fully aware as possible theoretical basis to provide “a core of sense that shapes a context within which various elements form meaningful relations” (128).

Hopefully, some of these approaches will persist, and allow other interested scholars, researchers, audience members and performers to make meaningful and productive interpretations of their experience in audiences. The ultimate court of all knowledge, even for the most apparently scientifically observed, compiled and correlated data, is in the intersubjective verification of tradition, peers and heirs.

§29 Approaches Not Taken Here

a) Absurd Intentionality

If I were to proceed towards something like a Husserlian full intentional explication of the relations unfolding between an Audience, its members, the performance and the performers, according to subject and object poles, I would have to at least take into account:

Performance as Subject ↔ Performance as Object
Audience as Subject ↔ Audience as Object
Performance as Subject ↔ Audience as Subject
Performance as Subject ↔ Audience as Object
Performance as Object ↔ Audience as Subject
Performance as Object ↔ Audience as Object
Performer as Subject ↔ Performance as Object
Performer as Subject ↔ Performance as Subject
Performer as Object ↔ Performance as Subject
Performer as Object ↔ Performance as Object
Audience Member as Subject ↔ Performance as Subject
Audience Member as Subject ↔ Performance as Object
Audience Member as Object ↔ Performance as Subject
Audience Member as Object ↔ Performance as Object
Audience Member as Subject ↔ Performer as Subject
Audience Member as Subject ↔ Performer as Object

And so on…………………., also following the intentional strands of relation between the place and times, location, space and duration of the performance, its concerns, and the broader social and cultural historical worlds of which each performance occurred as a projection. I do not intend to do this work here. This would work be work for a sociopsychologist, if there were such an animal. And even then it would attest to nothing other than the megalomania of the discourse and the obsession of the researcher, neither capturing anything of the lived experience of the audience gathered for the performance in question, nor revealing any more fundamental transcendental ontological truths. A less obsessive approach is perhaps necessary. I cannot lay siege to the totality of Audience.

b) The Four Intentionalities

In a previous study conducted in audiences for an Honours dissertation,35 I found four intentional dimensions in which my attendance-to the performance appeared to consist; four intendings through which being in an audience unfolds as a worldly meaning-making process. My conviction that these relations could potentially be productive as operational categories for intentional analysis led me to adopt them as preliminary protocols in this current study.

I characterized them as:

1. Audience member ↔ Whole Audience ↔ Performance.
2. Audience member ↔ Whole Audience ↔ Time and Place of Performance.

3. Audience member ↔ Whole Audience ↔ Other Audience Members.

4. Audience member ↔ Whole Audience ↔ Social/Cultural Predisposition.

These four particular relations were artificial and arbitrary constructs which appeared useful in navigating my own experience in audiences. They were not reduced essences, but indicators to possible approaches. They did not purport to be the only way by which being in an audience might be apprehended, nor did they preclude the possibility that other, more finely tooled and well-oiled conceptual apparatuses might emerge from the current and other subsequent studies. On the contrary, the method of the inquiry was propelled specifically by the hope that it would reveal the inadequacy of its own terms and promote their supercession. All attempts to categorize or schematize human behaviour must always remain provisional.

Nevertheless, these four categories opened and directed a specific inquiry with certain questions: What and how does the room/building mean? What and how do the other people mean? What and how do the performers/performed content mean, What and how do my prejudices mean? How is the odd relation between me and the audience to which I belong constituted? How is this audience given to me?

I would also note that each of these intentionalities, as intentional, was construed as a subjective/objective correlation, despite, particularly in the cases of the place and the other people, the apparent lack of any thematized intention to engage with these phenomena as objects. I believe this reveals a limit of the terms and concepts, intentionality and consciousness, belying the implicit notions of agency and will which lurk there. There is much in the constitution of audiences, as well as in general perception and intentionality, which escapes willed intention. And much which will never avail itself to thematization. At the time, I figured these four relations as horizons, always there playing a constitutive role, but, except in the case of the performed content, rarely emerging as themes.

I would also add that none of these four intentionalities was thought to exist independently of the others. They were provisionally and experimentally isolated variables, to be used as the basis for partial reductions; methodological contingencies, actually existent only through their interrelations. In any instance in which they were
applied to elucidate any attendance-to a performance, it was understood that all four are at work, more or less foregrounded, more or less effective, at any given moment in the description and constitution of audiences.

The accounting for these phenomena as intentional correlations between an individual audience member and their worlds might also appear to be at cross-purposes with the revealed definition of Audience as a prepertial, anonymous, ideal, transcendental intersubjectivity of which the individual audience member is a possibility. It must be remembered that these intentional relations were posited at the level of the psychological reduction, the first level of description, clues to a deeper stratum of transcendental intersubjective Audience. And any inquiry into the transcendental must begin with the description of worldly phenomena; must be “built on the psychological reduction—as an additional part of the purification” (Husserl 2004d: 8).

And finally, I am pleased to report that these four categories were superseded and dispensed with very early on in the performance of the research for this thesis.

c) Inadequacy of Theories of Perception to Account for Audience

As has been made clear in Section II: Phenomenological Groundwork, this work owes its thinkability to founding phenomenological concepts of perception and intentionality. However, as much as Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty turned to theories of perception as the most revealing fundamental starting point for the understanding of intentionality and thence all relatedness and comportment—affective, thoughtful, assertive, productive or otherwise—of humans to things, to worlds, to states of affairs and to each other, their work continually revealed the limitations and shortcomings in their own and each other’s understandings of systems of perception based on an inherent polar structure.

Perceptibility belongs to the object, gives the objectivity of the object, the condition of its constitution as object. Perceiving belongs to, is an act of, the subject. Yet, in this scheme, the perceiving and the perceptibility are irreducibly part of the same fabric of perceivedness. The is no alterity, nothing escapes the system. It is always already there as the all-too-neat structure of human relatedness to worlds.
Three obvious limitations of the polar structure of perception become immediately apparent: first, its inability to account for the complexity of intersubjectivity, the objectivity of subjects for other subjects, and the apparent subjectivity of some objects; second, an overvaluing of the human, with its implicit but insufficiently examined suppositions of agency and knowing; and third, a forgetting of that which escapes, that which cannot be contained or explained, but which nevertheless remains affective upon experience.

In Audience, the reversibility of the mutual co-constitution between performances and audiences is pronounced, perhaps moreso than between a cup and a drinker, and the limited applicability of the polar structure to the task of studying not only Audience, but maybe even perception itself comes into question. Whilst it is not my business here to trace the outlines of the self-acknowledged circularities and question begging in the arguments of the great phenomenologists, it is of interest to show how the complexity of the intentional structure of Audience reveals limits of the phenomenological habit of grounding human relatedness in models of polar intentional perception.

In the question of the relations between audiences and performances, the affective reversibility is obvious. Performers and the performances they are performing are crucially dependent on the audiences they gather. A tough crowd can lead to a tense and tight performance; an easy crowd can turn a tragedy into a comedy. Attention and appreciation energize musicians into greater expressivity. Affect loops reversibly and continuously between performances and audiences because the subject and object poles are blurred by the overtly subjective nature of both sides of the polarity. Everything in play, performers, audience members, place, mise-en-scene, is simultaneously endowed and endowing of meaning, always both object and subject. It is a mutually co-affective sphere in which my subjectivity, whether I am audience member or performer, is more or less aware of its objectivity for the others, be they the other performers or the other audience members. And in this hall of mirrors, the intentional structure of subject and object is left wanting in its inadequacy to describe the full concreteness, the complex structure which unfolds.

Audience, construed as the essence gathering to witness is a mesh of lateral, progressive,
horizontal, vertical, passive, active, affective, physical, ideal, social, cultural, aesthetic, moral and ethical dimensions, whose complex intentionality overflows the simple polarity of traditional theories of perception and intersubjectivity.

However, there can be no doubt that this thesis owes its genesis to this tradition. And it must take its lead from Emmanuel Levinas, who always acknowledged his fundamental indebtedness to Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, while nevertheless rehearsing a rigorous circumscription of their flaws, limitations and presuppositions. And it was Levinas who measured the distance, the separation, the proximity and the passivity which holds apart and gives structure, tension and meaning to phenomenological theories of perception. And likewise, this thesis, through protocols of gathering, witness, immersion, attention, completion and others as yet unrevealed, will attempt to measure the distances, separations, proximities and passivities of the complex intentionality of Audience.

d) Limited Worth of Theories of Reception and Spectatorship

It surely is a mistake to imagine that the essential activity at the core of an individual is an activity of elaborating meaning (Lingis 2006: 448).

Theories of reception, spectatorship and agency, which conceive of performances as objects, more or less read, constructed, conceived, received or authored by more or less passive or active individual spectator-subjects, can offer only provisional and preliminary approaches, at the relatively superficial worldly level of the psychological reduction, to a full description of the complex, multiple and multi-directional intentional relations between audience members, places, times, prejudices, memories, performers, scripts, bodies, historical eras, ontological presuppositions, buildings, climates, feelings and who knows what other phenomena which constitute audiences.

To the extent that individual audience members can be taken-for-granted as willing agents somehow making meaning for themselves within given social contexts, theories based on semiotics, textuality, reading and questions of authorship can certainly provide some inadequate first unthought categories which must immediately be dispensed with for any progress to be made.

However, to the transcendental intersubjective phenomenon of Audience, these theories
can contribute nothing.

The limited worth of these approaches to this study became apparent very early on in the process, in consideration of the four intentional dimensions of the other audience members, time and place, the performance and the prejudices:

1. The relationships between an individual audience member and the performers, and those between individual audience members, are relations of subject to subject, or more accurately, to use Merleau-Ponty’s terms, as subject-objects to object-subjects, which would give subjects perceiving themselves as objects for themselves and as subjective objects for others, who likewise subjectively perceive themselves as subjects perceiving themselves as objects who are also subjective objects for other subjects who they perceive as subjective objects. This vertiginous reversibility is created by the inadequacy of the attempt to use static subject/object poles to describe a phenomenon which is fundamentally intersubjective and experiential. The willing agency of the subject of reception studies dissolves in the swirl.

2. The effect of the place and times through which the performance occurs, though essential constituents of the formation of specific audiences, are not perceived objects but elements or conditions which an audience member lives from..., and undergoes. Even in so-called “durational performance” and “site specific performance”, where these factors are foregrounded, where the time of the performance and the place in which it occurs are specific objects of, the work, the times and place do not function as objects, representations, readable texts or states of affairs to be grasped and interpreted, but affective experiences to be lived through. They are part of the living fabric of Audience, operating more like Levinasian elements, conditions of the sayability of the saying, rather than the meaning of the said. And as such, they occur at a level of passivity more passive than the passive spectator which reception studies rightly denies and whose activity it tries to describe. But this extreme passivity occurs in a dimension where even ontological phenomenology has its primordiality called into question, and requires a more fundamental mode of research to describe its articulations.

3. The relations between the audience member and their own prejudices and
foreunderstandings through which they are able to apprehend meaning in the performance are *lived as* these prejudices and pre-understandings. Once again with Merleau-Ponty, the human body is “a perceiving thing”, a “subject-object” (1964a: 166). The urgency for the phenomenological reduction in the apprehension of myself by myself is generated by the necessity that I can never truly get away from myself. The intentional distance which makes possible the apprehension of a cup in its cupness, of an object in its objectivity—the same distance which opens between a sign and that for which it stands—continually opens and collapses in my perpetual slipping away from my grasp of myself as object as soon as I apprehend myself apprehending myself. Similarly, in more worldly ethnographic, sociological, semiotic and textual studies, this distance manifests as a problem, sparking debates which render these disciplines questionable from within. In transcendental phenomenology and Levinasian ethics, the study springs from and assumes the distance as its primary condition.

4. These inadequacies of a polar intentional approach highlight the necessity to plumb a more fundamental ontological transcendental depth. However complex, however densely intermeshed and opaque I might make an intentional or hermeneutic analysis, it would be predicated wrongly on a subject/object structure. The categories of subjectivity and objectivity themselves are not sufficiently fundamental to explain the phenomenon of Audience, which occurs at a more essential ontological level, and which, to put the situation more accurately, is implicated in the intrigue of the genesis of subjectivity and objectivity, at a ground prior to their coming into being, in the transcendental intersubjectivity of which they are merely higher level formations.

In this thesis, Audience is an essential element, a condition in which I am immersed and from which I emerge. Whilst there is an obvious hermeneutic dimension at work in the world-making, there is no room for concepts of spectatorship and reception which are entirely predicated on a distance, a directionality, and a notion of agency, which cannot be sustained under the terms employed here.

e) Why Not Semiotics—The Essence of the Sign

The essence of the sign is that it stands for something else. The sign, in its essence, relies
on a reference to something which it is not. In its essence, it is mediation. The sign, in its essence is never simply what it is; it is always a prevarication, an impostor. Further, in its imposition, it does not allow the thing which it represents, which it mediates on behalf of, to emerge as what it is. It renders the thing dependent on it. In the study of signs, the thing itself cannot show itself; there is only ever access to a sign which is merely a veil for another sign. Infinite slippage. In a world of signs there are no things, no immediacies, no quiddity. A sign relegates the thing to the status of its other.

The crime of the sign is the theft of the thing. It does not let the other for which it stands, stand for what it is, but, standing in for it, makes that other its other, nothing but that for which the sign stands, understandable only through the means by which the sign signifies. And yet the sign itself cannot be what it is either, by dint of its essential referentiality.

A sign always points to. It always points to the other for which it stands, is inextricably bound, in this slippage of otherness, where neither it nor that to which it points are entirely themselves, but contain each other, each the other’s impostor, denying access to each other, always mediated and mediating. There can be no immediacy, no thing in itself, no direct experience of the world.

The sign is a negation.

Language, reduced to a system of signs, is reduced to standing in for. Certainly, to the extent that language says something, it is a system of signs, but to the extent that language is the saying of that something, it is not a sign, but an act of creative force, a ground of the thinkability of signs. So language, rather than being a register of signs, is first the ground which enables signification to be thought. But language is also more than this. Language is a physical affective substance of intersubjectivity. And similarly with gathering to witness, witness itself is not merely the interpretation of signs. The witness and the gathering are a ground prior to signs. Signs depend on gathering and witness. Gathering to witness institutes value. Constitutes value. It does not decipher value in that to which it bears witness; it is a saying rather than a said, it makes value rather than interprets it. It is an attribution, an attestation, a making real, a manifestation, a bringing forth into reality. The experience of being in Audience, the immediacy of being together
towards, among, with, becomes lost in the relegation to a system of signs.

The study of the interpretation of signs, if applied to being in audiences, would at best point to another sign which would need to be interpreted and which could not possibly yield the transcendental intersubjectivity at which this work aims.

§30 Solipsistic Beginnings

Even though it is a transcendental intersubjective phenomenon which is being described, it can only be described from within my own individual perspective. I have no access to it except through my own experience of it. The only method at my disposal “is though an interrogation of myself, [one that appeals to] inner experience” (Husserl 1970: 202).

The ontological status of transcendental intersubjectivity, as the ground from which subjectivity emerges for itself, cannot be perceived by a subject as “an objectively existing structure in the world” (Zahavi 2003: 241), allowing of a third-party description, but can only be revealed through the individual subject’s participation in it. For Zahavi, this highlights the necessary reversibility of the relation between subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

Transcendental intersubjectivity can be disclosed only through a radical explication of the ego’s structures of experience. This does not only indicate the intersubjective structure of the ego, but also the egological attachment of intersubjectivity. Husserl’s accentuation of the fundamental importance of the ego must be seen as an accentuation of the fact that intersubjectivity, my relation to an Other, always passes through my own subjectivity. Only from this point of view are intersubjectivity and the plurality of constitutive centres phenomenologically accessible (2003: 241-242).

So despite my contention in this study of Audience (and, I believe, Husserl’s contention in the carrying out of the primordial reduction) that the transcendental intersubjectivity is primary, or as put conversely by Merleau-Ponty, “the solipsist thing is not primary” (1964a: 173), that the reduction to the solus ipse is merely a “thought experiment” (Husserl, cited in Merleau-Ponty 1964a: 173), or a methodological expediency, it does, nevertheless, provide the sole apparent road of access to the revelation of the intentional
web of the transcendental intersubjectivity.

Consequently, this study moves from my own necessarily solipsistic beginning in a previous hermeneutic study I had conducted on my own experience in audiences, to my still solipsistic participation among others in the group intentional work for this study, to the solipsisms of those others, and the attunement with them, through painstaking listening and reduction of my own viewpoint, into the web of intentional relations revealed through co-subjective corroboration, in which I posit myself an object for the others, and on to the constitution of the “primordial We” (Merleau-Ponty 1964a: 175).

§31 My Experience

How then, is transcendental intersubjectivity to be approached through my own perspective from within it?

Only by starting from the ego and the system of its transcendental functions and accomplishments can we methodically exhibit transcendental intersubjectivity and its transcendental communalization (Husserl 1970: 185-186).

It is necessary to first describe the psychological ego as it is held in its worldly correlations, then “in an essential system of forward steps” (186), exhibit first the transcendental ego “that each human being bears within himself” (186), in order to then approach the ultimate intersubjective constitution of the world in its objectivity and reality.

In the naïveté of the natural attitude of attending in audiences, subjectivity is heightened. The individual audience member, through their attention and interestedness in that which is being witnessed, is in a hothouse of their own judgements, tastes, beliefs and affections. Whether sensibly focused in an isolating darkened auditorium, or joined facing each other in shared attestation to their sobriety in an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting with its remedial emphasis on the anonymous ‘we’, or whether celebrating the glory of God, buoyed on other voices in hymns of praise, the individual bearing witness is bearing witness to their own taste, faith, sobriety, judgements and feelings. The road to the experience with others is always through ‘my’ experience of them. This is the
methodological necessity which motivates Husserl’s primordial reduction to ownness as the first step in the explanation of the experience of others and the genesis of community. The reduction is practised by the meditating phenomenologist on their own experience. In the group method practised for this thesis, the members of the group first go into audiences and describe their own experience. The intersubjective stage of validation, verification and attunement comes later, even though it is a fundamentally intersubjective phenomenon that is being described.

In the natural attitude, being in audiences is an experience. As such, its explication must begin as the explication of that experience. As an experience, it is an experience that happens to me. As my experience, the question of what is happening in an audience and how it might be most effectively studied then becomes a question of how the experience unfolds for me and other me’s with whom I discuss the experiences. I do not want to pretend that my experience of being in an audience is some discreet, studyable, easily objectified thing such as frogsperm or theatre building design in Eighteenth Century Budapest. Our understanding of frogsperm is limited only by our knowledge of physics, chemistry and biology. We can analyze its molecular structure, immobilize it, inactivate it, map its genes, freeze it, boil it, touch it, alter it, see it and make predictions about it. We could devise a study, based on other proven studies, of the effects of given conditions on its potency, measured in numbers of individuals spawned, and we might, as a result, contribute to the saving of a species. With theatre building design we could measure dimensions, study architectural fashions and engineering innovations, analyze building materials and draw on historical records to determine use patterns. We could pore over civic records and personal memoirs, establish dates, detect patterns of distribution of theatres in the city, examine the usage of interior space within the buildings, and relate it all to social, cultural, aesthetic conditions and values of the time. In the case of audiences we could count numbers of people, survey their demographics, test psychological, hermeneutic and semiotic theories on the behaviour of audience members, but still never touch the experience of being in an audience itself. Audience is another thing altogether. There are no pre-mapped co-ordinates against which we can hang our findings for validation.
How do I measure my carriedness by the laughter crackling around the auditorium sweeping me up, igniting my own vocal and respiratory apparatus into a cough of laughter which joins me to the others in belonging? How does it differ from the separation from the others I feel during an uncomfortable throat-clearing cough, perhaps disturbing a silent attentive moment of shared pathos? Certainly my experience is apprehendably different in an audience of two hundred property developers, stockbrokers, academics and art bureaucrats at the Opera House, than among three punks at a small pub, but there is no objective standard against which I can measure my sense of belonging, or predict the likelihood of someone else’s gasp of delight mirroring or picking up and carrying my own.

My experience of a situation, and the experience of others in that situation, can only be explicated through description. Any measurants must be allowed to give themselves through a sustained and diligent listening and holding to the description of appearances in the faith that the phenomenon under study will give itself. This is phenomenology. It is a methodology specifically designed for the exploration of the mysterious, the hidden and the taken-for-granted. It makes the familiar strange so that the things and states of affairs with which we are habitually engaged show themselves in their constitution, beyond their social or economic use value and practical applications. Frogsperm and theatre buildings can be exhaustively theorized in terms of their functions, causes and purposes. It is possible to study the informative or entertainment purposes to which individual audience members claim to put their attendances-to audiences in their daily lives (psychology, ethnography and sociology, with their techniques of survey and interview would be adequate to this task), just as it is possible to observe that frogsperm of a certain consistency is more likely to achieve fertilization. But if I were merely to describe the feelings of indignation or righteousness which I experience in an audience of a play or a film concerning an issue which affects me, or ask people what they thought of a performance, or why they watch a particular TV show, I am still not studying Audience. I am merely restating and interpreting my own and others’ opinions.

A phenomenological description of being in audiences reveals a hidden level, beneath the entertainment, the instruction and the worship, beneath what the people think they are doing there; a level at which all these worldly concerns reveal themselves as gathering to
witness in offer of completion. This is Audience, revealed at the transcendental level.

An audience gathers somewhere for a time in some way under given conditions. When that for which it gathers finishes, the audience disperses and becomes, in most but not all cases, too indistinct to claim its continued existence as the audience that it was. But another performance of the same show or ritual brings a new audience, which is in some way a continuation of the previous audience, or which at least participates in the broader historical audience which has borne witness to that ritual or play or team or value. If, on one night of a run of a show, two people walk out in disgust, the audience left in their wake still exists, but its character and the experience of the other audience members will be changed by their departure. When I attend-to a performance of *Hamlet* by the Bell Shakespeare Company at Sydney Opera House on a Thursday night, I not only enter the audience of these people in this room for these two hours, but also the audience which has seen any performance of *Hamlet* whatsoever. I also enter the audience who have attended and will attend Shakespeare’s plays at any time. For other purposes, I can be construed as entering the Thursday night Opera House audience, and the Bell Shakespeare audience. Any given audience is a manifestation of transcendental intersubjective Audience, a ubiquitous fundamental condition of human life, an intentionality of gathering-together-towards-to-witness, but it is only from within the experience of the phenomenon that this gathering and this witness can be apprehended. This is the business of phenomenology.

§32 Phenomenology of Audiences and Audience

The task of phenomenology consists in systematically explicating and elucidating the ontic sense of the world by investigating the intentional-constitutive accomplishments of transcendental subjectivity (Zahavi 1996: 25).

So, in order to shed light on the everyday experience of going into audiences, to get at the hidden and taken-for-granted condition of whatever it is that we are doing in those audiences, it is necessary to aim at the ultimate revelation of the transcendental-constitutive level by first describing the intentional constitution of audiences in the everyday mundane sense, from the audiences in which we attend-to, in theatres, at the
football, at church; describing our participation in them in their givenness, perceptually, temporally, placially, attentionally; then to proceed to invariant essences found constant in the experiences in these different sorts of audiences; and then, through these evidences, to access the constitutive-transcendental ground of Audience to determine at the most fundamental level possible the meaning of the question: What does it mean to be in an audience?

Then, beneath the everyday judging of the quality of an actor’s or a team’s performance, beneath our opinions of issues raised in a sermon, beneath questions of what we do or do not like or enjoy or believe, beneath questions of what it all means, it will be possible to reveal what it is that we are actually doing when we go separately to be together as strangers with common purpose in auditoriums, stadiums and places of worship, or stay at home gathered around TV sets in our separate living rooms.
B. What to Do in Audiences

§33 Foreword

I have laid out in depth and detail a wide variety of phenomenological and other theories to create a bed of conceptual resonance in which my research might lie. I have looked for clues and keys in the work of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and others for concepts and links which might illuminate some aspect of what it means to be in Audience. I have tried to analogize, to find sympathies, parallels and definitions which might aid what I am looking for. In the process my enquiry has been shaped to a large degree. I have some idea of what a phenomenology of Audience might look like. I have developed an understanding of what my object is and how I might apprehend it. I have, sometimes knowingly, but mostly by feeling my way blindly, taken up tools and methods by which a phenomenology of Audience might be conceived and performed.

But now it is necessary to do the job. To perform a phenomenology of Audience. To take, from the findings of the group, and from my own considerations, the beginning points of a full phenomenological meditation on the intentional constitution and the transcendental ground of Audience. I need to lay out the essential conditions, relations and connections in which Audience is constituted. I need to begin the series of reductions or other practices that will yield the essence of the experience, the state, the process of being in Audience.

Rather than trying to overdetermine the object to make the object fit to a pre-existent theory, it becomes a matter of locating where the theory is inadequate to the object and of allowing the object to guide the study and give its own theory.

For instance, Audience is not strictly a one-on-one, face-to-face intersubjective relation. It is a side-by-side-towards intersubjective relation. None of the theories of phenomenologists have been formulated directly in study of this phenomenon, so none of them apply directly. The methods by which Stein came at empathy, Levinas at the other, Scheler at values, Schutz at the social, can provide me with my starting points and a guide; even some of their results will show me ways into the phenomenon I am studying, but the value of this work lays in that which it reveals. It is in the gaps between the work
of other phenomenologists and the object of my study, in areas where previous thought
does not apply or falls short, in the unthought mysterious dimensions of Audience, that I
have the opportunity to shine a little light. This is the task, this is the responsibility, this is
the only valuable course of action.

§34 Immanent Description

Phenomenology is a type of reflective attentiveness that occurs within
the very experiencing itself. As phenomenologists, we describe the
experience of the “object” only within the experiencing of the object,
while simultaneously glancing at a distance, as it were, out of the
corner of one eye (Steinbock 2004a: 40).

In Husserl’s assessment of Brentano’s worth to the phenomenological project, he credits
the latter with having “presented to the modern era the idea of Intentionality, which he
derived out of consciousness itself in immanent description” (Husserl 1982a: 59). It is not
just the discovery of the importance of intentionality that the founder of phenomenology
recognizes here, but also the means by which it was revealed, from within, through
immanent description. This methodological stroke is as “epoch making” (59) as the
phenomenon it was designed to describe. Immanent description—in Brentano’s case, the
turning back of consciousness towards itself in examination of its own structure—is one
of the founding pillars of phenomenological method. Without it, Husserl’s life work
would have run a very different course.

As phenomenology, his thesis is a work of immanent description. Here, immanent
description is simply the describing of the experience of a phenomenon from within that
phenomenon. This work describes the experience of being in audiences from within
audiences with an aim towards an eidetics of the essence Audience.

Audience is conceived here in terms of Emmanuel Levinas’ concept of living from..., as a
nourishing element, with which life contents itself and in which it exalts. Audience,
gathering to witness, in the density and complexity of its together-towards intentionality,
is a nourishing medium from which life lives towards its meanings, values and
belongings, which in turn give themselves to nourish life. However, in Audience, the
overt intentionality towards that which calls for witness, which is also lived from as
immersive element, is turned away from Audience itself.

The subject, site of relentless, full-blown reduction to ownness, bringing down its judgements and making its proclamations, shouts down the sensitivities and susceptibilities of the intersubjectivity of the immersion, and remains blind to its own genesis, exercise and structure; adequating, comparing and containing the performance within itself, presenting the performance to itself as its own, as a “good performance”, one that I liked, did not like, have seen better versions of, which touched and moved me, could have been more this or less that, which left me cold, astounded, confused, which disagreed with my politics, filled me with rage. And yet this subjectivizing obsession of everything, containing the world as its object, depends upon its blindness and ignorance, its naïveté to the eddies and flows of Audience which buoys it up, gives it back to itself, and upon whose currents it froths up and trickles away.

Because of this, Audience itself remains barely perceptible, indirectly experienced, showing only secondarily, in its adumbrations on the bodies of the audience members, in the spattering of laughter and applause, in the fidgeting and silent concentration. The task of the study became the showing of the hidden structure and constitution of a phenomenon which does not readily lend itself to the thematizing glare; and in the process, to follow the contours of the intersubjective ground from which the individual subject emerges as a possibility.

To write of audiences from within audiences, as immanent description, to look “out of the corner of one eye” (Steinbock 2004: 40) towards my own involvement in an audience, to steal reflexive glimpses from and towards the immersive element, to tap into and bring back the conditions of the immersion through writing became the primary aim of the study. It was necessary to formulate a writing from the element of Audience. By turning to itself in the phenomenological attitude, the subject catches itself in the act, in its glimpse of itself not as its own object, but as its own coming forth. Thwarted from the judgements and taken-for-grantedness of the natural attitude, the subject embarrasses itself in the indiscreet flash of its own limits.

Thwarted from the judgements and taken-for-grantedness of the natural attitude, the subject embarrasses itself in the indiscreet flash of its own limits.
The question: is it possible to proceed towards a writing which carries the phenomenon, expresses it as its instance, rather than capturing it, as its other?

But Steinbock warns of the need for humility in this disposition within the phenomena.

The motivation for phenomenological reflective attentiveness is best understood as a kind of submission...we become vulnerable to the givenness of the matter’s self-givenness, and subject to the experience in the description...even if we try to describe the phenomena “abstractly” or “theoretically,” we open ourselves implicitly to the direct experience of them, and in so doing, open ourselves to being “struck” by them...in being true to how the phenomena give themselves, they may demand a transformation of our lives, a critique of our plans, our agenda, our theories or constructions...and this being guided, being lured, being enticed by the phenomena is precisely the affective force of the matter exercising its allure on us in the reflective attentiveness of the phenomenological attitude (Steinbock 2004: 41).

Steinbock describes something here which sounds very much like Levinas’ “most passive, unassumable, passivity, the subjectivity or the very subjection of the subject” (Levinas 1981: 55). The phenomenological disposition implies “submission”, “subjection”, “we open ourselves”, “being struck”, “transformation of our lives”, “critique of our plans”, “being guided...lured...enticed”. This is not an ascertaining, grasping knowledge, but one which nevertheless requires care, discipline and close listening.

It is necessary, in opening ourselves to the phenomena, in this case to the being in Audience in which we find ourselves conducting our questioning, to remain sufficiently exposed, sufficiently vulnerable so as to not allow the tyranny of the subject to shout down the phenomena, but to withhold, in the true spirit of the reduction, our plans, our agendas, our presuppositions, and to allow ourselves to be guided by the phenomenon, to allow the phenomenon to be our element, to let it become us, and to describe its becoming us.

In this way phenomenology raises us to its dignity, in service to the things themselves.

Certainly, we cannot be pure in this non-intrusion of the self, though
we do want to get as much as we can; so, we are always failing to some extent because we are finite in the face of inexhaustible presence. And if there is too much self-interest, we can distort the descriptions/experiences to such an extent that the whole process becomes compromised; no longer is there merely something left out of account, but we become mere academics, mere professionals (Steinbock 2004: 41).

Or worse still, mere ideologues, barrow-pushers, pot-bangers.

Certainly, we push on always under Merleau-Ponty’s famous assertion of the impossibility of the completeness of our reductive task, because, paradoxically, we are given by the task as we give ourselves to it. In the withholding of self, in the dis-position of self, the “forgetfulness of self as openness to the allure” (Steinbock 2004: 40), which allows the phenomenon to show itself in its givenness, we are given back to ourselves; the withholding of self allows a modification of self, through imbibing that which exceeds it.

An openness to the medium allows the element to become me, to nourish me; and if living from elements is nourishment—a gustatory and digestive relation—then writing from elements is a digestive aid. As I immerse into Audience, giving myself over to it, dis-posing of myself in the lure of belonging together with others to the performance, withholding my judgements and presuppositions, attentive to the flashes of my own immersion in the phenomenon, I am doubly enriched.

The task in phenomenology, then, is not to become inured to the affective forces of the phenomena, but literally to dispose ourselves to them, with humility, since the self-givenness of the phenomena ultimately is not our doing—or not our doing alone. In this way, phenomenology, of all reflective postures, is the most attentive disposition, and in this sense the most yielding, the most dis-positioned (Steinbock 2004: 41-42).

To achieve the turn to the experience from within the flow of its unfolding it is neither necessary nor possible to bracket the whole experience, but merely to turn towards the mundane unquestioned modes of its givenness. My job is to turn towards the way Audience is given to me, to the way it buoys me up, to my exposure and susceptibility to
the others present or not present who bear upon my being in Audience, to the specific demands of the place in which Audience gathers; to the way Audience commands my attention and concentration to the performance, and to the way Audience gives me over to the performance.

So, in turning my attention towards the building in which the performance occurs, or to the way in which my own predisposition and prejudices give the performance to me, or the proximity of the person seated next to me, and withholding my mundane attitude of intentional comportment towards the aesthetic judgement or interpretation of the performance, I begin to apprehend the givenness of my attendance in a particular audience, and through the intentional analysis of that givenness, open the possibility of transcendental phenomenological reduction of Audience as it is given in all audiences. By describing the modes of givenness from within, I can directly intuit that which would remain hidden from objective analysis or interview with audience members “in the wild”.

What phenomenology really wants to bracket, then, is a self-imposition so as to let the phenomena flash forth as they give themselves; what we become dispassionate about is ourselves through a literal dis-position of the self from the scene, and by so doing, dispose ourselves to be struck in whichever way the phenomena give themselves. This is not idle or random curiosity in things that we generate from ourselves, but an active remaining open while stepping back, a dis-position that has a directedness because it is motivated by the self-givenness of the matters themselves. Thus, the conversion peculiar to phenomenology of which Husserl speaks in the Crisis and elsewhere, is a conversion peculiar to the practice of phenomenology, it is the forgetfulness of the self as the openness to the allure (Steinbock 2004: 40).

§35 Transcendental Immanence

The transcendental constitutive dimension of humanity is lived as intersubjective involvement and immersion. At our most essential level, there “is no separation of mutual externality at all” as would be found mundanely apparent. Rather, in the epoché, there is revealed “a pure intentional, mutual internality” in which we all find ourselves immanent
to the “all-communal phenomenon ‘world’”. The description of the intentional implication in the phenomenon of world, not just ‘the world’, but in any communally lived world-phenomenon, such as Audience, needs to be explicated, not from a proposed outside, objective God’s eye-view, but from within my immersion and involvement, which is, after all, my only true standpoint, the only position I can take in regard to it. Such is the necessity of immanent description (Husserl 1970: 255).

After a detailed examination of various positions within the work of Husserl and his commentators and descendants on the question of dependencies and contingencies in relations between the primordial I and the open intersubjectivity, Dan Zahavi concludes.

For Husserl, intersubjectivity is not some relation, within the world, that is to be observed from the outside; it is not something transcendent to consciousness, or some sort of system or structure in which consciousness would be founded. And Husserl’s reference to intersubjectivity by no means implies giving up a starting point in a philosophy of consciousness...The very opposite is the case: intersubjectivity is a relation between me and the other or the others, and correspondingly, its treatment and analysis must necessarily take the I’s relation to others as its point of departure...It is only from the standpoint of the individual I that intersubjectivity can be phenomenologically articulated and displayed (Zahavi 1996: 79).

So, phenomenologically speaking, I can only approach intersubjectivity from within my relations with others, from my own standpoint. To assume the possibility of an objective view of intersubjectivity would be absurd. The challenge is to frame reductions or other methodological devices which will give me my involvement with the others, to isolate my living of the relations themselves, first in a mundane perspective and then to place those findings within a transcendental epoché to reveal and articulate and display their transcendental dimension.

How such a task might proceed is another matter altogether. Whether Husserl’s approach can be effected in its letter and law is a highly contentious question. The apparent impossibilities in the transcendental method led Heidegger, as has been pointed out in the previous section, to the necessity of completely reframing the task. But equally, it has been shown that the orientation implicit in the transcendental reduction, towards essential
philosophical categories which describe the relations and principles at a fundamental level, is not only a useful task, despite, or perhaps because of its infinition, but one which propelled the primary impetus of Heidegger’s project, and certainly those of all later phenomenologists.

Nevertheless, for this thesis to proceed, it will be necessary to find some way towards a method, a way of thinking, studying and writing which will serve to elucidate the relations between me, the others and the soup in which we are immersed; a soup which is something other than the totality of all our involvements.

§36 Writing From…,

To allow the revelation of the immersiveness of Audience—the being in, among and between, in the eddies and flows, the giving over to gathering, the completion of witness—through the flick of the switch, the change of attitude to the transcendental, as the condition of the worldly intentionality of the taking up of a position in relation to a performance, demands a concrete method which reflects, or perhaps more accurately, instantiates its structure.

In immanent description there is no transcendent object. There is the saying of the being-in of the immersion. The question is how to say this immersion. Certainly, it begins with the description of an experience, but this framing—as description—suggests the discreet distance of a subject’s regard for its object. What is needed here is an emergence, an inscription or invocation, an eruption of Dufrenne’s intimacy in the aesthetic experience.

No longer an aim or mere intention toward but a participation with…not merely to be conscious of something but to associate myself with it…(in) an act of communion…we are dealing rather with the acquisition of an intimacy” (Dufrenne 1973: 406).

Heidegger would demand that we

let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself (Heidegger 1962: 58).

Merleau-Ponty, in the same spirit, warns,

[o]ur relationship to the world, as it is untiringly enunciated within
us, is not a thing which can be any further clarified by analysis; philosophy can only place it once more before our eyes and present it for ratification (Merleau-Ponty 1962: xviii).

And Levinas’ concept of living from elements, provides the model by which it might be possible to sustain a research practice which could carry the intimacy to fruition as an expression of its fecundity. I live from audiences; I am in them. They affect me and give me myself and the others in Audience as we offer completion to the performances which call for witness.

To posit oneself corporeally is to touch an earth, but to do so in such a way that the touching finds itself already conditioned by the position, the foot settles into a real which this very action outlines or constitutes—as though a painter would notice that he is descending from the picture he is painting (Levinas 1969: 128).

This is a different relation from that which a consciousness has with its objects through a knowledge which ‘sees’ or ‘grasps’, and which reduces the world to the status of the other of its thought. Rather it is an immersion in elements. In this relation “the world I live in is not simply the counterpart or the contemporary of thought…it nourishes me and bathes me…it is aliment and medium” (129).

Thinking represents objects to itself. This is the structure of the intentionality of consciousness. In living from…, the structure of representation does not hold. “What I live from is not in my life as the represented is within representation” (128).

It seems obvious that the attempt to describe my being in Audience would benefit from an approach informed by this remarkable reversal of intentionality and its relationship with the things of the world. And this is not just because of the elusiveness of the objectivity of Audience, but more importantly because I am immersed in Audience; it constitutes me as I constitute it. The relationship would be betrayed by the attempt to lay it out as an object of my thinking.

But first, the question needs to asked of how it might be possible not only to conduct a study from within an element, but to report on the experience in such a way that the relationship is not betrayed, that the experience does not elude or turn away from the thematic glare of thinking, but somehow unfurls in the writing. What is required is a
writing which comes as a measured and careful listening, a writing from.....

Levinas tells us something of the way in which such a writing might follow that to which it listens. The element

is not reducible to a system of operational references and is not equivalent to the totality of such a system...(it) has its own density...a common fund or terrain, essentially non-possessable, “nobody’s” earth, sea, light, city...which envelops or contains without being able to be contained or enveloped (1969: 131).

He evokes the navigator at sea to illustrate how the relationship with the element might be taken up. The navigator makes use of the sea and the winds, obeys their laws, but does not “transform them into things” (131). If we were to take Audience as a thing, it would show us a side which we could describe as a partial adumbration, but as element we bathe in it; it is liquid, oceanic.

But still, the question remains, what sort of a writing is possible from elements. It is not even a question of a writing adequate to the task, because adequation itself presupposes an object. What is necessary is a writing that proclaims Audience, an announcement or a response, or attestation that does not try to contain Audience within a system, but which carries it forth, as an expression of it, allows it to gather itself, gives it breath, says it, performs its task.

To whatever extent such a writing might be possible.

§37 Conveying and Betraying

As a non-thematizable, a discretion, Audience cannot be encompassed by knowing, but can only be conveyed in its saying. It must be delivered over as its own expression; but this conveying must always be, to some extent, a betrayal, an indiscretion, which, as Levinas remarks, is “probably the very task of philosophy” (1981: 7).

The beyond being, showing itself in the said, always shows itself there enigmatically, is already betrayed. Its resistance to assemblage, conjunction and conjuncture, to contemporaneity, immanence, the presence of manifestation... (19).
Audience is a transcendental intersubjective phenomenon. Transcendental intersubjectivity, as transcendental, does not show itself in the natural attitude, does not manifest. The practice of the transcendental reduction, to the extent that it is possible, claims to reveal hidden transcendental structures. But the products of the transcendental reduction, to be useable, meaningful, to be measured for their worth in some aware living, need to be brought back for assessment, conveyed within the natural attitude. It is at this moment, where that which, in its essence, remains hidden, is brought into the indiscreet thematic glare, that the suspicion of betrayal will always lurk.

The problem is that “as soon as it is conveyed before us it is betrayed in the said that dominates the saying which states it” (Levinas 1981: 7). This is the methodological problem which Levinas set out to solve in Otherwise Than Being. Although he encountered the problem in the context of the attempt at the great philosophical task of bearing witness to the before and beyond of Being, and this essay attempts only to lay out a transcendental intersubjective essence, apparently very much in Being, the same methodological scandal embarrasses this work. And the question, having been outlined, must not be shirked. 36

36 I think that although Levinas encountered the problem in the facing of a realm beyond Being, that it is, if not the same problem, then a very close relative of the phenomenon which renders the reduction infinite despite Husserl’s yearning for totality, which Heidegger casts as the turning away of Being, which Merleau-Ponty tried to heal with the reversibility of the flesh, which makes the ethnographer tread lightly, watching himself out of the corner of his eye at all times, and which made Derrida delight in his perpetual disappearing act. I am also aware that even though I am using Levinas’ terminology and methods that I am not being faithful to the letter of his interpretations. He understood Being as eminently thematizable, as the showing of that which shows, prepared to lay itself bare for the perusal of the reducing phenomenologist. I am not so sure about this. And I suspect that his saying of the before and beyond Being, as an attempt to circumscribe the limits of Being, reveals, in its own constitutional incapacity to be shown in a pinned-down said, the stubbornness of Being itself, in its perpetual turning away from knowledge and perception. I think the moment of the showing of the before and the beyond of Being would be the moment in which Being shows itself in its fullness. And I see no evidence for the occurrence of this event under the scope of human perception. Further, I think that if Levinas is understood to be holding a hard-line Sartrean realist-existentialist position, somehow conceiving Being as nothing other than that which shows, the thereness of that which is there, then I think the phenomenon which he is calling the beyond of Being is a
It is not enough to merely note the inevitability of the betrayal and then be satisfied with a pragmatic resignation to the acceptance of infinitely never-quite-getting-there, performing knowingly inadequate reductions and attaching a self-forgiving clause of the awareness of limitations, even if such admission of failure be the only truly possible outcome. On the contrary, it is necessary not only to proclaim the possibility of a writing which conveys without betraying, but to make some attempt to perform it. Or at the very least provide, in Husserlian mode, a thorough accounting for the betrayal. However insane the task might sound.

And Levinas, as he begins his foray into the beyond of Being questions the insanity of the task of proclaiming “a kerygma that identifies the innumerable aspects of its manifestation”, which ”enters into the current flow of language in which things show themselves” (1981: 8), with the suggestion that

[The Nietzschean man above all was such a moment. For Husserl’s transcendental reduction will a putting between parentheses suffice—
a type of writing, of committing oneself with the world, which sticks like ink to the hands that push it off? One should have to go all the way to the Nihilism of Nietzsche’s poetic writing, reversing irreversible time in vortices, to the laughter which refuses language (1981: 8).

§38 Saying

Saying states and thematizes the said, but signifies it to the other, a neighbour, with a signification that has to be distinguished from that borne by words in the said (Levinas 1981: 46).

The movement back to the saying is the phenomenological reduction.
In it the indescribable is described (52).

Again, Levinas has outlined the shape, given the direction, and diagrammed the contours for the sort of writing that is being proposed here. In his differentiation of the saying from reinterpretation of the same phenomenon which Heidegger called Being. (But as I have stated many times, I’m not in the business of judging the relative merits of the work of the great phenomenologists).
the said, the saying, the condition of the coming forth of the said, which gets lost, absorbed in the said as soon as the said is formulated, must be distinguished or “reached in its existence antecedent to the said” (45). The saying, which moves inevitably towards its own disappearance in the said, occurs as proximity, addressed to another; and the writing from Audience, whatever it says, must hold to the saying, as an articulation of the intersubjectivity which is the very proximity of the neighbour. The writing must hesitate, as the momentary showing of the saying, flickering before its disappearance in the said. And the moment of hesitation is the moment of responsibility, of contact.

So the writing that comes from Audience, from within the intersubjectivity, insofar as it seeks first to make contact with the others, must come from within the contact with the others to let show the saying which makes that contact, to be “a modality of approach and contact…over and beyond the thematization and the content exposed in it…as a modality of the approach to another” (47).

In this writing, this saying which is giving over to the other, we expose ourselves to each other, we are in the “supreme passivity of exposure” (47). This is the passivity of Audience; not the passivity of a receptor awaiting a message, but a passivity more passive, the giving over to immersion in the concerns of otherness, with the other, in Audience, in offer of completion to that which calls for witness. A traumatic abdication of sovereign subjectivity.

Audience obsesses us, lays siege to us, is all around us, we give ourselves over to it, we are immersed in it. And likewise we give ourselves over to the writing which comes from Audience. We offer ourselves to each other as to the audience, we attempt to write the passivity, that this is happening to me, this is the besiegement, this is the disturbance, these eddies and flows in which I am swept up, this is my exposure to that to which I am exposed; handing myself over to allow the coming forth of myself and the others, in attestation to that to which we bear witness.

No matter what we purport to say, it is the way of our saying it to the others with the others, as another, a counterpart, the way we are giving it to the other for their scrutiny and perusal, that catches this. It is not simply an intention to address a message or communication, but the contact which is the condition of the message and the
communication, an attempt to stay with the saying as a response to a call from the element through which we are others for each other. It is an abdication, a submission, a call for help. “What is happening to me? Is it happening to you as well?”

Rather than making a statement, it asks a question. It asks: “Are you there? Are you there with me in this?” The same question that Audience asks of its members, that the performance asks of its audience in its call for completion: “Are we in this together? Are we of this value? Do we have this faith? Do we submit to this intersubjectivity?” And the writing does not aim at an object, but seeks to emerge questioningly from the immersion. Not to put forth a statement that proclaims me: “This is who I am, what I believe, this is my subjectivity”, but: “Are you here with me? How are we implicated together in this?” Again, it is not as “a modality of cognition” that this saying derives its salience. It is “the risky uncovering oneself, in sincerity…the breaking up of inwardness…exposure to traumas, vulnerability” (48).

The passivity of Audience is in its giving over to the call of the performance for completion, giving over to vulnerability, to affection, to offer oneself up as the completion for which the performance calls. And just as the audience member gives themself over in offer of completion of the performance, the writing from Audience gives itself over to offer of completion by the others in the audience, by becoming counterpart, one of the others.

And the only verification, the only certainty, is not in the ultimate givenness of myself in my thought, but in being another among others, each one other for each other one, dissolved in the intersubjective soup.

§39 A Brief Note on Declension and Mood

This is not a writing which can occur in the active nominative singular. It is not as an “I think” or “I perceive” or “I intend” that the exposed audience member is written, but in the accusative, dative, or ablative case, by with, from, to and for the others. The writer is always framed as affected by: “this is happening to me”, “it makes me feel such and such”, or in the passive voice: “I am horrified, I am bored, I am shocked”, or else as the object of the performance or the audience: “the chant carries me away”, “it thrills me,
saddens me, amazes me”, “let me be the vehicle of your faith o Lord”, “the laughter crackled through us”.

And if the nominative is used, it is often used in the plural: “We enter the auditorium, we applaud for minutes on end, we are seated in the darkness”.

Or the writing can be addressed in the vocative interrogative to the others: “Did you feel, did you notice, how did you…?” The second person, singular and plural, effects an abdication of self in the writing by asking for the other, giving over to the others, seeking to be with. And the interrogative saying to the other holds the uncertain subjunctive moment of hesitation in which the said might fail to hit its target.

These forms of address, these pronomial declensions, moods and voices, are examples of possible imposed artificial instruments in the writing which might actively serve to distance the writer from the position of sovereign subjectivity which arises naively to dominate and contain its always forgotten immersion in Audience. The hidden relations, the us-ness, the shared submission, the giving of the value, recede too readily in silent modesty behind the barking subject, spouting the certainty of its tastes and preferences.

But in the “you”, the “we”, the “me”, the “us” in the accusative case (which for Levinas is the originary mode of the subject, which comes forth as responsibility to the summons, the accusation of the other), the pontificating, bellicose, opinionated, perpetually self-verifying subject can be kept provisionally at bay, at least at pen’s length, to some extent circumvented, in an act of abdication, to reveal the original accusative coming-forth which the subject abhors, and upon whose denial it shakily takes its illusory stand.

§40 Hyperbole as Method

Levinas critiques the methods of transcendental philosophers as searching for that which precedes, or comes before. “An idea is consequently justified when it has found its foundation, when one has shown the conditions of its possibility” (1998d: 88). These foundations, for Levinas, are for a philosophy which is architectural, which seeks precedents for a world that is inhabited. He claims, however, that his philosophy, on the other hand, proceeds: “starts from the human, and from the approach of the human who is not simply that which inhabits the world, but which ages in the world” (88). This is not
a philosophy of transcendental foundational ideas which underlie, or come before other ideas, but one in which ideas flow and emanate in a kind of sublimation of the superlative, of rhetorical emphasis, excessive expression, overstatement, “hyperboles whereby notions are transmuted…Exasperation as a method of philosophy” (89). This is the transcendence of time, of ideas passing from one to the other, rather than an obsessive quest for the future discovery of prior origins and antecedents.
C. Measure

We have with our body, our senses, our look, our power to understand speech and to speak, *measurants* for Being, dimensions to which we can refer it...The perception of the world and of history is the practice of this measure...because we ourselves are one sole continued question, a perpetual enterprise of taking our bearings on the constellations of the world, and of taking the bearings of the things on our dimensions (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 103).

§41 How to Catch the Measure of Audience

Traditionally, researchers measure audiences using techniques of quantitative and qualitative market research. It is a question of “bums on seats”—how many and who. Numbers of attendees at what venues for what events are counted, collated and correlated with data on income, social status, tastes, age, gender and employment. ‘Respondents’ are surveyed and interviewed about what they think of the whys, hows, wheres, whens, with whom, to what ends and under what circumstances they go to gather in audiences.

If this were a quantitative survey I would be telling you how many people from what sort of social and economic demographic categories attended what sort of performances on what sort of occasions and what sort of factors determined those numbers of those categories of people who attended on those occasions. If this were a qualitative sociological or market research survey I would be telling you about what people said in interviews after the performance, that they said they liked this about the performance, that they did not like that, that they noticed this or did not notice that, they would have preferred this, that this reminded them of that; and I would once again be attempting to quantify these responses in order to detect patterns and calibrate these quantities and qualities of what people thought about what they were doing. And if I were doing a phenomenological psychological analysis of this data as first and second person reporting I would be telling you that essentially they appear to be saying this about what they do, that this function or this operator or this protocol was in action here, and I would hermeneutize and interpret what this all meant.

But this study is not sociology, nor market research, nor psychology nor hermeneutics. It
is not an empirical study in the contemporary understanding of the term, attempting to capture the audience “in the wild”, either as an objective social phenomenon or in terms of the subjective opinions and habits of the audience members. This study is not empirical, but eidetic. It is not concerned with the audience member “in the natural attitude”; its methods are not those of the natural or the social sciences. It is a descriptive/eidetic phenomenology aiming at essence. As such, it is conducted in the phenomenological attitude, as immanent description, from within the reduction, by trained phenomenological researchers examining themselves in the situations in which they find themselves. The group of researchers is small, by no means a “sample”, by no means “representative”. Results are shared and discussed according to practical intersubjective techniques seeking accord and attunement but aiming squarely at the essential rather than the general.

So the question arises: if the study is not quantitative, working with statistical data; if it does not qualitatively evaluate the experiences of “typical” or “representative” audience members with an aim to reveal trends and commonalities in what they say about what they are doing, then what does it hope to find, how might it measure those findings, and how might it assess and measure its results?

§42 The Essence of Measure

In the 1950 essay “…Poetically Man Dwells…”, Heidegger challenges us to let go of our current definition of measurement, in which something known is stepped off against something unknown to make it known and “confined within a quantity and an order” (Heidegger 1975a: 224). To remove the links between measure and number, measure and quantum, to reveal “what all measuring is in the ground of its being” (221); to strike a measure “inconvenient to the cheap omniscience of everyday opinion, which likes to claim that it is the standard for all thinking and reflection” (223). It is necessary to find a measure which does not “abruptly grasp” in “an excess of frantic measuring and

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37 Though I gladly accept Brentano’s definition in his Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint: “My standpoint is empirical; experience alone is my teacher” (Brentano 1973: xv).
calculating” (228), but rather, to allow ourselves to be “guided by gestures befitting the measure here to be taken” (223). A measure to be taken “in a concentrated perception, a gathered taking-in, that remains a listening” (223).

This conception of the essence of measure occurs in his analysis of the work of the poet Hölderlin. Heidegger contends that it is in poetry that this measure-taking listening occurs: “to discern this measure, to gauge it as the measure, and to accept it as the measure, means for the poet to make poetry…poetry is this measure-taking” (224).

In Heidegger’s reckoning, poetry is the original metric, the measure of human dwelling. As the means by which the human measures itself against the divine in the span between earth and sky, poetry is the origin of measure, the meting out of the meter; the first measure-taking by which humanity receives “the measure for the breadth of (its) being” (224).

It is poetry that really lets us dwell. And we need “to escape the inversion of the true relation of dominance between language and humanity. For strictly it is language that speaks”. Humanity first speaks as human when, and only when it “responds to language by listening to its appeal”, and the authentic responding to the listening to the appeal of language is poetry, and the more painstaking the listening, the more open and ready for the unforeseen, the more poetic the poetry and the more precise the measure. And the humanity of the human is this poetic measuring, as it measures itself against the divine in the span between earth and sky. “Measuring secures the dwelling of the human”. And the taking of measure is what is poetic in dwelling. In poetry there takes place what all measuring is in the ground of its being. Poetry is the essence and the origin of measurement because it is precisely the measurement that lays out the human in the breadth of its being (224).

So to catch the means by which we might measure something as unthematized, as opaque as Audience, something which makes no appearance which might be held against pre-calibrated yardsticks, it is necessary to listen as poets. To go into audiences and dwell there, taking-in, gathering what gives, in a concentrated painstaking listening, and allow ourselves to be guided by the listening to a measure befitting the phenomenon which shows itself.
But as Heidegger asks, what strange measure is this? This poetic gauge by which the human measures itself against the divine, the infinite, the ideal, the essential. This seemingly impalpable measure which does not grasp at the standard yardstick, but is *guided by gestures* befitting the measure to be taken.

And how to bring it to the phenomenon of Audience, conceived essentially as *gathering to witness*?

**§43 Morphological Essence: Measurement Inexact, Yet Not Imprecise**

Husserl gives us a clue here. He had already come upon this ground in his early work, in *The Origin of Geometry* and in *Ideas I*, pointing out the “misleading prejudice” (Husserl 1982a: 169), in the belief that the methods of the exact sciences of geometry and mathematics must serve forthwith as models for every new science, and proclaiming transcendental phenomenology as a *descriptive* science belonging to a fundamental class totally different to the exact class to which the mathematical sciences belong.

The geometer is not interested in *de facto* sensuously intuitable shapes, as the descriptive natural scientist is. He does not, like the latter, fashion *morphological concepts* of vague configurational types which are directly seized upon on the basis of sensuous intuition and which, in their vagueness, become conceptually and terminologically fixed. The *vagueness* of such concepts, the circumstance that their spheres of application are fluid, does not make them defective; for in the spheres of knowledge where they are used they are absolutely indispensable, or in those spheres they are the only legitimate concepts. If the aim is to give appropriate conceptual expression to the intuitionally given essential characteristics of intuitionally given physical things, that means precisely that the latter must be taken as they are given. And they are given precisely as fluid; and typical essences can become seized upon as exemplified in them only in immediately analytic eidetic intuition. The most perfect geometry and the most perfect practical mastery of it cannot enable the descriptive natural scientist to express (in exact geometrical concepts) what he expresses in such a simple, understandable, and completely appropriate manner by the words “notches”, “scalloped”, “lens-shaped”, “umbelliform”, and the like—all of them concepts which
are essentially, rather than accidentally, inexact and consequently also non-mathematical (Husserl 1982a: 166).

Phenomenology is a science of “morphological concepts of vague configurational types directly seized upon on the basis of sensuous intuition”. Their fluidity and vagueness “does not make them defective”. In the spheres of knowledge in which they arise they give indispensable, legitimate, appropriate, conceptual expression to essential characteristics of intuitionally given things. Perfect circles, absolute points, precise symbolic logics, and any form of pregiven schemata are of no use to the scientist of description, whose objects require essentially inexact words like “notches, scalloped, lens-shaped, umbelliform” to give those objects full and proper expression. The concrete objects of the senses require these inexact vague morphological essences, this poetry, for their description. The objects of geometry and mathematics are, in essence, ideal and exact. The objects of the human and the natural sciences are concrete and inexact.

But this does not mean that the essentially vague and fluid concrete essences of the sensible cannot be raised in some manner to the general and typical. It is just that their extension is the concrete, not the ideal.

So what might be the inexact poetic essences by which the measure of Audience might be gauged. Belonging, proximity and dispersion, laughter, stillness and movement, attention, concentration, applause, song, office conversation, faith, modes of dress, foyer talk, silence, gasps of shock and appreciation. In the audiences of the performances that the group attends-to, we find the flickering traces of the passing of Audience among us, the moments when we are given to ourselves and each other on tides and flows of the vague and concrete appearances which emerge around, by, with, from and as us.

And how, precisely, do morphological essences give us measure? We live them, we live from them. We measure with them by living them. By experiencing them. By drifting up into the open ceiling of the auditorium, by riding the tides of song in the amphitheatre, by kneeling still in prayer, pogoing in the frenzy of the moshpit, contemplating the photo of our ancestor’s face beside our father in the candle light, giving brief, hurried attention as we walk past the street performer. These essences are precisely apprehendable sensitivities, susceptibilities, exposures, vulnerabilities to weights, proximities, speeds.
and concentrations.

And we measure them with each other, whether we are present in the same room or not. They are fundamental co-ordinates of gathering and witness. And it is only in the gathering that they can be apprehended and undergone, because the objective verification, the ground of objective certainty of these essences, or anything for that matter, despite the fact of our irremediable separation and mutual unknowability, is not to be gained in Descartes recipe, cogito ergo sum, nor even in a pluralizing cogitamus, but as dicis ergo est, you say therefore it is.

Now, it has been stated over and over again in this thesis that the essence Audience shows itself only secondarily through its effects on the bodies of individual audience members, but it is nevertheless, as an essence of embodied experienced processes, a concretum. It is not a purely ideal abstraction, but a concrete essence in which people partake when doing something. It is gathering to witness: experienceable, lived, and “seized upon in immediate intuition” (Husserl 1982a: 165), and thereby amenable to description by “morphological essences as the correlates of descriptive concepts” (166).

Phenomenology, despite its expansion and many departures from Husserl’s original brief as “a descriptive eidetic doctrine of transcendentally pure mental processes” (167) is apt to the task of measuring Audience in its full concreteness, because Audience, like Husserl’s “consciousness”,

fluctuates in flowing away in various dimensions in such a manner that there can be no speaking of a conceptually exact fixing of any eidetic concreta of…the determinateness and indeterminateness with which it…appear(s) now from one side and now from another, precisely in the distinctness or blurriness, in the vacillating clarity and intermittent obscurity, etc., which are indeed proper to it (Husserl 1982a: 168).

So the task then becomes the careful listening from within the phenomenon of Audience for the morphological essences, the inexact, vague and fluid, yet precise and utterly appropriate, poetic, befitting gestures which are given by, and which will give the measure of Audience.

It remains to allow these essences to arise through the listening.
§44 Audience as Measure

It is also necessary, in light of Heidegger’s discussion of the origin of measure, to discuss how and of what Audience, in its ubiquity, is itself a measure; and how Audience figures in relation to his assertion that “because man is, in his enduring the dimension, his being must now and again be measured out” (Heidegger 1975a: 223).

In Audience, humanity attests to its belonging-to that which exceeds it as the source of its value as human. In church to God the Father, in ceremony to the ancestors, in the theatre to the enduring genius of Shakespeare or the inspiration of the actor, in the stadium to the glory of the national or the local team or the speed of the fastest man on earth, by the side of the road at the accident scene to the value of human kindness, at the rock concert to the shared ideals of youth, at the TV screen to the power to vote off the undesirable who is least like us and undeserving of the prize, in an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting to the gift of sobriety. Audience is a measure of and attestation to these values, beliefs and belongings. In gathering to witness, humanity measures itself.

And Heidegger asserts the measuring against the godhead as essential to the humanity of the human.

Man, as man, has always measured himself with and against something heavenly…the godhead is the “measure” with which man measures out his dwelling, his stay on the earth beneath the sky…only insofar as man takes the measure of his dwelling in this way is he able to be commensurately with his nature (Heidegger 1975a: 221).

In gathering to witness, the source of our shared value—that which tells us what we are as us, as collected, is given to us, as shared affectivity, in Audience. And here, gathered together, against the godhead, on the earth, under the sky, Audience gives us the measure of our dwelling, commensurate with our nature. How do we live, how might we live, how should we live together as humans on earth?

Husserl gives a good working definition of the sort of thing the essence Audience is as shared measure:

a single unity of intentionality with the reciprocal implication of the
life-fluxes of the individual subjects, a unity that can be unfolded systematically through phenomenology; what is a mutual externality from the point of view of naïve positivity or objectivity is, when seen from the inside, an intentional mutual internality (Husserl 1970: 255).

Our beliefs, our values, our identities, our origins, our belongings are celebrated, exalted, reiterated, reinforced, given their measure, made evident to all of us as the source and substance of our commonality. When we gather with each other in the face of our gods, our idols, our heroes, our icons, our ancestors and our values, we catch a glimpse of transcendental intersubjectivity, “a transcendence to others that is coeval with the very selfhood of the self and which is the prior ground of all particular instances of actual communication” (Burch 1991: 44).

In Audience, I, gathered as a self among and with others, glimpse, touch and catch the measure of myself in mutual, reciprocal transcendence, as against my peers, my rivals, my dependants, in the face of our gods and the values which constitute the shared substance of what kind of things we think we are and how we should be.

Measure is the means by which we make the there-for-all-of-us.
D. Group Phenomenology

§45 From I to We

As already stated, this work evolved from an earlier solipsistic study I had conducted, describing my own reactions and responses to consecutive attendances over four nights to the performance of a dance piece, *Nerve 9* by Tess de Quincey. I examined these audience experiences hermeneutically in light of what I had been doing previously on the day of the performance, the foreknowledges I brought to the performance, my conscious and sensuous apprehension of it, and how it gave itself to me. As I have also stated, the project gained its initial impetus from my bewilderment at a previous experience in which widely and seemingly unaccountably differing responses to the same night of the same performance by different audience members had been justified by them with an appeal to subjective taste as the ultimate arbiter and validation of their responses. I was equally baffled to find, in the subsequent Honours research, that my own responses to the performance of *Nerve 9*, the quality of which was remarkably consistent from night to night, had varied from near disinterest on one occasion, with attention spans of no more than a minute or two, to highly intellectualized over-interpretation on another night, to seeking narrative where there was none on another, to an experience of almost complete unbroken synaesthetic immersion in lights pulsating to rhythms of recorded text as the dancer’s body shimmered in a sound aura and my own body twitched in metakinetic sympathy.

I realized there was a lot more to being in an audience than a more or less ‘competent’ spectator undergoing cognitive, representational, affective and interpretive processes, which might be revealed by semiotics, psychology and sociology. I suspected it would require a full phenomenological intentional analysis to reveal the hidden subjective, objective and intersubjective structures in which these mysterious variations became possible.

I took two primary clues for further research from the experience. First, I found the four

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sets of intentional correlations or engagements detailed above;\textsuperscript{39} correlations affective upon the experience of an audience member; correlations in which the experience is held, and according to which it develops. I expected that a phenomenology of the specific intentional analysis of these relations might account for the phenomenon of being in audiences in a sufficiently exhaustive manner.\textsuperscript{40}

And second, I recognized the need for verification and validation, but was aware that the manner in which I had begun the apprehension of the constitution of audiences was not something that could be ascertained or developed any further by working with naïve audience members going to their theatres, churches and sporting events. It would require an approach that audience-goers in the natural attitude would likely and justifiably find intimidating, annoying and just plain rude. Very few people are interested in being involved in research to find out what they are “really doing”. However, I was sufficiently certain of my own limited findings, of their worth as bases for pursuing further research, to believe that a small group of trained phenomenological researchers performing similar phenomenological self examinations, and corroborating in a mutual attunement of their results, would be the best means by which the ground I had made could be expanded and explored further.

It became obvious that the fundamentally intersubjective phenomenon of being in audiences, and its transcendental counterpart Audience, required intersubjective work to allow its full description. Audience always happens as an \textit{us}, between and among us, engulfing us. If I wanted a description of the phenomenon as it shows itself, it would have to be described as it showed itself to an \textit{us}.

This also seemed to necessitate a species of knowing other than subjective certainty or taste: direct entry into the intersubjective validation of objectivity, working against the subjective betrayal of the phenomenon, (though perhaps only to turn it into a conspiracy

\textsuperscript{39} See above, Section III, Methodology, §29(b) The Four Intentionalities, p. 154.

\textsuperscript{40} However, as the eventual shape of the work attests, my expectations were disappointed as it soon became apparent that these worldly engagements were only the beginning of a story which pointed to the much more mysterious hidden world of transcendental intersubjectivity.
rather than a betrayal). Still, the attempt could be made to convey that which moves between us, to ride it in its emergence, and through shared speaking and writing, help it to gather and reveal itself.

I knew I would have to work in groups, but was unsure as to how to proceed. The most well-developed group work with Audiences I had come across in the realm of performance/reception studies was Willmar Sauter’s ‘Theatre Talks’, which were based on a qualitative market research model, conducted with groups of theatre-goers after they had attended performances, aimed at finding out what they thought about going to the theatre (Sauter 2000). I knew from work I had done with interpretive ethnographic methodologies that this approach would produce only preliminary worldly data upon which I could at best perform an interpretation of an interpretation. To plumb the transcendental depths at which I was aiming I would need a more rigorous phenomenological method.

Fortunately, I was able to draw together a readily assemblable tradition of group work in phenomenology which laid out much of the practical and theoretical groundwork I required.

§46 A Partial History of Group Phenomenology

a) Herbert Spiegelberg’s “New Way into Phenomenology”

In *Doing Phenomenology*, published in 1975, Herbert Spiegelberg lamented two concerns for the state of “relative sterility” of phenomenology at the time, dominated as it was in his view, by “mere meta-phenomenology through textual and historical studies” (Spiegelberg 1975: 25).

> What is needed today is a revival of the spirit of doing phenomenology directly on the phenomena, the “things”, the spirit which permeated the first generation of phenomenologists. What can be done to reawaken it in a different setting (25)?

And, in response to the still tediously trotted out accusations of solipsism:

> I would like to show…that there is nothing in the nature of the phenomenological approach that confines it to isolated practice, that
it can be performed, like any other observation, in groups as well as in isolation, and that these groups could and should communicate (25).

This state of affairs persists. Because phenomenology exists institutionally, usually in departments of philosophy, often fighting for its life and preservation in the syllabus of those institutions in the face of the dominance of analytic philosophy and other humanities disciplines supposedly more useful or applicable in ‘real-world’ situations, it tends more towards arguing the finer points of interpretations and differences in the works of the great figures in the phenomenological movement than it does to doing phenomenology—working and testing phenomenological methodologies on the things of the world. Consequently, the fact that the great phenomenologists were actually practising phenomenology on the hidden strata underlying the human experience of meaning-endowment in the world becomes forgotten, and we are left with the situation where more is written about phenomenology than about the things themselves.

Despite the take-up of phenomenology in many areas of the human and natural sciences, particularly since the 1990’s, encouraged precisely by the promise of the ability to work directly on the phenomena (as refreshment to academic palates jaded by the overdetermining theoretical excesses and schematic tyranny of the semiotics and structuralism of the 1970’s and 1980’s), the second of Spiegelberg’s concerns, the applicability of group phenomenology as a remedy to the apparent solipsism of phenomenology still remains largely unexplored.

Spiegelberg conducted his renowned seminal series of workshops between 1965 and 1972, at Washington University in St. Louis, in an attempt to raise group philosophizing above the level of chatter and argumentation about philosophies and philosophers to the dignity of “a method of cooperative research”. He writes of a tendency in the history of philosophy towards sym-philosophein, philosophizing together, from Platonic dialogue, to Aristotle’s ethics, to Husserl, and finds “significant precedent” in some group work developed by the Oxford language philosopher, J. L. Austin (Spiegelberg 1975: 24).

In his work on idiom in specialized areas of discourse, Austin employed trained groups of “a dozen or so working together” to collect idiomatic terms and their usages,
supplementing and correcting each other’s work, telling stories and discussing the circumstances in which the terms were used. Over a number of sessions, the members of the group were able to reach “virtual unanimity” on their interpretations and categorizations of idiomatic usages in the areas under study (Urmson 1965: 502).

It is important to note, in the context of this research in audiences, a field in which quantitative and qualitative methods of survey, questionnaire and interview have traditionally been employed to capture audience members “in the wild”, that in Austin’s work, a small group of specialized, trained researchers working in a group laboratory was found to be more efficient and more effective than questionnaires conducted among a large sample, producing fewer inaccuracies, more detail in the data and a greater ability to reach accord (502).

Spiegelberg hoped the group method might

overcome the seemingly hopeless stalemate between contradictory
‘intuitions’… narrow down clashes by entering sympathetically and
empathically into one another’s perspectives and…some of the
alleged chaos of subjectivities could be overcome (1975: 25).

The first Washington University workshop, in 1965, consisted of a small number of graduate students working through four phases: 1) carrying out “parallel private investigations” of selected phenomena; 2) preparing brief written reports of their findings; 3) reading their notes to joint sessions for comparison and mutual exploration; and 4) discussion of disagreements (26).

Across the following five years, techniques were varied and refined, but the workshops were always conducted according to three ground rules:

1. The rule of turn taking, in response to the danger of self-important monopolizing of the exchanges.

2. The rule of exploration, against the danger of insufficient communication through ambiguous expression or inadequate inspection.

3. The rule of tolerance without indifference, against the danger of intimidating persuasion (33).
With characteristic scholarly prudence, Spiegelberg makes no great claims of achievements or breakthroughs for the method, but “suggests” that working in groups stimulates the opening of new perspectives, aids clarification in the need to communicate, attains to objectivity in the sharedness of the results, enriches and complements through the addition of further perspectives, and attunes understanding of each other’s viewpoints, positions and findings (32-33).

When I came across Spiegelberg’s work, I was an Honours student, engaged in hermeneutic work on the question of what it means to be in an audience, so I was skirting phenomenological questions, but I remained perplexed on the difference between doing phenomenology and arguing the finer points of interpretation of the work of different phenomenologists. Spiegelberg’s book gave direct address to the question and ultimately proved crucial to the shape of the work. His chapter on group phenomenology gave structure, purpose and clarity to the whole project.

Also Spiegelberg’s “new way” offers hope for the realization of writing from.... He writes of “entering sympathetically and empathically into one another’s perspectives” (25). This is potentially more powerful than a mere exercise in mutual understanding. By placing the work in the connections and relations between audience members, between each other and the performance, actively bracketing the individual’s own subjective responses, despite the impossibility of entering into the other’s perspective as though it were my own, an intersubjective transcendence is attained; it emerges from within the intersubjectivity, as the saying of the intersubjectivity. The silent belonging together speaks. The writings of the group are addressed to each other as a plea for response, calling for recognition by each other in a shared attempt to allow the emergence of the phenomenon in which they are immersed. The rules against argumentation in favour of mutual clarification assure that the writings are not statements put forward to each other for ratification, but are reaching out touching gestures, seeking the response and contact which tacitly underlie the gathering. In the writing, the phenomenon unfolds.

Although, to my way of thinking, it is the transcendental intersubjectivity of our experience of Audience that flickers here, and not a Levinasian beyond, it is the method of writing from together that allows the transcendental condition to emerge. As I have
said, I am not sure whether Levinas’ work actually points to a beyond more beyond than that described by Heidegger’s Being or Husserl’s transcendental reduction, and I am not in the business of proving or disproving the relative fundamentality of these different realms, but it is apparent that methods derived from his insights can be effective in allowing the revelation of the hidden condition that happens between us, or the amongness of which we are emergences.

b) The Carbondale Conference

In a 1996 conference, ‘Back to the Things Themselves’, convened at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale by Anthony J. Steinbock, Helen Fielding and Glen Mazis, partly in tribute to the Spiegelberg workshops, “with the conviction that phenomenological philosophy is a communal endeavour” (Steinbock 1997: 130), a group of researchers including some of the most eminent phenomenologists of the day, some of them veterans of the original Washington University workshops, set itself an aim:

the communal experience of philosophizing together—Aristotle’s as well as Husserl’s ideal, symphilosophein— is our task and experiment

(131).

The conference did not seek to “reproduce the Spiegelberg workshops per se” but emerged as an expression of a “confidence” that the phenomenological approach can be “taken up in a unique, rigorous and fruitful way” towards the important issues and matters facing our lives: “ethics, ecology, reason, feminism, dialogue, religious experience, the body, political power etc…and can be emancipated from the relatively static and sterile atmosphere of most academic settings” (131).

In the introduction to the conference, Anthony Steinbock surveyed the state of phenomenology thirty years after Spiegelberg’s groups, finding the issues largely unchanged, but slightly reconceptualized. The problem of solipsism, for instance, reposed in an academic climate accustomed to and coming to terms with autobiographical approaches to theory and the emergence of more narrative styles of research and reporting, had become

the danger…that phenomenological description become idiosyncratic, or put in more drastic terms, that it stop at
phenomenological autobiography...a narrow attentiveness to my lived experience...How does the phenomenological description of experience avoid being the expression of mere opinion and the voice of my thoughts locked up in my own private existence? (128)

He locates the answer in a move doubly evocative of Husserl: of the noematic pole of the noetico-noematic correlation, and the intersubjective basis of objectivity, writing of an “identifiable core of sense that shapes a context within which various elements form meaningful relations” (128). This leads him to the possibility of

using my experience as a leading clue...(to) the characteristics of the world of life for the intercorporeal, intersubjective, and intercultural spheres of experience (128).

In pursuit of this aim, and to meld a more tightly imbricated intersubjective way of knowing than merely comparing notes or sharing separate investigations, the 1996 conference sought to draw the attendees together in “the open atmosphere of learning”, “socializing”, and “active involvement in doing phenomenology”. There were no concurrent sessions and participants were asked to attend for the duration of the conference. The “uniquely intersubjective inquiry” (130) which would thereby emerge, would hopefully assure the convenors’ trust that

the phenomenological approach to the things themselves will be more than a technique, and become a style of living critically with others, on the ground of the earth, and within the world (132).

I should note that it is not my intention here to offer critique or assessment to these efforts, or to assess from afar the degree of success or failure achieved, but merely to draw together a loose methodological tradition devolving to and affective upon my own group research into the uniquely and fundamentally intersubjective phenomenon of audience.

c) David Seamon—Environmental Experience Groups

Mention needs to be made of one other piece of research which influenced the methodological progress of the audience research phenomenology project. David Seamon’s seminal work in Human Geography, A Geography of the Lifeworld, first
published in 1979, then reissued in 2003, offered assurance of the means of validation, showing the ways in which the work might lift itself out of mere opinion, even from the slightly expanded mere opinion of a small group of interested scholars, to aspire to claims of essentiality.

Seamon conducted the research for his 1977 PhD thesis at Clark University in Massachusetts, on “the human being’s inescapable immersion in the geographical world…people’s day-to-day experiences and behaviours associated with places, spaces and environments in which they live and move”, using “environmental experience groups”: four groups, nineteen people in all, coming and going around a core group of seven. They met twice weekly across two semesters, discussing a theme of his choosing each week (1979: 1).

Similarly to Spiegelberg’s combination of private meditation and structured group discussions, the environmental experience groups set out “through intersubjective verification—the corroboration of one person’s subjective accounts with other persons”—to establish generalizations about human experience” (4).

Seamon notes the limited use of group inquiry up to the time of his study. This still holds true a quarter of a century later. Although there has been a continually expanding take-up of phenomenological methods in the area of psychotherapy, palliative care and to some degree in pedagogy, these endeavours are patient or client relations with therapists, teachers and facilitators, in healing, educational and remedial situations, rather than groups of phenomenologically trained specialists researching areas of everyday life to reveal the hidden modes of givenness of the mundane and taken-for-granted.

The primary value of Seamon’s work to the audience project came in remedy to the sense I had of the phenomenological inadequacy of qualitative market research techniques, as had been applied to audiences in studies such as the aforementioned ‘Theatre Talks’ groups. I was likewise certain that the ethnographically and sociologically inspired methodologies traditionally employed at the Department of Performance Studies at the University of Sydney, where I was working, could not lead to the essential, transcendental-phenomenological results I sought. I knew that the validation provided by large samples of interviewed and surveyed respondents drawn from audiences “in the
wild” would only produce facts about the natural attitude of individual audience members, to which I might then possibly be able to add interpretation and recognition of trends and tendencies in the data. In paraphrase of Clifford Geertz, I would be interpreting what I think about what they say about what they think they are doing. This method of interpretation of an interpretation of an interpretation moves further away from essentiality at every step (Geertz 1973: 9). Doubtless, if I had no access to a more immediate approach, it might suffice to conduct a study using the reports of naïve audience members as the source material for a relatively more distant second and third person psychological-phenomenological reduction, but this would not as readily or effectively achieve the same detail and depth of access to transcendental concerns as might be achieved by trained phenomenological researchers beginning the first reduction of the naïve psychological world on their own experience.

I sought attainment to a mode of understanding, a “plane of existence” at which “we each share common characteristics”; to perform a study which, though “based on a limited set of experiences” (Seamon 1979: 5), might

apply to other lifeworlds past, present and future. If the groups were conducted in other contexts—with Sudanese villagers, Pennsylvania Amish, New York Sophisticates, or characters in Thomas Hardy’s novels—the specific experiential reports would describe a significantly different lifeworld, but underneath should appear the same underlying experiential structures (8).

Seamon’s deeply experiential approach to validation offered a promising way towards this aim. Rather than “statistically proper procedures as a prerequisite for legitimate generalization”, Seamon’s interpretation of group corroborative phenomenology assumes a “different measure of accuracy and objectivity”. In order to attain to this different measure, to “reflect human experience in its typicality”, it is necessary to seek out, explore, question, discuss and compare each other’s insights, accords and disagreements with “as much precision as possible” (5).

In this view, comparable with Steinbock’s appeal to the intersubjective structure and genesis of objectivity, each individual’s viewpoint constitutes and is constituted as a noetic adumbration relative to a noematic whole which becomes “a composite picture
which is greater than each description alone” (5). As with Steinbock, there is reference here to the intersubjective noetic-noematic structure of objectivity, in which the verifiability of the meaningful core of the objectivity of the object is gathered and enriched by multiple intersubjective adumbrative profiles.

And the intersubjective objective proof, the verification of the accuracy of the findings thickens when the reader encounters the work and either finds or does not find accord and attunement there.

The aim, in other words, is not to think about the discoveries of the group process—to argue their validity logically—but to search out their existence in day-to-day experience. In this way, the reader touches the experiential source of the group discoveries and accepts and rejects them in terms of his own and others’ daily living (9).

So the reader’s experience enters into the objective verification, deepening and enriching the shared truth of the experience; entirely in accord with, and in enactment of Merleau-Ponty’s dictum:

[O]ur relationship to the world, as it is untiringly enunciated within us, is not a thing which can be any further clarified by analysis; philosophy can only place it once more before our eyes and present it for our ratification (1962: xviii).

Phenomenology, since the moment of its inception, calling into question the foundation of logic and the sciences, cannot rely on anything as taken-for-granted, even the supposedly immutable truths and laws of the falsifying objective physico-mathematical sciences, but must further the infinite task of exploring, establishing and enriching the total intentions, meaning structures and givenness of the things themselves in their “unique mode of existing” (Merleau-Ponty 1962: xviii).

d) Duquesne Psychology

When I began my research in audiences I took a brief survey of preexistent methodologies of audience research to ascertain whether any previous work might be of use. I was faced with a choice between, on the one hand, the interpretive and qualitative market research and ethnographic techniques which I have already mentioned; on another
hand with scientistic semiotic micro-analyses of spectator and reader response and reception theories, elaborating vast detailed schemata for containing and representing the ways in which intellectual and affective states occurred in the ‘spectator’; and on another hand again with odd, quasi-scientific experiments conducted at the Department of Performance Studies at the University of Sydney, (where my own research took place), employing exquisitely absurd, almost Jarryesque prostheses attached to the heads of audience members, designed to track where they were looking (Fitzpatrick & Batten 1991: 11-29).

My encounter with the well-documented pioneering work in phenomenological psychology emerging from Duquesne University for the last forty years brought a breath of fresh air, and cracked open multiple theoretical and practical possibilities and avenues into the work. Here was a rich history of rigorous and systematic studies of humans making meaning; studies employing well-developed processes of validation and verification of first and second person reporting, working not from samples, but individuals and groups, requiring no quantification, no adherence to unwieldy preordained schemata, and claiming to produce results which, rather than attaining to generalities and commonalities within small populations, sought, as phenomenology, the essence of human behaviours.

The Department of Psychology at Duquesne founded its first Masters program in existential-phenomenological psychology in 1959 and a doctoral program in 1962, and had already, by 1966, been noted as “the capital of phenomenological psychology in the New World” (Misiak & Sexton, cited in Smith 2002: 2).

From this context, the work of Amedeo Giorgi was most influential on my work. He elaborated the most complete, detailed, systematic and rigorous methodologies of practical applications of phenomenological concepts and approaches to lifeworld experimental situations, too many and varied to detail here, in the service of

the removal of the natural scientific methodology from the privileged position…to free psychology from artificial boundaries and restrictions in terms of the number and kinds of phenomena that can be studied, and also in the ways in which these phenomena can be approached (Giorgi 1971).
From the more than thirty prolific years of work published by Professor Giorgi, his peers and students at Duquesne, I took the confidence that I was working within a tradition which had produced significant results in a wide variety of theoretical and practical applications; a tradition whose recent marked pace of growth in influence and application has been notable in the fields of care, nursing and psychotherapy, observable even during the three short years of my research.

Still, even in this rich tradition there is not much pure group phenomenology conducted by trained phenomenologists working together in description aiming at essence.

Overall, Spiegelberg’s hope for his “New Way” has not borne much fruit. There is still very little evidence of much current group phenomenological work. Anthony Steinbock’s website informs that he regularly conducts

*an informal research seminar in phenomenology [The SIU Study Group in Phenomenology] in which we engage in focused phenomenological work. The Study Group has taken as themes, the phenomenology of hope and despair, is presently focusing on a phenomenology of trust and betrayal, and plans future work on the phenomenology of guilt and shame (Steinbock 2005).*

He has also informed me in an email that he believes that his colleague Natalie Depraz may be working in a similar way at the Sorbonne in Paris (2004b). I intend, as a corollary of the work in audiences, to follow up a more systematic investigation into the full extent of the prevalence or otherwise of group phenomenology.
E. The Audience Groups

§47 The Beginning

I began canvassing for people for the audience groups in mid-2003. I had decided to recruit six people from either a philosophy or performance studies background who understood or were willing to study a few basics of phenomenology. In line with “the rule of turn-taking” from Spiegelberg’s workshops, I thought each session should consist of two ten minute presentations by group members, followed by five to ten minutes of attuning questioning by each of the other members, followed by open discussion. I feared a larger group would have proved too dispersed and unmanageable, or would have given insufficient time to develop themes and follow threads in the required depth.

I spoke to about ten or twelve people; a couple were not interested, some did not have the time. I required them to be able to attend six performances and six discussion sessions over a six month period, and do some required reading concerning the aims and potential methods of the project to help focus the work. At this stage I was still vague as to precisely what we were to do and how we were to proceed in the audiences themselves. I wanted to leave it open as far as possible for the group to find its own direction and specific methodology.

§48 Not a Sample

This was to be a small, non-representative group of people brought together to achieve a very limited, very specific goal. The specific skills base and orientation of the participants and the size of the group was an expression of expectations of what the thesis might achieve, both in the main question of what it means to be in an audience, and also as a questioning of the worth to the study of Audience of surveys employing wider, more representative samples of respondents which aim to arrive at more generally pertinent results.

This study was acutely aware of the limited specific truth value and knowledge which it was capable of producing. All of the participants were PhD students or graduates. All of them had some expertise in philosophy and are experienced theatre and concert-goers.
The selection of participants was canvassed only at the departments of Performance Studies and Philosophy at the University of Sydney. It was essential that prospective group members were able to understand the aims of the thesis, limit themselves to its task, and in the process, take up and apply complex and difficult concepts and procedures from phenomenology and performance studies. It was essential that all aesthetic judgements of taste could be bracketed and examined, and that preconceptions could be isolated and studied rather than blindly regurgitated and acted on. A group of people who were prepared to challenge their own fundamental belief systems and habits needed to be recruited.

The size and orientation of the group also had to be limited in order to contain the play of variables in the work as much as possible. Whilst there is no pretence here to a method which would claim to be able to limit the experiment to observable controlled variables and constants, there did have to be a tolerable degree of consistency and verifiability in the work. The intersubjective validation between the members in the group and hopefully in the wider but nevertheless obscure and limited communities of enquirers in applied phenomenology and performance studies needs to provide and be provided with sufficient weight and substance for a discussion to ensue, for the possibility of accord and discord to cohere and make meaning, and thereby to test the worth of the study.

§49 The First Meeting

By the time the first group met, there were seven of us:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jaclyn Booton</td>
<td>Postgraduate Student</td>
<td>Performance Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuart Grant</td>
<td>Postgraduate Student</td>
<td>Performance Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline Manley</td>
<td>Postgraduate Student</td>
<td>Performance Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Maxwell</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Performance Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Nijjem</td>
<td>Postgraduate Student</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Rossmanith</td>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>Performance Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jakob Ziegler</td>
<td>Postgraduate Student</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The performance studies people were skilled at performance analysis, with backgrounds in sociology, ethnography, semiotics and postmodernism; the philosophy students were knowledgeable about the history and concepts of phenomenology, and had a high level of experience at attending live performance for their own pleasure. None of the group had much experience at doing phenomenology, at practising reduction or other phenomenological techniques on the things themselves.

We met for the first time in Ian Maxwell’s office at the Department of Performance Studies at the University of Sydney on a Wednesday evening for two hours. I taped the meeting for revision to extract any useful or dominant themes. We introduced ourselves, stated our areas of expertise, and discussed my preliminary research. I told the group that at that stage I had not developed a full program of how to proceed but that I hoped we would be able to work out our method together.

Some of the questions we addressed at this first meeting were: What does it mean to do phenomenology? How do we perform a reduction? How do we suspend the natural attitude and go into the phenomenological attitude? Is there some kind of attentional switch that we can flick to go from the natural attitude to the phenomenological attitude? What of the shocks and surprises that put us out of our habitual attitudes and patterns of behaviour, making the familiar strange; are they types of reductions? Is the Nausea of Sartre’s Roquentin some kind of pebble-induced reduction (Sartre 1965)? Why, after a hundred years of phenomenology, are we still getting a lot more written about phenomenology, than phenomenology performed? Why has there been so much more written about the reduction that brought back from within it?


The theme that arose most prominently the following week in people’s gleaning from the
readings was Spiegelberg’s appropriation of Heidegger’s concept of *attunement* (*Stimmung*).

§50 *Diversion on Attunement*

The concept of attunement became so central to our concerns in the early stages of the group that it would prudent to take a diversion here into an explanation of the concept. Spiegelberg explains.

Cooperative phenomenology is not merely a matter of exchanging views, of ‘swapping’ reports, as it has been called, or even of registering and, as far as possible, understanding one another’s different perspectives. Such an outcome need not be the “end of the story,” it can be the beginning of a new one, the attempt to attune dissonances. But what does it mean to “attune”? The expression is taken from the field of music. Even in this field much remains to be clarified about what is involved in “tuning” and “attuning”. But that something can be done about dissonances and about attuning instruments that are out of tune may be indications of what can be tried out with discrepant accounts of phenomena. Mutual exploration may reveal that the instruments of description are out of tune, i.e., that the disagreements among the describers are merely verbal, and that a readjustment of the linguistic tools can clear up some discrepancies. But ‘attunement’ is also possible at a deeper level if the dissonances should be in the prelinguistic experiences. Here it is possible to direct and redirect our viewing by ‘drawing attention’ to factors previously overlooked, by pointing out unconscious preconceptions and the like. In the pursuit of such attempts at attunement one of the most meaningful and revealing occurrences may be when one of the partners suddenly exclaims “aha” in a tone of voice indicating that he has not only just become aware of something new but also realizes that he has discovered what the other partner meant all along. Such episodes were among the most rewarding of the workshop experiences. The phenomenology of what is going on in such experiences may throw important light on the process involved in genuine attunement (Spiegelberg 1975: 33).
Spiegelberg, the scholarly historian the torchbearer of the phenomenological movement to America, cannot be using the word attunement without calling up connotations from its importance in Heidegger’s ontology. The genealogy of this usage of the word is of interest here. It is a translation of *gestimmtheit*. A footnote by Macquarie and Robinson in their translation of *Being and Time* is a good place to begin the discussion.

The noun ‘Stimmung’ originally means the tuning of a musical instrument, but it has taken on several other meanings and is the usual word for one’s mood or humour. We shall usually translate it as ‘mood’, and we shall generally translate both ‘Gestimmthein’ and ‘Gestimmtheit’ as ‘having a mood’, though sometimes, as in the present sentence, we prefer to call attention to the root metaphor of ‘Gestimmthein’, by writing ‘Being-attuned’, etc (translator’s footnote in Heidegger 1962: 172).

David Farrell Krell, likewise in a footnote, in his translation of Heidegger’s essay *On the Essence of Truth*, also feels the need to emphasize and clarify this link.

*Stimmung* refers not only to the kind of attunement which a musical instrument receives by being tuned but also to the kind of attunement that constitutes a mood or a disposition of Dasein. The important etymological connection between *Stimmung* and the various formations based on *stimmen* (to accord) is not retained in the translation (translator’s footnote in Heidegger 1977: 131).

This connection is of interest here for two reasons. First, this attunement/mood link constitutes mood not as some kind of psychological state or temper, but, in Heidegger’s words, something “prior to all psychology of moods” (1962: 174), and, more precisely, “mood is a primordial kind of Being for Dasein, in which Dasein is disclosed to itself prior to all cognition and volition, and beyond their range of disclosure” (175).

Furthermore, “the mood...makes it possible first of all to direct oneself towards something” and “Dasein’s openness to the world is constituted existentially by the attunement of a state-of-mind”. The attunement to the mood “permits what is within-the-world to be encountered” (175).

So, as a phenomenological term, attunement works at the most fundamental ontological horizon as the means by which we are disclosed to ourselves as being in the world, with
others, and among things.

§51 Problems and Drawbacks

As we attended more performances, concepts came together and dispersed, themes emerged and faded. The practical input from the group and the theoretical and interpretive development of my own solitary meditations were mutually affective. Still, we had not brought the specifics of the actual tasks we were going into the audiences to perform together into sharp enough focus.

It became apparent that some of the group were resistant or unable to suspend the natural attitude in which they attended the performances. I suggested that the judgements of taste with which they were leaving the audiences we attended in, were precisely the phenomena we needed to study, and further, posed the question of how, once having established such behaviour as the natural attitude, it might be possible to suspend it. However, this line of thought carried no further at that stage because of an unavoidable interruption of six months.

The group did not stay constant. Jaclyn had dropped out almost immediately after the work began, due to lack of time. Ian and Kate dropped out due to other commitments. Jakob recruited another philosophy student, Luke, and then, after the six months of inactivity, Jakob moved interstate and Luke moved to Germany for academic reasons. I recruited Jodie McNeilly, a performance studies student to replace them. At that stage, the group shrank to a core of three: myself, Pauline and Jodie.

§52 Note to the Group

Each member of the group needs to be sensitive to symptoms, in themselves and in the other audience members, of the appearance of Audience in which they are participating. Are we swept up, spellbound, uninterested, thinking of other things, critical, detached, immersed? How does Audience, as this betweenness and amongness, this fundamentally intentional structure appear to us? How do we perceive these manifestations in ourselves? What are the conditions of the apriority of the ability to become absorbed into audiences, or more accurately how does a self emerge through its immersion in audiences? And
most importantly, how do we recognize these symptoms as manifestations of Audience.

§53 Reductions in Audiences

During the break in the work, I realized that we were drifting. Some of the loss of group members may have been caused by my sustained reticence to prescribe a methodological agenda, and my insistence on letting everybody find their own ways of working. I decided that I needed to impose an approach of performing specific reductions in the audiences we attended-to. The four intentional relations which I had carried over from the earlier work had, by this stage, become transformed. I proposed that we should begin with a series of intersubjective reductions, concentrating on the effect of the other audience members on our apprehension of that to which we bore witness; then move through some attentional reductions, observing how our concentration on the performance and other factors ebbed and flowed, leading to a consideration of durational aspects of the audience; and then try some placial reductions, noting the effect of the buildings and other features of the place where the performance occurred.

§54 A More Focused Approach

Interpreting the thesis using Heideggerian terminology, at the level of the ontic we are studying audiences; at the ontological level, the Being of audiences is Audience conceived as essential to the possibility of audiences, and Audience, thus conceived, is essentially gathering to witness. And our job here is to take the measure of gathering to witness.

In a Husserlian sense we are performing psychological reductions on the specific intentionalities which constitute the audiences we are in, and assuming that an audience is a fundamentally intentional state—a purely intentional being, to use Dufrenne’s term—to somehow open up from those psychological reductions, into transcendental phenomenological reductions which will reveal the transcendent deeper structure of the essence Audience, eidetically revealed as gathering to witness.

We say “I am going to the theatre to watch a play”. From that statement we need to perform a reduction of the I, the watching, the theatre and the play. How to make the
transition from the psychological to the transcendental, whether by the confident inevitable “leap” of the early Husserl, or by more measured means, I will leave to the orthodox Husserlians among us.

The more existential approach I will be taking is couched in terms of Levinas’ reverse intentionality in *Totality and Infinity*: as research construed as a living from…. to reveal the pre-thematic in an attempt to stage an escape from being held hostage by the subjective view.

The deep structure of gathering to witness is hidden. We are so accustomed to thinking of our attendances in audiences as I the subject going as a consciousness with tastes to form a set of operations on a performance. According to the reverse intentionality of enjoyment, Audience becomes an element from which we live. In Audience, through the nourishment of enjoyment, the audience I am in becomes me through the alimentary immersion in it.

Being in Audience is the condition, the hidden ground of the possibility of the ability of representational consciousness to make its judgements, to tell its stories.

The side-by-sideness of the people with me in the dark shadows the face-to-face responsibility by which we are given to each other as each other; the way I think of where I am as the Opera House or the church hides the resonant capsule of the walls and ceiling which press upon me, and the crippling seatedness of a lifetime spent in chairs.

We go, necessarily and inescapably, as an individual consciousness, to make aesthetic judgements, to construct stories, to reinforce beliefs, to celebrate our sporting heroes, all of which prevent us from being aware of the hidden anonymous horizon of Audience.

§55 *A Smaller Group*

In the smaller group it became apparent that the work was more focused and productive. The less the noise and friction, the clearer the aim at the things themselves. The rigorous phenomenological questioning and drive towards essence seemed to be self-checking. The inessential cannot stand up to the test of free imaginary variation. The need for attunement provided a humility and a rigour. If argument against the essentiality of any
finding was effectively sustained, then it was not defended, but reassessed and either submitted to further analysis or dispensed with. There seemed to be no room for opinion. A doubtable essence is useful only to the extent that its doubtfulness allows. It must remain provisional and ultimately be replaced. My faith in the process became greater than when I began, and still, the test of the work remains in those who ultimately read the results. If they can provide doubt where the group could see none, then the work will be of limited use to them and will require further refinement and reassessment. This is the Cartesian spirit of Husserlian phenomenology.

Further, all knowledge, all truth, all objectivity is produced through intersubjective validation. As Giorgi observes, even quantitative scientific knowledge requires two levels of critical evaluation. Apart from the consideration that “the researcher should not simply posit what he or she finds without checking that all procedures, analyses and calculations have been properly implemented” (Giorgi 2005: 78), he reminds that

    a second level of criticism, of course, comes through publication, which gives qualified members of the scientific community an opportunity to confirm or criticize the knowledge presented (78).

The ultimate court of all knowledge is the appeal to intersubjective validation. Even if the calculations are correct, it must be agreed that the right calculations are being performed.

§56 The Transcendental Leap

This seems like a pertinent moment to heed a call from the court of intersubjective validation.

One of my supervisors, Ian Maxwell, has shown some concern that I have left a gap between the laying out of the methodology and the showing of the results of the transcendental phenomenology of the fourth section of the thesis.

    At the moment, there is a kind of leap of faith into which the reader is invited; rhetorically: "there is a methodology; it was followed; it produced this phenomenology of Audience (trust me: the evidence is in the appendices)” (Personal email Ian Maxwell to Stuart Grant 21/12/2006).
Dr Maxwell’s contention is that I have not sufficiently shown how the methodology led to the transcendental outcomes. I believe he is correct, but I am unsure not only as to how to show the path from the worldly description to the fundamental constitution but whether or to what degree such a path is showable.

I know that in the emails to the group and in our discussions, we covered a lot of theoretical ground, as I have done in the second section of the thesis. I know that this theoretical ground informed our experience of the performances we attended-to. I also know that we went into the audiences we attended-to aware of the phenomenological task we were there to perform. I know that I gave the group specific readings that contained and developed particular concepts which I wanted them to consider in relation to the attendance-to the performance. I know that we discussed the pertinence of these concepts and the degree which they shone light on and shaped our thinking on our attendances. But I am not sure how these complex theoretical and experiential interleavings affected each other.

There is not sufficient space here to enter into an epistemology of how theory and description create the experience of phenomenological meditation. I had thought that the inclusion at the end of the thesis of a selection of writings from the group might sufficiently demonstrate some examples of the process at work. The writings are too long, rambling and loose, covering too much ground and giving too much inconsequential detail in the quest for phenomenological thoroughness to be acceptable in the body of a doctoral dissertation. However, since my supervisor has suggested strongly, and more than once, that I address what he perceives as a lack in the work (although there are, perhaps, many other things in this thesis which might be considered inappropriate in a doctoral thesis), I have decided to include an example (the most pithy and direct I could find) of the sorts of exchanges in which the terms and objects of the study were given, experienced, described, applied and tested.

I stress once again, there is a need for a thorough description of how the carrying of phenomenological concepts to experience, and the subsequent descriptive meditation give their reduced results. This work is not even begun here. Husserl himself made great claims for the worth and universal applicability of the methods and results of
phenomenology, and his heirs have rightfully been accused from within other branches of philosophy of not backing up his claims with sufficient reasoning and evidence. The flick of the switch from worldly to transcendental, the modes of givenness of ideas, the leap from description to essence, all require further explanation.

If the reader wishes to further examine the method at work in this thesis, there are more examples in the appendix. I hope that by providing these intersubjective exchanges and personal meditations, that something of the workings, the nuts and bolts of reduction, might be shown.

§57 An Example of Intersubjective Phenomenologizing

On the way to attending the performance of Ma\footnote{Akram Khan Company, Ma, Sydney Opera House, Wednesday February 9 2005 8pm.}, by the Akram Khan Company at the Sydney Opera House, Pauline and I found ourselves discussing, in a less than favourable light, the sort of people we might find there. This ‘sizing up’ of the other audience members increased as we approached the box office and entered the foyer. We acknowledged that the phenomenon was probably due in some part to our decision to perform an intersubjective reduction on the other audience members, suspending considerations of whether we enjoyed it, or how it compared to other performances, or whether it was of a particular standard, and concentrating, as far as possible, on the other audience members; how they were given to us, our participation with them and how that participation affected our apprehension of the performance. Nevertheless, we also felt that it was something that we always did, more or less consciously, more or less thematized, whenever we were going into an audience. We agreed that the foyer plays a crucial role in the formation of a group of people into an audience.\footnote{There is further example of the role of the foyer in Audience formation at Section VI, Appendix, §11 An Amateur Theatre Production, p. 31.}

We discussed this phenomenon, of sizing up of who else was in the audience, with Jodie over a plate of noodles in Chinatown before the next show we attended—a performance
by Steven Berkoff at the Seymour Centre. We all agreed that it was something we always did at a performance.

Pauline and Jodie each wrote a piece on the experience in the audience of the Berkoff show. I responded.

a) Pauline on the Berkoff Audience

Gathered by the trio eating, laughing, and talking, whether specifically about the audience or about the richness of the soup. Building toward fully-fledged audiencing, especially when not sure if tickets are available. This was more pleasurable than other gatherings like a savouring of foreplay. To eat and chat and prepare.

Lively chatty audience gathered by drinks downstairs marks the theatre. Buzzing enters my body combined with an almost anxiety. Feeling both immersed and detached as I am altered by the atmosphere and moving back to watch. The move from the natural to the reductive attitude does emerge as a stepping back, a retreat from complete immersion.

Some of these folk have gathered quite early with the seemingly express desire to stand around and chat. Prolongation. But it is warm in here, especially warm I wonder?

After sitting and watching for a while it did strike me that this audience loved the performer before he did anything and loved him more when he did stuff. There was a warmth that he gathered to himself and sent out again. Audience and performer were particularly bound, synchronised, affective, responsive.

The near empty arena is full of discomfort; emptiness, coldness, too bright lights, hushed tones, echo, regret that I am not one of those laconic standers and drinkers outside. I feel I’m in here too early, that the space is not ready yet, not warmed. No anonymity over us. We talk quietly and watch others and turn our heads a lot and look and catch eyes that quickly dart away from too direct a stare. I relax as people literally pour in all at once and the air hums with louder, more confident chatter. It is all right now because we are all

43 Steven Berkoff, *Shakespeare’s Villains*, Seymour Centre, Friday March 18 2005 8pm.
here and we buoy each other up and allow laughter and more raucous engagement

Sitting at the edge of an audience felt like sitting at an edge. At the back and early gave me a look at everyone. These seats are tiered in space and in price. The expensive seats are at the front and there seems to be a high performative quality to the entrance of the audience. Those seated in the front row are almost part of the stage, on the same level and well lit. They are available for interaction with a performer known for improvisation.

The audience entered at once almost. Like a beast with a body, it formed quickly in the auditorium. Audience has timing, acute temporal awareness of each other’s movements and the structure of performance. Audience here was a surge, having a structured flow of movements which have a particular timing, zesty, alive, aware but not rushed in its surging. This crowd seemed knowledgeable, maybe more so than, say, the crowd at the *Lion King* who were seated much earlier and did not seem interested so much in drinking, standing, chatting.

Again, as in every time I have looked to audience, I feel held within something. Something that is anonymous in that my individuality is reduced in importance. I sit with many others with a shared orientation. We are not silenced but muted. Peripherally but deeply aware of each other the audience shares a focus reinforced by the shared responses of laughter and silence. Consciousnesses are gathered and held in an agreement to witness.

My neighbour was a big man with loads of gear. The zip of his coat stuck into my side, his elbows stuck out and I leant away from him toward my friend. He felt squashed and uncomfortable and so did I. His presence kept bringing me back to the audience. I was acutely aware of his reactions. Part of the anonymity is a particular relation with a neighbour who is unknown. A certain distance and intimacy is required. So the sense of being held in the audience also relies on an amount of individual space, of room to move within the whole. My sense of the first half of the performance was deeply inflected by discomfort, transgression, amusement. It helped the reduction because discomfort prevented constant or complete immersion or engagement.

Being so aware of another audience member revealed that while we are all held in a world, there is much divergence, creating sparks of noise, movement and energy
throughout the audience and throughout the performance. The audience bubbles along sometimes gathering in an eruption, but these are occasional. These are congealing moments for the bubbling. Moments of noticeable and enjoyable pleasure, not just of the performance, but there is a cumulative pleasuring of the audience by itself. This is a deeply shared moment heard felt spoken moved.

When my neighbour moved seats for the second half my world opened up, as did my body. I spread out to the stage and the rest of the audience, who had been blocked by the towering girth of my neighbour. My body felt more opened up to what the environment. My orientation changed, less side on to the performer, flattened out, facing the actor. How I sit matters. My relation to my neighbours matters. These two are related.

Sitting in audience, I feel expanded. The agreement to share an environment with a concentrated focus makes me move out of myself into this world with clear confines. This movement outward combined with the clear and patterned behaviours and orientations allow an audience its body and life. Audiences are brought into being because the enlargement is both comfortable and confined.

b) Jodie on the Berkoff Audience

Seated K38

Downstairs foyer area before the show: small groups of people (ranging from couples to four or five), standing, sitting, looking at programs, going to the bathroom, returning from the bathroom, lightly chatting, waiting. Some are buying tickets. Some are wearing sports jackets over cotton shirts, coats worn and slung over shoulders, an array of darkened colours, and make-up on faces, umbrellas. A gathering of people dressed less casually than what might be expected for a performance at the Performance Space.

We ascend the stairs and enter the auditorium. There is no rush, albeit the bell has rung. The people enter the auditorium in pre-gathered configurations, separated only by the steepness of the stairs which -more often than not- are descended by one person at a time. This negotiation of the ‘aisle’ changes as the audience leaves together (more amassed for the interval exeunt, and a little sparser at the end as some remain to chat). The ascent of individuals as they search to find their seat draws my attention to their shoes first of all,
alongside what seems the careful negotiation of the stairs (one step-together, two step-together type rhythms).

The seating of the audience has been pre-configured by ticket sales. Two segments of seating flanking the stage are left empty. People begin to fill the centre three (?) segments of seating. Like pieces of a puzzle, people sit, their postural orientation and potential foregrounded attentive focus toward the empty stage, an Audience is formed.

I notice the single members. One such lady all in black, tacking eyes from program to stage, and randomly to passing members, constitutes herself, in and by herself, as singularly gathered. This detail is elided once the seating is at capacity and particularly once the stage is live. She then belongs to a much larger group where the intimacy of witnessing dissolves delineations between those arriving together, familiar; and those on their own. The postural stance of a seated being, whose attentional/intentional acts operate more actively within the sagittal plane from self to single object (performer) and more passively on the horizontal, intersubjective plane. This works paradoxically insofar as everyone looks and feels to be alone ‘audiencing’ (look Stu, I can do the wanky thang!!), but at the same time looks and feels to be together. (I am reminded of Pauline’s moments with the guy sitting next to her, and how she felt ‘with’ at certain moments…or was it for the duration of that first half???)

Anyway, once we are full the noise escalates, excited chatter, expectation and anticipation as heads move from side chatter to front and down reading to up and front. Once Berkoff begins we are uniformly present for him. Independent conversations and the vacillation of head movements have ceased. I think there was applause???

The moments where Berkoff addresses the audience, to cajole latecomers, ask questions and flirt with the blonde in the front row, do we become more aware of ourselves as a group? The eruptions of laughter starting in one area, spreading to interolve the laughing sounds of others, infects self like a contagion, often released without any logical necessity to perceiving the performer and his material as humorous. Here is where I feel caught up, warm belly, part of, to quickly break away and question validity of laugh. In the dark the laugh of Audience has width, barbs, fluid pools dripped into and shaken off, lapped up elsewhere. Like nocturnes we seem to all react to lighting inflections,
mesmerised and quietened by colour and shape. An Audience in obevance, serving well its functioning whole with transgressions: single sporadic laughter; two people sitting outside, parasitically to the group in the second half; boredom; and sleeping.

c) My Reply on the Berkoff Audience

This sizing up of the other audience members according to dress, bearing and size of little groups in which they arrive; measuring who they are, gauging an overall sense of the type of people in the audience; age, quality and style of clothing. Is it some question of whether or not I belong with them? Whether I can belong to something with them? It is without doubt a move towards my constitution of the audience in which I am about to immerse myself, an attempt to constitute them as a group; to seek a sharedness to or from which I might give myself over or separate myself? At any rate, it is the beginning of my constitution of the entity—this audience. This audience among which (even if not fully with which, as one of, according to my own self-constitution of whether I am like them) I enter the auditorium to witness the event of the performance. Almost as if seeking withness, building a sense of some sort of grouping, something to which I might or might not be gathered, in belonging or otherwise, to perform the witnessing. I am experiencing them as a group more than as separate individuals, scanning for recognition and consistencies. The relation between gathering and witness—does being gathered more closely, more intensively, facilitate an easier, or more complete, or readily attained state of witness. Maybe, maybe not, but one thing is certain: I have come to this event to participate in some way. By seating myself with these people in this room, I am participating in this audience with them. On arrival I assess the other participants who have done likewise, and begin to gauge or measure degrees or senses of groupness, gathering, and my own belonging or lack thereof. Whether or not I, in my thinking, set myself apart from them as not like me, or draw them close as my kind of people, the absolute physical there-togetherness,44 or more fundamentally, the sharedness of our

44 This there-togetherness should not be understood in the limited sense of co-presence in the same room. A reality TV show audience is there-together in a more dispersed proximity, gathered in their separate homes around their screens observing the same event; counterparts, witnesses, members of the same audience in every sense of the word, gathered by the shared purpose of constituting themselves as a public, expressing
specific task, inevitably involves us in a gathering to witness, thereby instituting an instance of the essence Audience. Irrespective of the stories I tell myself about who they are and who I am.

The moment of seating, when the audience takes on the final shape in which it will apprehend the show, the “pieces of the puzzle” and the “lady in black”, measuring, with her looks to the stage and the other audience members, her position, her viewing point, and her orientation among the others. What does “singularly gathered” mean?

It seems the questioning of who, which took place out in the foyer, has become a measuring of where I am seated, in what sort of proximity to whom, in what relationship to other audience members and the performance, (necessary to take the relationship to the stage out of play). How densely are we distributed in this room? How close is everyone else to me? How many and how big are the spaces in the room? Where am I in relation to everybody else, but more importantly, in intersubjective terms, how weighty are we as a singular transcendental witnessing entity, “a much larger group where the intimacy of witnessing dissolves delineations”? And how does the towardsness of our orientation to the performance serve in drawing together and dissolving delineations?

This play between, on the one hand, the more subtle, lateral and less attentionally focused relation to the other audience members in the dark, and on the other hand, the more concentrated focus of attention on the performer, manifests as a more heavily subjectified state, in which the others are dethematized but exist for me as a those among whom I am held. I have a sense of being held, being part of something, subject to something, but paradoxically my subjectivity is simultaneously enlarged or thematized in some way.

We need to examine this play of attentionalities. It seems there is a key question concerning how the bloating of the subject occurs in the context of this close intersubjective situation, yet also how the immersion seems to simultaneously foreground and promote the judging, pontificating subject. I guess that it occurs similarly in church, where the immersion among the faithful shores up and buoys the faith of the individual belonging to values through the voting off of undesirables. At the most fundamental level of its essentiality, Audience is a specific movement of transcendental intersubjectivity; not a group of people in a room.
believer. We need more description of the full intentionality of this.

We noted how sparse the audience was when we first entered the auditorium, and how we expected a Berkoff performance to be better attended, and then we realized we were early; and we watched as the room filled with people and everybody changed from reserved and quiet in their demeanour to relatively boisterous, chatty and loud as the seats filled and the cacophony of conversation grew.

Expectation and anticipation: this sense of building towards. We sense and are carried by the rising tide of chatter, but without thematizing it as an object of consciousness. It takes us up into the building expectation. Maybe we talk a little louder, become a little more excited, as the room fills and the noise of the audience grows. Is this noise, with its movement of contagious affect, a substantial manifestation of a transcendental intersubjectivity, caught in affective moment on the individual audience members.

By the time the lights go down and the performer appears, the aroused joint expectation, the excitement of the rising chatter, the thronging, the being amongst a group of people with shared purpose, quietens but does not disperse; rather, its energy concentrates and focuses.

Applause and Laughter. The performer addressing us directly. How do these work?

I recall from the Akram Khan performance how, when my attention was more fully involved in the dancing, my sense of being among others in an audience was minimized. There was just me, a conscious subject, caught up in appreciation, enjoyment and judgement of the performance, with my attention ebbing and flowing, following different dancers, being carried by the rhythm and lights, referring, comparing, quizzing, delighting and interpreting. The effect of the other audience members was largely dethematized. However, when the narrative sections, particularly the comedic parts occurred, I was, through the laughter, more aware of the others and my place among them. Laughter erupted in the room when I was not laughing but had felt the impetus to laugh; the laughter of the others allowed my own laugh. At other times when I found myself laughing alone, my attention swung fully to the audience, in judgement of them. There was something here of a recognition of, or a lack of, a shared meaning endowment. There was a sense of reassurance and belonging as infectious clusters of laughter and
spontaneous pockets of applause erupted, crackled and spread through the room.

We need to do some work on how laughter and applause give themselves.

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This response illustrates the method as it has evolved so far. Seeking not critique of the fellow phenomenologist’s description, but clarification and an aim towards essence through free variation in the imagination, the joint phenomenological endeavour attunes, deepens and enriches. And the phenomenon itself becomes successively clarified, released from its taken-for-grantedness, its mystery and hiddenness. The approach departs from the Spiegelbergian rules to the extent that subsequent responders, while not arguing or criticizing, add details from their own experience, seeking to enrich as well as clarify.

§58 Conclusion on Methodology

The work in audiences continues. As the object—the ideal transcendental intersubjective movement of gathering to witness—becomes clearer, the method develops. When we began the work, it was not possible to say that we were dealing with this particular transcendental essence of Audience. It is becoming revealed, allowed to show itself through our work. The more we dwell in it and speak of it, the greater the sensitivity with which we turn towards it, and the more it gives itself.

We now share a sense that the given audience we are attending in at any performance is an instance of the transcendental phenomenon of Audience which consists as gathering to witness. The reductions we perform give us openings into and outlines of the phenomenon. It is not something that can be grasped and quantified, though there are certainly measurable quantitative dimensions which are affective on the way it forms and manifests. The measures by which we live in and from the audiences we attend-to, the listening, the immersion, the taking-up, are given to us by those audiences, but are ultimately are unencompassable.

We live from “good soup”, air, light, spectacles, work, ideas, sleep etc…These are not objects of representations. We live from them. Nor is what we live from a “means of life” as the pen is a means with
respect to the letter it permits us to write—nor a goal of life, as communication is the goal of the letter (Levinas 1969: 110).

As a writing from audiences, the work is nourished by the audiences it is a saying of. It lives from audiences. They are its nourishment and they become it as it says them. And Audience, the transcendental intersubjective essence of all audiences, is undoubtedly “good soup” from which we live; a consummation and a nourishment. But it is only apprehendable in the living from. As transcendental, it cannot be exhausted as knowledge, encompassed by representation, but it can, through group phenomenological practice, be lived in its saying. Rather than seeking to contain or categorize or predict the behaviour of audiences, or to disclose the ultimately undisclosable mystery of the soup of Audience as a “this or a that”, or to ascribe and fix meanings to Audience as a “something” (Levinas 1981: 37-38), we aim to speak Audience from within, as immanent description, to allow it to announce itself, to sit, stand or kneel together-towards in hearing the call to gather in completion of that which requires witness.

We collect data, shine light in small corners of large dark rooms full of people, follow leads, recognize patterns, talk to each other, and stand continually amazed as each different audience calls, shapes, subjectivizes and escapes us differently.
IV. Phenomenology of Audience
We gather together to tell our hilarity or our sorrow; we speak of the things we bless and those we curse (Lingis 2005a: 453).
F. Introduction to Phenomenology of Audience

§59 Phenomenological Structure

This section begins firmly in the natural attitude, with a few ontic observations on how the application of Husserl’s different reductions yielded the object of the study and revealed it in its worldly manifestations.

However, the main body of the section, and its main aim, consists in a transcendental phenomenology of the constitution of Audience, beginning with its intentional structure, and moving on to analyses of the relations between Subject and Audience, and Performance and Audience. This is followed by an ontology of gathering and witness, which develops into a discussion of the workings of proximity, passivity, attention, belonging, and completion in Audience.

There is further development of the theoretical background of the thesis and a fuller attempt to show the phenomenon against this background.

§60 Incompleteness of the Study

This phenomenology of Audience cannot be comprehensive or systematic. The very nature of the object—its evanescence, its refusal of encompassment, the indistinct flicker of its edges, its fluid escape, its subjective essence, the necessary immersion of its experiencing, its brief and uncertain manifestation in the thematic glare—would make the attempt at comprehensive containment seem futile and arrogant.

In setting out to describe the processes by which, first, the object, transcendental intersubjective Audience, became clarified through two stages of psychological and phenomenological reduction; second, how the eidetic essence gathering to witness was reduced through free variation; and third, how the way towards the possibility of the measure of gathering and of witness might begin—according to the revealed protocols of proximity, completion, belonging, passivity and attention (as first provisional categories)—the following section demonstrates the essential unfinishability of the project. From the preliminary experiential descriptions to the eidetic essence to the more
detailed protocols, each level of analysis can ultimately only be a basis for further studies which will, no doubt, reveal each phenomenological layer as resting upon its own inadequately thought-through presuppositions. So it would seem that the incompleteness and inconclusiveness of the study is of its essence.

This does not mean, however, that the study should lack rigour, or refrain from questioning its own presuppositions, or neglect from putting its assertions to the test. It does, nevertheless, mean that the study leaves more questions asked than answered.
A. Preliminary Reductions

§61 The Eidetic Reduction: What is An Audience?

When I began this research I knew that I occupied an unclear, unthought position from which some phenomena appeared to my taste as audiences and others did not. I knew that I considered a group of people gathered in the Playbox Theatre at the Sydney Opera House, seated in the dark in rows of chairs pointed towards a stage on which the Bell Shakespeare Company was performing *Troilus and Cressida*, to be an audience. Sydney Harbour itself on the other hand, however many different human lives and deaths and ways of life it has supported and nourished, did not seem to me to be an audience. Irrespective of processes which endow places with an enriching subjectification through the living ascription of histories of meaning, it would have taken an unacceptably naïve anthropomorphism for me to construe room for the harbour in this study. Likewise, I was certain that my shoe was definitely not an audience, even though it might have borne witness to my postural problems.

There were, however, cases which were not so clear. I knew that I believed a football crowd and a church congregation to be audiences, but I had a moment’s doubt about a crowd gathered at a car crash scene. Audiences of one person, the implied audience to which I rehearse alone in my room, a group of friends sitting together basking in the fading warmth and pink of a sunset, and people gathered in their separate homes around their TV sets watching and participating in the evictions on *Big Brother* also provided problems.45

45 Ultimately, these definitions are a matter of taste. To me, to my taste, I am drawn to what appear to be the similarities between the dispersed gathering of an *Australian Idol* audience and an audience at the Opera House gathered to witness *Twelfth Night*. Both of these phenomena participate in and provide avenues for the revelation and description of the transcendental intersubjectivity in Audience, as the condition of all gathering to witness. It is my fundamental responsibility in this thesis to attempt to dig into these similarities and reveal a common structural core. The current debates in performance studies concerning whether or not TV audiences sitting in their own homes are of the same genera or species as groups of people gathered under the same roof, are quite simply, a matter of taste. Dufrenne opens this possibility in
I decided at the time, though I cannot remember the exact circumstances which yielded the decision, that all of these cases, whether concrete events in the objective world or psychic imaginings, whether dispersed or concentrated in time and place, whether planned or accidental, were, to my taste, audiences.

In my attendances-to performances with the study group that conducted the fieldwork for this thesis, in my own other attendances-to sporting events, lectures and concerts, in my being drawn to sit alone in my room for three consecutive nights to watch the *Angels in America* mini-series, in my reading of the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger, the aesthetics of Mikel Dufrenne, and anything else I was reading at the time, I came, over a couple of years of what amounts to a method of Husserlian free-fancy, that is, imagining whether and in what ways all sorts of things might or might not partake in audienceness, upon the emergence of the invariant eidetic essence, *gathering to witness*. The clarification of this essence revealed a stratum in which it was possible to discern the conditions by which what sort of things and states of affairs could be understood to be constituted as audiences. It helped focus the enquiry with greater definitional precision, limiting the grey areas and reducing anxiety.

As I had set out with the principal question of what it means to be in an audience, the essence *gathering to witness* gave me a firm enough starting point from which to begin an investigation of the ways in which an audience consists. In Heideggerian jargon it provided the ground from which the audienceness of audiences in their audiencing might be investigated. For an audience exists precisely insofar as a gathering to witness occurs. There is no audience (or anything for that matter, according to Heidegger) without gathering, and there is no audience without something, however organized or disappointing, to witness. One father, standing alone at his son’s football match has been

his differentiation between taste as such, and the plurality of tastes by which I define myself, “Whereas tastes are determinate, taste as such is not exclusive. To have taste is to possess a capacity of judgement which is beyond prejudice and partisanship…to have taste is not to have tastes. That is why good taste resides in nonchoices rather than choices” (Dufrene 1973: 62). My job here is not reinforce my tastes, but to taste the savour of them. Not to draw lines which exclude and categorize, but to follow given contours and outlines, describe and extract essences.
gathered, by his involvement in his son’s life, by his love of the game, by his own corporeal memories of playing the game. The gathering of an audience of one occurs as a gathering, a gathering for that which has called for witness, irrespective of whether anybody else has heard and responded to the call to gather. A group of people gathered in the foyer of a theatre production which gets cancelled at the last minute, are an audience in that they have been gathered into the specific intentionality of gathering to witness, even though that for which they have gathered remains incomplete, it is their gathering in offer of completion which constitutes them as an audience. An audience is a gathering-for that which calls its members to witness. This for-ness of an audience is an essential characteristic of bearing witness. An audience gathers for a performance. This gathering-for, in its orientation towards that to which it bears witness, is the specific intentionality of being in an audience. Witness is always borne both by and towards. As intentionality, it belongs, as Heidegger has revealed, to both the subject and the object, and yet to neither of them. In an audience’s bearing witness there are no fixable subject or object poles. The witness borne is a fundamental condition of both audience and performance. They require each other through Audience

An audience would be misconstrued as a group subjectivity; it is rather a complex interplay of mutual co-constitution. A multidirectional co-constitution or consummation of entwined selves in shared affect and mood, in context with a witnessed event which more often than not involves other selves, and which is always, to some degree, affected by the witnessing. The sharedness of the gathering as a consummation of selves, irrespective of whatever might have drawn any given audience together, makes a subjective/objective intentional analysis inadequate to the description.

§62 The Psychological Reduction of the Intentionality of Audiences

An audience, as I am interpreting the term here, is not a group of people assembling in a place at a given time to watch something. As much as it requires, as its condition, at least one person gathered to witness an event, an audience, in its essence, is something other than the people gathered. An audience is precisely the movement of gathering with the orientation to witness. It is the co-constitutive gathering of the audience members in a witnessing towards. The gathering of an audience occurs on, through and between the
audience members, and as a result of the pull of that which is there to be witnessed. So, the question must be asked: what sort of a thing, event, or state of affairs this theorized apparently polycephalic audience animal might be, insofar as it is something else from, but requiring the participation of the group of people on whom it depends for its appearance? How does it appear? How is it constituted? How might it be apprehendable?

In a theatre performance it would most likely be possible to observe a number of people sitting quietly in rows of chairs pointed at the stage; ‘watching the play’, as we say. However, the audienceness consummating this group of people is not so readily visible. Certainly their presence in the room together during the performance would suggest to the everyday understanding that they were an audience, but a description of some hypothesized logical or affective representational processes which might be happening inside each member of a group of separate individuals would not be adequate to the description of the fundamental gathering holding them together. The audience is in the gathering holding together; with each other and with the performance. The character or mood of any given audience, whether they are a tough crowd, whether they are stabbing each other on the terraces, or fidgeting bored, or kneeling silent, bearing witness to the glory of their Lord, is the shared affect of their holding together. So how does the presence of this affective holding-together show? How might it be possible to stay close to a phenomenon which does not show itself relatively more clearly like a cup or another person, but only in adumbration, through its effects on the individual people in the room. The gathering to witness in an audience shows itself, manifests, as quietness or noisiness, as dancing or stillness, as applause and laughter. The shared stillness and quiet breath, or the cries of ‘amen’ crackling around the room at a performance by an inspired evangelist preacher might be an appearance of Audience, or the frenzy of noise and movement in a moshpit, or office conversation the day after a Big Brother eviction.

The question then becomes: how might this gatheredness give its measure?

46 In this discussion of the structure of Audience, and throughout this work, I will often refer to the performance. This is shorthand, in the absence of a better word, for that for and to which witness is borne. So, by this definition, a car crash scene is a performance, however spontaneous and unplanned. It is made into a performance by the gathering to witness of the crowd.
The task at hand, in Husserlian terms, would be to collect, examine and describe lived experiences (my own and others) of these adumbrative appearances with the intention of allowing them to reveal, from the shadows, the organized totality of which they are *abschattungen*, partial profiles from the potentially infinite ways in which any object might allow itself to be shown through the intentional acts of experiencers. By this way, the thing under study, the gathering to bear witness constitutive of the organizing principle of an audience, itself accessible only through secondary evidences of its existence on the bodies whose gathering it is, might be able to be rendered more clearly and emerge as a distinct, and in some way given state of affairs.

§63 The Transcendental Reduction to Audience

In the naïveté of the natural attitude we describe ourselves as going to the theatre to see a play, going to the stadium to watch the game, going to church on Sunday to praise the Lord, attending a self-improvement seminar, staying home to watch the TV show. What needs to be suspended here is the going, the staying, the theatre, the stadium, the church, the seminar, the home, the game, the Lord, the self-improvement and the TV show, so that Audience as phenomenon, in its hiddenness, among its members, as its own affective eddies, as heard in its call and subjected to in its demand, can become apprehendable.

If this study is to achieve something like a transcendental dimension of Audience, it cannot remain within the level of the specific intentional acts and their correlates, the show, God, my judgements, my taste, my team. This analysis would be the first stage of the reflection, as a not yet transcendental *phenomenological psychology*, ontical and naïve, but which might provide us with access to openings out on to a truly essential and transcendental phenomenology of *gathering to witness*.

Audience is the anonymous co-conceived horizon from which the witness to the performance is borne. In immediate intuition,

> the horizon is already co-perceived but as “anonymous” only, as Husserl expresses it. Its anonymity means that as horizon it does not itself be known immediately, and that in its functioning as meaning-implication of the straightforwardly grasped object it is, at first, even unknowable. The horizon lets itself be known only when, by
explaining the being, we enter the horizon and in this way deliver it from its anonymity (Brand 1967: 197).

Audience, in its anonymity, its hiddenness, may well appear momentarily from behind and among the individual audience members as a possible theme. But it does not show itself clearly as a theme. At first, it is the hiddenness and the anonymity which give themselves, that require examination. As transcendental essence, Audience refuses to be laid out under the bright light of intentional consciousness so that all of its dark corners and mysteries might be betrayed. It hides from the thematizing glare. And it is precisely this escape, this refusal, and this hiddenness which constitute our encounter with Audience.

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I had no idea of the actual object of my investigation until I found myself running aground on my own terms. This simple story of terminological confusion reveals how transcendental Audience gave itself to me as my object. Professor Gay McAuley had asked very early on in the process whether I was concerned with the individual “spectator” or “the audience as a whole”.47 I realized that my work would have to account for both; for the experience and activity of the individuals as well as the groups in which they formed. But the situation rapidly became less clear and more complex.

My earlier research, conducted at Honours level, had been framed as a study of an audience. The use of the indefinite object insured against unwarranted universalizing and avoided the trap of falling into the vagueness and pomposity which had become apparent in the usages such as “the body” which had been thrown around without rigor in performance studies for too long. I realized that although I wanted to reveal the shared essence common to a church congregation, a football crowd, a theatre audience and reality TV show viewers, at the ontic level they were different phenomena, between which any naïve sociological or anthropological study would find more differences than

47 Professor McAuley was the primary impetus in drawing my attention to the neglect of any satisfactory studies of audience. She is Professor Emeritus at the Department of Performance Studies at the University of Sydney.
commonalities. I also knew that I was studying *audiences* plural rather than *the audience*. Subsequently, after using the plural form for a while, and isolating the commonalities shared between the different audiences, I began to feel more comfortable with the usage *any audience*. However, the term *any audience* still described worldly phenomena at the level of the psychological reduction. I had, by this stage, reduced the eidetic essence *gathering to witness*, and realized that this essence, this state, this movement, this mood, this orientation, was constitutive of the transcendental phenomenon which was gradually revealing itself to me. And that *the audience, an audience, audiences, any audience*, took me back to unacceptably naïve, ontologically insufficient, taken-for-granted conceptions.

As the resistance, the turning away, the fleeing, the modesty of the manner in which the object was giving itself, I realized that I was dealing with phenomena at an ontological level; that I was not encountering some *thing* present-at-hand, some presence, or some implement, but a mode of Being; a mode of Being which participated in towardsness, in amongness, in withness, and in in-ness, a mode of concerned involvement; a mode which could not be laid out as a positive object, as *Körper*, like a dead body on a table, but which must be experienced by myself as *Leib* and described from within the experience. And as such, as a phenomenon of dubious thingly character, it could not be adequately described as *the, a or any audience or audiences*, and I decided, perhaps clumsily, but hopefully with necessity and without pomp or pretence, to use the Heideggerian capitalization to delineate the ontological status, and came up with *Audience*, devoid of article.

And then the task of the thesis was clear. To find a way to work from within the experience of being in audiences, turning towards the experience in description of the ground of its possibility. To extract the transcendental essence of Audience.

**§64 The Intersubjective Reduction of The Other Audience Members**

For this thesis, the question of how the individual audience member constitutes and is constituted by the other audience members and the audience as a whole is crucial. For the phenomenologist it is not sufficient to proceed as the sociologist or anthropologist might, with the group as a given, taken-for-granted fact, but it is necessary to take aim at a full
description of the constitutive connections and manners of givenness between audience members in audiences to gain clarification of transcendental intersubjective Audience.

One of the problems of dealing with the involvement in Audience is its hiddenness, exacerbated by the fact that the subject is so absorbed in its bearing witness and in its intentional objects. As I get lost in the show, I pray, I make judgements, I give myself over and get myself back, and the side-by-side lateral relation with the other audience members in Audience retreats. I am specifically not there to be concerned with the others, but with that to which we bear witness. The more I am doing my job of bearing witness, offering completion to the performance, the further back the others retreat and consequently, transcendental Audience fades further into the background. Yet at the same time, being in Audience with the others is a crucial condition of my particular apprehension of the performance, of what I make of that performance. The specific modes of being with or being together in Audience gives, or at least effectively contributes to some extent to the quality of my apprehension of the performance. The question is how and to what extent.

Husserl’s account of the constitution of others describes processes of passive synthesis within me which occur prethetically. It is not about conscious awareness. All I am aware of, all I intuit, is that there is somebody else there. I take this for granted. In Audience I take it for granted that they are there and that they are taking it for granted that I am there. We are in mutual co-constitution. We are imbricated with each other. We are of this group. We constitute this group. We take it for granted that we are others among others. Husserl’s account may or may not accurately capture the fine points and stages in how this occurs, but it does highlight the reality of the salient transcendental intersubjective dimension of my relations with others. And, as I sit in an audience, making my judgements, following stories, losing attention and wondering about my day and what I must do tomorrow, the ways in which I am affected by the modes of presence of the other audience members, whether we are crammed together and herded like sheep in a *Fura Dels Baus* performance, or whether they are invisible to me in their own living room at a ‘major television event’, the ways in which we live together with each other in our otherness from each other determines, to a large part, our particular responses to the performance.
When I am sitting here in this audience making one set of judgements, one set of appraisals, apprehending one outline, feeling one set of feelings, one grasping of the performance; I sketch an adumbration among a multiplicity of others, as one of these people in the totality of this audience of which I am part, in which I am immersed and which permeates me, and without which these judgements, appraisals, apprehensions and feelings would not be what they were. The audience is giving the performance as what it is as the correlate of this particular audience. Another audience on another night would constitute a different performance through the different completion they offer. The performance, as what it is in the world it makes for itself, is the correlate of its audience more than it is the correlate of any one of the particular adumbrations of any individual audience member. I am of this audience; my view, my judgement, my feeling, is one adumbration. I, as audience member, do not make the performance what it is any more than the performance makes me what I am, though doubtless we do affect each other. What makes us both what we are in relation to each other is our respective orientations to and emergences from the audience of which we are both possibilities. A performance is what it is through the intersubjective verification of its audience.

So, if we are in and of this instance of Audience, this transcendental intersubjectivity which is making the performance what it is, and yet, at the same time we are bound as horizontal grasping thematizing consciousnesses, then the job becomes the description of the specific intentionality of the sideways movement into Audience, the ways we leak into each other through that to which we bear witness.

Merleau-Ponty catches the shape of the structure.

\[
\text{We have learned...not to conceive our perspective views as independent of each other; we know that they slip into each other and are brought together finally in the thing} \quad (\text{Merleau-Ponty 1962: 353}).
\]

In Audience we slip into each other. We know that we are not the only viewpoint. “The other is not shut up inside my perspective of the world...because this perspective...slips spontaneously into the other’s and because both are brought together in one single world in which we all participate as anonymous subjects of perception” (353).
It would appear that the nuts and bolts of this, the methodological starting point of the reduction of this paradoxical leaking totality of isolated consciousnesses is to be found in the intersubjective genesis of objectivity. Ricoeur, citing Husserl:

I see myself within the world as psyche among psyches, as psyche equalized with, separated from, and tied to the other psyches. Each man appears to each other man in an intrapsychic manner, that is to say, ‘in systems of intentionality, which as psychic lives, are themselves already constituted in a mundane manner’ (CM 158:31-33)...Hence the notion of the ‘psychic constitution of the objective world’ (CM 158:34) must be introduced in order to realize...this ‘objectifying equalization’ which is the condition for all higher levels of communualization...at this level the Others are also realized as psyches, separated and reciprocal (Ricoeur 1967: 137).

The description of this “psychic constitution of the objective world”, of “objectifying equalization”, this separation and reciprocity, will give the bridge between that which is being witnessed, those who are witnessing and the gathering into the immersion in the witnessing itself. You think, I think, therefore we think, therefore it is. The accord of the intersubjective validation of objectivity, the objectifying equalization, is the necessary condition of all culture and morality. It is the essence of value.

As has been discussed, the history of the phenomenological study of intersubjectivity is a tale of debates between the relative primordiality of the self as opposed to the social, of the one-one-one relation as opposed to the plurality, and consequently of the ontic or ontological status of the we. I contend that from the perspective of a living human being, these debates are insoluble. Processes of induction from empirical data and deduction by logical laws are inadequate to the question. From my position, with the given evidence that it is available to me, I can only ultimately proceed from a working assumption of the equiprimordiality of self, thing and world, apprehendable both ontically and ontologically through processes of different levels of reduction.

What follows is primarily the result of transcendental and intersubjective reductions conducted on the findings of prior psychological and eidetic reductions, some of which are made available in Part VI Appendix—Writings From Audiences.
B. Constitution of Audience

§65 Together-Towards

It is in the relationships between the audience members, insofar as those relationships are also pulled and drawn by the performance towards itself, that Audience consists. The tension between, among and towards, holds open the ground on which Audience flourishes.

§66 Is Audience Intentional?

An audience is always a going-out-towards that which calls for witness. It is also a relationship with others in a shared going out towards that which calls for witness. It is also a relationship with the time and the place in which witness is borne. This transcendence, this going out towardsness, is essential to an Audience. But is this essential going out towardsness best conceived in terms of intentionality? In how many directions might we have to catch this intentionality? Is it reversible? Does reversibility render intentionality inadequate to the description?

Or are these relationships with the others, and with the place and times of the performance, not so much transcendences of going out towards, but transcendences of being affected by? Are they not passivities? And passivities which are more passive than the passivity of the supposedly relatively more or less passive or active meaning-making processes of the 'spectator' as conceived by reception studies, or the ‘agent’ of analytic collective intentionality theory? And do these passivities subtend the syntheses of intention towards the performance? Are they the conditions of the intentional relationship of audience member to performance? If so, how?

These questions need to be answered by a phenomenology of Audience.

§67 Fundamentality of Audience

As social, as perceptual, as situated in relation with others from whom we learn, and by whom we are shown how to live and how to perform the actions necessary for survival;
and with other things and places which show themselves and ourselves to us in all our awe, wonder and need; as we stand before and come forth among the weave of possible engagements which offer themselves, we are always already in Audience.

The orientation towards taking up relations to the world’s showing, and taking up these relations in concert with others as a world-making hermeneusis is, according to Heidegger, equiprimordial and co-conditional with the formation of self. And insofar as a self is a performance, it is already in the audience upon which the possibility of self is predicated.

Audience is a fundamental element by and in which we become. It becomes us as we become it. We emerge as selves from the immersion.

There is, at a limit of this thesis, an indistinct pull, a kind of vague teleology drawing it. It has been there, left ill-formed, untouched and deliberately ignored, in the back of my mind (as we say), through the whole process. I have been loathe, for a number of reasons, to foreground it as a theme of the thesis. As a hypothesis, it might bear testing, but it so smacks of overdetermination, as the “violent coup de main of a wild theory” (Heidegger 1982a: 69) against which Heidegger warns, that I check myself and refrain from giving it full consideration. But I do need to voice it in the thesis, if only to invite refutation.

It is the question of the putting forward of the fundamentality of Audience conceived as a basic structure of consciousness, mentality, subjection or being, and of our going into audiences to gather to witness those things which concern us and give validation to our belonging, as a rehearsal of the basic constitution of life’s bearing witness to the originary situatedness in which it finds itself. The proposition that huddled together, in a dark theatre, or standing side by side on the football terraces, or kneeling in temples, or dispersed at TV sets, that the gatheredness together-towards in completion of the call of the performance, is a condensed, concentrated revelation, a workshop where we service the bearings and gearings of the fundamental structures of our belongingness among the things of the world, as the basis of our constitution of self, objectivity, relatedness and reality. To practice and be shown how we are together making worlds.

Perhaps this is all too grandiose and sweeping a proposition; but it is one which continues to haunt the work.
§68 Audience is Not a Contract

Audience is not a simple contract between a spectator and a performer. It is not a legality, bound by legislation. Neither is Audience an exchange. It is something more than a contract and something less than a contract. It is not an agreement between two finished individuals to meet certain conditions, and provide certain goods or services in exchange for recompense. It is not a rational equation, but a mutual submission to the creation of a world to which we belong and which gives us to ourselves; a world without which we would not be who we are. It is not a meeting of or agreement between two agents, two sovereign freedoms, two institutions, a performance and a spectator, but the ground of the coming into being of both, owing service to a greater demand, under a shared imperative to bear witness to the truth or value which makes us an us.

To the extent that the performance requires the participation of the audience member for completion, it is more of a summons than a contract. The performance attests to a truth which requires the witness of the audience member to attain completion. Whether or not particular behaviours are demanded, information is exchanged, or interpretation required by the specific performance to which the witness is borne, none of these things are constitutive of Audience. Rather, Audience is the necessary precondition of the coming forth of these phenomena.

§69 You Cannot See Audience by Looking at People in a Room

You cannot come into a room, look at the people and see Audience. Certainly, you see an audience, but at a fundamental level, Audience itself is something (to the extent that its saying requires its denotation as a something) which can only be experienced from within. You have to be a part of that audience, involved in the audience that is occurring here and now, not only to understand it, but to be able to tell it, to be able to bring it forth, and it is only in giving completion to the performance that you can access Audience in any given audience. The only possible telling of Audience must come from within. Audience itself cannot be viewed from outside its swelling tide as a totality. Like the Milky Way, it just looks like a vague smear across the darkness.
§70 Exteriority of Audience

Audience is not something in me. Rather, I am in it. Unavailable to my totalizing grasp, it encompasses me. It is not an interior state, but an exteriority which contains me and transcends me.

§71 Audience as Element

Audience is an immersion. A soup of immersive intentionalities and dispositions to which I yield, to which I give myself, to which I enter in subjection. I find myself in an exteriority, to be affected, to allow it to infiltrate me, to have it become me, to join with it. And in the immersion, I live from it, I become what I might under its demand.

It contains and envelops me as I bathe in it. It possesses me, does not originate in me, but nevertheless would not be as it is without my immersion in it. It is sustained in me and in itself by my participation in it, but if I were not in it, it would still be what it is, but not in the same way as it is when I am in it.

And ultimately, I arise from it as an excess of it, as triumphant subjectivity, refreshed, reaffirmed and convinced of my own apparently coherent sovereignty. It nourishes me. I need to immerse myself in Audience to emerge as what I am.

§72 An Audience is Something of its Own

An audience is gathered by a performance, for that performance, but what it is as an audience is not determined by the performance. It stands over against the performance as what it is: as an audience. It comes into its own. An audience is drawn together by a performance but it comes into its own. Although determined to some extent by the demands of the performance: by the size of the venue, the time of the performance, the program, the advertising, the cost, the concern of the performance, an audience is, in its connections, in the relatedness which constitutes it as a transcendental intersubjectivity, as an instance of Audience, something of its own.

Audience is not a sum total of all the audience members. Although they are the audience of the given performance, they do not constitute the Audience of that audience. The
Audience of any audience is already there as the gathering to witness called for by the performance. The individual audience members join it. Certainly, the presence of each individual audience member affects the quality of the experience for the other audience members, and consequently each also affects the measure of Audience of the audience in question, but Audience itself is not dependent on any one member of an audience for its existence. It is already there before the audience members attend, as the precondition of their becoming members of it. The audience members give themselves over to it, affecting it and themselves in mutual codetermination.

§73 Side-by-Side

In Audience, with its side-by-side-towards orientation, the contact between the individual audience members is indistinct and mutually affective; it overflows between them, not thematized but mutually interpenetrative and permeative. It is not a face-to-face relation strictly speaking. In fact, we are specifically turned away from each other.

The particular mode of mutual contact in an Audience is not about direct encounter, recognition and communication, or even acknowledging the existence of the other, but it is an immersion in sort of pre-, non- or a-thematic intercorporeal world.

The side-by-sideness of the people with me in the darkness enshadows the face-to-face responsibility by which we are given to each other as each other.

The thematization of the performance—that which we are together-towards—necessarily dethematizes our shared relation and participation with the other audience members.

The aim of this thesis is to get access to the unthematized, this pre-, non- or a-thematic belonging, this anonymous co-corporeality in which we participate, to get in amongst it, to live it awarely, study our participation in it. To feel into the ground of the way in which we are always together before we acknowledge the so-called other. To find our way into Audience—an anonymous syncretism which binds, holds, allows, shapes, and directs the attendance-to the performance.
§74 Immersion with Others in Audience

Audience cannot be approached as a sum total (a kind of abstraction which would make it measurable) of mental and emotional immanences sharing space and time, (although there are certainly contagions, frequencies and amplitudes of ebbs, flows and eddies which fold, pile up, accentuate and attenuate each other) but as a consummation, a coming together, a gathering.

For me, as an individual audience member, Audience is not an aggregate of intentional consciousnesses of which I am one, but a sensible intensification in which I am immersed. I do not so much survey and measure the audience around me, or collect it, as give myself over to it, involve myself in it, find myself in it.

As elemental, Audience is an immersion in which “eddies of egoism differentiate, diversify, discharge and dissipate” (Lingis 1998: 19). Alongside each other, side-by-side, immersed in the darkness of the auditorium or in the bright afternoon in the stadium, we feel the movements and the stillness, the speeds and the warmth of our fellows, we hear their breathing and their shuffling and their cries of exaltation, “we are awake with the sense of another sensibility in the dark parallel to our own” (20), even though we do not make face to face contact. Audience is the shared attention of all of us to that to which we bear witness.

We do not look at the audience in which we are immersed, but with it and according to it. From our experience of it, it is not an objective thing but a participation with. The sense of the other sensibilities gives the belonging to the validation to which we bear witness. Our laughter, our applause and silent attentiveness give the comforting belonging of our shared measure. We subject ourselves, measure ourselves out, offer ourselves to immersion in the eddies of laughter, awe, admiration, applause, jubilation, terror, pity, and belief.

§75 Ethics of Audience

We are there to share the experience, to attest to the experience, to say something about that to which we come to bear witness, to bear witness, to bear the responsibility of
witness. We are compelled, commanded to offer witness to that which calls for it; even if we offer only a refusal, we bear witness in some way. There is an ethics, a demand, a set of imperatives; and it is this set of imperatives that constitutes the specific ethical situation of any audience. Audience is primarily an ethical situatedness, a summons, a call to witness, an obsession of transcendental intersubjectivity, a condition of an order perhaps analogous to Levinas’ call to responsibility for the other. Audience is, at the same time, a call to responsibility to the performance, the other audience members, and to the value, truth, beauty and goodness to which the witness attests.

This is not to say that the group is prior to the one-on-one relation. Again they are two different but related strata of the phenomenon of the ways in which we are with each other. And perhaps we can get a way into the relation between them using Levinas’ model of the call of the other as an ethical demand, for we are similarly called, in the face of God, in the face of the values of society, in the face of beauty, into being as a self, to make a pronouncement as a self, to bear witness, to share in the saying of that which gathers us and which says itself in that very gathering. In this bearing of witness, neither the group nor the individual Audience member enjoys priority. It is the call to the bearing of witness which gathers us.

Bearing witness has the quality of “a visitation, an epiphany, a revelation” (Zahavi 2001: 159).

§76 Other Than but Encompassing of…

Audience is other than, but encompassing of and anterior to, simple or complex relations between a subject and an object unified in a multiplicity of perceptual acts organized according to atemporal meaning-principles; other than but encompassing of the apprehension of others verified as like me in body and in consistent behaviour; other than but constitutive of the ground of shared worlds verified objectively. Audience overflows and exceeds these logics of subjectivity, perception, otherness, objectivity and truth. It initiates them and provides their ground.
Affective Contagion

Movements of contagion ebb and flow, cut through and cohere Audience. Shared contagious affective movements evidenced in laughter, applause, gasps, stillness and attention in the bodies of individual audience members.

Contagion sustains the mood and quality of any given audience.

In an ‘easy crowd’, a Sleazeball audience at the Sydney Gay Mardi Gras listening to a Barbara Streisand dance remix, or a hometown football crowd, or among thousands of supplicants taking holy communion together during the Easter vigil mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, the directedness-together-towards coheres more readily. There is high susceptibility to shared contagion and belonging. The performance emerges from a more fertile element, a more nourishing gathering.

Contagion flows, overtakes, transcends individual audience members, enveloping, creating the being-in of Audience. It is the internal transcendence between and among the Audience members held by the pull of that which has gathered them—their faith, identity, belonging—that makes them feel inside of something. An immanence through transcendence.

In this easy crowd, a more intense movement of the shared affect of Audience cutting through, a faster and more affective contagion, more readily merged with, is therefore more readily apprehendable than in a dispersed and disinterested audience. In the audience of the popular reality TV show Big Brother, an audience of millions, one of the easiest crowds, the placial dispersal is overwhelmed by its mass distribution, by the frequency of its nightly broadcast, by its carrying over to conversation in the workplace the next day, and by its takeover of a television station’s whole night of broadcasting; placial dispersal is overcome by speed and magnitude.

However, Audience might equally well form in a crowd which is largely bored, largely disapproving, or split in two in its response. As long as the individual audience members are swept up and carried by the ebbs and flows and eddies and swirls of the shared affect and belonging which constitute the Audience in which they find themselves, however dispersed, they are expressions of the transcendent al intersubjectivity by which they are
continually given to themselves, in the gathering to witness, in the call to completion.

Audience itself operates as a kind of agency before individual agency, a precursory preconceptual, intentional capacity for coherence, manifesting as belonging. An ideal membrane susceptible to disturbances of affective contagion. Audience will always move towards coherence and belonging.

§78 An Audience of One

An audience of one is an instance of Audience. As I sit or stand alone watching a performance, in a theatre or in a railway tunnel, or in a rehearsal room, my empathy with the performer is intensified by my solitude, by the absence of other audience members. I am acutely aware of the performer’s humanity, their struggle, their pain in having to perform all that they have to offer to only one person, and of their joy in being so closely attended-to by one person who hears and responds to their call for witness.

And I, in this intense moment, standing alone before a busker in a tunnel, bring histories to bear on my witnessing. I judge the performance, bring values to it, refer to my foreknowledge and experience, and the foreknowledge and experience of others implicated in my judgements. I am reminded of my own and other performances of these and similar songs. Songs which were written with audiences in mind, and which bear witness to stylistic and cultural audience traditions of what a song is and what it is for. The structure of the call for witness and the completion offered in an audience of one is as tangible as opening night at the Opera House; the performance and audience traditions carried forward by the event are as established and venerable as the AFL football Grand Final at the MCG, witnessed by a crowd of 100,000 chanting fans.

And then there are the others who pass by. Momentary flickers of attention that join mine, which I feel as a flash of intensification of my own witness. They pass, drawn for an instant by the performance and by my attention to it. My attention beckons theirs. I want them to stay, to share this experience, to validate it with me, to validate me. And as a crowd gathers, my valuing of the performance is verified. The worth I find there is, or is not, recognized by the others.
§79 A Mode of Coexistence

Audience resides not in what I see or hear or experience from my perspective, nor in the fact that I experience or attend, nor in the fact the person next to me attends or experiences, nor in the fact that the performer performs. It is not a determinable object or field which is laid out according to an arrangement or series of locatable coordinates: “it is what comes about on the fringes of all perspectives, and on which they are all erected” (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 363). As the condition of nation, class, or any other ideal social phenomenon of belonging, it is a mode of coexistence which calls upon me.

§80 Audience Exceeds the Individual Audience Members

Being in Audience is fundamentally a group experience. We go to participate with others, in “the way we have always done it”, according to pregiven demands not of our making. To approach Audience in terms of the individual “spectator” and the making of meaning for the individual is “an impoverishment from a primordial phenomenon for us” (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 409). So it is essential to get to the experience for us. So even though I must out of necessity begin with my own experience, the whole point must be to get down to, to rediscover, to wipe away the rigid adherence, the persistence, the stickiness of the need to come at it from the perspective of the individual. “To find at work in my perception, a thinking older than myself” (410).

The reason audience exceeds me, escapes me, the reason I cannot contain it, is because it contains me, it outruns me. In an audience, the laughter of the others affects me, buoys me up, makes me laugh, and the contacts between the others escape me; they know things that I do not know, they can see things from their perspective that I cannot see, they know people in the play, they are creating the eddies, flows and tides in the audience which carry me, which are neither of my making, nor of any individual one of them, but which, in large part, determine the individual experience of each of us and the things we say about that experience.

All these others are “prolongations of my own intentions” (412). They are doing what they are doing, I am doing what I am doing. We are all doing the same thing, but doing different things with it. We are all counterparts in a system which exceeds us all. We are
all interwoven into a single fabric of this audience. We are of a common ground, inserted into a shared operation of which none of us is the creator. “Our perspectives merge into each other and we coexist through a common world” (413).

§81 Audience as Demand

Audience is not a thing: “not an object formed nor an organization elaborated among objects but an ordinance taken up and followed through” (Lingis 1998: 27). We sit in our rows of seats, kneel between the pews, get herded through narrow barriers, wait, proceed, fall silent, all for distances and durations not of our determining. In Western entertainments we say we choose to go to attend-to this or that show or event because we want to, we like it, but we go to see the great entertainer before they die because they embody the value most completely; we can say that we saw them perform. we go to see our team every week as we did with our father; we put on our dinner suits for opening night because we are the sort of people who have memberships to the opera company.

We attend-to the play at the small local theatre company because they need our support, they are our peers, our friends; they need our support and we must offer it in order to belong to our us. In ritual performance, the imperative is more tangible; the volcano will erupt if the ceremony is not performed properly, the social web will remain damaged if the young man who has transgressed the law is not seen to have been ritually speared in the thigh.

The rules for how, why, where and when we go to attend-to performances are not of our making. The moods and beliefs and attitudes of those who are there with us are not of our making. The conditions in which and under which we find our way to the performance is not always in every way of our making. The ebb and flow of our attentionality, the way the concerns of our daily lives intrude, our worries about the rent, about a sick friend, a presentation we must make at work the next day, are not of our making.

The rhythms of life, of society and culture, must be obeyed. The child must be christened, the lunchtime performance must end so that we can get back to work, the ancestors require our regular attendance, the opera season begins and ends. Correct ceremonial dress must be worn or the gods will be angry: the opening night tuxedo, the club colours.
in the scarf, jumper and beanie help to determine, intensify and focus the experience and
the quality of the audience which forms.

We sit in seats in rows in the dark or queue up to receive the flesh and blood of our
saviour, or stand on terraces, or kneel with our faces to the ground. We say the prayers
which must be said in the way they have always been said, we chant the songs and the
slogans as they are being chanted by all of us in the tide and swell of support to the team.
We get there early to watch the warm up game, or to avoid getting shut out when the
doors close on the auditorium.

And we sit quietly until the end of the symphony, applaud as long as the others are
applauding, measuring our appreciation. We save our discussion until the end of the
show, or yell abuse at the umpire at precisely the right moment to express our belonging
and expertise, and to win the approval of our peers.

It is strange how the subject, seated in the auditorium, handing down its judgements,
thinks it is the arbiter of all that occurs in front of it.
C. Audience and Subjectivity

§82 The Self Lost and Found

I do not lose myself in Audience. I am immersed but always refer back to myself. I refer the performance back to myself. Do I like it? Am I interested? Am I bored? Does it do anything for me? What does it mean to me? Can God hear me? And, less consciously, I refer myself to the other audience members. Who are they? Am I like them? How much noise are they making? Am I one of them? What are they thinking? What do they think of me?

And in these positioning questionings, I am given to myself as the person that I am, as who I am, by the others, in the face of that to which we bear witness, by my association with, by my assessment, my anticipation of the others, I come out as myself, knowing and saying who I am.

Dufrenne declares that through alienation in the aesthetic object (or for the purposes of this thesis, in Audience), the individual finds itself: “Still, losing himself in this way, the spectator finds himself” (1973: 555). By bringing themself dutifully to the task of witness, handing over the fullness of their attention to the work of completion, the audience member is strengthened, and returns from the audience replenished, restored and fulfilled to the capacity of their powers. Even the bringing of the harshest criticism fulfils and restores the self of the critic, and the most dismissive and desultory sneer of an attendance gives the disapproving audience member the fullness of their own closed rectitude.

Thus the spectator’s alienation is simply the culmination of the process of attention by which he discovers that the world of the aesthetic object into which he is plunged is also his world. He is at home in this world…the aesthetic object invites the spectator to be himself, it teaches him what he is…the spectator discovers himself by discovering a world which is his own world (Dufrenne 1973: 555).
§83 The Subject-Tyrant

The subject-tyrant sitting in its little seat in the auditorium fondling its objects, attributing them to itself, handing down its judgements, exercising its taste, making the story its own, is naively and blissfully oblivious to the hidden ways in which its experience is determined by its immersion in Audience; an immersion of which it must remain fundamentally unaware in order to have its experience as its own.

The subject-tyrant, rejoicing in the illusion of the all-encompassing nature of the light shed by its beam of consciousness is blinded to the hidden condition of Audience which its beam casts into shadow. It remains ignorant of the foundations of its own possibility and ignorant of the source from which it shines outward towards the objects it illuminates and consumes into itself.

But what is it that the subject is unaware of? What escapes its grasping gaze? What does it mean, this “hidden condition of Audience”?

§84 Audience Gives Me Back to Myself

The relatively still and silent body of an audience member among other audience members seated in rows of chairs in the dark all facing the same direction “derealizes” the audience member in the sense given by Dufrenne: “I have derealized myself in order to proclaim the painting’s reality and…I have gained a foothold in the new world which it opens to me, a new man myself” (Dufrenne 1973: 57).

Whilst I do not disappear in Audience in front of the work I must give myself over to it. I do not leave the real world for the world of the performance but offer myself up for transformation by it. In my becoming its vehicle it makes me, to some degree, amenable to its requirement for completion, and it becomes my vehicle, which I enter into as the means by which I am transformed. In giving myself over to the transcendental intersubjective Audience I am made amenable to the performance.

But equally, in my participation, it becomes what it is. It requires me to attain its completion. It attains this completion in the witness of Audience. Whether I am an audience of one or one of a thousand, it is in Audience that the truth of the performance is
proclaimed. And this proclamation of the truth of the performance is attested to by the transformation into themselves of the audience members. “We always discover in the work what we are. But we must add at once that it is the work that awakens us to ourselves” (Dufrenne 1973: 60). The performance has something planned for me. I will stand or sit somewhere for a certain duration in a certain place and witness events which have been contrived to have an effect on me. I give myself over to these demands to allow the performance to have its effect, to attain the fullness of its truth.

The performance sets up a play of memory and forgetting for me. I forget the thoughts, cares and concerns which have been foremost in my daily world, as I hand myself over to the demands of the performance, and it ignites other potentialities in me, which have been forgotten, and I am released from the important concerns of my daily world into other possibilities of myself. In Audience I am refreshed; my faith attested, my beliefs affirmed, my belonging reinforced. I get myself back from the concerns and cares of my daily world.

But for this to occur I must immerse myself in Audience. I must join in the belonging to loosen the bonds of the particular self which I must be to function normally in the world. I must subject myself to the demands of this particular audience, in attainment to the condition of Audience, so that, as one of these others, as a counterpart, as anybody, I am given to myself.

In Audience, the subject, through its own dissolution, receives itself back.

§85 The Self Enlarged

The self of our thoughtlessly random, common, everyday existence, reflects itself to itself from out of that to which it has given itself over (Heidegger 1983: 161).

It is a truism of hermeneutics that the self reflects back from things, or as Heidegger has it, “we rediscover ourselves in things” (161). But this is not the reflection of a thought aware of itself, a scrutiny turning back on itself: “the ego bent around backward and staring at itself”; rather, it is more like reflection as used “in the optical context, to break at something, to radiate back from there, to show itself in reflection from something”
In the reversibility of Heidegger’s hermeneutic world of always already being-in, Dasein can only find itself in things, in the things that are with it daily:

\[\text{tending them, distressed by them, it always in some way or other rests in things...we understand ourselves and our existence by way of the activities we pursue and the things we take care of (159).}\]

Ricoeur applied this relation of dependence of self and things to the work of art, with his concept of “self-understanding in front of the work”, according to which all understanding “is to understand oneself in front of the text” (Ricoeur 1991: 87-88).

\[\text{It is not a question of imposing upon the text our finite capacity for understanding, but of exposing ourselves to the text and receiving from it an enlarged self, which would be the proposed existence corresponding in the most suitable way to the world proposed...as reader, I find myself only by losing myself (Ricoeur 1991: 88).}\]

It is obvious that the practice of attending in audiences, in its immersiveness and intersubjectivity, with the aim of asserting belonging, values and judgements, is a complex gathering of selves. We gather to affirm who we are and what we believe in, to share joy, awe, concern and reverence. In a very direct and unambiguous way, we give ourselves over, in Heidegger’s sense, to Audience, to nevertheless come away again as triumphant subjectivity, reinvigorated, spouting its aesthetic judgements, affirmed in its belonging, assured of its objects, buoyed up by its beliefs, happy in its enjoyment.

In Audience, through giving myself over to participation in a group, submitting to the purpose of that group in offering witness to the performance which calls for completion, in the immersion in perceptual, experiential situatedness with others towards, in the holding of the suspension of myself in the withness and the towardsness, in the way I am given back to myself refreshed, enlarged, enriched and affirmed, I encounter and participate in the fundamental drama of the birth of subjectivity, in the revealing of the I to itself through its giving over to these suspensions. The primary belonging-together before the grand spectacle of the world, without which I, as myself, would have no existence, would not be able to think myself or find myself reflected back from my immersion with the others towards the things, is laid out and enacted.

But it is not enough to merely assert that this is the case. Part of the job here, to the extent
that this research is an intentional analysis of gathering to witness, is to reveal in detail and depth the ontology of how this giving over of self gives self back to itself anew, to reveal the transcendental dimension of these transformations. Specific reductions must be conceived and conducted to ascertain how something like ‘sense of self’ or ‘self-affirmation’, occur, play out and concretize in Audience.

Heidegger’s intuition of the fundamental co-originality of self, other and world offers a solution to the apparent paradox of the way subjectivity is enlarged or bloated in Audience. If the fundamental nature of the subject is that it is in-the-world-with-others, then the greater the concerned absorption, the towardsness-together, then the more intensified and foregrounded the subject will become. Because there is actually no opposition between subject, others and world, because they are bound together in the world in which they find themselves and each other, it follows that the more intensely and concentratedly absorbed in that world they are, the more the subject is subjectified. And as Heidegger contends: “The closest kind of encounter with another lies in the direction of the very world in which concern is absorbed” (Heidegger 1985: 241).

§86 Undeclinable Assignation

Levinas offers a possible clue to the way in which the subject, through its giving over to witness, is itself given. Under the call to responsibility for and to the other, the I emerges in the passivity of pure exposure and susceptibility:

It does not posit itself, possessing itself and recognizing itself; it is consumed and delivered over, dis-locates itself, loses its place, is exiled, relegates itself into itself (Levinas 1981: 138).

And in this “relegation” into itself, this “withdrawal from oneself” (138) an inwardness is hollowed out. And this inwardness is a disengagement in the extreme passivity. This disengagement is the “latent birth of the subject”, the separation of a unique subject; “an exposure to an obligation for which no one could replace me” (139).

Here Levinas presents the story of how the self emerges from the giving over to the demand of the other. This plot is relived in Audience, where, in subjection to the demand of the call for completion, the self, “in the passivity of an undeclinable assignation” (139)
bears witness to that which transcends it but which makes it an instance of belonging to an us. As a devotee, as a believer, as a member, as a citizen, as a clan member, I am given to myself as the one which I am, recognizable through my separation and relatedness to all of the others.

So the subject, emerging from the immersion in Audience with its tastes, its judgements, its opinions, its pronouncements, becomes possible only through subjection to the demands of the belonging (or non-belonging), with, or against the others in the immersion.
D. Audience and Performance

§87 The World of the Work

For Ricoeur, the enlargement of the self, this recuperation of the self in the text happens by exposure to, and appropriation of and by the “world of the work”.

Ultimately what I appropriate is a proposed world. The latter is not behind the text, as a hidden intention would be, but in front of it, as that which the work unfolds, discovers, reveals (Ricoeur 1991: 87-88).

It is important here, for my purposes, to avoid the pull towards exploring this “world of the work” in terms of the work itself, and to maintain focus on the role of Audience in the unfolding and enabling of this world. That which the work “unfolds, discovers, reveals” happens in Audience, very literally in front of the work. The work gives itself to Audience for witness, required for its meanings to achieve completion and fullness. And the job of this thesis, in relation to the performance, is to hold fast to the task of showing how that completion occurs specifically in Audience.

But still, the question of how self is refreshed and reinvigorated in Audience requires an examination of the ways in which the world of the work is given to the self in Audience. For it is precisely as a world, as a shared and verified objective reality apperceived, apprehended and apppresented in Audience, that the work and the self attain their communion and mutual exaltation. And any objective world is always the work of an audience; is conceived in, presupposes Audience. The verification of an object as what it is, is always a concretion of transcendental intersubjective processes.

And this promotion of the public towards humanity is possible only through the work. If the aesthetic object expects of the public not only its consecration but also its completion, conversely the public expects of the work its promotion to humanity. Therefore the aesthetic object brings no less to the public than it receives from it. The public must be a public for it and raise itself to the universal. And, of course, it can constitute itself in this way only because the work first acts on the individual and by itself invites him to an
The performance is something quasi-subjective, is something subjective, so it throws out a world before it as the audience members throw out a world before themselves, and it is the encroachment of these two worlds in the audience as they surpass themselves towards each other that creates the world in front of the work.

§88 Performance and its Audiences

The performance, in its requirement for completion, places its demands on us. It is something subjective. It puts forward its demands as manifestation of the assurance of its being. It occurs in a certain place, at a certain time, for specific reasons, under given circumstances. In order to participate in its call for completion, in the audience which forms, to gain the grace, the thrill, the delight, the entertainment, the wisdom that the performance offers, the individual audience member must obey its demands.

And to attain to this in-order-to of completion, it is a demand that we must realize, that we must proclaim, that we must exalt. The truth with which the performance is pregnant, its possibility, calls upon the audience member, and in Audience together, the audience members rise to, and are extended by the performance and each other. The fuller the completion offered to the performance, the fuller and the more glorified by the truth of the performance is the audience member. The more fully the audience member offers themselves to the completion, even if only in the steadfastness of refusal, the more verified the audience member becomes in their own truth by their immersion in Audience to the given performance.

Likewise, the performance exists only through an audience which concretizes it and recognizes it. Audience is an element for the performance, in which the performance bathes and nourishes itself, as much as it is an element for the audience member. Audience is the communion between audience members and the performance.

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48 A discussion of my use of Dufrenne’s concept of “the public” can be found below at Section IV, Phenomenology of Audience, §99 Audience and the Public in Dufrenne, p. 273.
The performance exists in the service of a world which aims at incarnation in the performance. As acted on as well as acting, the audience member exists in the service of a world incarnated in the performance through the gathering of Audience.

An audience has a performance and a performance has its audience. We say “I am in an audience”, but we could equally say that the performance resonates through Audience in me. I must immerse myself in Audience with others in order to allow the performance to resonate with me. Audience facilitates the resonance of the work in me. In order to be in Audience I must somehow make myself anonymous, an anybody, one of the others, as required by the performance, for it, a counterpart, in the we.

Similarly it is the anonymity of the spectator which is indicated by the theatrical performance which I am attending or the exhibition of pictures which I visit. And of course I make myself anybody when I try on shoes or uncork a bottle or go into an elevator or laugh in the theatre (Sartre 1984: 551).

The performance posits its audience as an undifferentiated we. I go to the performance to immerse myself in this undifferentiated we.

We have also seen that the others are in no way experienced as subjects in this experience, but neither are they apprehended as objects. They are not posited at all...I have a lateral and non-positional consciousness of their bodies as correlative with my body of their acts as unfolding in connection with my acts in such a way that I cannot determine whether it is my acts which give birth to their acts or their acts which give birth to mine (553).

§89 A Performance is for an Audience

A performance is for an audience. It is aimed at an audience. It is a demand for an audience. It lays down a demand for which it requires audience members to offer completion in Audience. At a performance of *Ma* by the Akram Khan Company at the Sydney Opera House, an audience of Australians are offered participation in a world which deliberately seeks to blend Asian and Western dance values. An individual audience member might see a dilution of pure Kathak dance, or a display of pyrotechnic skill by muscular, developed bodies, or a piece that is not as exciting as his previous
work, or a breathtaking spectacle, or a bunch of arty types jumping around. The performance is all of these things in its attainment of completion by the audience which attends-to it. But in its call for a completion on its own terms, it is aimed at a specific audience, which it projects for itself, which in its status as quasi-subject, it requires for the affirmation of its value.

As an audience, in Audience, brings its attention, concentration and expectations to a performance which more or less successfully draws that audience into gathering, as the audience members give themselves over to the performance in Audience, the completion they offer to the demand laid out before them brings them to themselves as the values which they themselves are. In Audience, a performance affirms the individual audience members to themselves as their belonging. They are fans, they are believers, they are followers of their team, they are family members, cognoscenti.

A god who does not need to be believed in is no god at all.

§90 Being-Performed-to and Attending-to

Audience forms as being-performed-to as much as it attends-to. Being performed-to and attending-to are reversible, asymmetrical directions in the same relation. The completion offered to a performance by its audience cannot exist without the call for completion given out by the performance. Without an audience, of one or many, in close or distant proximity of time and place, concrete or imagined, there can be no performance. Without the call for completion, motivated or accidental, stated or silent, implicit or explicit, there can be no Audience.

§91 The Quasi-Subjectivity of the Performance

Audience ought not be conceived as a kind of group subject perceiving and interpreting the object of the performance. This prejudice stems from limiting the conception of Audience to attendance at entertainments. It brings with it discussions of the relative passivity/activity of reception, and semiotic/hermeneutic attempts to compile networks of psychological and affective micro-processes occurring in the spectator to account for what they are doing in audiences.
But, more accurately, the performance itself is something as subjective as it is objective, and as subjective as is the audience member. These polar oppositions and studies based on them are relatively useless in accounting for the phenomenon of Audience. Dufrenne attempts to remedy the situation, or at least offer a more adequate rendering of it, by conceiving of the work of art as a *quasi-subject*.

In short, the world of the work is a finite but unlimited totality, a totality which the work shows through both its form and its content, while soliciting reflection as well as feeling. This world is the work itself, considered not in its immediate and meaningless reality as a mute thing without a soul but as a thing which surpasses itself towards its meaning—that is, as a quasi subject (Dufrenne 1973: 190).

So the work is involved in its own straining towards meaning, irrespective of the participation of any actual present audience member. This is because a performance, or any work of art, is an expression of a state of affairs *prepared for* an audience. So despite the presence or absence of anybody experiencing it at any given moment, it nevertheless, in its essence, attains to its completion in Audience.

Part demand, part offer, the performance is the expression of a world which can, or might exist, like any object, but cannot reach its fullness of completion without the mutually affective co-participation of audience members, imagined, sole or multiple, proximate or dispersed, in Audience. This is not a “signification attached to representations” to be deciphered, but a “more fundamental signification” (196), perhaps as fundamental as the sincerity of the *standing-for* which underlies and fundamentally constitutes all signification. The performance and the audience member are responsible for and to each other. Audience member and performance share a responsibility for each other and with each other for that to which they bear witness. The performance itself, as subjective, is subject to, bears witness to that of which it is the expression: the shared value of belonging. Audience is not a contract between free agents, but a graver responsibility; a mutual submission to a shared subjection to bringing each other into being.

The conception of performance as an entertainment offered to an audience for assessment and appreciation clouds the crucial issues here. Certainly the theatres, sports stadiums and
cinemas where subject-spectators objectify plays, games and films are places where the immersion in Audience occurs in some cultures, but to understand these events through the prism of a subjective/objective ontology as though it were the fundamental underlying structure enacted there is to skim the surface. Ontologically, Audience is no mere being-entertained. It is an intimacy; an intimacy in which audience members and that to which they bear witness become revealed to each other in their mutual belonging to shared value.
E. Gathering

§92 Everywhere People Gather

Everywhere people gather to witness. To learn, to bury and praise the dead, to dream in ancient ruins, to the Hajj, to bet on roosters with razor blades tied to their legs fighting to the death, to listen to stories, around fires, in meetings, conferences, courts, parliaments, to celebrate the richness of the harvest, to fashion parades in shopping malls, to buy and sell stocks and shares, to watch a man walk on the moon, to sing and dance, to execute their enemies, to watch the fastest men on earth run a hundred metres, to praise the skill of their fellows in sport and entertainment, to welcome strangers.

Seemingly, all pack, herd and swarm animals gather to do something like witness. Cows do it, when a disturbance happens at the fence, possibly endangering them. Lions gather together to witness the behaviour of the prey at the beginning of the hunt for food. Bees do it in observation of the dance of their returning sister which communicates the location of the pollen. All pack, herd and swarm animals: ants, dogs, elephants and humans, do it. We gather together to witness that which concerns us.

But although I hold to this definition, I am aware of its more contentious limits, and ultimately I am neither a botanist, nor a zoologist. I am a worker in the humanities, studying people, and, more limitedly, in line with the definition of the object of performance studies that I have inherited from that interdiscipline, with its roots as the bastard offspring of theatre studies and anthropology, I am studying gathering to witness in everyday human behaviour, in places of worship, in sports stadiums, in theatres and cinemas, in front of TV sets, at car accidents by the side of the road, and in any other situation where people gather together to attest their belonging to shared value.

It is precisely because of its ubiquity and prevalence in animal life that gathering to witness remains unexamined and hidden; a taken-for-granted fundamental structure of the social. But equally, it is because of this taken-for-grantedness and hiddenness that it requires phenomenological explication in the spirit of Heidegger’s exhortation.

What is taken-for-granted as being self-evident is the true and sole theme of philosophy (1982a: 58).
§93 Gatherings to Intend

Witness is attestation to and validation of the reality and worth of the phenomena to which it is borne. This is what differentiates gathering to witness from other forms of intentional gathering—production, assertion and dwelling, for instance—although there is certainly assertion in witness and something produced by witness, and the ethos, or characteristic mode of dwelling, undoubtedly bears witness to values and attests to reality in the extent to which it is revelation of ways of being.

The characterization of these modes of gathering in terms of intentionality, as gatherings to intend, allows their understanding through the different phenomenological conceptions of intentionality, and the implicit definitions of meaning upon which they are predicated. For instance, the intentionality of production, understood through Merleau-Ponty’s operative and body intentionalities, for which perception and intentionality are not a question of optics and mentality, but the insertion of the whole body in situations, allows the characterization of that which is produced as a type of physical/bodily objective meaning and truth.

And likewise, the gathering to produce attests to the reality and worth of that which is produced, and validates, through perpetuation, the characteristic mode of dwelling of those who produce. And it would also be possible to point out the ways in which dwelling is the production of a way of life. These gatherings to intend are not discreet entities but mutually dependent, complementary, and to an extent which needs to be clarified, contingent and arbitrary divisions of the whole field of intentional relatedness.

As I have stated, the full elaboration of these dependencies is not the job of this thesis. But, in answer to criticism I have received concerning the breadth of my definition of Audience as gathering to witness, and the question of its applicability beyond the discussion of the aesthetic entertainments and rituals which are customarily grouped together as the proper object of performance studies, it is necessary for me to clarify the motivation of my contention of the status of Audience as a fundamental structure, not

49 See above, Part II: Phenomenological Groundwork, §12 The Phenomenological Tradition, pp. 45-67, for a history of the phenomenological definitions of intentionality.
only of these entertainments, but also revealing of their consubstantiality with all the
transcendental intersubjective phenomena—the attendance-to car accidents, theatre-
going, pilgrimages, instruction, reality TV shows and ceremonies—included within the
definition of Audience for the purpose of this thesis.

§94 What is Gathering?

Gathering or assembly, by an ancient word of our language, is called
“thing” (Heidegger 1975c: 153).

Once again, it is necessary to begin this section with the negative observation that in this
case gathering is not simply a group of people coming together for a shared purpose.
Gathering is understood in this thesis in light of Heidegger’s ontological use of the
concept, as a meaning of being, of logos, as the gathering of things coming into
themselves, holding sway as what they are, making themselves there. So the question
then becomes: what comes into being and how does it come into being when a group of
people gather to witness? Just as witness has been shown to be more than a simple
looking at, to be a bringing into being in attestation, so likewise, gathering is the way of
the witness, it is the holding together as what it is of that which comes into being.

Gathering…as a turning toward, pulls beings together into the
gatheredness of their being (Heidegger 2000: 180).

If we were to talk about Audience as though it were some thing, we would assume,
according to Heidegger’s definition of the thing, that it is some thing because it gathers
up into itself as what it is. Audience though, is not a thing, but rather, in its essence, it is
the gathering of things: an essential moment of the coming forth of things; of the letting-
come of things.

The interplay between gathering and witness opens the dimension of Audience. In
Audience, gathering and witness belong together. Audience is a letting-come. Gathering
and witness open the dimension where the letting-come occurs. Through the attestation of
witness and the coming forth of gathering, that which shows is let come into being as
what it is.

Between them the gathering and the witness bring forth beings, bring value into being,
bring self into being, bring community into being, bring humanity as transcendental intersubjectivity and sharedness into being.

To understand how this occurs it is necessary to give closer heed to Heidegger’s conception of gathering.

§95 Ontology of Gathering

To be human means to gather, to gather and apprehend the Being of beings, to take over the knowing setting-into-work of appearance and thus to govern unconcealment, to preserve it against concealment and covering-up (Heidegger 2000: 186).

In the Introduction to Metaphysics and ‘The Thing’, Martin Heidegger gives a deep ontological interpretation of the concept of gathering. In a discussion concerning a reappraisal of the original meaning of the word logos to the ancient Greek mind, he claims that “logos does not originally mean discourse, saying” as it is usually translated; there is no “immediate relation to language” in logos. Rather, for the Greeks, the word originally had more of a sense of “gleaning, collecting wood, harvesting grapes, making a selection…laying one thing next to another, bringing them together as one—in short, gathering” (2000: 131).

He finds, in an analysis of some fragments of Heraclitus, that logos “essentially unfolds as the Together in beings, the Together of the Being, that which gathers…that comes into being…what holds sway” (135), and finds that

[w]hat is said of logos here corresponds exactly to the authentic meaning of the word “gathering”. But just as this word denotes both 1) to gather and 2) gatheredness, logos here means the gathering gatheredness, that which originally gathers. Logos here does not mean sense, or word, or doctrine, and certainly not “the sense of a doctrine”, but instead, the originally gathering gatheredness that constantly holds sway in itself (135).

He then goes on to tie logos as gathering to phusein and noein as the central ontological concept of “the gatheredness of beings themselves” (137). A being is that which holds sway in constancy as what it is. This approach underlies the conception of ‘thingliness’ in
the later work ‘The Thing’, where he claims that “[o]ur language denotes what a gathering *is* by an ancient word. That word is: thing...The thing things. Thinging gathers” (1975b: 174). This extends to the contemporary meaning of the word thing in English where we speak of states of affairs as things; when we say for instance, “things are looking up”.

After reminding us that this is no mere “etymological game”, but a giving thought to the “essential content” of words, he embarks on drawing a broad and astonishing connotational web, beginning with the observation that “the Old High German word *thing* means a gathering and specifically a gathering to deliberate on a matter under discussion, a contested matter”. It is very fruitful for this thesis, as it concerns gathering to witness as attestation through performance of the practices which gives an us its values, to follow Heidegger’s subsequent meditation, in which he traverses the Latin word for “a matter for discourse”, *res*, with its origins in the Greek “eiro (rhetos, rhetra, rhema)”, meaning to deliberate on something, and takes us to *res publica*, “that which, known to everyone, concerns everybody and is therefore deliberated in public”. He notes that the Romans used *res* “almost synonymously” with *causa*, “that which is the case”, before the latter term took on the sense of causality of an effect, and ties it to the Italian *cosa*, meaning what, and the French *chose*, thing (Heidegger 1975b: 174-175).

This etymological array gives us not only a historical-conceptual connection between the very nature of things, the intersubjective origin of objectivity and the human practice of gathering to witness, but a deeper ontological substratum which entails the way in which things, states of affairs, and human belonging-together, all partake in a movement of gathering, which Heidegger recognizes as “the gatheredness of beings themselves” (2000: 137), the coming-together as what it is of that which holds sway.

The question here is: how does this fundamental ontological conception of gathering, this holding sway, occur in the ways in which audiences are gathered in their usness through the attestation to shared values in Audience?

First, it is important to note the twofold nature of the gathering that Heidegger has described. It is the gathering to discourse which allows the gathering of the thing itself. The *res publica* is the gathering which gathers that with which we are concerned. When
people gather in audiences, that to which they attend, the value, the truth, the skill, the relation, the beauty, gathers as what it is. Audience is a gathering which gathers. The audience members, gathered in their shared witness, allow the gathering of that to which the witness is borne through their completion of it. So, the value, the truth or the belonging which makes us into an us, to which we attest in Audience, can only gather itself through our gathering. The twofold gathering of the audience members and that which comes to hold sway are inseparable moments of the same phenomenon.

Whilst Heidegger’s deliberations on the words thing, res, causa, chose, dink, with their meanings of thing, gathering, that which shows and comes into being, do not necessarily bear directly on the question of Audience, it is in the connection between the pertaining to, the bearing upon, the showing to, the coming into being, the realization, that this line of thinking provides clarification, because, in the bearing of witness the performance becomes what it is in its fullness, it attains its completion. It is brought into what it is, it stands forth as showing.

We gather together in Audience to bear witness to our truths; truths which gather us as the us which we are and from which our selves emerge. The truth which gathers and holds sway in Audience is the truth to which we attest.

So it is only in our gathering that humans apprehend and institute that which gathers.

§96 Gathering and the Divine

The question motivating the primordial reduction:50 the unknowable depths of the other person who looks like what I think I look like because I think I look like him; who exhibits behaviour that appears to accord with mine, and who shares this common time and Nature with me; but whose inner experience is utterly separate from mine, utterly unapprehendable in the same way as my own. We are always strangers. We never coincide.

50 For a discussion of Husserl’s primordial reduction see Part II: Phenomenological Groundwork, §15(d) Four Reductions: The Intersubjective (Primordial) Reduction, p. 78.
As family, as fellows, as co-workers, as humans, in our nations and our neighbourhoods in our clubs and our societies; in all our gatherings we are always a gathering of strangers.

And in Audience, drawn together by that to which we bear witness, side-by-side, in validation of the truths and meanings that are ours, that make us ‘us’, that give us licence to say we, we gather in anticipation before that which transcends us. Heidegger gives us our awaiting of the divinities as one of the co-ordinates of the fourfold which constitutes our humanity (Heidegger 1975c: 150). We await the divinities. We need to ask: what does Heidegger mean by “the divinities”, what or who are the divinities which we await, and how do we await them?

Putting the full explication of these questions through the close reading of Heidegger’s text aside, it is possible to say preliminarily that the divinities are something to which we, as human, belong in our awaiting of them. As one of the folds of the fourfold in which we are given, the divinities must belong primordially to the human. We are in a relationship of belonging with the divinities. We belong with the divinities in a relationship of awaiting.

And we turn to that to which we belong in awaiting to remedy the catastrophe of our ultimate mutual separation, our irreconcilability, our mortal finitude. Side-by-side, in proximity without coincidence, we turn away from each other to that which is not us, that which transcends us, to give validation and reality to our shared world, to attain the index of our we. That to which we belong as ‘us’ and which belongs to us in its giving us our ‘us’, our belonging together. In the belonging together of our awaiting. An awaiting which never ends, which, if fulfilled would no longer be an awaiting, and would therefore be the end of the human. We await the healing, the resolution of the unknowable, and we await it in our infinite supplication to the divinities.

The audience voting to evict the undesirable house member on Big Brother, voting together from their own separate homes to assert who belongs and who does not, awaiting the judgement of the majority, the faithful kneeling towards Mecca from all over the world in separate time zones bearing witness awaiting the will of the God to whom they belong and who belongs to the faithful, gather with each other as surely and as
completely in a proximity closer than mere synchronous presence in the same room.

The viewers in their separate homes, the faithful kneeling in prayer, remain strangers, but in their gathering to witness, through the validation of that which transcends them, they belong. Side-by-side, together but unreconciled, gathered in expectation in Audience by that to which they bear common witness. The finitude of irrevocable separation awaits infinite remedy.

The awaiting of the divinities is of the essence of the human. Philosophers await the revelation of the Gods of truth and reason in their ever truer argument and algorithm; scientists await the falsification of the currently held doctrine; the faithful await paradise kneeling in prayer towards the birthplace of the Prophet; the football follower awaits the moment when the coach, the players and the strategy all come together in the ultimate moment of the holding aloft of the cup, the unfurling of the pennant in glory; the democrat awaits the voice of the people to speak in the election of the ruler, bearing witness to the axiomatic truths of freedom and equality. We wait for the time when the forces that are greater than us, the infinite values which exceed us but make us an us, come to us as enlightenment, victory and glory.

We gather in ceremonies to invite the gods to give us good harvest, to save our souls, to bring wealth and good government, to show us the truth, to exalt our belonging. And, if we are to believe Heidegger, it is the mark of our humanity.

§97 The Intersubjective Divine

In an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, sitting in a circle, facing each other, the once utterly destitute and isolated alcoholics bear witness to the divinities as “the god of our own understanding”, as the source of the sobriety which leads to their return as “responsible and productive” members of society”.

The alcoholics gather together in the knowledge that they can only keep what they have, their sobriety, by giving it away to others in need as it was given to them. They “share” their stories, nodding in “identification”, “looking for the similarities not the differences”. And they continually refer to their “gratitude” to “you people who have given me back my life”.

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This is gathering to witness as the divine. That to which the recovering alcoholics bear witness in their anonymous societies is their very belonging. The acknowledgement that they share a common underlying spiritual, mental and physical condition and that they must come to be with others who are like them is that to which they bear witness. Through belonging to “the fellowship”, they are given life, the ability to function normally and “freedom” from the “isolation” of the “disease” over which they are “powerless”.

The gathering of alcoholics occurs in regular meetings. They must continue to attend meetings on a regular basis or they will “lose what they have”. The gathering to witness is the source of their healing. Left to their own devices, they will drink and their lives will fall into ruin. It is only through coming to the meetings, performing their stories to each other through “sharing”, and bearing witness, in Audience to each other, that they are healed.

§98 God and the Human

Husserl’s theory of the primordial reduction skims across the surface, and does not touch the phenomenon of Audience, but reveals to us, in the necessity of its resort to appresentation, pairing and analogy, the ultimate irreconcilability of a conception of our relations with others coming from a subjective perspective. We gather in Audience to hang together in the face of the source of belonging, of the absolute, of the infinite—as the value of the vote in democracy, as the value of faith in god, as the value of belonging to the team—in all of these belongings, each of us belongs to that which comes before us as we bear witness to it, in the seeking of the reconciliation of that which has never been and will never be reconciled. God is the reconciliation of the irreconcilable.

The divinities always come before the human. God made us; always. That is his job. And yet we gather to await him. We do it because we have always done it this way; it is the way of our ancestors. And we gather, in anticipation of ceremony, before our ancestors, as they did before theirs, and as our heirs will gather before us. We gather to witness in anticipation of the divinities who were always there as our condition. We anticipate that which was there before us. The coming of the infinite, of god, is the source of our
separation. Before god we were inhuman. It is only in the awaiting that we become human. The mortal span that opens as the awaiting is the measure of the humanity of the human. The span in which the measure of the human is laid out. The terror of the irreconcilable, irrecuperable passing of time is given its measure, is contained, made known according to a standard in the span of the awaiting.

The question of this thesis, assuming, as it does, not only the ubiquity of gathering to witness in human cultures, but the foundational moment that gathering to witness constitutes as a ground of the humanity of humans, aims at the whence and the whither of gatherings to witness, conceived as awaiting the synchronous bringing to presence of the truth of the ultimately unsynchronizable eternal and always prior divinities in the destitution of human finitude as remedy to the ultimate irreconcilability of the isolation of separation.

Whether it be in the axiomatic truths of justice, liberty and equality, or the faith in a creator, in the laws of nature, or in the values of truth, beauty and goodness, it is the divine that makes us human, that initiates our humanity. The divine is the essence of humanity. The divine always comes before the human which awaits it and bears witness to it.

A people become a people by gathering to witness in the awaiting of its divinities. The divinities, in coming before me in my awaiting, give me dimension, bring me forth as human. In awaiting the divinities, I am brought forth as myself, among others who are brought forth by the same divinities which are there for all of us in the same gathering to witness. The divinities are the source of our belonging. We are responsible to and for each other in our belonging.

The infinite is not indifferent to me. It is in calling me to other men that transcedence concerns me. In this intrigue of transcedence the non absence of the infinite is neither presence nor representation. The infinite is to be found in my responsibility for the other (Levinas 1983: 113).

In the reality TV show, the gods of democracy come before us, as we, with mobile phones in hand, bear witness to that to which we belong, in democracy, through the vote.
The vote is the voice of the god of democracy. We vote. We maintain an us in our values of freedom, our right to choose, and our responsibility to the values by which we belong, by voting off the undesirable house member, the less competent or believable singer or by electing the politician who we believe understands our needs and priorities and serves our interest most effectively.

§99 Audience and the Public in Dufrenne

Dufrenne draws a distinct difference between audience and public.

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51 It has been suggested to me that I should use the notion of “public” with caution. I am informed by these critics that this need for caution comes from anthropological notions that the term “public” is too Western-centred, that there are many cultures that have no such notion. I am aware that eminent anthropologists would not have begun such a debate unless they perceived the need to do so. I am also aware, (whilst addressing what I hold to be irrelevancies) that I should anticipate criticism stemming from feminist work on the notion of the public/private binary. In anticipatory refutation of these criticisms, I note that I am using the term strictly as used by Dufrenne: to denote a larger amalgamation of witnesses to any given performance than an audience present in a room together for a specific duration; an amalgamation which nevertheless bears, specifically in its temporal or placial dispersal, proximity and magnitude, on the experience of the audience present in the room. Further, I use the term public to denote a psychological-ontic formation, distinguished in its worldliness from the transcendental-ontological formation of Audience. If I were to be drawn to discuss other, not entirely relevant notions of the public, I would be much more likely to cite Heidegger’s concept of the publicness of the ‘they’, which “maintains itself factically in the averageness of that which belongs to it, of that which it regards as valid and that which it does not, and of that to which it grants success and that to which it denies it. In this averageness with which it prescribes what can and may be ventured, it keeps watch over everything exceptional that thrusts itself to the fore. Every kind of priority gets noiselessly suppressed. Overnight, everything that is primordial gets glossed over as something that has long been well known. Everything gained by a struggle becomes just something to be manipulated. Every secret loses its force…Distinctiality, averageness and levelling-down of all possibilities of Being for the ‘they’, constitute what we know as ‘publicness’. Publicness proximally controls every way in which the world and Dasein get interpreted, and it is always right…because it is insensitive to every difference of level and of genuineness and thus never gets to the ‘heart of the matter’. By publicness everything gets obscured, and what has thus been covered up gets passed off as something familiar and accessible to everyone” (1962: 165). But my job here is not to be critical of any notions of the public, or of the public itself, or but to describe phenomena in as unprejudiced a fashion as I can muster.
Here we use the narrower term “audience” instead of “public” to denote the compact and transitory group which attends a performance (Dufrenne 1973: 48).

He emphasizes the corporeality of an audience, quoting Alain: “this great sea of flesh within which signals ceaselessly rebound, ever more powerful because of its mute dialogue” (Alain, cited in Dufrenne 1973: 48). This intimacy is mutual affectivity “discoverable in the kind of human warmth and emotion which a rapt crowd exudes” (49). The affectivity flows in multiple close loops of exchange, between performers and audience members, and in which audience members actively collaborate without ever losing their awareness of their perspective and their work as audience members. On the other hand, the term “public” refers to a “morphologically dispersed group of people” (50) characterized by a movement towards “what is universal in the human” (63). The public grows vertically as a historical object, in front of which “I am joined today to those generations and civilizations through which…it has passed” (67), and whose historicity bears upon my appreciation of the work; and it grows horizontally as the spread of reputation, prestige and appreciation, always moving towards increasing universality as its influence grows.

However, in this distinction, Dufrenne remains at the ontic level. These are differences of proportion and proximity, which are undoubtedly interesting and rich enough in their own right to warrant further study, but which, in an ontology of Audience, tend to blur and lose their distinctness. Dufrenne’s analysis enters the realm of the ontological when the individual “spectator” joins with the “work” in the “aesthetic object”. His transcendent object is the “aesthetic object”. The transcendent object of this study, however, is Audience, the hidden, unthematized soup, the condition from which the intentional beam of the individual audience member’s understanding, affect, attention and awareness grasps and illuminates that to which it bears witness; and for the purpose of maintaining the phenomenological attention to the fundamental givenness of Audience, it is the essence gathering to witness, in all of its concrete forms, however placially and temporally distributed, at which this study must aim.

However, Dufrenne’s phenomenology is of value here to the extent that it does not describe a simple polar relation between consciousness and its object, but prioritizes an
intersubjective dimension. Husserl’s work, as his life progressed, pointed more and more towards the necessity of acknowledging and describing the movements of transcendental intersubjectivity in the constitution of objects, as evidenced by his increasing concern with the intentional analysis of intersubjectivity after the *Cartesian Meditations* of 1927 and into the *Krisis* of 1935.

Dufrenne, working in the complex domain of aesthetic perception, needs to account for the spectator of the work, the audience and public of the work, the work itself in its materiality, and ultimately, the aesthetic object in which they are all brought constitutively together in completion, all the while bracketing off the creator of the work. Dufrenne’s inspiration allows the description of the relations between the performance, the self and the other audience members in Audience, without falling back into textual or performance analysis of the intent or signification of the work itself.

In Dufrenne’s terms, the ‘public’ is closer to transcendental intersubjective Audience than is his fleshy “audience”. Audience can be placially and temporally dispersed, across continents and eras.

And then again how does it happen that a public can be formed and felt even when the circumstances of aesthetic perception render it invisible? It is because, in the first place, this public is not fundamentally an assemblage of individuals or the indefinite extension of a relation of an I and a thou, but the immediate affirmation of a we. Even at the theatre, glances neither meet nor question one another, and the dialectical process of recognition is not entered into. Our gazes remain fixed upon the stage and intersect only there (Dufrenne 1973: 65).

Whilst it is unclear whether Dufrenne’s terms refer to a worldly or transcendental we, it seems that his *public*, in its straining towards universality, faces more on to the transcendental domain than his *audience*. However, the usefulness of Dufrenne’s differentiation is in the highlighting of the relative temporal and placial proximity of the two formations. His *public* points the way to the transcendental domain. Irrespective of its breadth, its dimension, its ontic social function, be it ritual, entertainment or educational:
The public dissolves to make way for a mutual relationship of consciousnesses which operates on another plane. The group is a group, “essentially social”, as Raymond Aron says, only when the relations of I and thou are surpassed. And, as it happens, the aesthetic object enables the public to be constituted as a group because it proposes itself as an eminent objectivity which wins individuals to themselves and compels them to forget their individual differences (66).

And it is in this shared experience, as counterpart for the other within the group that the audience member is called to realize themself as human. The drive towards belonging is the drive towards humanity.

Man in front of the aesthetic object transcends his singularity and becomes open to the universally human...he is capable of rediscovering the stark essence of man within himself and of directly joining forces with others in the aesthetic community (68).

So Dufrenne’s concept of a public’s straining towards universality resembles Husserl’s transcendental domain, not just in its fundamentality, but in its founding of community through shared values and verifications. In the face of this object, and in the reaffirmation of these objective values, of this objective judgement of this thing that we have in front of us: this Shakespeare, this football team, this tradition, we become community.

We may say then that aesthetic contemplation is a social act...which includes at least an allusion to the other...because I feel supported by him, approved by him and in a sense answerable to him (68).

It is not a question of a collective consciousness but of a consciousness directed by a common object (69).

§100 Density of Concentration

It is the performance that is making me laugh, the performance that is making me cry, the performance that is provoking thought, engendering wonder and praise, pity and terror, and yet, in among a rapt audience I am swept up more readily by that laughter, those emotions, in ways that I would not be in a sparse or distracted audience. It is the performance is making us laugh, so the laughter of the other audience members, even
though I am laughing at the performance, is sweeping me up into the laughter at the performance. My participation in the audience sweeps me up into, or provides the density of concentration.

§101 Concentration is a Measure of Gatheredness

Concentration is a measure of gatheredness. As concentrated, audience members are being centred together with each other around whatever they have gathered to witness; the mutual centredness around or towards the performance.

The individual audience member is an emergent moment of attention concentrated in an audience. The concentration of attention is a lure to Audience for an audience member.

To concentrate is to purify, to reduce, to intensify. To bring or draw together with common centre. The concentratedness of Audience can be more or less dense, more or less gathered, more or less attentive towards.

Darkness in an auditorium concentrates attention, extracts a concentrate. Audience is the purified concentrate of together-towardsness. The witness, in submission to the work joins in the precipitated concentrate which stands as the truth of the work, its completion.

Reduction is the method of concentration, the removal of impurities. In reduced concentration, proximity is intensified; the like parts are brought closer together. The concentrated purified essence precipitates as a condensation of greater density

Concentration brings together that which belongs together. In belonging in Audience, centred around that to which we bear witness, we are drawn together in the demand of the performance for completion. Our worldly concerns, our day to day cares are suspended for the ceremony, for the afternoon at the football, for the two hours of the performance; concentrated in attention with the others in Audience, purified, brought closer together in the bearing of witness.

Concentration is the measure of gathering and the measuring of witness.

§102 Gathering and Witness

Were we to count the number of people in the room; were we to survey their
demographic profiles; were we to engage their level of expertise; were we to talk about their relationships with the performers; were we to talk about how many empty seats there were; we would not begin to touch how an audience and its members participate in Audience.

At the very moment we try to measure an audience according to these terms, at the moment we try to conceive of an audience as something that is apprehendable according to the social or economic status of its members, or in terms of psychological or semiotic processes; at that very moment we lose sight of the audience in its essence: in Audience. These categories can only give us worldly measures. They cannot measure the gathering and the witness which constitute Audience. They cannot measure gathering as it gathers, they cannot attest to witnessing. They can only count. They can only measure off against a yardstick, rendering the unknown against the known.

Participation in Audience occurs as gathering and as witnessing. And the gathering and the witnessing belong together. An audience gathers in order to witness and in its witnessing an audience gathers. Witness gathers. Gathering witnesses.

Witness is attestation to: the saying that brings forth the value, the belief, the faith, the enjoyment, the belonging. Gathering is also a bringing forth. The gathering together of that which gathers in order to stand forth as what it is. So the gathering itself attests to that which the witnessing brings forth. They are both ways in which that which stands forth comes to stand forth as what it is.

The witness gathers in the gathering, and the witness draws the gathering.
F. Notes on Witness

§103 Witness as Intimacy in Audience

Intimacy of witnessing: Dufrenne warns equating the mere physical presence of the spectator to the work with witnessing. The witness “must enter intimately into the work” (1973: 56). He writes of “reciprocal possession”, “alienation” and “bewitchment”. The witness must be intimately “involved with the work”, “possessed by what it projects”, “haunted” by it (56). And through this giving over to the demands of the work, allowing oneself to be cut through by the work, in which “our body submits to the object, allowing itself to be moved by the object”, the witness “penetrates into the world of the work” and “the meaning penetrates into him, so close is the reciprocity of subject and object” (57).

So as full witness I become a property of the work. I become the work’s proper witness; proper to it. I become its property. Involved in it, belonging to it, as the mode of completion which it demands.

This occurs in Audience. Only in Audience do I become a property of the work as its witness. I cannot be a sole witness. Even an audience of one refers to the others who might be there, who might have been there, and to the existence of traditions, to the generative dimensions of culture and history. Without the intersubjective verification, the work, as object, has no reality. Elsewhere I have shown that I can only apprehend objects intersubjectively. Even if I am the only one in this particular auditorium, in this church at this moment, the God to whom I pray exists for others, the play I am watching was written for an anticipated audience whose members are my counterparts. And further, the meaning, the truth, the validity of that to which I bear witness can only be attested to in intimacy with others.

§104 Responsibility of Witness

As witness I am responsible to that which calls for witness. My witness is the response to the call, to the requirements of the work, the God, the team. And this response is not merely the deciphering of a sign or the following of a plot by an agent in a state of relative activity and participation. Even the hermeneutist does not share the semiotician’s
naïveté in this. Hermeneutics, at least, finds the witness making a world in front of the work. But still, supporting the semiotician’s attempt to reduce humanity to the cipher of symbols, indexes and icons, beneath the hermeneutist’s interpretation of interpretations, before the subjectivity and agency which semiotics and hermeneutics presuppose, there is sincerity. The sincerity of good faith, the good faith of the standing-for with which the sign bears upon that for which it stands, the good faith which guides the faithfulness of the hermeneutist’s interpretation, the good faith which sustains the veracity of human interaction.

The act of bearing witness, the bringing and giving of witness, is the sincerity of the audience member as witness. The sincerity, the good faith, is the us-ness of the us. The Audience given to the performance by the audience. Sincerity is the sustenance of Audience. Because we believe in the sincere good faith of each others’ witness, we can belong to that to which we bear the witness. Each audience member brings themself in some way in good faith to the responsibility of the answer of the call for completion.

You do not go to the theatre to not pay attention to the performance, even if you know in advance that you are not going to like it. If you are going there with the prejudged intent to make a statement of disapproval, you do not try and block all sensory apprehension of the performance but seek in the performance that of which you disapprove, in order that you might be reaffirmed in your refusal. You do not go to church to secretly despise God. You do not go to submit yourself for two or three hours to a ritual in order to betray it, unless you do so to sincerely bear witness to a truth you believe to be greater. You bring yourself to it. The reason you go to see that particular movie is because you think that you or your companion might appreciate that movie, that director, that actor. The bringing of yourself to the witness is an act of responsibility. The work will not be given
its completion, you cannot be there for the work as the work requires, unless you hand yourself over responsibly in submission with sincerity.

Witness is not simply somebody looking at something; is not somebody simply present in front of something displayed for enjoyment or understanding. Witness is the drawing of attention, the giving of the self over to the submission to the demand. Even the brief attention to the street performer is a giving over of self. What is this street performer asking of me? What does this require to be brought to completion? And am I able to give it? Do I stay here for more than five seconds? Will I throw a coin in the hat? If I do stay here, it is because I become subject to its demand, and feel that somehow, in answering the call responsibly, that I will leave enlarged, that my subjectivity, through the subjection which produces and sustains it, will be enriched.

And if I like the performance, if it means something to me, has value for me, then, in witness, in the responsible answer to the call of the performance, I expose myself to it. I say ‘here I am’ for that which seeks witness. I am here to bear witness. All I am doing is here, being here in front of, being here for the performance, a conduit for the revelation of the truth of that which calls for me to be there for it as it demands. I deliver myself over to the task. I am for it.

§105 The Need to Say Something—Sincerity

The things we say when we leave the performance and the need to say something about it: but is there not always a need to say? And is it not in this saying, in the need to say, in the saying after leaving the performance, in the attestation in front of the neighbour, in front of the third party, that the truth, the value, the reality of that which has been witnessed, is given? In the praise, the appraisal. The attestation is the bearing of witness. We need to have something to say, and that need to have something to say and the saying itself constitute the bearing of witness. The requirement of the work is that in our witness to it, we say it. The work reaches completion in and as what it becomes in the appraisal of our saying it.

The saying could not be interpreted as a sincerity, when one takes a language as a system of signs. One enters into language as a system of
signs only out of an already spoken language, which in turn cannot consist in a system of signs. The system in which the significations are thematized has already come out of signification, the one-for-the-other, approach and sincerity (Levinas 1981: 199, fn. 9).

Witness is neither the deciphering of signs, nor interpretation of text, but an answer to a call. Witness is sincerity. The sincerity with which we bring ourselves to witness is the sincerity which is the condition of possibility of language. Certainly, a sign bears witness to that which it signifies, and certainly, that signification is an act of sincerity. If at traffic lights a green light were to show instead of a red when I am supposed to stop, if the sign betrays my faith in its sincerity, then my life is at stake as I drive into the flow of oncoming traffic. There is a sincerity in the red light, and as I bear witness to it in my stopping, as it bears witness to the state of affairs in the flow of traffic, behind the sign, as its signification, is its sincerity. The sincerity is the primary condition of the sign.

And witness, language and saying are not instances or species of signs; the dependency is in the other direction. Signification depends on the witness that is its condition. Signification is merely one possibility of language, one interpretation of language. And language is merely one possibility, one interpretation of the attestation of witness. Witness brings forth signification. Signification is merely the type of witness borne by a sign to that which it signifies, the particular sincerity of a sign. The essence of signification is standing-for. Standing-for is the type of sincerity which sustains and brings forth a sign. But signification, as standing-for, barely scratches the surface of the question of what it means to be in Audience, of gathering to witness.

That to which witness is borne becomes what it is in the attestation of its saying by the witness. Witness is not a representation, but a bringing forth. And it is in the appraisal, in the saying of the value, the truth and the reality of that to which the witness is borne, in the intersubjective verification, that it is brought forth, and attains to completion. The attestation to the truth of God, to the truth of the performance, that which the audience member brings to the performance, is the sincerity which is at the root of all language, all relation. The essence of obligation. The truthfulness of truth.
§106 Witness and Truth

Witness, the giving oneself over to the demands of the performance in sincerity, is veracity. The truth of the performance manifests through the bearing of witness. That which Levinas calls “the veracity which is prior to the true, the veracity of the approach, of proximity, beyond presence” (1981: 143): the bearing witness, as approach, allows the truthfulness of the truth.

The witness which I bear, in itself says nothing but ‘I am here’. It is simply a carrying over of myself, a giving over of myself. A putting myself before something in sincerity for the cause of its completion. In responsibility to and for it. The witness I bear is true, but with a truth irreducible to the truth of disclosure. I am not disclose anything of that to which I bear witness by being its witness. I am disclosed myself, in the offering myself up, giving myself over as an act of sincerely being-there-for. And being-there-for does not narrate anything that shows itself, nor is it the action of an agent, but rather the assumption of a passivity, a giving over, an allowing myself to be a means-by-which. Witness is not an intentional, noetic, interpretive, or signifying act, but an obedience to that which demands. Not a contract among equals, but an answer to a summons. I do not enter into a contract with the performance. I am its supplicant. It owes me nothing. I belong to it. I am responsible to it and for it. Witness is the sincerity of the truth; the response in the responsibility.

§107 Witness and Subjectivity

The performance is a call into question. The witness is called to answer, to give themself over to completion of the performance, to respond responsibly, as responsibility to and for the performance; and in the responsibility to the performance, the handing over to witness, the responsible being-there for the performance, in speaking as the witness, as the witnessing, the I, subsumed to the witnessing, fronts up in response. In having to answer to the performance as its witness, the I becomes what it is.

In the giving over of bearing witness I am not self-consciousness attaining itself in the present. But I reveal, as the condition of myself, before myself, at the origin of myself, of consciousness and of agency, the workings and gearings by which I am, with others,
defined. I do not bring myself as a discreet finished self to stand over as judge and interpreter to the witnessing, but I dissipate, I dispose myself in Audience, “derealized” as Dufrenne puts it (1973: 57). In Audience, in the witnessing, with the others, as one of the others, to become the vehicle or the means by which that which calls for witness realizes itself. It is a dissolution of self. It is the opposite of intention; the will unwilling itself; agency seeking its un-doing in the utmost passivity, to reveal a structure which is the structure of the self as one of the others in the face of the world.

In witness the subject is disturbed, disorganized, dethroned. Levinas hyperbolizes: “The ego stripped…of its scornful and imperialist subjectivity, is reduced to the ‘here I am’” (1981: 146). So although the subject-tyrant goes to sit on its little throne in the auditorium, to fondle its objects, attribute them to itself, hand down its judgements, exercise its taste, make the story its own, it is not only naively and blissfully oblivious to the hidden ways in which its experience is determined by its immersion in Audience, but also blind to the horror of its dissipation in the moment of witness, in which it must, in painstaking listening, abdicate, and be there for that which calls for witness, as its property, as belonging to it.

And in a strange twist, my bearing of witness, my subjection to the way that that which calls for witness concerns me, circumscribes me, orders me, through its call for me to say it, to realize it with my own voice, in the taking in of its value in my completion of it, in the attestation to it, in the belonging, it orders me by my own voice. “The command is stated by the mouth of him it commands” (Levinas 1981: 147). We say ‘this is what I like…I am the sort of person that…it did nothing for me…I believe that…this is true’. These are the commands to the value in that to which we bear witness. And the means by which that to which we bear witness nourishes and fortifies us. From giving over to the completion of that which calls for witness, from our saying of it, from giving it to itself as our own voice, from the dissolution comes the reassembling and the fortification of subjectivity.

And in this sincere giving over to, the structure of the subject itself is given, inspired by the values to which we attest. The subject occurs as inspired by the infinite, the beautiful, the divine, the value. The infinite and the beautiful do not appear as themes, graspable
and apprehendable, but they are revealed, glorified and attested to in the subject itself, in the
gasp, in the feeling, in the saying of ‘I am what I am because I can attest to this
beauty, to this value, this feeling, this good, this God’.

§108 Witness and Revelation

In Audience, as witness, when I am watching the play, when I am shouting for my football team, when I am kneeling before God, the value itself, the belonging to the team, the beauty of the art, the love of the God, does not manifest before me as such. God does not appear to me, truth and beauty do not show themselves to me in their substance. What appears to me is the play, the prayer, the sermon, the game.

But by my giving myself over as one of the others to the beauty, the belonging, the belief, in attestation to it, it is glorified, valued; it is our giving ourselves over to it that makes it the value that it is, the God that it is, the belonging that it is.

That which calls for witness, in its requirement of me and the other witnesses for its completion, is revealed in the fullness of its unfolding, only in our witness to it.

§109 Intersubjectivity of Witness

In bearing witness, I say ‘look at what shows itself’, and I say it to and with the others with whom I am bearing witness. And we bear witness to the truth of that to which we bear witness, to each other; and thereby, in the intersubjective validation of objectivity, our bearing witness, our saying of that which calls for completion, attests to and gives it its truth and its value.

This is not empathy, but the condition of empathy. The means by which I, in the place of another, experience what that other might experience. Because I am one of the others, and will always be merely one of the others for and facing that which calls for witness. A counterpart in witness. One of the ones who might provide it. Audience is the condition of empathy. Intersubjectivity is the condition of subjectivity.
§110 The Essential Structure of Witness

I go into a seminar in the Department of Performance Studies at the University of Sydney, where semiotics is the dominant mode of approach to the study of Audience, and an audience of twenty academics and postgraduate students gather to sincerely bear witness to what I say. I say ‘the semiotics you study is more or less worthless as an approach to the phenomenon of Audience’. They bring the sincerity of witness, the sincerity which is witness, to what I am saying. They offer it completion. Their sincere consideration of what I am saying brings completion to it. And in their world, amongst themselves, in attestation to what I am saying, in their particular mode of attestation and verification and validation of what I am saying, they do not need to say ‘O yes, our semiotics is more or less worthless’. They can say ‘we have borne sincere witness to what this man is saying. We attest to what he is saying by reaffirming that our semiotics is the necessary and most proper tool for the study of audiences’.

I come to give a seminar paper. I call for completion. To hyperbolize, I am akin in this context to a Muslim speaking to a gathering of devout Christians, come to say to them, to bear witness to the fact that the almighty has returned, and to his truth that there is but one God and Mohamed is his prophet. In the bringing of witness to what I am saying, and in their refutation of it, the group of Christians affirms and attests to who they are, and in their bringing of sincere witness to what I am saying, they make themselves who they are, they attest to that to which they belong. Their attestation to their belief in their saviour is reaffirmed in the sincere bringing of witness to what I am saying. Their sincere rejection bears witness to who they are and to who I am, and brings forth their salvation in the love of their saviour. This is the essential structure of witness.

Whether or not they agree with what I am saying is of no concern at the transcendental level. Whether or not one or more among them is brought closer to conversion is not the issue. If I were to speak before a gathering of transcendental phenomenologists who applauded and laughed with my characterization of the naïveté and scientism of semiotics, ignorant as it is of its own superficial, ontic, scientifically ungrounded worldliness, they would certainly be on my team, in greater accord with my findings than the gathered semioticians, but they would not necessarily be offering a more sincere
completion to my call for witness.

§111 The Aesthetic Infinite

All too easily I speak of gods, football and theatre in one breath. But this is not a glib
equation. This thesis is about ideals, about transcendental intersubjective audience
conceived as gathering to witness, and measured in terms of belonging and value, of faith
and beauty and truth. These are ideals, ideas of the infinite. Although the work finds its
genesis in the phenomenological ideas of intentionality, reduction and transcendence, it
bears the strain of the testing of the limits of those ideas; a strain which results
necessarily from the application of those ideas to themselves.

At the limit where an intentionality of subjects and objects is inadequate to the task of
describing the infinite mirror of reduction, and where transcendental foundations break
up, it is necessary to attest to values.

In God, we praise and bear witness to infinite values of mercy, creation and eternal love.
In the worship of our ancestors we bear witness to their eternal return and continually
restore their presence. In the belonging to our football team we bear witness to shared
suffering in defeat, to triumph in victory, and to a tradition that came before us and will
survive us.

And the infinite to which we bear witness in aesthetic performance is the Good, the
Beautiful, the True. Whether praising the adherence to the unities in the unfolding of the
drama, or the grace in the dance, or the orphic transformations of the actor, or becoming
indignant at the lies of the government; whether we are laughing, crying, applauding or
sitting silently, moved by the plight of the respondents in verbatim theatre, we bear
witness to values which we hold to be true, and which give goodness and order to our
lives. That which we like, that which tells us who we are, that with which we identify.
This is the infinitude of aesthetic performance, of mere entertainment, of Shakespeare, of
Big Brother and Australian Idol, of Oedipus Rex and Butoh, of protesting Ronald
McDonalds at the G8 conference; whether we care to admit it or not.

And this is important. We must overcome the supposed obviousness, givenness and
mundanity of statements of the order of ‘I know what I like’ and ‘it’s not my cup of tea’.
There is no mere entertainment. We do not ‘just like it’. Aesthetic performance is about the *aesthesis*, the coming together of sensuality, perception and feeling, in intersubjectively verified systems of value, concerning truth, the beautiful and the divine. It is about what affects us, that which we consider to be good and true and worthy.

Certainly, it would be possible to perform studies of audiences in terms of signification, in terms of hermeneutics and semiotics, and also in terms of the worldly *experience* of the audience members. After all, most studies of audiences are cast as ‘reception studies’ of ‘spectators’. And certainly again, if aesthetic performance were held to be reducible to a system of signs and social indexes, then it might be considered separately from religious ritual, as something of less import which does not attain to the same full dignity as the infinite and the divine.

However, the business of this thesis is the revelation of the fundamental structures which underlie the possibility of thinking semiotic and hermeneutic processes: the very structures of bearing witness, of which signs and texts are worldly manifestations. And in its most fundamental analysis aesthetic performance reveals as the structure of witness to the infinite. This is not a glib matter, not something to be taken lightly, not a mere metaphor, not an interpretation of signs, but a giving over and a bearing witness to the infinite, to that which overflows, transcends, and exceeds us: to value, to belonging, to God.
G. Proximity

§112 Audience in the Time of Distancelessness

Half way through the 20th Century, in 1950, in a meditation on ‘The Thing’ (1975b), Martin Heidegger is troubled and excited by the phenomenon that “all distances in time and space are shrinking”, with the consequence that information which had previously taken months to receive had become instantaneous; that the slow growth of plants could be sped up and made visible on film, and ancient and distant cultures were shown on film as if they were part of contemporary street traffic. And ironically for us today, he predicts how television will soon abolish “every possibility of remoteness” (1975b: 165). Now, at the beginning of the 21st Century, the internet and the personal computer have merely accelerated and emphasized this trend.

Heidegger observes, however, that this “frantic abolition of all distances brings no nearness…what is least remote from us in point of distance…can remain far from us”. This is no nostalgia for a simple presence, but rather a disruption of the order of nearness and farness. Although the least remote things remain far from us, “what is incalculably far from us in point of distance can be near to us”. This abolition of distance has created a situation where “everything is equally far and equally near…lumped together in uniform distancelessness” (165-166).

This state of affairs is of vital importance for the question of the limits of how audiences and Audience are constituted, of what sort of phenomena are to be considered as audiences, and consequently of the question of the essence of Audience. Heidegger is led, in the face of this problem to conduct an enquiry into the essential nature of the thing, “the thingly character of the thing” (167). Plumbing the taken-for-granted, unasked question at the heart of phenomenological method—the claim to the thing itself—he asks:

[w]hat in the thing is thingly? What is the thing in itself? We shall not reach the thing in itself until our thinking has first reached the thing as a thing (168).

The importance of this Heideggerian insight is twofold. First, the radical brilliance and simplicity of the questioning reminds us that the phenomenon of Audience cannot be
It has always been taken-for-granted that an audience is a gathering of people present in a room. There is a tendency in some strands of performance studies to take this type of presence, as manifested in the copresence of audience and performers in the same place at the same time, in an insufficiently questioned notion of “being there”, in the concept of “liveness”, in the unrecordability and unrepresentability of performance, in a deconstructionist dialectics of presence and absence, and in a scale of relative degrees of mediatedness and virtuality, to constitute and circumscribe the proper object of the discipline. It is ironic, but perhaps understandable, that the proponents of this mute thereness, this brute presence, tend to come from a background in semiotics, in which they are steeped in the belief in the mediatedness of everything by signs.

However, it is necessary, in clarifying the phenomenon of Audience, to release it from this circumscription, to let it show itself as what it is, to catch it in its coming forth. And, insofar as Audience is gathering, to take up questions of the measure of this gathering, in terms of distance, proximity, dispersion and presence, in delineating the types of phenomenon which we understand as audiences, and which we routinely call audiences in everyday speech. We need to distinguish that which is essential to Audience from the merely culturally specific and contingent.

It will be useful to begin with Heidegger’s observation that that which is closest to hand is not necessarily that which is nearest. We can be in a room with others and be less affected by them than by someone a thousand kilometres away sitting at a screen of a computer or TV set to which we are connected. But how can this be? What do we share with the fellow viewer voting off the undesirable housemate in the reality TV show that draws us closer to them than to someone with whom we might be seated together in a small auditorium, but who nevertheless remains less near to us?

Audience as gathering is a coming near, a coming together. And, as Husserl discovered in the Cartesian Meditations, it is “a common time-form…”, a “temporal community” at the
root of the “constitution of a world and a world time”, which is the founding basis of all community (1999: 128). Time founds gathering more primally than place. We are gathered into a single time, a single stay. Time, which gathers across the distance makes nearness. Whether or not our bodies are directly perceptually available to each other, it our shared or common time which constitutes our participation in Audience.

Even in a room full of people looking at the same event, the measure of our gatheredness, of that which makes us an audience, is the extent to which we share a common time, rather than the distance between our bodies. Presence is not simply a measure of being nearby, or perceptually available, or in the vicinity of, but is fundamentally a temporal figure, of something that is enduring, now, is enpresenting, is coming forth, showing forth. That which presents is that which shows forth. Performance is the showing forth of that which presents.

In Audience, the separate, unsynchronizable times of the individual audience members pour into the common time, the duration demanded by the call for completion of the performance: the duration which constitutes this audience as this audience. An audience is a common duration. And this duration can last for millennia or microseconds.

So, as we are drawn to our TV sets in our separate living rooms, towards the same call for witness, our mutual answer to that call connects us through that to which we bear witness. As we turn towards our TV sets, though dispersed across distances, the task of the shared watching of the TV show brings us together in a common time.

There is no virtuality in Audience. We are real and we are there in the concrete manifestation of our gathering and in our witness, in whatever form is demanded by the specific call of that which calls for completion in the gathering to witness.

§113 The Nearness of the Thing

Neighbourly nearness, then, does not depend on spatial-temporal relation. Nearness, then, is by its nature outside and independent of space and time (Heidegger 1982b: 103).

What is nearest to us is not that which is possibly within the ambit of our perception but that with which we are concerned. The value, the belonging, that which makes us an us
through the attestation of our witness, is what determines our proximity in Audience. If I kneel, as a devout catholic, in prayer at the coronation of a new pope, I am a member of an audience whose dimension spans the globe, and am closer, despite the collapse into distancelessness, to devotees in Costa Rica and Shanghai, than I am to my next door neighbour the atheist. How is this so?

§114 Closer than Presence

Whether seated next to me in the auditorium or available to me, apprehended by me only as an anonymous laugh from across the room, or thousands of kilometres away from me on the other side of the country in a different time zone watching the evictions on Big Brother an hour after I have seen them, the proximity of the other audience member is nearness without distance. It is nearer than the nearness of the apprehended object present to hand, whether that object be an awareness of another human being or any other perceived object. The proximity of shared witness, of offering completion to that which calls for witness, like the Levinasian other, as outlined by Alphonso Lingis in the introduction to his translation of Otherwise Than Being,

concerns, afflicts me with a closeness (proximité) closer than the closeness of entities (prae-ens)...escapes apprehension, exceeds all comprehension, is infinitely remote, is, paradoxically enough, the most extreme immediacy, proximity closer than presence, obsessive contact (Lingis in Levinas 1981: xxv).

Presence, that which presents, that which is present, is already the making of a distance between the subject and that which presents to it. The present moment is the span of time in which that which is here now becomes apparent. Conversely, proximity, the proximity of the neighbour, of the fellow audience member, whether they be present or not, is closer than presence.

§115 Proximity in Levinas

Throughout this thesis, Levinasian concepts are used with a sense of uncertainty. There is a haunting trepidation in ‘applying’ ideas which attain to pre-ontological status, which attempt to describe “the hither side” of realms which phenomenology had always held to
be the most fundamental levels of the approach to the being of phenomena. To speak of obsession, proximity, the face, saying, passivity, responsibility, contact, patience and other pre-events which shimmer at the unapprehendable preconstitutive limit of the apriori of the coming forth of being itself, as possibly being of use in offering explanation to a phenomenon like Audience, which attains to transcendental fundamentality but nevertheless remains unsure of the whence and whither of its ontic and ontological limits, threatens to invite accusations of theoretical assault.

And at times, there is a sense of succumbing to the danger of Heidegger’s warning, which stands at the head of this work, to not “flee prematurely from the enigmatic character of phenomena nor to explain it away by the violent coup de main of a wild theory” (Heidegger 1982a: 69). But even though these fears and dangers gather and threaten at the horizon of the work, I am compelled to carry through these investigations and possibly heavy-handed ‘applications’ for a couple of reasons. First, I detect in Levinas’ rejection of ontology, not only an attempt at the before of the categories of his predecessors, but also, in the aim beyond, a concreteness, a more direct access to phenomena which had previously held to be ‘merely worldly’, not bearing the serious stamp of philosophical transcendentality and absoluteness which supposedly give phenomenological concepts their dignity. It seems somehow that in the domain of the Levinasian face and responsibility, the border between the worldly and the transcendental is somehow effaced or dissolved. And second, it seems that the grounding of Levinas’ plunge beyond in specifically intersubjective terms exposes underlying gestures of the phenomena more pertinent to the study of Audience than those revealed by Husserl’s perceptually based version of the phenomenological reduction.

For instance, Levinas’ concept of proximity: “the proximity of the one to the other, the commitment of an approach, the one for the other, the very signifyingness of signification” (1981: 5), basing the ground of subjectivity in the approach of the other, provides a way to the condition of a taken-for-granted notion of presence; a notion of presence which blocks access to the essence of Audience, leaving us unable to apprehend anything in an audience other than a group of intellectual and emotional entities responding to a performance in a room. Even though Levinas’ claim is to a realm beyond essence, it is as a break-up of received categories by which we unthinkingly apprehend
our gathering together, and as a cracking through to what happens between us that Levinasian proximity is of use here.

It is absolutely necessary to the understanding of what is happening in that room of people in front of those so-called “live performers” that we break through to this ground of elemental immersion in together-towardsness which constitutes and conditions all Audience, whether it be across the furthest distances of time and place, or together in the same room for two hours.

According to Levinas we have lost the sense of “pure and simple” proximity as contact, exposure: the primary condition of possibility “without which no language, as a transmission of messages, would be possible”. Thus conceived, proximity is not merely “a distance diminished”, a ready perceptibility, “an exteriority conjured” (16), but “the very signifyingness of signification” (5).

It is not presence that characterizes this proximity but responsibility. Audience consists in mutual responsibility between the audience members and to the performance. The call for completion of the performance, the passivity of the relationship between the audience members and the responsibility to the performance are the constituents of Audience. The shared responsibility is the ground on which Audience comes forth.

The other audience member “does not belong to the intelligible sphere” (25). The other audience members are not objects of a cognition, but given passively alongside. They are a very different kind of presence than the presence of the performance itself, or the presence of my own experience of my own body. A simple concept of presence is insufficient to describe the differences the way in which all these phenomena are given. So the relationship with the others has to be conceived on its own terms, as the relationship between others who are pointed together-towards an object which calls for completion through witness. Levinas’ conception that “proximity is quite distinct from every other relationship, and has to be conceived as a responsibility for the other” (46), gives us a way into allowing the particular relationship between audience members to emerge. And for this to happen it is necessary to look for what is common in all manifestations of gathering to witness.

It is not the contiguity of perceptual presence that constitutes the nearness of proximity in
Audience, but the responsibility to each other and to the value, the truth, the belonging, the beauty to which we bear witness and which we constitute through the witness borne. It is “the opening up for the other”, for their enjoyment which constitutes this proximity.

The proximity of the other is the immediate opening up for the other of the immediacy of enjoyment, the immediacy of taste, materialization of matter, altered by the immediacy of contact (74).

In the reality TV show, the proximity of the audience members, gathered around screens in their separate homes, is in their opening up to each other under the demand of the performance, to its requirement for completion through the voting, the attestation to the value of the good singer, the good or entertaining house member. In Audience we belong to that to which we bear witness. And this is not a mediation. My relationship to the other is not primarily mediated by the mutual belonging, but is the ground of both that to which we belong and the coming forth of each of us as what we are. It is the passive unmediatedness of our contact side-by-side together-towards that gives us to ourselves and each other as each other and as us, as belonging to that to which we belong. Our very we-ness constitutes the object. And our we-ness is the measure of our nearness.

It is not a question of unified consciousnesses coming together in a primary “spatial contiguity” (82).

Proximity does not resolve into the consciousness a being would have of another being that it would judge to be near inasmuch as the other would be under one’s eyes or within one’s reach (83).

Proximity, rather is the “closer and closer” which “becomes the subject” (82). And yet, consequently and paradoxically, in this becoming of subjectivity, access to the proximity is lost. The proximity is hidden in the presenting of the subject. Presence obscures the proximity which is its condition. The value of the reality TV show to this study is in the non-presenting, or more accurately, the specifically dispersed presenting of the other audience members. Because the other audience members are not perceptually present, but only experienceable secondarily through their SMS messages ticker-taping across the bottom of the screen and through the statistics in the voting (and this is not virtuality, but merely a relatively more dispersed mode of presenting), the underlying proximity which is the condition, the approach of the presenting, flickers momentarily into view.
§116 Audience as the Paradox of Subjectivity and Belonging

The history of the phenomenology of intersubjectivity has been shown to turn on the axis of the question of the relative primacy of the one-on-one contact vs. the open intersubjectivity. The proximity of Audience, where the subject comes into itself through the “closer and closer”, in a “relationship in which I participate as a term, but where I am more, or less, than a term” (Levinas 1981: 82), where the belonging with an other to the value is not mediated by that value but is its very inception; where the value is not a third term but the very usness of the us which gives each of us as the subjects we are, is the enactment of the plot of the coming into being of these irreconcilable terms. And Audience shows that these terms are neither capable nor requiring of reconciliation, but demand, more appropriately, the description of their intricacies. It is not an either-or situation, but a complex of apparent separations, intertwinnings, parallels, accordances, confluences, aporias and abysses.

§117 Dispersed Audiences

I have met with debate over the broad scope of phenomena that I have included in this study, from church congregations, to reality TV shows to football crowds, to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, with particular questioning from within my own Department of Performance Studies at the University of Sydney as to whether a TV audience should be considered as the same sort of thing as an audience present in one room together. It has been my contention throughout that viewers seated around their TV sets in their separate homes have been gathered to witness and so require inclusion in my considerations. This conviction firms for me as the ideal and irreal nature of the object of my study becomes clearer. Audience, as I am studying it, is something other than the bodies in the room. It is an intersubjective condition. It seems less and less like an isolable entity the more I turn towards it.

The appresentation of other beings to me in the world in which I find myself immersed

52 See Section II. Phenomenological Groundwork, §20 Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity, p. 94, for the genealogy of this debate.
does not require their presence. Heidegger gives a clue:

[for such an appresentation it is not necessary for others to be ‘personally’ near so to speak. But even when the others are encountered personally or, as we can most appropriately put it here, ‘in the flesh’, in their bodily presence, this being of the others is not that of the ‘subject’ or the ‘person’ in the sense in which this is taken conceptually in philosophy. Rather, I meet the other in the field, at work, on the street while on the way to work or strolling along with nothing to do—always in a concern or non-concern according to his in-being. He is appresented in his co-Dasein by his world or by our common environment (Heidegger 1985: 240).

The appresentation of others to myself and the affective impact of them on my experience do not require their presence within my immediate perceptual field but within our common “world”. I would not watch *Australian Idol* if nobody else was watching it. I would not judge, according to established and widely-held intersubjective prejudices which I have received and fostered concerning the valuation of what constitutes a “good singer”, a “good entertainer” and a sellable popstar, I would not text in my vote, I would not look forward to the next heat, I would not support my favourite, glorying in their grand performances, and feeling disappointed with their errors of judgement in choice of repertoire and application, unless the others were there doing it too. I would not scoff at the ignorance of my fellow audience members as those I considered worthy were voted off. I would not discuss it with my fellow addicts the next day, as millions do around water coolers and shop counters across the whole country.

According to the definition of the transcendental intersubjective phenomenon gathering to witness, this audience, in its combination of dispersedness, magnitude and ubiquity, in the way it hangs together over distances of time and place, provides a key study, a prime opportunity to belong to and participate in the very phenomenon of which this thesis seeks to be an expression. I can locate my object more readily and more concentratedly in the reality TV audience than I can in an audience of thirty similarly-dressed, similarly-opined subscribers at a play by a new Australian dramatist at the Stables Theatre or a politically motivated contemporary performance piece about refugees, performed to an
audience of the faithful at Performance Space.\textsuperscript{53}

\textbf{§118 Proximity and Dispersal}

In terms of transcendental intersubjective Audience, the difference between, on the one hand, a theatre audience or a football crowd, and on the other hand, a supposedly mediated, or so-called ‘virtual’ audience, sitting around television sets or computers in separate homes, or at the movies, where, although together in the same room as each other, the audience members are not in the same room as the performers, must be shown to be merely a difference of proximity and dispersal.

It is a temporal problem. There is a prevalent error in performance studies, a fault line along which this notably quibblesome discipline has staged some of its more prominent recent battles. This error is predicated on an aggrandisement of an insufficiently thought through notion of presence. A misunderstanding of the spatial mode of the present. Presence is not just a here, but a here-now. The now is not a simple present, but (as needs to be fully described in a series of reductions), a complex structure of pasts and futures gathered into a specific duration. The gathering to witness constitutive of Audience spans these pasts and futures, drawing in its wake whole histories and projected outcomes, bearing the traces of other past productions of this play, or the grand tradition of my team, or the social values and traditions inherent and enacted in the reason why this house member should be evicted, weighed upon by our march to the pennant, or the new understanding I wish to reveal, or the future career of the singer for whom I, and millions of others are currently voting.

The differences between these various types of audiences occur at the level of the mundane; they are ontic, worldly phenomena. Essentially, there are other depths to plumb. At the transcendental level, they are accountable as differences of temporal and spatial proximity and dispersal, of densities and concentrations of gathering, as

\textsuperscript{53} The Stables theatre is a small well-established theatre in inner city Sydney, with a reputation for supporting new work by emerging Australian playwrights. Performance Space is Sydney’s premiere experimental theatre venue. Both have established and loyal audiences.
attentional intensities of witness, which must be taken into account, for the purposes of
this thesis, as manifestations of the essential transcendental intersubjective phenomenon
of gathering to witness.

Proximity and dispersal are pressures and densities of Audience to which audience
members are susceptible. The immersion and involvement in Audience are a measure of
these pressures and densities on the susceptibilities of audience members.
H. Passivity

§119 The Passivity of Audience

The passivity of Audience is the being given over to. The being given over to each other of the audience members, the being given over of the audience to the performance, the being given over to exposure, to completion, to affection, sensibility.

The passivity of Audience is not reception but is a passivity more passive. In Levinasian terms, Audience obsesses us, is all around us, it besieges us, we give ourselves over to it, we are immersed in it, and in the writing that comes from Audience we give ourselves over to the writing, we offer ourselves to each other. We attempt to write the passivity, the besiegement. This is what is happening to us. This is the disturbance, the eddies in which we are swept up. This act of writing is the giving of myself over to. The saying signifies this passivity.

§120 Obsession, Witness, Passivity

The relationship between me and the other audience members is not objective or spatial or recuperable as thought under the orders of consciousness. It is obsessive and non-thematizable. They are strangers. I have no prior commitment to them. I have no prior commitment to this audience. As Audience, it obsesses me. And this obsession is stronger than commitment. They are not my family, my co-workers, people to whom I am contracted in obligation, but in Audience, my proximity to them in the shared witness, gives a belonging through the demand upon us all of that which calls for witness.

Audience obsesses me. Audience obsesses the audience members; besieges, lays hold to them. It belongs to witness that an audience member abdicates freedom and agency in the passivity; a passivity more passive than the passivity of reception. Witnessing is handing over, sacrifice of myself to the demands of the performance and Audience.

This thesis lays hold of me. It obsesses me. It stalks me day and night. And not because I think it would be wrong to not do it, or it would damage my future employability, but because it has called me and nobody else to write it. This is obsession. Having to answer
to a call which is stronger than and prior to a commitment to social function or expectation or purpose. Were I to be unable to finish this, I would experience a sense of loss of myself, of who I think I am. My humanity would be diminished. I would die with the failure on me. This is obsession. It comes from outside.

Obsession is from the Latin *obsidere*, to sit down before, besiege, occupy. Obsession is the action of besieging. I am the vehicle or the hostage of this thesis in the same way that Audience besieges me in front of the performance.

I have been critiqued by my supervisor, Lowell Lewis, for ascribing a kind of agency to ‘the thesis’. Whilst I agree that formations like ‘this thesis contends’ and ‘it is a fundamental belief of this thesis’ are ugly and perhaps too frequent, so frequent that they may be jarring to the reader, I believe it is an important function of ‘this thesis’ that it highlights its underlying assumption that the concept of agency (like the concept of freedom which agency aims to supersede or to replace without the same weight of unwanted connotation, but which it merely manages to presuppose) with its inherent unquestioned acceptance of subjectivity and objectivity is inadequate not only to the description of Audience, but to the transcendent account of any human activity. The thesis must highlight that in Audience, for witnessing to occur, an audience member must hand over, must allow themselves to be obsessed, besieged, gotten by the audience, in a passivity more passive than that presupposed by the subject/object contract of reception theory. The lateral relation with the other audience members, the leakage, is before agency, more passive than the relation to the performance. Such passivity is the precondition of witness. Witness is surrender, sacrifice, submission, the handing over to being obsessed, besieged, the allowing of Audience to take hold of the audience member.

And what of the way the performance lays hold of its audience? To what extent does the performance obsess its audience? Is it that the obsession of Audience holds the audience members to the call for completion given by the performance? As witness I am besieged by the performance. In the bringing of completion, I am obsessed by the performance. I suspend, to whatever extent is demanded of me, my daily concerns, and, in the prescribed place for the allotted time, according to the predetermined arrangement of how the performance is to unfold, and give myself over to the call of the performance, submitting
to its demands. But this can only happen in the besiegement by Audience. It is my submission to Audience, my being gathered to witness, which holds me to the performance.

This thesis operates as a call. The phenomenon Audience has called for me to bring it to completion. I must attest to it. Similarly to the way in which I am given over to witness in auditoriums, cathedrals and stadiums, I must allow myself to be besieged by the concept, to hand myself over to it, to be obsessed by it, to allow it to take hold of me in a painstaking listening. I must bear witness to it in the thesis. It is a surrender. The thesis too calls me. I listen. If I am rigorous in my listening, in my attending, I will hear its call clearly.
I. Attentionality

§121 Phenomenology of Attention

The authentic and pure values—truth, beauty and goodness—in the activity of a human being are the result of one and the same act, a certain application of the full attention to the object (Weil 2002:120).

A brief check of the academic databases shows that although an attempt to define, to measure, and to ascertain the importance of attention has been a consistent concern of psychology for over a hundred years, there has been limited application of phenomenological methods to the question. However, a brief overview of the phenomenological work performed on attention reveals some consistent findings and approaches and points to possibilities for further research.

a) Merleau-Ponty—So-Called “Attention”

It is true that we carry with us, in the shape of our body, an ever-present principle of absent-mindedness and bewilderment (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 31).

In the Phenomenology of Perception, in a chapter entitled “‘Attention’ and ‘Judgement’”, Merleau-Ponty dismisses the concept of attention, placing it in inverted commas, in the service of his aim to supersede the intellectualist/empiricist debate. He uses the chapter to pursue the Gestalt psychological schema of figure and background, in its value and its limitations, in the broader issue of the founding of “a new set of categories”, “a complete reform of understanding”, which would enable us to “translate phenomena accurately” (1962: 56).

It is necessary to question of “the objective thinking of classical logic and philosophy” in order to lay aside “the categories if the world” in “a true ‘phenomenological reduction’” (57). In this way we would “arrive at a true theory of attention” (36).

b) Depraz—Concrete Embodied Attentionality

As we already said, intentionality would remain the scaffolding of each act of consciousness, whereas attentionality brings in its flesh
Natalie Depraz asks the question of attention in the title of an article: ‘Where is the phenomenology of attention that Husserl intended to perform? A transcendental pragmatic-oriented description of attention’ (2004). She cites section §92 of Ideas 1, noting that Husserl never followed through on his claim of “the necessity of performing a systematic ‘phenomenology of attention’” (Husserl, cited in Depraz 2004: 5). Although “the attentional experience quietly accompanies and softly permeates most analysis of perception”, and “the theme of attention is spread widely throughout his writings” (Depraz 2004: 5), and despite the fact that Husserl himself noted in Section §92, that “attention is a central theme of the psychology of my time” (Husserl, cited in Depraz 2004: 6), the founder of phenomenology never lent his rigorous approach to a detailed analysis of attention, and never gave it consideration as a distinct practice alongside the three phenomenological methods of intentionality, reduction and constitution. Depraz combs through Husserl’s work, finding various references to attention: in the aforementioned section of Ideas 1, in Experience and Judgement (1939), Lectures on the Theory of Meaning (1908), in First Philosophy (1923), and in the Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis (1918–1926); and she notes the secondary role given throughout to the consideration of attention. She also comments on Husserl’s ambivalent relationship with the concept, valuing it at times as just one kind of intentional modification, and at others as a fundamental category.

In light of this neglect and ambivalence she seeks to bring the question of attentionality to the fore, asking:

[w]hat are the gestures, the concrete cognitive operations, the precise rules and the practical performances through which attention may come to the fore as a theme endowed with a phenomenological dignity? (Depraz 2004: 7).

In Depraz’s view, attentionality is the “performance”, the “concrete embodied…real praxis of intentionality, reduction and constitution” (7). Paying attention is what we actually do as our inhabitation of these structures by which phenomenology apprehends consciousness.

She interprets Husserlian references to attention as “attempting to show the peculiar
concrete flesh of attentionality beyond its general intentional structural scaffolding” (10). Consequently, she conceives attentionality as a vertical dimension of horizontal intentionality, as the intensity of intentionality, and sets about a description of the phenomenon as it develops in phenomenological methods.

Depraz notes two tendencies in Husserl’s buried version of attentionality which she excavates from the various texts. First, attention is a two-sided gesture: both a turning oneself towards that which is intended and a becoming salient of the object. One the one hand there is the physical activity of turning the perceptual apparatus, and on the other hand, the way in which that which is turned towards becomes released or selected from the field and consequently affects the perceiver. Second, there is the “gradual gesture of noticing”, or the “signitive scope” of attention: taking note of [merken], noticing [bemerken] and remarking [aufmerken]. In this scheme, the object is either “just barely noticed”, “favoured”, paid attention to primarily or secondarily, or “completely unnoticed though still appearing” (13). She also cites, from the Lectures on the Theory of Meaning, a framework of “primary noticing”, “secondary noticing”, “marking”, “adjunct intending”, and “thematic intending”, in explanation of different strata of being aware of meanings of words or the words themselves.

Here,

> attentionality is conceived in terms of modifications or changes. Such embodied and precise gestures suggest that the attentional activity permeates and nourishes as an everyday praxis every one of my intentional perceptual, remembering or imaginative acts of consciousness (12).

And so attention becomes a question of degrees of modifications and changes in intentional intensity, framed in terms of “concrete bodily and signitive gestures” (14).

This leads Depraz to put forward the hypothesis that “attentionality is a dimension of the acts of consciousness whose originality is to show the character of changing present in all the intentional acts of consciousness” (14). Attentionality is a question of the inherent variability of acts of perception, which “furnishes every act of our consciousness with a material fluctuating density due to its inner variations and its concrete changeability” (14). Further, attentionality
is presented as going through, as penetrating the different strata of consciousness, be they perceptual, remembering, imaginative etc. It is a sort of transversal qua vertical activity of my consciousness, perpendicular to the horizontal linearity of intentional directedness, since it gives us an access to the mobile depth of our consciousness as being a weave of vibrating variations (14-15).

This is the worth of attentionality to the study of being in Audience. In Audience, perception, affection, memory, expectation, imagination and disposition interweave synaesthetically through all the senses, as constitutive strata of a perpetually shifting field in which that which calls for witness, the time and place of the performance, and the predisposition of the individual audience members are given in a dense multidirectional intersubjective ebb and flow. Attentionality accounts not only for modal shifts in the horizontality of that which attracts the attention, but in the shifting of the degrees of attentiveness itself, which can give us access to the wandering, changing attention, the different modes, intensities, vibrations and contents which constitute Audience.

As a constitutive dimension of all acts of consciousness, and as the material/empirical dimension of those acts, attentionality functions as a “materialized eidetics” (15) of consciousness. In Audience, the tangible study of the concentration, depth and dispersion of attention, gives us access to a rich source of the materiality of the intersubjective and relational flows in which the experience is given.

Importantly for this study, Depraz leaves us with reference to Minkowski’s observation that

attention contains quite essentially in itself inattention: it is an illusion to try to focus one’s attention. It is the death of attention…so as to suggest that distraction is the better way to broach the theme of attention rather than attention itself. This remark brings to the fore distraction and modes of inattention as a more relevant access to a phenomenology of attention (18).

In the audiences to which we attend, as we bring our attention to the shifting modes of attentionality, it is undoubtedly the losses, the switches and the wanderings that are the most telling and informative. The hidden intersubjectivity of Audience, the very object of the study, which is, in essence, not available for observation when the performance is
being attended-to, is only apprehendable in the flickering moments, the hesitations in which the attention to that which calls for witness breaks down.

c) Steinbock – Levels of Awareness

In an article entitled ‘Affection and attention: On the phenomenology of becoming aware’, Anthony Steinbock draws on Husserl’s genetic phenomenology to conduct a detailed analysis of fine shades of awareness and attention, both passive and active, to “enumerate seven ways of becoming attentive within perceptual and cognitive life”, from the relatively most passive “dispositional orientation”, to the relatively most active “philosophical attentiveness” (Steinbock 2004a).

Whilst Steinbock’s detailed schema may not be directly applicable in this investigation into Audience, there are certain principles and concepts underlying his categories which should be noted as pertinent and which might profitably inform the work.

Steinbock has probably done more than any other scholar to elaborate Husserl’s concept of passivity. 54 In this article, his characterization of the relatively more passive modes of attention are of particular interest. First, attention, in its lawful–fundamental regularity, operates primordially in the “constitution of sense”; second, passivity suggests a lack of active subjective agency on the part of the subject in the constitution of sense; third it evokes perceptual and cognitive registers which are pre-predicative, pre-reflective and pre-linguistic; fourth it “designates a sphere” at which “object-like formations (not objects as such) are constituted”; and finally, passivity is the condition, the basis of active levels of truth generation and validity (Steinbock 2004a: 23).

In illuminating the workings of the passivity of the side-by-side relationships between the audience members; in the unthematized affective role of the place and time of the performance; in the hiddenness of the constitutive intentionality of the gathered together-towardsness; in the way that all of these things remain unthematized in the reflected glare of the subjective beam on the performance; in its judgements, opinions and tastes; in the

54 See particularly his translation of Husserl’s Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic (Edmund Husserl Collected Works), (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001).
transcendental status accorded to intersubjectivity as gathering to witness; in its foundational role in the constitution of value and belonging, Steinbock’s elaboration of Husserl’s passivity is useful to a phenomenology of Audience.

Also, perhaps coincidentally with Merleau-Ponty, Steinbock credits the lure of the object as motivation for perception: “a motivational (not causal) solicitation or pull to attentiveness” (24). This gives more agency to the object, in accord with Dufrenne’s “something subjective” in the work. The demand of the performance for completion, the demand of Audience for belonging: both work to elicit “an orientation and pattern of constitution from the subject, beckoning the subject to peruse it more closely and participate in the formation of its sense” (24).

He also refers, in common with Merleau-Ponty and most of the work on attention listed here, to the figure and ground of Gestalt psychology as “an irreducible perceptual structure” (24), and notes Husserl’s own appeal to Gestalt, which he contends is “presupposed throughout” (24).

Finally he refers to the “many things” which rival for my attention. This is very much evocative of the situation in Audience. Despite the fact that I am awed by the grand structure of the cathedral, by the volume and harmonic deluge of the organ, by the solemn sanctity of the institution, designed to concentrate my prayer; despite the hushed darkness of the theatre auditorium and the orientation of the rows of seats towards the stage; despite the density of the bustling crowd which buoys me on the football terraces, my thoughts wander, my attention strays to memories, to expectations and hopes, to random perceptual moments and distractions, which can determine the quality of the experience. Attentionality in Audience is much more complex than a simple subject/object correlation between a performance and a spectator.

d) Arvidson—Gestalt, Gurwitsch, Figure and Ground

P. Sven Arvidson has sustained a study of the phenomenology of attention for more than a decade, culminating in the recent book, *The Sphere of Attention: Context and Margin*, (2006), and a recent turn towards an application of his theories to an ethical dimension, in the article, ‘Moral Attention in Encountering You: Gurwitsch and Buber’ (2003). He
contends that at some point researchers and theorists must effectively articulate the nature of attention since it is fundamental to an understanding of consciousness (1996: 71).

He also takes note of the amount of research devoted to the phenomenon in psychology, and finds that despite the historical length and breadth of these studies, that: “1) the phenomenon of attention is ill-defined; 2) the theory is disconnected from the phenomenon; and 3) there is a consistent appeal to an intelligent force or agent”. And he states that these inadequacies “launched Gurwitsch’s account of the phenomenon of attention over 65 years ago” (71).

Arvidson’s account of attention is based entirely in Gurwitsch’s Gestalt field theory of consciousness, according to the “essential phenomenological situation that a theme is given in a thematic field” (72).

He begins with the necessity of separating the “unity of experience” into two phenomena: “the field of consciousness” and “the consciousness of the field”.

The field of consciousness is all that is presented or intended at any moment in consciousness. The consciousness of field is the intending or presenting activity. The field of consciousness is always structured in terms of three organizational dimensions. At any moment what is presented is theme, thematic field and margin (72).

According to this schema, the theme is the coherent unity which is the focus of the subject’s attention. The thematic field is the context for the theme, including “all of the co-present items of experience which are relevant to the theme that are not of themselves thematic”. All themes are situated within a field. The margin “presents all those items which are irrelevant but are presented just the same” (73).

Arvidson’s early studies attempt to show how this schema can be used to account for changes in attention. Once again, this is in accord with Depraz’s observation that attentionality is dynamic and always concerned with changes on the perceptual field. Arvidson’s categories of changes in attention fall into “three general modifications”: 1) the theme remains constant while the field changes, 2) the theme is replaced by a new theme, or 3) there is a change in the content of the theme itself (73).

He criticizes metaphorical accounts which figure attention as a spotlight or a window, as
well as psychological theories of orienting response, divided attention, effortful attention, sustained attention, and selective attention, on the basis that they do not account for “the basic complexities in attention”. These theories are all dismissed: “insofar as consciousness is concerned, microprocesses lead to micro-results” (80). He warns further against the psychological approach of viewing attention as a complex build up of cognitive processes, because “[t]he theme that replaces the previous theme is an inherently organized Gestalt that is presented independently of the processes that lead up to its presentation” (82). The advantage of the phenomenological approach, in accounting for both the consciousness of the field and the field of consciousness, is that the object is allowed to be what it is in its showing of itself.

He finishes with a brief discussion of the margin, which is of particular interest to this thesis insofar as it might reflect on the effect of the other audience members, the place of the performance and other non-thematized events and phenomena on the apprehension of the performance and the experience of being in Audience. According to Arvidson’s scheme these factors would be marginal, unnoticed but determining factors in consciousness: “since those items are presented within the field of consciousness, albeit as irrelevant to the theme it is wrong to call them unconscious” (82).

In a later paper (2003), he presents a “lexicon”, bringing together principles and concepts from cognitive science and phenomenology in mutual explanation. In this exercise, he refines his earlier ideas on attention, refiguring the structural, organizational principles of the scheme as “gestalt coherence of the theme, unity by relevance of the thematic context, and co-presence of the margin”. He also develops the transformational processes of “serial shifting, context-shifting, enlargement, elucidation, synthesis, singling out, restructuration” (2003: 101). However, as with many of the phenomenologies outlined in this section on attentionality, it is of most value here as an example of an approach, and must remain of limited specific application in this phenomenology of Audience.

Interestingly though, as a consequence of the application of gestalt field theory, he ends up equating consciousness with attention. He comes to the conclusion that the field of attention is consciousness. And further: “attention is a better term since consciousness is more vague”. He sounds almost surprised by his own assertion, stating “this sounds
pretty reasonable to me, controversial but reasonable” (126-127).

e) Richard Lind—Microphenomenology of Attention

Until phenomenologists begin to treat their "explications" as subject
to corroboration their observations will continue to be totally ignored
by non-phenomenologists (Lind 1993: 624).

In Richard Lind’s investigation into attention and the aesthetic object, he contends that
“the aesthetic object is not merely illuminated by attention but restructured and textured
or rather constituted or made intelligible by discriminating attention” (Lind 1980: 131).

He examines a number of aesthetic theories of attention and criticizes them as simplistic
on the basis that they figure attention as a lighting beam which illuminates things, and
which switches on or off. He begins his attempt at a more satisfactory account of the
phenomenon by turning first to Merleau-Ponty’s use of the idea of figure and background
from Gestalt Psychology, but finds this scheme lacking because the idea of “the figure”
presupposes attention. A figure only becomes a figure when it is attended-to. He
interprets Merleau-Ponty’s position:

> [a]ttention, he concludes, does not merely illuminate the objects of
> experience but creates them by articulating indeterminate data into
> figures against a ground. Hence attention is no "searchlight"; it is an
> articulation process (Lind 1980: 132).

So, according to Merleau-Ponty, a figure is an area of *phenomenal intensity* on a field,
drawn together, gathered by attention. Lind though finds that there are, nevertheless,
given “qualitative differences” in the field which “can sharpen and contain this attentive
intensification” (133). In this understanding, attention

> evidently amounts to the modulation of relative intensities by which
> anything appears. Since the process is in continual flux, attention
> might best be described as *the dynamics of phenomenal emergence*,
> i.e., the manner in which phenomena continuously appear and
disappear with contrastive degrees of intensity, whether they be
sensory or imaginary, concrete or abstract (133).

In Audience, phenomena of different orders—perception, memory, temperature,
imagination, fantasy, seating, physical proximity, error, relative degrees of awareness—
continuously appear, fade, ebb and flow. There seems to be some clue here to a model of how a phenomenology of attention in Audience might proceed.

He then goes on to elaborate a schema of aesthetic experience. But, once again, preordained schemata should always be treated provisionally and with suspicion by the phenomenologist facing the phenomenon as it shows itself from itself, and consequently they are of little use in this thesis.

One of the limitations of many of the phenomenological studies of attention, particularly those based on Gestalt theory, is that they remain psychologies which act as clues, but provide no direct access to the hidden structures and fine intensities of attention, which do not readily show themselves. To get at the complex shifting phenomenon of attention at its foundations, Lind proposes a “microphenomenology” (1993; 1985), as a practical solution to the problem, through “the hypothetical reconstruction of attentional leaps too swift, subtle or slight to be ‘caught in the act’ by direct reflection” (1993: 622).

Lind’s microphenomenology is formulated as “a method for reconstructing subliminal attentional events”, and he relates it to Husserl’s mode of passive genesis, as an attempt to “describe events not subject to explicit reflection”. He considers that the psychological work demonstrates that there are “unconscious” attentional events; things that register too quickly or too vaguely to be held in memory, or even to emerge as awareness. And he suggests that these events occurring at “lower levels”, can be revealed by microphenomenology, which, although it cannot reveal hidden “causes” lurking “behind”, tries to “reconstruct, based on what is detectable from what is reflectively undetectable “in” the field, as the dynamics of its manifestation”. This, he claims, gives access to the “intelligibility” of the field itself, to the conditions of the formation of the figure. (624).

Lind’s “dynamics of phenomenal emergence” and microphenomenology recalls Depraz’s conception of attention as the vertical dimension of intentionality—the performed living intensities of structural horizontal intentionality. A phenomenology of attentionality in Audience, in its constitutive dimension, must take on not only the question of that which is attended-to, but to the comings and goings, ebbs and flows, and intensities of attention. Certainly, a question of that to which my attention is given and that from which it is
distracted, but, more importantly, to what extent, for how long, under what circumstances, and with what degree of intensification of being given-over-to my attention becomes lured by the phenomena. And subsequently, a question of how the levels of intensity allow the phenomena to emerge as what they are or appear to be. How fully do I attend, and how fully is this attentiveness given and experienced?

f) Casey—Heterogeneous Mental Multiplicity

When we pay attention to something closely, we take ourselves into its nearness, as if we brought ourselves alongside its very surface... As a result, we begin to live on its terms rather than our own alone. We let it take the lead, but we can do this only because we have first taken the initiative of a disciplined attentiveness (Casey 2004: 106).

Edward S. Casey makes a characteristically insightful and provocative contribution to the phenomenology of attention in the article ‘Attending and Glancing’ (2004). In a wide-ranging graze through some theoretical and practical psychological studies in attention, some proposed schemata of modalities and intensities of visual attending and glancing, combined with some Husserlian insights and a phenomenology of his own experience of meditating, Casey gives us a careful description of the complexity and diversity of factors constitutive of any seemingly simple act of attention.

He observes, while describing the working of different modalities of glancing, particularly in the internal glance into his own mind, states in which “the visual field is no longer merely bifurcated into focal area and background...but more adequately characterized as heterogeneous” (2004: 93). This heterogeneity is described in terms like “relinquishment of attention” (borrowed from J. M. Findlay); “de-accentuated” objects of attention; side-wise glance”; “the ‘polythetic’ character of the Blick” in Husserl; the ability of the mind to glance at “more than one thing at a time”; glancing “mentally any which way” (94). Casey catches modal changes and shifts between visualizing, remembering, thinking and supposing, and “polyaesthetic enactment...realized in several sensory modalities” (95), and paints a picture more complex and diverse than theme and field. This seems much more adequate to the description of the experience of being in Audience, and even of normal perception, where half-awareness, vague affections, anxieties, barely perceived stimuli, suddenly shifting focal areas, repetitious phrases in
the back of the mind, suggestions, memories, hopes, prejudices, unexpected stomach pains, the smell of other people’s bodies, snatch-es of song, and unresolved fears compete for and determine the durations, concentrations, patterns and objects of attention.

And he notes the philosophical significance of this rendering of the situation, carrying further Lind and Arvidson’s criticism of the concept of the lighting beam of attention.

Nor can the very idea of visual ray claim any priority in principle; we can just as well speak of a “stream” of attention, which can take various sensory forms in keeping with the character of what is attended to (just as this latter can be entertained in a number of cognitive modalities as well). Experience here becomes radically democratic; in it the multiplicity of the mental reigns (95).

This allows him to claim that the study of attention “brings out this mental multiplicity most convincingly”. And likewise, the study of attention appears to be a very useful way into the study of Audience. Like Casey’s assessment of the “crazyquilt motion” of the “heterogeneous contents we find within our mind”, Audience, although consisting in an ultimately unencompassable complex of states, perceptions, affects, memories, images and sensations, is not a total confusion—“a situation of utter distraction”—but one in which the complexity and indeterminacy of consciousness becomes apparent. We do not sit in an audience in a state of utter chaos. On the contrary, attention is heightened by its being directed towards a performance for a certain time according to the demands of that performance; according to a pattern, but nevertheless, a pattern of heterogeneous structures and contents (95).

Casey puts this complexity down to four factors: elusiveness/evanescence, braidedness, edgelessness and self-illumination.

i) elusiveness/evanescence:

the objects of inner attention…their phantom-like character…disappear almost as soon as they appear…our mental life is filled with flotsam and jetsam of a very disparate sort that calls for a special sort of multiple attention to deal with their very heterogeneity…the elusiveness of what we attend to within ourselves extends to the entire Innenwelt itself….It evanesces under our very (mental) eyes (95-96).
ii) braidedness:

our experience has a peculiarly braided quality, ordinary perception
being deeply intertwined with the mind’s coming and going in the
midst of everyday engagements (96).

Likewise, in Audience, our experience is determined and structured by what we did
earlier in the day, what we do or do not know about the performance, the way the world
of the work and the world portrayed in the work intersects with the daily world we
inhabit, the relationships we have with those with whom we attend to the performance,
the building, the seating, the broader social context into which the work insinuates itself.
And, moreover, it is not entirely possible to account comprehensively for the ways in
which these factors determine our experience.

iii) edgelessness:

the inward domain of the mind constitutes a world without edges...Vaguely as a particular memory or thought may appear to us,
still it is that very thought or memory. We deal with and respect the
vagueness as such. The inner world to which we attend leaves us little
choice but to take it on its own terms (96).

iv) self-illumination:

the attentional world...is always already illuminated, indeed, self-
illuminated...neither that of the visual ray that is beamed outward
nor that of the world’s rays that come from outside the organism.
This is a third form of light, one that begins and ends with the
mind...it is part and parcel of mental attention itself...requiring no
other source but itself (97).

Casey applies his findings in a phenomenological description of his attempts at
meditation, noting how the difference between open and closed eyes ‘melts’ in open-eyed
meditation, and how mind and body “become coterminous” in consideration of “how
important the right practice of body and breath are to the ‘disposition of mind’”. This
conjoining of terms in dualities also occurs in the way “the basic attitude of attentiveness
combines act and object, noesis and noema in a single sweep”. There is a clue here to the
way a phenomenological methodology might work. The reduction, the holding in
suspension of the doing while it is being done, in order to examine the ways in which it is done, requires a moment of hesitation to allow the saying to be apprehended before it becomes obscured in the said. Meditation teaches the skill of the prolonging and inhabitation of the hesitation, slowing the disappearance of the saying in the said. Perhaps likewise, the meditating phenomenologist in the enlarged experiential zone of the epoché can be considered to experience the “deconstructive dissolution…forming a remarkable indefinite dyad” (103).

Casey also finds structural similarities here with the techniques of Freud, Jung and Gendlin, in that their methods propose

  a mode of attention in which the usual distinctions between body and mind, intentional object and act, ego and deep self, self and other etc., become subject to a spontaneous dissolution not easily attainable elsewhere in human experience (103).

This suggests possible effective application for a phenomenology of attention as a practical means by which the experience of being in Audience can be approached in a manner which will not only shed light on the phenomenon, but provide an occasion in which the question of the degree of possibility of holding a sustained phenomenological reduction can receive a clear and consistent test. It reveals “the enormous psychological value of the process of becoming attentive…the very experience of gaining and holding attention in new and unexpected ways” (103).

And, in the case of Gendlin’s focusing technique, Casey contends that it gives access to a way of paying attention which does not “fasten…greedily” onto its objects, but which stands back “respectfully”, perhaps in a manner reminiscent of Weil’s equation of prayer and attention, “paying homage to what one takes in…by entering fully into the process of attending itself…so as to extend the process…taking it to heart” (104).

  Far from the intentionalist paradigm…not just that of noting some discrete item…but of immersing oneself in one’s own onstreaming mind…in a domain where there are no robust materialities or discrete items; instead we engage with phantom things, as evanescent as they are elusive (105).

The value of Casey’s analysis is not only in its recognition of the multiplicitous
heterogeneity of perceptual acts, memories, images and sensations in which attention
consists, but also in its revelation of its non-intentionalist structure. The phenomenology
of attention leads us into the state of “being attentive, which arises in the form of
becoming aware” (107). Rather than the illumination of an intentional beam enabling the
grasping or having of its objects, it is a being-in, an immersion.

Attentiveness is more of an attitude or posture, a praxis or process,
than something we have already acquired. It involves body as well as
mind, and both together in feeling. It is ongoing (107).

**g) Levinas—Attention is Consciousness**

As surely as this thesis begins with the possibility opened by Husserl’s noetic-noematic
structure of intentionality, it descends at its limits into an uncertain murk overseen by
Emmanuel Levinas’ moment of saying. And for Levinas, speech is “the attendance of
being at its own presence” (1969: 98). He does not share Arvidson’s surprise at the
discovery that attention *is* consciousness. “Attention and the explicit thought it makes
possible are not a refinement of consciousness, but consciousness itself” (99). The
moment of attention is the moment of thematization, and the moment of thematization is
the coming to light in consciousness, but more pertinently to Levinas’ agenda, and to the
methodological concerns of this thesis, attention is the *action* whereby the self responds
as itself.

*Attention is attention to something because it is attention to someone.*

*The exteriority of its point of departure is essential to it: it is the very
tension of the I* (99).

So, in the context o the reversal of intentionality, the “point of departure” of attention, is
the coming forth of the self. The moment of attention is the ignition of the I in its
response to the other: the opening of the possibility of both subject and object.

**h) Weil—the Giving Over of the I**

Attention consists in suspending thought, in leaving it available,
empty and subject to penetration by the object, in maintaining the
various acquired knowledges one is forced to use nearby to thought,
but at an inferior level and without contact to thought. Our thought
must be, with regard to all the already formed specific thoughts, like a man on a mountain who, looking in front of him, sees without looking at them many forests and plains below him. And especially, thought must remain empty, awaiting, not seeking anything, but ready to receive in its naked truth the object that will penetrate it (Weil 1977: 58).

The Christian mystic, Simone Weil gives us a phenomenology of attention more essential than the schematic phenomenological psychologies of Arvidson, Lind and Steinbock. She extracts and concentrates the essence of the giving over of the self in awaiting to the demand of something else.

Attention alone—that attention which is so full that the ‘I’ disappears—is required of me. I have to deprive all that I call ‘I’ of the light of my attention and turn it on to that which cannot be conceived (Weil 2002: 118).

There are two aspects of this definition which need to considered. First, the way in which attention is a diminishment of self, and second, the spirituality of attention.

It seems that for Weil, the more I attend-to something, the more I give myself over to it, the more the I diminishes. The ‘I’ is a measure of a lack of attention. This accords with Dufrenne’s conception of the witness given over to the completion of the work in the aesthetic object, and may also shed some light on the workings of Ricoeur’s extrapolation of Heidegger’s hermeneutic discovery of the way in which the immersion in the world of the work gives the subject back to itself.

Ann Pirruccello summarizes:

[Relation to Weil's notion of attention, one could say that the power of consent to self-diminishment...is one of the aspects of the loving expectation of goodness that is the core of attention, for attention is the activity of waiting, of expecting in a way that embodies self-diminishment. Only when one has suspended a way of seeing that has the values of the personal self or ego as its interpretative principle can one approach reality instead of illusion. Such a suspension is the heart of attention (Pirruccello 1995: 61-62).

In Audience, I must give myself over to the demands of the performance in the most
basic ways. I am seated in the dark, pointed towards the stage, or kneeling quietly in the lines of pews, or high in a grandstand limited to a view of the arena, for a certain appointed time, in a certain appointed place, to bear witness to that for which this time and place have been set aside. But how does this immersion, this acceding to the demand give me back to myself? An attentional reduction must be framed to ask this question.

Weil also measures out a spiritual dimension, opposing attention to will. Whereas will is merely a matter of muscular exertion, attention “presupposes faith and love”. So that attention, taken to its highest degree, is the same thing as prayer”, and “absolutely unmixed attention is prayer” (Weil 2002: 117).

And this spirituality of attention extends to all intellectual and aesthetic activities.

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\text{Extreme attention is what constitutes the creative faculty in man and the only extreme attention is religious. The amount of creative genius in any period is strictly in proportion to the amount of extreme attention and thus of authentic religion of that period (117).}
\]

Pirruccello finds different stages of attention in Weil, beginning with the intellectual attention of the student to their studies, in which, through “a suspension of our selves—our own opinions and imagination…one can come to an appreciation of truth as something universal and necessary”. This is evidenced in Mathematics, in particular, where “specific relationships must be obeyed, and rules must be rigorously applied” (Pirruccello 1995: 65).

Above this first turning to the ideal and the necessary, are the “supernatural” forms of attention—attention to “the order of the world, or beauty (66), and attention to “love of the neighbour”. To give attention to beauty is to “contemplate the necessary relations that compose the indifferent order of things with a sense of love” (67).

\[
\text{Whether we are attending to the universal beauty embodied in the order of the world, or the faint echoes of this beauty suggested by particular things or people, what beauty arouses is a longing for “finality.” By “finality” Weil means an end or intrinsic good (67).}
\]

Attention to beauty reveals the truth of the good. “If we turn our mind toward the good, it is impossible that little by little the whole soul will not be attracted thereto in spite of
itself” (Weil 2002: 117).

In the Audience group, Jakob commented that he felt that there should be some goodness, something uplifting in the attendance of Audience, that it had to be in the service of some improvement. Some higher ethical or spiritual aim had to be served. The giving over of attention, as diminishment of the self waiting in service to the other, the play, the ritual, the movie, always reveals goodness. Weil says “truth is not sought because it is truth but because it is good” (118).

And, just as “the poet produces the beautiful by fixing his attention on something real. It is the same with the act of love. To know that this man who is hungry and thirsty really exists as much as I do—that is enough, the rest follows of itself” (119).

The love of the neighbour is attention to “the human freedom or personhood of the human being we are attending to” (Pirruccello 1995: 68). Attending to another recognizes their freedom, consent and dignity, and allows them to recognize it for themself.

The loving attention that comes down from God to human beings in loving our neighbour is genuine, egoless love that unites with, and produces, its own reality as freedom (69).

By extracting the essence of attention as the giving over of the self in awaiting to the requirements of the other, and using it to gather together truth, beauty, goodness and freedom as way stations on the pathway to the divine, Weil affirms the common ground on which the various forms of gathering to witness unfold. Although it is not the intention here to provide a schema of attention or a hierarchy of more or less perfect forms of attention, it is a central tenet of this work that the basic structures of Audience: the together-towards intentionality, the passivity of gathering into belonging, the elemental immersion, the giving over to the completion of the demand, the giving back of the self to itself in the world of the work, the sincere responsibility of witness, the temporality of awaiting, proximity and dispersal, are the common ground of the practice of religious ritual, aesthetic performance, educational instruction, attendance-to sporting events; wherever and whenever people gather to bear witness to that which makes an ‘us’ an ‘us’, in rooms together, across distances and times, and that these structures are the condition and ground of the coming forth of the human.
§122 The Essence of Attention

Clearly, it appears from this phenomenological history of the concept that attention is not simply a matter of noticing or not noticing; that there are degrees and modalities of attention, from intense or pure attention, (for Weil, prayer, for Steinbock, philosophical contemplation) to, at the other extreme, Lind’s moments of attention that are so fleeting that they are unavailable to reflection. But whether or not any of the phenomenological or psychological studies, or any other scale of gradation of attention is held to be accurate, is of no consequence here. What we need to do is attempt to apprehend ourselves in our living of the structure of attention in attending-to audiences, allowing Audience to give its modes and scales of attentionality to us.

The transcendental limitation of the psychological theories, and with Arvidson and Steinbock’s scales and Lind's microanalyses and to a lesser extent Depraz’s verticality, is that they do not get to the revealed essence of attentionality. They all deal with worldly taken-for-granted assumptions about what it means to attend-to. The study of Audience, in bringing together attention and attendance, brings together the whole ambit of connotation generated by the forms of attending, and thereby opens the question onto a more fundamental ground, similar to that laid open by Weil.

It does not require any deep etymology to reveal the connotational complex evoked by the word ‘attend’. From a root in Old French meaning to stretch towards, it comes to us in contemporary English meaning to serve, to give service to, to be at the ready, in a state of ready awakeness, to turn one’s energy to, to listen to, to consider, observe, to give consideration to, to pay heed to, obey, apply oneself to, follow up, expect, await, wait on, wait for, watch over, to minister to, take care or charge of, to follow, escort or accompany, to go with, visit, be present at, to frequent, to present oneself, to take part in the proceedings of business, worship, instruction or entertainment (OED 1981: 137-138).

But the key, the core, the essence of the term in all of these meanings is in the being given over to of the self to the needs or demands of someone or something else in a temporality of awaiting. In prayer, the giving over to the god, awaiting its will; in service, to waiting on the needs of the superior; in the military command of coming to attention, to being at the ready for action; in the application of oneself to the task; in the meeting,
the worship, the theatre, the lecture, to be at the ready to give completion to that which calls for witness. The attention in all of these instances is the giving over of the self to the needs, wants, requirements, orders, demands of others, things, information, states of affairs and situations.

And in all of these instances, we await. We await the outcome, the command, the truth, the revelation. Attention is the activity of waiting, of expecting something and of diminishing the self in the expectation.

In Audience we await the divinities, in patient attendance, in expectation of truth, beauty and goodness, of the aesthetic infinite. We await to find out, to marvel, to wonder. The temporality of Audience is a temporality of expectation, awaiting, attendance, attention.

And attention as waiting, as submission, as giving over to, is the being given over of the self in service to that which is attended-to.

§123 Attention as Contentment

However, in this play of loss of self in service to the other, in the process of the giving over, the object also disappears as it becomes the self, nourished and fulfilled. Despite Weil’s characterization of this play as a dialectic of presence or absence, of appearing and disappearing of the other and the self, it seems that the prayer does not annihilate the supplicant, nor the restored faith annihilate the god. Rather, there appears to be a mutually enriching dynamism at work. In Audience, for instance, the giving over of the self in attending-to the demands of the performance and the audience, gives the self back to itself nourished in its faith, its judgements, its belongings.

The witness and that to which witness is borne do not annihilate each other. They content each other, fulfil each other. A god is not a god without belief, the team needs its supporters, beauty requires the admiration and affirmation which attests to it. And likewise, the believer, the fan, the aesthete become what they are, as believer, fan and aesthete, only in their fulfilment and nourishment by that to which they bear witness.
§124 Attentionality and Inattention in Audience

Eschewing an approach of applying the pre-ordained schemata of Steinbock, Arvidson and others, which would constitute trying to make the phenomenon fit the theory, but nevertheless holding to the sense of different intensities, verticality and other illuminating concepts forged in these theories, this study will attempt to trace where attention ebbs and flows in Audience, asking what sorts of events motivate shifts in the ebb and flow. When and under what circumstances or influences is attention more or less likely to hold and waver? So, despite maintaining this sense of intensity and verticality, a more traditional horizontal analysis of attentionality is also required, following what and when we are attending-to and not attending-to: when and where our attention wanders. What we purport to do in audiences is to give heed to our inattention, in accord with Depraz's observation from Minkowski, that

attention contains quite essentially in itself inattention: it is an illusion to try to focus one's attention. It is the death of attention…so as to suggest that distraction is the better way to broach the theme of attention rather than attention itself…this…brings to the fore distraction and modes of inattention as a more relevant access to a phenomenology of attention (Depraz 2004: 18)

The description of attention best begins with the breaks and wanderings. Seated or standing in audiences, oriented towards that which calls for witness, attempting to open a reduced experiential region constituted as the attempt to experience the structure of attention while attending-to both that to which attention is given and to the structure of that attention itself, the meditating phenomenologist is given the opportunity, between the shifts and cuts, through the ebbs and flows of the intensities of the attention, to apprehend something of the givenness of attention itself.

If I stop typing and look intently to my finger nail, I am paying attention to my fingernail in a way I which I usually would not be paying attention to my fingernail. In this sense it is the intensity of the intention of the perception that constitutes the attention; the intensity with which I am looking at it. This supports the Depraz contention that the term attentionality refers to the verticality of intentionality. So when I am sitting in a theatre, even though one moment I might be listening to a speech about the fickleness of the gods
and the next moment I might be aware of a smell that is emerging from the person seated next to me, or how beautiful the harbour looked tonight, or how much I miss my recently broken-up with girlfriend, each one of these objects is the object of an intention enjoying a certain attentional intensity.

Inattention is not a loss of attention but the substance of attention. Because attention is not a beam, but as Casey has described, a heterogeneous soup, I do not lose the attention to the performance while I am thinking of something else, but merely ride the emergences and dispersions of different possible intensities in the attentional element I inhabit as the current or recent field of concerns which constitute my daily life. And the attendance to the performance is merely an alteration of the field of my daily life.

This is not a problem, because it must be acknowledged that attentionality occurs as a very complex synaesthesia of overlapping and mutually informing perceptions, memories, expectations, images and affections that constitute what we call thinking or consciousness, but in Audience the sort of inattentions that we are undergoing, the breaks in attentiveness, the overall picture of the attentionality, is one where memories, other sensations and affections intrude on a presupposed primary intention towards the performance. This gives us an opportunity to isolate and thematize, in the potted hothouse atmosphere of the auditorium, the church and the stadium, against the attention towards a primary object, the very structure of attention itself, as the structural harmonics of consciousness.

§125 *Awaiting*

The proper method of philosophy consists in clearly conceiving the insoluble problems in all their insolubility and then in simply contemplating them, fixedly and tirelessly, year after year, without any hope, patiently waiting (Weil 1970: 335).

Attending as awaiting. Weil says we always wait for God, Heidegger has us awaiting the divinities. The temporality of attention is expectation, and in Audience, in which we bear witness to the idea of the infinite, to that which exceeds us, we always await the truth, we await the revelation of beauty, we await the victory, the message, the news, the coming, the fulfilment, the unfolding of the plot, the meting out of justice, we await faithfully,
patiently. Attention is the waiting on, the waiting for.

§126 Attention and Witness

In Audience, immersed, given over as gathering, witness is borne to that which calls for completion. Attention is the measure of the completion brought by the witness.

In bearing witness and offering ourselves to that which calls for completion, the truth of the witnessing is enabled to come forward, attention brings forth the truth of the value.

So, in Audience, where we give over to the demands of the audience, where we seek truth that is true for all of us, for you and them as well as for me, is the search for a necessity that is greater than the self. And in the search for this necessity, in the patient attention to this necessity, that to which witness is borne, to which patient attention is given, achieves completion.

§127 The Demand to Attention

Gathering demands, compels us. When we come upon a crowd gathered around something in the street: a busker, a fight, somebody in need of help, we are drawn to find out what is going on, to join the mutual towardsness. We move into Audience so easily. It claims us. The gathered concentrated attention of Audience claims our own attention. In a department store, we watch as we pass a demonstration of a new kitchen appliance, attend for a few seconds, momentarily together with the others, take note of what is being demonstrated, to test whether it is worthy to claim our attention beyond the mere pull of the gathering itself. From the corner of our eye we catch a glimpse of the catwalk model or the lunchtime entertainer as we go about our business; and where the attention of others has gathered, we assume there is value and we assess that value for ourselves. As Audience claims us, sucks us into the gathering pull by which it seeks increase, we give ourselves over to the giving of Audience to that which calls for witness.

§128 To Surprise the Future

According to Dufrenne, to be attentive,
is to transport oneself into the past in order to grasp the object in its future, for there is a future for myself (a future of the world, my speech, or my gesture) only if I am already in the past, I perceive only from the past and into the future; in the present, I can only act. To contemplate or think is to return to the past in order to surprise the future (Dufrenne 1973: 347).

I perceive from the past and into the future. In bearing witness, I await the divinities, the meaning, the truths of reason: that to which I bear witness. To contemplate, to bear witness, I return to the past in order to surprise the future. I dwell here, now, in and from the past where I intend the return of the future.

It is my past which draws my attention to that which lays before me. In Audience I bear witness to that which I anticipate. I go to confession anticipating God’s forgiveness, to the football in anticipation of the glory of my team, to the theatre expecting to be entertained and thrilled by the spectacle and the stories, to a lecture to be taught something new. I go to performances and events which I expect will provide me with an experience of a certain type, style or standard. I bear witness to bring the future into accord with the past; to await and allow and surprise the new.
J. Belonging

§129 Gathering into Belonging

The audience member, as witness, provides completion to the work by belonging to it, by being in its audience. The work gathers audience members into Audience as a gathering into belonging.

“I am in the presence of the aesthetic object as soon as I belong to it” (Dufrenne 1973: 404).

Ultimately we go to be in an audience in order to belong. To be held by the audience. Belongingness gathers in an audience. Being in an audience is being in Audience with the other audience members towards the performance.

The audience is there for the performance as the performance is there for the audience. The audience and the performance belong together as completion. The audience and the performance belong together in Audience. The belonging occurs as completion of the performance in Audience.

I am in Audience to the extent that I belong to an audience. Audience members belong together to the performance in Audience.

§130 Audience Hangs Together

Audience is a principle of coherence; the hanging together of the individual audience members by their shared orientation towards that to which they bear witness.

Even though we might not know the specific demands of how to behave in a moshpit or at a trance ceremony, we already bear an apriori disposition towards gathering and witness before we give ourselves over to the specific demands of any given audience. We know how to take up a position together with others relative to something else as our shared concern. We know how to belong. Belonging is of our essence. Audience members belong together in their belonging to that to which they bear witness, which in its turn belongs to them. Audience, as belonging, is a hanging-together involvement and immersion in a multi-directional intentionality of belonging.
§131 *Intentional Gatherings*

The necessity of including in a definition of Audience the worship of God and other gatherings to witness different from traditional Western entertainment forms stems from the understanding that the gathering to sit in rows of seats in front of a sporting match or a play or a show, in its fundamental emphasis, is an instance, a type, a variation of a fundamental ubiquitous human activity of *gathering to witness*, of which prayer, sacrifice and ritual production—the witnessing of god, of value, of belonging—are perhaps, if not more primary, then at least other variant formations. And the realization that at bottom, at the root of traditional Western forms of gathering to witness lies an unacknowledged, unthematized witnessing and attestation or instantiation of value, of belonging, which necessitates their more fundamental revelation in the context of other, apparently different, but more accurately, variant forms of similar social and spiritual functions in other cultures, thereby revealing them in their truer light as specific emergences of this fundamental gathering to witness.

In the shared passivity of being called to respond, in belonging, my proximity with my fellows is instantiated. In our *belonging-to* that to which we belong we are given to ourselves as what we are, and this is why it is necessary to speak of bearing witness to God, to the team, to the ancestors, the skills of the actor, to our value, in the same breath. *Belonging-to* is a primary essence of sociality; that which gathers us. The key defining human moment is not our agency; it is our passivity. Our responsibility to that which gathers us is the essence of our proximity, our sharedness, our sociality. That which gathers us to respond, which gathers us for its completion, that whose completion can only be offered by our belonging together in witness to it. This is the irreducible form of Audience, from which stem worship and entertainment alike.

I go to church, to the football, to the theatre to be *inspired*, to learn, to know, to bear witness to the inspiration, to assume passivity, the initiating passivity, to submit myself to the transcendence of inspiration.

That which is approached in the performance, in the prayer, in the football match, in the play, as a theme, hides the gathering; the theme hides the underlying belonging-to, which fades into the margins, hides from the light of the blaze of the glory of God, the putting
together of the following of the story, the shouting at the umpire. The belonging together, the gathering and the witnessing itself fade into the margins, when in actuality, in each of these cases, it is the gathering to witness in belonging that is giving us to ourselves as us.

This is not to say that there are not other forms of intentional gathering. When a group of people get together to ritually chop down a tree or build a hut there are a number of different intentionalities at play, a number of different together-towardnesses: a gathering to produce, to assert, to dwell, to witness, among others, in different degrees in different ways at different times in the process/event.

But this thesis is specifically about the witness, about the times when the witnessing is the most pronounced intentionality, and also the ways in which witnessing functions in relation to, and within the other intentionalities. That is, production as witnessing (the way the manufacture of a car bears witness to technological advancement, the way God’s production of the universe bears witness to his omnipotence, or the way in which assertion bears witness to that which it asserts. The contention is that all of these gatherings to intentionality, participate, through the groupness, in a bearing to witness which facilitates and is necessary to all group activity. If there were no witness, there would be no possibility of a group. This is not to say that the intentionality of witness is prior to or the condition of the intentionality of production, assertion or dwelling, but rather that they are in founding relation. Zahavi refers to Husserl’s third Logical Investigation in which something’s being founded on something else implies “neither that it can be deduced from it nor that it can be reduced to it, but merely that it cannot exist without the existence of its foundation” (Zahavi 2003: 249).

The problem of the specific founding relations between the different gathering intentionalities needs further explication. The intentionality of together-towardness, in all its forms, needs to be accounted for. What do the different intentional modes have in common and how do they differ, what is essential to each, how are they related?

But there is not sufficient room in this thesis to perform such a thorough-going explication. It will suffice here to point out the need for the work to be done, and to go some way towards outlining the essentials of gathering to witness. If gathering to witness is the eidetic essence of being in audiences, is it possible to plumb the eidetic essence of
gathering to witness? How? How does gathering to witness consist and sustain? What are its coordinates?

There is gathering and there is witness. Dufrenne characterizes witness as the offer of completion. Are production, dwelling and assertion forms of completion? If so, is completion the witnessing aspect of these other intentionalities? If so, then how and to what extent do these intentional modes bear witness?

There is something fundamental underlying the looking at, listening to, participating in, performing of rituals, of attestation, which is constitutive of the witnessing in witness; some way in which the activity itself, irrespective of any agency in the individual witness, bears and is borne, some direction, some orientation, some capacity.

How and to what might the ritual cutting down of a tree, the dancing of a shaman in a healing ritual, the placing of holy water on the baby’s forehead in a christening, offer completion or attest. How do these and other performances which cannot be contained in a two-sided polar audience–performer relation, bear witness?

By attempting to isolate gathering to witness as a broader, transcultural, fundamentally human phenomenon, of which going to the theatre and to sporting events are only limited Western examples (certainly worthy of study in their own right, but in this case only in the context of their foundation), I hope to reveal the way in which the coming together to bear mutual witness to that which makes us into an us is the primary means by which we establish the reality of the world; thereby bestowing to the theatre, TV and sporting events a genesis far more profound than mere entertainment, but as sources or sites of the emergence of essences of the human. Zahavi attributes to Husserl the claim that the intersubjective experiencing of objects endows the categories transcendence/immanence, objectivity/subjectivity, reality/appearance with their meaning and ontological status. (2003: 38). If both Zahavi and, by imputation, Husserl, are correct in this case, then I would be robbing this study of its full revelatory potential by not including and trying to account for the extent to which gathering to witness is constitutive of worship, prayer and work in all human cultures. To do otherwise would limit the work so as to be of no worth outside the discipline of theatre studies.

I only know that I am me, that the world is the world, that things are things, that what I
experience is what I experience, because I am gathered to witness with others, because I
witness the world with them as they witness it with me and I witness them as they
witness me. And my self is existent only in its relativity to my gathering to witness with
others. There is no self, no world, no things, without gathering to witness. Gathering to
witness is a constitutive transcendental phenomenon.

To attempt to contain the definition of Audience within the domain of activities where a
group of people gather before a performance which has been staged for their enjoyment,
assessment, pleasure, education or whatever, misses the whole point that Audience is the
condition of these activities, not these activities in themselves. They are merely higher
level ontic formations that have come about in a specific cultural context as a result of the
fundamental need, the basic human category of gathering to witness.

It is actually an urgent necessity to include spiritual and other belonging practices, where
the shared witness is borne to God or some other third party or event. It is further
necessary to do away with the categories of participant and recipient, which have proven
utterly inadequate to describe even the most traditional Western audience practices, of
which they are nothing but the received language used naively and unthinkingly in the
realm of the everyday.

Once again, the job is to lay out that of which kneeling to pray, sitting in rows in
cinemas, carrying coffins, and jumping around in a mosh pit are manifestations:
Proximity in shared immersion directed as belonging-to.

§132 The Gathering Place

The room, auditorium, amphitheatre, stadium, basilica, mosque, roadside or field in
which an audience gathers is as much a constituent of and effective upon the coalescence
of that particular gathering as the identity of the people, the genre of the performance and
its duration.

The height of the ceiling, the presence or lack of windows, the arrangement and
orientation of the seating, ornamentation in the room, air-conditioning, the size of the
stage and its distance from the audience, will all clearly affect the experience of the
audience members and the ways in which and degrees to which Audience will occur. But
also, a building or a public space, is a living emplacement of a cultural tradition; for instance, a postgraduate seminar at the Department of Performance Studies at the University of Sydney in the AV room refers to a tradition of collegiality, a study of ethnography, semiotics, sociology and performativity, to the study of the Humanities as a field of academic investigation, to a particular interpretation of what it means to study and to know; on another plane it refers to the John Woolley Building, the formation of the Centre for Performance Studies, the changing history of the Schools and Departments in the Faculty of Arts, to the history and tradition of the University of Sydney, and Universities in the Western world. Places are sites of tradition and meaning.

§133 A Schizophrenic in a Bank Queue

Certainly, under normal circumstances, a queue in a bank is more a gathering to produce than a gathering to witness. Although it does bear witness to many things about our culture, and the individuals gathered are audience members to the extent that they constitute a shared belonging-to a validation of a way of life, the gathering to witness is not primary in their intention. However, they become an audience, that is, their gathering to witness of their values and way of life, of the spirituality to which they bear a more tacit witness just by being in the bank, becomes more explicit when a schizophrenic enters the queue smelling of urine and begins shouting and condemning them for the demons by which they are possessed. It is essential at this stage that the tacit Audience binding them together becomes foregrounded to witness the spectacle of the schizophrenic who is not like them, and they participate in the attestation to and validation of the values which cohere them in belonging to the world that unfolds in front of the performance of the schizophrenic.

The intent of the performance is no criterion for approach to the phenomenon of Audience. Whether it gathers to respond to an artistic statement, to participate in a political action, to consecrate a ritual burial, to make a contact with ancestors, to praise a god, or observe a public disturbance, an audience is a foregrounding of the shared intentionality of gathering to witness to validate and attest to the reality and value of transcendental phenomena.
§134 Football Dogs

In the world of Australian Rules Football, a most belonging-making of games, a game which defines a city to itself, the supporters are bound through the generations to a team which defines, for its followers, a mark of self, a neighbourhood, a city, a nation. In this game, the one who changes teams is called a “dog”; stripped of their humanity. Dogs appear to be like us, they belong to us, but not as one of us. Although they participate in Merleau-Ponty’s seeing which sees, they no longer bear the mark which defines us, the mutual bearing of witness to the apprehendable truth of that which summonses us.

Audience, as the mutual bearing witness to that which summonses us, is a specifying mark of the human.

Dogs belong to a pack. We are also pack animals. We belong to our groups—families, interest groups, towns, regions and nations. But in our irremediable separation, we also belong to the divine. Audience, as the bearing of witness to that which transcends yet binds us is the source of a specifically human relatedness. A dog who changes teams is no longer one of us. They have transgressed the summons of the divine and cannot be understood as belonging to the same value as us.

The source and structure of the necessity of this relation is the recognition of our ultimate separation, our ultimate irreconcilable difference. We need to draw our difference together, to synchronize it in a hanging together under the summons of the divine, that which makes us an us: the measure of who we are. The difference in us hangs together in proximity through the intervention of the divinities which come before us as the condition of our possibility.

The one who changes team refuses to bear witness to the belonging to the gods, the value, the team; to the belonging which, in the stadium, remedies our irreconcilability.

We are reconcilable only through the divinities, be it divine reason and discourse, or a bearded divinity to whom we kneel, or to the team’s colours, or to the divinities of the traditions and bards and heroes of culture and nationality, or freedom and democracy expressed in the vote, or to the sobriety which binds the once destitute alcoholics in an AA meeting, or to the truths of beauty and goodness in aesthetic performance.
And those who are not with us, who change teams, who do not believe, who do not understand, are simply *not one of us.*
K. Completion

§135 Performance Calls for Completion in Audience

For Dufrenne the work of art requires the spectator to achieve its completion in the aesthetic object as the revelation of its truth. Analogously, for this thesis, the performance requires the individual audience member for it to achieve completion in Audience.

*What the work expects of the spectator is its consecration and, simultaneously, its completion...the work has value only as long as it has being, and the primary task of the public is to fulfil this being...what the work expects of the public is, first of all, its completion* (Dufrenne 1973: 47).

This is because a performance, any work of art, a sporting event, a road accident, or pilgrimage cannot be encompassed in its entirety, adequately known. No amount of knowledge of the history of previous productions of a play, or familiarity with the text, or personal knowledge of the performers or players, or number of times a ritual has been performed, or knowledge of first aid, or number of club games attended, or knowledge of the circumstances of the artist’s life, is adequate to explain or contain the specific witnessed event. The event is shown, revealed, witnessed, undergone, experienced, joined, immersed in, in its uniqueness as the event that it is, to, by, for and from the audience that gathers for it. “No knowledge can be its equivalent and no translation into concepts substituted for it...because its primary reality is found above all in the sensuous” (47). This fulfilment and completion offered to a performance by its audience, by the audience which belongs to it, occurs as belonging in the realm of the sensible.

In this sense an audience is a performance in which individual audience members participate to bring the witnessed performance to its fulfilment.

*Whether he is at the pageants of Versailles, religious processions, or Nuremberg parades, the spectator is at the same time an actor, moved and delighted by these events. It is as if the total event, with its discipline and solemnity, had been moulded by the will of some stage director into a kind of work of art* (48).

A given audience forms according to the demands of the performance it gathers to
witness. The specific nature of the requirement of a performance, the demands it makes on the audience it requires for its completion, the particular gathering it calls for and gathers, determines the degree to which Audience occurs, and consequently the degree to which the performance gains the completion which it requires to fulfil its being as intentional object.

The demand of silence in the concert hall creates the most favourable ground on which the concentrated attention of individual audience members might gather and accumulate to best apprehend the subtlety and mastery of the soloist. The echoing height of the cathedral ceiling lends resonance and awe to the song of the gathered congregation.

The more an audience belongs to a performance, the more clearly it hears its call and heeds its demand, the more attentive the witnessing, the fuller the completion it can offer.

§136 Audience Requires Performance

But as much as the performance needs its audience to attain completion, Audience, understood in its essence as gathering to witness, requires the demand to gather for that which calls for witness. Without something to bear witness to, even though it might be only a shared value or purpose, a group of people, however large, cannot participate in the essence Audience. Audience only comes into being as drawn together or gathered up by that to which it bears witness.

§137 Individual Audience Members Require Completion by Each Other

Each audience member’s perspective on, or particular engagement with the proceedings is a completion of the performance event. But, as far as a noetico-noematic structure can be held to apply, each of these completions is a partial profile, one of a potentially infinite number of positions that might be taken up in relation to the performance. In any given audience, any individual audience member’s apprehension of the proceedings is one of the viewpoints which is being taken up by the audience members in attendance. Each of these positions taken up in relation to the performance calls for completion by the other positions taken up by the other audience members. The totality of the present audience (and it must be remembered here that the gathered present audience may be placially
dispersed around millions of screens in separate homes) submits to and partakes in the essence Audience as completion occurs. Audience requires and attains this lateral completion as it offers completion to the performance. Completions accumulate and compound.

Audience offers completion to itself, to the individual audience members and to the performance.

And likewise, just as the audience members give themselves over to completion of the performance, and completion by the performance and each other, the writing from Audience gives itself over to offer of completion by the other audience members and by the reader. Verification can only be found in the others.

The call for completion heard by the crowd gathered giving assistance to the injured passengers at the motor vehicle accident scene bears witness to pain, suffering, kindness and humanity. The completion called for and offered is in the gathering to bear witness to the acknowledgement of our shared fragility, our capacity for empathy, our communion in the inevitability of chance and death. By the side of the road, Audience exalts our humanity. Before God, Audience exalts our faith and submission. In the theatre, Audience exalts beauty, truth, aesthesis and culture.

§138 Intersubjectivity of Completion

The subject requires other subjects to achieve its completion. Just as a performance projects a world which requires witness for its completion, audience members require other audience members, present in the same room, or dispersed across places and times, or imagined, to achieve their own completion as audience members offering completion to the performance in Audience. Dufrenne’s concept of the public shows how Audience, in its essence, exceeds a given group of people in a room at a given time. When I am witnessing a performance of King Lear, even if I am alone in the auditorium, I bear witness to a cultural-historical phenomenon which bears on me. I am also “at the theatre”, a bounded cultural-historical phenomenon itself. My gods, to whom I kneel in ceremony are the gods of my ancestors, my football team is a grand tradition. All performance phenomena are fundamentally intersubjective, not only because of the obvious
intersubjectivity of the performedness by other subjects, but also on the side of Audience considered in itself. Witness calls for counterparts.

And, in fact, we shall grasp the power of the work still better in observing that its witness, even when solitary, is not alone. He is part of a public, and the constitution of this public, its peculiar nature (which is not reducible to that of an audience present and necessary to a performance),\(^\text{55}\) testifies to the reality of the work and to its effect on its witnesses (Dufrenne 1973: 64).

In Audience, in bearing witness, in the immersion into the completion of the event, the solitary audience member seeks affirmation in attestation to the truth of that to which witness is borne. This, according to Dufrenne, is a straining towards universality. Bearing witness is fundamentally universalizing. To dispense with potentially distracting problems created by the use of the world universal here, let it suffice to say that witness is a movement towards belonging, towards opening out in accord with others, seeking ever-growing contact and affirmation or acknowledgement. The individual audience member desires others to acknowledge with them the world in front the performance.

The aesthetic emotion wants to communicate and spread. It seeks confidants and co-witnesses. And it seeks guarantors as well. The demand for a public corresponds to a craving for security. The judgement of taste which ratifies and concludes the aesthetic experience feels sure of itself only insofar as it has supporters (Dufrenne 1973: 64).

This is the key to Ricoeur’s enlarged self in the contact with the work (Ricoeur 1991: 87-88). In audience, the self becomes reassured in the veracity of its objects, its place in the world. The verification of the others, functioning as “counterparts” in belonging, secures, guarantees and ratifies the judgements, tastes, attitudes, dispositions and beliefs in which the self consists. This is a higher level formation of the basic there-for-all-of-usness of objectivity. Because we can share access to a common Nature, because you or anybody

\(^{55}\) And I would stress here that although this essential intersubjectivity is not reducible to the present audience, the present audience is an instance of the broader essential intersubjectivity constitutive of Dufrenne’s public.
can also use and be shaped by this shoe, this bed, this DVD player, this law, this prayer, in the same way that I can, because we say the same things and follow the same procedures, we have certainty that we are not isolated or mad. Or, as Dufrenne writes of the theatrical play, “through this attention to the object and its properties, the play, shaping man into the tranquil and sovereign form of the spectator, invites him to be himself and not to become alienated” (Dufrenne 1973: 50).

So, simultaneously, the immersion in an audience with others coincides with a concentration of subjectivity in itself. The merging into belonging and the dominant sovereignty of the subject, although apparently opposite outcomes, appear as complementary. The more the belonging with others holds, the more the self is reinforced in its judgements.

By losing himself in an audience which is directed by the object, the spectator gains himself (Dufrenne 1973: 50).

§139 Failure of Completion—I Didn’t Like it.

When we leave the theatre saying “I didn’t like it”, this is not unfulfilled completion, but completion through refusal. It is a specific refusal of the performance, the revelation of the fully witnessed specific truth of the object for that witness. In good faith or bad faith, always with prejudice, witnessing offers completion.

§140 Expectation of Audience

Audience expects. The temporality of Audience is a structure of expectation. A demand fulfilled. As the performance demands and requires completion by an audience, so Audience is a demand of the demand of the performance; an expectation of return, of its completion in the attending-to. Hence, the “it did nothing for me” of the disappointed theatre-goer, the early exit of the sports spectator on the day when their team puts in a desultory performance. In Audience we give ourselves over to the task of witness in expectation, that the completion we offer to the demand of the performance will attain fulfilment.
§141 Completion is Not an Aim

An audience does not use the performance in the way that a carpenter might use a hammer. As much as there might be educational value, moral standards being instituted, explored or enforced, the belonging to these values in Audience is lived as an immersion, as enjoyment of a situation which nourishes at the same time as it answers the call of the performance for completion. To be sure, the use of a tool is a species of completion, as is aesthetic enjoyment, but the enjoyment of the belonging to the call to completion in Audience is not a cause tied teleologically to an effect, it has no necessary aim.
V. Conclusion
§142 Provisionality of Findings

This phenomenology of Audience is only a beginning. It is by no means comprehensive or systematic. The givenness of the object, its evanescence, its edgelessness, its modesty, its unyieldingness to containment, would make such an undertaking seem at best overly ambitious, at worst spurious.

But having undergone the description first of the process by which the object revealed itself; second, the means by which the eidetic essence gathering to witness became apparent; third, through the attempt to find the measure of gathering and witness; and fourth through the analysis of the transcendental categories of completion, proximity, dispersal, concentration, passivity and belonging, I would suspect that a further transcendental analysis of those categories would reveal again other perhaps more fundamental categories and presuppositions.

So, it would seem that the unfinishedness, the provisionality of this most important section of the work is of its essence.
§143 Unasked Questions

Perhaps the measure of the worth of a piece of research is the urgency and import of the questions it leaves to be asked in its wake. From my perspective, which hopefully will not be the only one at the conclusion of this work, the future questions which remain to be asked are clear.

a) Audience and Time.

b) The history, development and future possibilities of group phenomenology.

c) The wider application of phenomenology in performance studies.


a) Audience and Time

For all phenomenology, temporality is the most fundamental of questions. To the extent that phenomenology lays claim to the apriori in its positing of the prethetic, the preconceptual, the presupposition, the Urdoxa, and other such essential fundamentals, it places itself in the realm of the before as its most primary task. As Heidegger puts it: “all ontological propositions are Temporal propositions” (1982a: 325). And even Levinas, in positing a time of irrecoverable lapse, senescence and diachrony, turns to an ultimate temporal explanation of the phenomena he describes. Consequently, to the extent that this work claims to be phenomenological, the question of the temporality of Audience might be seen as a glaring omission.

However, the omission is deliberate. Where the work has drawn towards the question of time, I have deliberately turned away. The question of time and Audience is vast, and must be addressed as a part of a further, broader study of time and performance. To this end I have begun work with a panel of emerging scholars of different inclinations from within performance studies. A team including a theatre historian, an experiential dance phenomenologist, an essayist, a performance ethnographer and a philosopher of performance came together at the 2006 conference of ADSA (Australasian Association for Theatre, Drama and Performance Studies), to begin preliminary discussions aimed at formulating an agenda for a comprehensive exposition on the question of Time and
Performance.

In the event of the availability of the means to conduct a more in-depth study, I will also put together a team to perform some group phenomenology along similar lines to the reductions in this thesis, to study the experience of time for audience members, with an aim at accounting for the temporal structure of attentionality, as well as the bearing of broader generative historical/cultural dimensions on the experience, with, of course, a subsequent eventual aim at a more transcendental analysis.

The work on attentionality in the thesis has revealed the awaiting, anticipating structure of attention, but this is only a beginning. A full description of the temporality of Audience, as a component of a wider-reaching phenomenology of time in performance would need to address and account for the experience on audience members of the duration of performances, the question of when, at what times, with what regularity, and on what occasions audience members go to performances, to questions of repetitions in ritual performance, to ancestral time, to eternity, to historical dimensions in the changes of specific performances over time, to the experience of time for performers with different audiences, to the atemporality of the infinites of belonging, beauty, goodness and truth.

b) More on Group Phenomenology

The work on group phenomenology needs to proceed on a number of fronts.

e) The history of group phenomenology needs to be researched. Approach should be made to established forums of phenomenological philosophy and practice, to canvass what work has been done, by whom, in what areas, how it was structured, and how the proponents assessed the worth of their findings.

   From this historical study, patterns need to be established to draw conclusions about the limits of group phenomenology. What is group phenomenology? What is not group phenomenology? What constitutes group phenomenology? What are the benefits of a group approach? How can these benefits be ascertained and guaranteed? To what objects is group phenomenology an appropriate approach?

f) More projects using group phenomenological approaches need to be formulated and
carried out to test the historical, conceptual and philosophical findings.

Again, the pursuit of these aims remains dependent on the ability to attain an institutional context and the resources with which to conduct the work.

c) Performance and Audience

How does Audience shape, affect or constitute the experience of the performer and manifest in the eventual outcome of the performance?

Performers perform differently in front of different audiences of different sizes on different nights. It is commonplace for performers to speak of what they get Back from audiences. This phenomenon, whilst taken-for-granted as being a very real affective factor on the performing of performances, has received very little direct and dedicated scholarly concern.

Having clarified and revealed something of the structure of Audience, it is now possible to approach the workings of the relationships between performance and Audience within that structure.

d) Phenomenology and Performance

In my view, this is the most important question left by this thesis. Performance Studies, once an exploratory, ground-breaking, and as I have often repeated, methodologically promiscuous discipline, is beginning, perhaps inevitably, to become stale, tired, repetitive and petty, in its approaches, its disputes and its applications.

This unfortunate circumstance is occurring partly because of the institutional realities of its existence, but more insidiously, and perhaps more avoidably, because of the theoretical and political ossification of its practitioners.

I have written at length in this thesis against the absurd schematomania and scientism of the semiotic approaches to performance which have prevailed in the past at the University of Sydney, the institution which has made my own research possible. I have, however, perhaps not been harsh enough on the students of race, gender and sexuality, who still control the majority, if not all, institutions in the study of the humanities in the English speaking world, with their rapacious overdetermination and reduction of all
phenomena to the limited terms of their own warlike self-interested discourses. I believe that the bringing of these disciplines to the study of performance (and most other areas of human endeavour) commits the perpetual return of a deadening neurotic violence, in the attempt to submit everything to containment in their terms.

And worse, these discourses derive from and remain locked in a specific historical/cultural context shaped by their battle with their primary opponent, economic rationalism, which not only determines their permitted forms of existence in the institutions in which they thrive, but which, more tellingly, requires them as its other, as the acceptable institutional enemy which it can safely contain, and against whose putative excesses it can position itself as a necessity.

And I believe further that phenomenology, with the generosity of its claim to return to the things themselves, to allow the showing of that which shows as it shows itself from itself, can give remedy to this situation, in the study of performance and every other division of the humanities. The aim is to let phenomena speak rather than trying to make them fit pre-ordained schemata or theoretical frameworks.

Particularly in the area of performance, however, phenomenology, through its existentialist emphasis on corporeality, through the study of intersubjectivity, culminating in the facing of the other in the ethics of Levinas, through its beginnings in experience, through its taking into account of situatedness, through its emphasis on givenness, seems to offer avenues which might yield an understanding of performative phenomena on their own terms.

§144 Final Word

Writing this thesis has been a long and baffling process. As I approach the end I feel ambivalent in many ways. Sometimes I think it is a work of great merit which makes an important contribution to the field, sometimes I think it is a piece of crackpot idealism that bears no relation to the lived world at all. Sometimes I feel like it just arrived one day with very little input from me, sometimes I feel like I worked hard to land it. Sometimes I can convince myself that I thought it up, sometimes I feel like it got itself heard despite my best efforts.
However, the one certainty I have is that what I think of it is completely irrelevant to its destiny from here on in. I submit it for assessment and validation to the court of intersubjective verification in the hope that somebody finds it useful, interesting, or illuminating in some way. Perhaps it might offer understandings or openings for other people who venture into audiences to try to figure out what is going on there. Perhaps it might provide clues as to how a phenomenological approach could be employed in the study of performance or some other area of human endeavour. Perhaps it will provide someone with some entertainment or amusement, if only in scoffing at it, dismissing it, ignoring it or debunking it. Perhaps after a lukewarm appraisal by its examiners it will remain unread, gathering dust on a shelf in the archive room at the Department of Performance Studies at The University of Sydney. I don’t know. For my part all I can do is say that it is done, and to humbly submit it, before moving on to the next thing. For me, it has been an enjoyable conceit, a grand obsession which has made me feel as though my life has had purpose for a few years. And for that I am grateful.
VI. Appendix—Writings from Audiences
L. Emails to the Group

§145 First Email to the Group

a) General

You are receiving this email because you have expressed interest in participating in the audience experience group. I have already spoken to you all in some detail about the aims of the group and what sort of an investigation it will conduct. The purpose of this first written contact is twofold: first, to ask confirmation of your participation; and second to lay out a few quick points about how the investigation might proceed.

If, after reading this, you are unable to participate for whatever reason, I would appreciate it if you could let me know as soon as possible, so I can replace you in the group. Although the time commitments will not be too great, I would appreciate it if anybody who commits to participation will do their best to see the whole process through. I assume, though I am not sure why, that this will help to provide continuity and consistency in the results. I think perhaps that the changes we undergo in our understanding of what happens to us in the audiences in which we will participate, and the way in which we bring those changes to each successive audience attendance and to the group sessions, will constitute, to a large extent, the substance of the findings. So please let me know if you think you will have problems carrying the commitment through.

The group will meet semi-regularly, depending on where the work is at, what performances we have attended-to, and how we have dealt with them. There will be a minimum of six performances attended during the remainder of this year. This will mean attending a performance at least once a month.

There will need to be one or two discussion sessions after each performance to allow time for everybody to report on their attendance and to ask questions. The sessions will be recorded. A detailed outline of the rules for the conducting of the reporting and discussion sessions will follow in a subsequent email. It is essential that the discussions proceed according to strict guidelines, in order to structure and utilize any conflict that
may occur, to make sure that everybody reports with a degree of consistency, to ensure that the investigation remains a phenomenological experience group and not a theatre appreciation society, to keep our focus on our experiences in the audience, and to maintain the methodology of intersubjective verification which will be the means by which this research will succeed or fail in providing anything of worth or value.

There will be an email discussion group which I will set up as soon as I organize a new ISP. This will be an ongoing discussion about all aspects of the work; about what performances to attend, about themes or thoughts that have arisen from the sessions, about theoretical and methodological considerations. I consider this genre of working and thinking to be a vital part of the research. An email discussion group is something somewhere between writing and talking. It is a type of writing as thinking in practice. It does not need to have the weight and polish of final written product, of essays and articles and books, but it is also something which flows according to rhythms different from those of spoken conversation, which ebb and flow into some realm of indistinct unaccountability. I will be using the material collected in the email discussions in the same way as I will be using the recordings of the reporting sessions: as a source of data from which the findings of the research and protocols for further investigation will emerge. I would hope that everybody would be able to participate in these email discussions.

Information on the nuts and bolts will follow.

b) Theory as Methodology as Method

This research will find its way using defined and tested ways of thinking and proceeding among things and events that will unfold and develop as the work goes along. The understandings of these ways of thinking and proceeding among things with which we will begin the research need to be elaborated more thoroughly. I will provide, as soon as the mailing list gets set up, a brief outline of the work I have already done in these areas, as a framework on which we can begin. I think we will need at least one session to sit down and nut out our starting approach before we go into an audience. I suspect this will be primarily a questioning of what we are NOT going there to do.
The most important thing is that this is a phenomenology. As such it will have a defined practical relation to the work of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Dufrenne and Levinas, as well as any other phenomenologists whose work becomes relevant. It will, in its execution, be an application and testing of some of the fundamental concepts in the work of these philosophers. A more thorough elaboration of the relations between this work and some of their fundamental ideas will follow.

Once again, I have discussed this to some extent with most of you. I would hope that the relations between this work and the ideas of these thinkers is something that will develop with the work as a fundamental part of it. How the work thinks itself in the intellectual tradition it draws together will be a crucial determinant in how it proceeds. This is one instance in which it appears to become unproductive in a phenomenological inquiry to treat theory, methodology and method as separate questions.

c) Meeting

Finally, for now, there is the question of when we are available to meet. I suspect the most effective way of sorting this out is to nail down a single meeting some time soon (during the next week), and work out an ongoing schedule from there. It would be good, however, if we could start to get some idea of when each of us is not available, to get a picture of what might or might not be possible. It would be perfect if we could find a regular time when we could all meet with some consistency, but we do need to be flexible. We all have different commitments and I feel a little hesitant about asking people to prioritize this at a given time, but I suspect, for reasons of my own sanity, and for the quality of the research, that I will have to ask everybody for an hour or two once every couple of weeks during which this project will have to be the top priority. If this is not possible, could you let me know before we start.

So, for starters, how are Wednesday evenings? Other times?

Thanks

Stuart
§146 Preliminary Note to the Group- The Aims of the Work

As research, the work aims to test some hypotheses and verify some definitions. It must be stressed that these definitions and hypotheses are provisional protocols that, while structuring, enabling and directing the work, will hopefully be superseded through the performing of the work. The work aims to produce another set of hypothetical and definitional protocols requiring their own subsequent testing and verification. At each step of the way rendering further clarification and reducing more essential truth of the matter under study.

Some preliminary definitions produced by earlier work on the matter which I conducted in an Honours dissertation:

1. An audience is that which gathers to take up a position in witness relative to a performance. A performance is that relative to which an audience gathers to takes up a position in witness. By this definition, a car accident scene by the side of the road is a performance when a crowd gathers to witness it.

2. As a hermeneutic process, an audience is the making of a world or worlds.

3. There is always an audience. A fundamental intersubjectivity underlies the possibility of thinking the concept of performance. Even the solitary rehearsal in my bedroom is a performance in that it presupposes an implied, absent, or imagined audience.

As phenomenology, the work will proceed as the verification of two methodological proposals.

4. The phenomenon of being in an audience is to be explicated as an intentional process which articulates on four relations:

   audience member ↔ performance ↔ audience as a whole.
   audience member ↔ other audience members ↔ audience as a whole.
   audience member ↔ time and place of the performance ↔ audience as a whole.
   audience member ↔ their own prejudice and foreunderstandings ↔ audience as a whole.
These intentional relations are, at present, vague and ill-defined. It is hoped that the work will provide sufficient clarity to surpass them.

5. It is necessary for the work to take up a position relative to Husserl’s reductions. The reductions, however completely impossible, are distinct methodological procedures with a precise aim towards a specific type of knowledge. They define all phenomenology, implicitly or explicitly, as distinct from other research methodologies. One of the results of the work will be a questioning of the scope and limits of the practicability and worth of the reductions, in their practical application and tangible results. The work will begin with a detailed explication of the methods of intentional analysis and reduction.

§147 Themes from First Discussion

Immersion/Emergence.

The need to say something afterwards. Making it make sense—the need to contain and explain.

Imperatives/demands.

Mood/Attunement.

The show working/not working.

Proper audience gathering. How do I bring myself to it. Does it give me what I expect.

Temporality of expectation/anticipation.

“When you are in it you are everybody”.

*  

We took as our first order of business the need to attain some shared sense of what we were doing, what it meant to be a group, and how we, as a group, might become a phenomenological instrument. We were all in agreement about the rules against argumentation and criticism and began setting up our discussions as clarifications. I was careful to suggest that we shouldn’t necessarily adhere too strictly to Spiegelberg’s rules, but rather take up their general attitude to find out what worked for us. At the end of the
session, we decided that at our next meeting we would perform a couple of basic phenomenological experiments to begin trying out some of the principles. Jakob suggested he would write something which he would email to us for discussion at the next session.

He was a coffee addict, and wrote a detailed description of the experience of drinking a strong cup after abstaining from his drug for 24 hours. He wrote it as “a detailed description of the specific experiential situation which aims towards eidetic insight…focused on a noetic rather than a noematic description” (Ziegler 2003). He described the actions of ordering, and anticipating the beverage, sitting in the place he was drinking at, the appearance of cup, saucer and spoon, the sensuous qualities of the coffee itself, and the onset of the effect of the drug on his state of mind and thinking.

We discussed his paper, practising turn taking, finding arbitrary moments that each of us thought required clarification. John became very concerned over the question of whether and how the writing was phenomenology. This caused dispute and conflict but raised the issue of how we needed to attune with each other in our task. We needed to know how each of us understood phenomenology, and to establish our specific task along whatever lines might bring us into accord as a group. Still, we left the meeting with some sense of having moved forward.

I emailed the group during the week, addressing John’s question of the ways in which Jakob’s writing was phenomenological, and how we might expand on it. This discussion, concerning what was or was not phenomenology, led, on our next meeting, to a spontaneous session of practising eidetic reduction through free variation on the cups and tables etc. in the room. We decided to attend our first performance.

§148 Email 16/8/2003

Yesterday’s meeting was again very productive. Ian, Pauline and I showed up. I reiterated the findings of the previous week that John, Kate and I had nutted out, picking up the

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56 Jakob’s Phenomenology of Coffee is available below, At Section VI, Appendix, §14 A Phenomenology of Coffee.
thread of possible ways towards relatively deeper, or more stripped back (I am finding it difficult to reconceptualize the metaphors of descent which take a hold of this thinking) fundamentality and essentiality. We discussed the question of what we say when we try to speak being and essence, citing Heidegger’s use of clearing and disclosure, and Merleau-Ponty’s dehiscence and flesh; and the fear of these being ‘mere’ metaphors, (whilst acknowledging that very fear as a nostalgia for an unattainable identity between what we say and what it says); the drive towards ultimate essence, and the need to allow the situations in which we find ourselves in audiences to emerge, as far as we are able, as what they are in themselves.

Chewing these things around with Ian and Pauline produced a few loose guidelines to take into audiences.

1. We need to be aware of the movement towards fundamentality and essentiality as the primary imperative of the enquiry. To learn to speak of the experience of being in audiences in terms of the most fundamental essences we can extract.

2. In order to do this we are going to have to perform something akin to reduction. We attend-to performances in the natural attitude—understood simply as the habitual modes of attendance and response we bring to the experience of whatever we think we are doing when we go to attend in audiences.

   With the awareness that the reduction cannot be a true putting out of play, but a holding at bay, or at a distance of habitual ways of understanding. To recognize, observe and examine the workings of these modes of attendance and response, allowing ourselves to slip in and out of them. Working, in effect, between the habitual and the examination of it.

   Trying, as an attempt at the fundamentality and essentiality, to be aware of what we bring to the audience we are in, what we take away from there, and what we leave there. This is the question of prejudice from Gadamer. How do our prior understandings structure our experience. Ian talked of his personal history with the Stables theatre, where we will attend our first performance, next Tuesday.

   I understood it as the need for a rigorous taking into account of everything of which
we are aware which might be affective upon and structuring the experience.

3. Pauline raised the question of embodiment as one species of moving towards essentiality, a species of stepping back. I mentioned that I thought the fashion for studies of embodiment in the last ten years or so, and the rising appeal of Merleau-Ponty is because it is precisely a search for a recasting of experience in terms of more fundamental categories.

4. Finally, once again in line with the move towards fundamentality and essentiality, the keeping in mind of the four intentional relations we began with: time & place/others/performance/prejudice, in light of the characterization of an audience as a gathering together with others in front of a showing/revealing.

These guidelines stem from a response to a lack of pregiven readily assimilable tried and tested ways of proceeding. In fact, the tried and tested is precisely what we do not want to do. We need to let the work proceed from what we find.

Ian raised the question of whether we should meet beforehand or not, go as a group or not, sit together or not. I thought that at this stage of the proceedings it was impossible not only to isolate such variables, but even to know what the variables might be, let alone how to isolate them, or whether our work should even consist in an isolation of variables.

I believe, that over time, with application of sufficient rigour, with painstaking listening, and with holding to what reveals as the work becomes what it is, it will find its own procedure. Time and working together, refining our guidelines, will provide focus and direction.

We need to begin at the beginning, as unencumbered, as open and as aware of our presuppositions as possible, to become more aware of further presuppositions at work, which we must work with by putting them into suspension.

§149 Email 3/10/2003

Hi all,

First, continuing a discussion: what was John (or was it Jakob) saying when he reached across the small table in Ian’s office, picked up the cup, brought it to his lips, drank from
it, put it back down on the table with a satisfied look on his face, and said “that is the essence of the cup”?

Was he saying the essence of the cup cannot be said, can only be performed? Was he saying the essence of the cup is in the nourishing enjoyment of it? Was he saying the essence of the cup is found in mutually co-constitutive relation with my body? Was he saying that the essence of the cup cannot be found outside an equipmental contexture, whose ontological structures would then need to be revealed? Was he saying there is no essence? I’m pretty sure he wasn’t saying I identify the cup in adumbrative profile through noetic acts organized according to unimaginably complex and dense but conceivably traceable noematic networks associated by my aim to drink.

John also asked, of Jakob’s coffee adventure, how it was phenomenology?

Later in this email I’ll try and answer some of these questions in light of how they might pertain to focusing our next couple of sessions, and how they have shaped what I think I’m doing phenomenologically in this project. I’d like to know what anybody else thinks.

(Meeting arrangements deleted)

Our little sessions so far, though piecemeal and unfocused, have provided me with the big methodological questions of the thesis. Questions like the one above concerning the cup; like Jakob’s assertion that he thought there should be some sort of improvement or betterment in life by going to be in audiences; like the question that haunted me about Jakob’s feeling of being in a Marilyn Manson video at Performance Space, with all the aesthetic and cultural judgements that statement presupposes, and how to phenomenologize those judgements.

I have tried to use these questions to frame both the approach to audiences and the question of what sort of a thing audiences might be. I’ve also stuck a little history of intentionality and reduction in the thesis to do the same thing. It’s got to a point where the relations between the experience of being in audiences (my own and ours), the theory stuff, and my own phenomenological writing are so mutually co-informing and dependent that the boundaries between them are becoming increasingly indeterminate. I think this is a good thing. The calls from within the work are clear. It is leading me.
Methodologically, to do a bit of generic name-association on it, I’ve gone a bit, though by no means exclusively, Levinasian. I am figuring the work as *immanent description* from within the experience of being in audiences, conducted as *living from* audiences with the specific aim of revealing something of the constitution of audiences.

Eidetically, the thesis interprets audiences as *gathering to witness*. The concepts of gathering and witness are defined according to Heidegger and Dufrenne. The job of the thesis then becomes the measurement of gathering and witness. How to catch the measure such essences give. In Heidegger’s sense, “measure-taking gauges the between”. I want to use his brief phenomenology of measurement in ‘…Poetically Man Dwells…’ to begin us asking some questions.

I won’t send any more stuff till I hear back and get an idea of what is not clear to you guys in all of this. I can provide the basic readings behind what’s built itself so far and any stuff from the thesis to show how that stuff led to what I’m doing.

Please stay in touch ASAP, so we can make the arrangements to meet on the 19th.

Look forward to seeing you all.

Stuart

§150 Email 11/10/2003

Hi all,

*(Meeting arrangements deleted)*

John took up my offer to send some stuff but unfortunately because I don’t have a scanner I only have secondary material that I have been able to download. The most relevant piece methodologically to my approach (and I stress it’s just my approach) is pp. 109-151 of Levinas’ *Totality and Infinity*, where he lays out the structure of enjoyment of living from elements. I stress that it’s *my* approach because, as phenomenologists, our aim at essence is taken up according to and on the basis of whatever particular ontological and metaphysical presuppositions carry us into the auditorium.

For instance, I would find it interesting but comparatively unfulfilling to cultivate my
approach to the object of my study using the ideas and presuppositions of a Christian existentialist like Marcel or Jaspers, with God the precedent producer having the idea of man; or as one of a potentially infinite number of Husserlian profiles on the object, determined by where I stand, and organized noematically. Likewise, an utterly and deliciously fleshless Heideggerian metaphysics would be insufficient *in light of my own ontological presuppositions* to describe what I think is going on in an audience.

I think, if anything like truth is to be revealed, then each of us necessarily goes into the study with a phenomenological attitude based on how we think persons and the world are constituted.

Levinas’ plunge to the realm of enjoyment and the reverse ‘intentionality’ of sensible elements lived from (and the tendency of other late existentialists towards sensibility as anterior to and overflowing of consciousness and mute being) sustains sufficient questioning relations with earlier phenomenologists, while at the same time attuning more to my own taste in accounts of the genesis of subjectivity and objectivity.

And this is my methodological key. Because 1) I believe that audience cannot be accounted for as an interplay of subjects and objects but rather that audience is an anterior condition of subject and object. In audience with others towards a performance (which appears to me also as a subjective object making demands of me) I am somehow given to myself as subject and object. I also believe that Husserl’s attempt in the *Cartesian Meditation V* to account for intersubjectivity as a community of monads has got it all upside down. It remains too rooted in the priority of the subject facing other ultimately unknowable subject/objects as starting point. And 2) I can’t think of a satisfactory way of pinning audience down as an object like a rat on a dissection table, or a historic era, or the effect of water temperature on the amount of eggs a frog will produce. That would not be phenomenology. *In my view* the only way to get at the essence of what is happening in an audience is through immanent description from within the phenomenon. Levinas’ concept of living from..., provides me with the basis of a model of research as immanent description conducted from, written from within the phenomenon.

So, to hark back to John’s question of how this is phenomenology, I would say that it’s
up to you, determined by what you think an audience is and by how you work phenomenology. This is a measuring of your ontological presuppositions as much as it is a taking of the measure given by the essence *gathering to witness*. The Spiegelbergian guidelines of our discussions, as well as attuning and clarifying our intuitions can also, I think, be used to help each of us clarify our own presuppositions.

On the question of measure, I suggest reading Heidegger’s ‘…Poetically Man Dwells…’; on gathering, I am beginning with Heidegger’s ‘The Thing’ and ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’; on witnessing, Section 1, Part 3 of Dufrenne’s *Phenomenology of Aesthetic Perception*. Some of you will have some of these. I’ll bring copies to our meeting.
M. Writings from the Group

§151 Maurice Murphy Tells a Good Story—The Stables Theatre— 19/08/03

We found ourselves at the Stables theatre, a small well-established venue in Kings Cross, Sydney, with a history of promoting local writers and actors. The show was a one-man performance: Maurice Murphy Tells a Good Story, by Maurice Murphy. There was a desultory turnout of no more than six people other than our group. The performance was dull at best. At intermission we sat together at a small table in the foyer and discussed how bad the show had been. We were surprised that the more we shared our dislike of the show, the more we felt like an audience. I observed that where the performance had failed to gather us, our discussion of our shared attitude had succeeded. We went back in after the break with more of a sense of being of a group and consequently enjoyed being in the audience a little more, even though the show remained relentlessly uninspiring. We also surprisingly found more sympathy for the performer.

At the cafe beforehand we had discussed the need to stop talking philosophy and start holding to the experience with basic descriptions. Jakob observed that it was easier and more comfortable to talk philosophy than to rigorously hold to the descriptions. It seems obvious to me that I need, as far as possible, to go in unencumbered with preconceptions, or, more accurately, to at least be aware of my preconceptions; to let, acknowledge and examine the role they have in my particular understanding of the event, and then, once again as far as possible, hold them at bay in order to allow the event to emerge as what it is, or in Heidegger’s famous definition:

\[
\text{to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself (Heidegger 1962: 58).}
\]

This is, in my reckoning, the best description of the aim of phenomenology.

A few things that stuck out for me:

57 Maurice Murphy, Maurice Murphy Tells a Good Story, Stables Theatre, Tuesday August 19, 2003.
1) I was aware, on coming from the street outside into the foyer, as a narrowing of horizon. From wide open vision to an enclosed close area of walls. The air changed from fresh, cool and clear, to warmer and stuffier.

2) Standing in the small queue on the way in and handing over the ticket, the sense of having to have met some precondition (in this case, payment) for admission to the event.

3) On entry to the auditorium, as always among a small crowd at the Stables, the choice of where to sit. I noticed that I was affected by where those who were already sitting had sat. Obviously, I couldn’t sit where they were. I didn’t want to sit too far away from them, but I also didn’t want to sit too close. I was aware of my thought of what the others in the group would make of where I might sit. This seemed to be something of the substance of attendance in Audience coming to tangible awareness.

4) The room was small, the other half of the audience was visible face on. I became aware that I was looking for their reactions, and wondering what they might be doing there. Who they were, what was their relationship to this performance, this theatre, the world of theatre in Sydney generally. I thought that only a small group of weirdos goes to the theatre in Sydney. It was a small crowd. There were large gaps in the room. My experience as a performer made me think of the way energy disappears in the gaps in an empty auditorium.

5) I felt like the man doing the performance was trying to get me to like him, to share his views and beliefs, be part of his world. There was an implicit value system and assumed shared knowledge in what he was saying, to which I felt I did not belong. I felt that I did not belong in his audience. I was not his people.

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The upshot of this experience for me was the thematizing of the question of gathering, of how that which calls for witness seeks to gather its audience, and of how our discussion in the foyer had gathered us when the show itself had not been able to. As a result of this line of thinking, gathering became a central operator of the thesis. I decided that gathering was essential to being in audiences, even audiences of one person, but that the relation of dependence did not hold in the other direction; all audiences are gatherings but
all gatherings are not audiences. A gathering becomes an audience when it gathers with intention to witness, or when, having gathered for any purpose, it turns, as a gathering, to shared witness of any event. In short, gathering to witness is the essence of all and any audiences. Anything that gathers to witness is an audience, and anything that does not gather to witness is not an audience. This eidetic reduction was obviously a crucial, formative, definitional turning point. The object of the work was revealed. The job of the thesis became the description and measurement of the intentionality of gathering to witness.

§152 Ma—Akram Khan Company—Sydney Opera House—Weds 9/2/05 8pm

I arrived in Sydney a couple of days before the show and began trying to track down John. By the night of the show, I had had no luck on John, and Jodie had not been able to get a baby sitter. This left just me and Pauline. I still had a couple of spare tickets so I invited an old friend of mine, Annalee, a nice suburban girl with no knowledge of phenomenology, whose only experience with thinking about performance and audiences had been as a stripper trying to extract money out of customers. I organized to meet her at the theatre.

Pauline and I caught a bus to Circular Quay. On the bus we discussed the idea of the intersubjective reduction we would perform. She was a little disturbed, as a dancer, at the prospect of what it might mean to bracket out the performance and concentrate on the audience, at a dance performance she really wanted to enjoy as a fan. I said that I thought it was probably necessary to go in, sit down, establish the natural attitude as best as possible, (considering we knew we were in there to perform a very specific experiment) and then try to take up the phenomenological attitude, attempting to isolate the effect, or at least the manifestation, or lack thereof, of the other audience members on the natural attitude in which we normally attend-to performances. So hopefully she would be able to enjoy the performance to a large extent, the intersubjective dimension of that very enjoyment being the object of our study.

This little twist of thought immediately illuminates Merleau-Ponty’s assertion about the
impossibility of performing a complete reduction. The knowledge we took into the auditorium, that we were going in there to perform a reduction, immediately took us out of any possibility of going there in the naïveté of the natural attitude. It would be necessary to bracket out the fact, as best we could, that we were there to perform a specific experiment, in order to perform that very experiment. Consequently, it seems that the provisional motto under which the reduction must, of necessity, be performed is: “as best we could”, or “to the extent that such a thing might be possible”. There seems to be something very uncertain and unscientific about this; very reminiscent of the anxiety that draws so much study in the Humanities to adopt a savour of scientism. Perhaps it is actually the ultimate limit of the situation in which we try to find ourselves; Dilthey’s science in which “life grasps life”, the circularity of hermeneutics, Merleau-Ponty’s reversibility, Heidegger’s Being which continually turns away, Levinas’ unthematising, uncomprehending, original responsibility, the subject which is its own object, chasing its own tail, can only ever apprehend itself “as best it can”. The temptation to posit a relation between the ultimate unfinishability of the reduction as the encapsulation, or ultimate evidence, or cause and/or consequence of the thought that thinks infinity beckons here.

Nevertheless, comforted in the assurance that we would not produce nothing, and in the certainty that this uncertain realm was the necessary domain of our study, we strolled along the quayside talking about the audience we might encounter, thereby getting even further away from any possibility of producing anything like the discreet and distanced object of the natural scientist. The night was warm, the quay was crowded, and we even rehearsed our ongoing conversation about the need to champion the use of the passive voice in academic writing to disperse the tang of agency.

We caught ourselves talking very harshly and judgementally of the sort of audience we might encounter, positing some sort of hybrid between a stuffshirt opera house crowd and the insular involuted audience of dancers that go to see dance. When we go to a performance or a sporting event or a religious ceremony, it seems the anticipation of who else might be there in the Audience is a preparation for the event. In Australian Rules Football, a crowd of Collingwood supporters, the most vociferous, obnoxious and partisan of followers, provides a very different backdrop and audience experience to the fans of other teams.
We arrived at the theatre a half an hour before the appointed start time. There were only a half a dozen other people in the foyer. We stood outside and watched the crowd arrive, mostly in couples and in small groups of two and three. The first thing that struck me was the difference between these people and others I had seen arrive for Shakespeare and other dramatic productions in the same theatre. They were younger, cheerier and slightly more casually dressed, though, as Pauline pointed out, it was a smart and well thought out casual. She was surprised at how few of the usual faces she always saw at dance performances were there. These were fifty a dollar a head tickets. Poverty stricken dancers and students might not be able to afford it.

After a while Annalee turned up. I had briefed her about the intersubjective reduction we were there to perform. She thought it rather odd and wanted to know why we were doing it. I explained it to her. She said she would do her best. I assured her that that was all we could do.

By this time the crowd had built, the foyer was full of anticipation, there was a high level of social combustion, loud voices, smiling, laughter, a lot of looking around the room. People drank wine and stood around in groups talking animatedly.

We went to the toilet at the last second. We were among the last into the auditorium. The lights were up, the atmosphere remained socially active but slightly more subdued until the lights dimmed a little and the hubbub disappeared in direct proportion to the encroaching darkness. By the time the room was in pitch dark, the only sounds that could be heard were a general background shuffling and the odd cough. It struck me, as I turned my hearing (the most prominent form of attention available to me in the darkness) to the people around me that I had always thought theatre audiences to be silent, but there was a continuous ebb and flow of shuffling sounds, of people shifting in seats, getting comfortable, very quiet mumbling and throat clearing. I wondered whether this was the case in all audiences, and I had just never noticed it.

The performance began with a faint illumination of parts of the stage and then a bright dazzling light, so commanding of the attention as to make the audience gasp. The light was so intense that we were gathered in our dazzlement and focused on the uncomfortable attempt to readjust to it.
I tried to settle into enjoying the performance, listening to the music and watching the dance. Each time my attention wandered, I turned it to the audience. There was, obviously, only a row of shadowy backs of heads visible to me. I felt constrained from turning to face the people behind me. I was still struck however by the constant background noise coming from the audience. It was as though the attempt to darken and silence the audience into docile attentiveness, to create

a backdrop of pure silence, a human silence charged with attention, and for this attention, by reverberating from one consciousness to another, to create the most favourable climate for aesthetic perception (Dufrenne 1973: 49-50).

would always be thwarted. As though the concentration of my subjectivity in the darkness, the highlighting and containment of my body, the forced separation into an impossible solitude, created a tension with the belonging-to of Audience. An odd separated mute sociality of grunting and fidgeting bodies crammed into close proximity and forbidden all but the most lateral, passive and unthematized communication. But a communication which sought the affirmation and witness of the others in the room. At one moment, a joke was told in the performance. A tentative laughter spattered through the room. Before the laughter spread, I had already gotten the joke, and felt an incongruity of the desire to laugh, but threw my laughter out, not spontaneously, but towards the other people in the room, almost for reassurance. It was as if the sharedness of Audience was straining to show itself to itself despite the demand to solitude of the rows of seats in the darkness.

In one section of the show two of the dancers, contorted into a position on one leg with the torso completely bent over and the head upside down under the hips, came to the front of the stage and did a comedy routine. As the audience was addressed directly and with humour, the continuing laughter was comforting, telling us that we were together in this, sharing the joke, the sound of the laughter making us more present to each other. There were moments of incredible skill in the dancing and singing, moments of great power and beauty. At these times spontaneous eruptions of applause and gasps of appreciation acknowledged to each other that we were in the presence of something quite special, something worth being at. It was a high quality performance by an internationally
renowned troupe at a famous and prestigious venue. Our high ticket price was rewarded.

At the end there was sustained appreciative applause and a number of bows. We joined to express our acknowledgement of the quality of the performance; to give measure of its worth. The longer and louder our applause, the more we, as a group, stated our having been drawn together in shared appreciation of the performance. We approved. We had been well gathered and had witnessed something which justified our attendance-to it.

The applause seemed to relish itself, overflowing, as the joy of which it bore expression became its own momentum. And yet, there was a point at which the intensity of the applause began to ebb, and once this diminishment began it too fed itself. There was no long dying away and drawing out of the applause. It died quickly and abruptly, with the same intensity that had sustained it for a long enough time, in expression of a definite measure of appreciation. But not a dot more. A precise measure of worth and appreciation.

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In the attempt to thematize that which, in the natural attitude, is explicitly and necessarily hidden, that which must be forgotten in order to do the prescribed task (in this case forgetting the other audience members in order to apprehend the performance), the first turning towards the other audience members is odd and disconcerting. There is a sense of a void, almost as if there is nothing there, or that what is there, is only barely so. A vague row of grey heads silhouetted against the brightly lit performance, a perceptible but indistinguishable sea of faint rustling, no facing, no comfort of the returned gaze, the tentative smile, the nod of recognition; a deprivation of access to the exchange of face to face signs of human togetherness and belonging, an enforced solitude in the face of that which is there to be witnessed, so that the focus is emphasized, undiverted, making the separated subject bloat to assimilate the intensification of the thematized performance. A silent ordering. This is what you are here to do! Pay no heed to these others! And yet the darkness and the silencing allow an immersion into an impersonal and anonymous dimension in which there is no recognition, no back slapping. In Audience, (as emphasized in dark theatre auditoriums) there is no identity because there is no face to face contact. No identity, just pure bloated subjectivity engorging itself.
But Audience itself is an ineffable and radical exteriority in which I am inextricably immersed but which disappears as I turn towards it. It is precisely everything that eludes the subject; in turning towards it, the subject loses itself. It is one or the other. The subject cannot grasp Audience, it can only be in it.

Audience is irreflective, unthematized, the necessary condition of our apprehension of the performance, but we are not thematically conscious of it.

The contact with the other audience members in dark auditoriums is sideways, it leaks out and into each other, it murmurs and crackles, sighs and laughs and applauds and gasps and shuffles. It does not assert and affirm. It is only on leaving the auditorium, in the refocus back to the world in the shuffle back to the foyer, and then out into the need to catch taxis and buses and eat food, that the comments, the speaking, the disagreements and agreements, the shared insights bring that which was witnessed into some sort of objective accord. Outside, the question becomes: to what extent was it there-for-all-of-us?

§153 Big Brother

Many times in this thesis I’ve referred to reality TV shows as a particularly interesting case, where the audience, though dispersed in different locations, attains proximity, weight and density, through the magnitude and the concentratedness of their gathering and witness. They are attesting to the values of who is or is not a desirable or valuable person, who deserves to stay on the show, who should be voted off. As well as a direct appeal to the values of what sort of a person is acceptable to us, it is also an attestation to the gods of democracy, to the vote; central core values of the culture of which the shows are an expression.

Jodie, Pauline and I watched a night of Big Brother, a popular reality show, with particular attention to the adult-oriented Big Brother Up Late. Although this was the fourth or the fifth series of the show, they had, in this series, been showing more nudity and more sexually tinged encounters between the participants, so the ratings were high. Everybody was talking about it, as they say. It was so popular that on some nights, the channel devoted almost the whole night to the show, from 7 pm until 2 am, showing three
or four different episodes across the evening, rerunning earlier happenings in the house, going over the last round of evictions, preparing the ground for the next, interviewing evicted house members, and late at night showing long passages of the house members asleep in their beds. We sat down, in our separate homes, to watch *Up Late*.

**a) The Time of Big Brother—Stuart**

I had the TV on from 7:00 until 8:30 in the evening when the first of the shows, consisting of the wrap-up from last week and the eviction nominations for this week; then from 9:30 until 10:40 for the ‘uncut’ version featuring the promise of sex and full frontal nudity; through to *Up Late*, starting at 11:40 and running until 1 or 2 in the morning. (I fell asleep).

Across the course of the night there were so many little stories, so many little micro-narratives, so much repetition that I was able to wander around doing other things, performing other tasks, eating, writing, answering emails, going to the toilet, doing the dishes, catching glimpses and spans of different durations of the program itself. I watched the show, had it on in the background for the whole night, coming and going, the ebb and flow of my attention engaged and lapsed, but I was in the audience for the whole time, for more than five hours.

**b) Big Brother Up Late—1st Viewing—Stuart**

After midnight, lying in bed alone watching Big Brother Up-Late. Watching two hosts talk about the fact that we are watching nothing happen as we intrude into the conversations and sleep of a group of people paired-off in a large number of beds in the same room as each other. Some are already asleep, motionless. Some are touching, shuffling in bed. One couple kisses and we focus in on them, the sound of their lips and saliva amplified by the microphones they must wear. They have no privacy; from each other, from us, from the anonymous voice who speaks to them when they are breaking house rules or need to be summoned to the interview room. They whisper, steal kisses, touch, locked up, thrown together in the hothouse of the close intimacy and the expectation of whether they will pair up or whether they will try to have sex (impossible considering the scrutiny they are under). I lie here in my bed watching these people not
having sex, knowing that they will not have sex, in the hope that something might happen. And as one caresses the other, the multiple layers of watching and being watched create a tension and excitement in them, and I sense their tension and excitement. This is reality TV. It’s live, happening now. And I, separate, alone in my home, am aware of the others, in their homes, watching, perhaps as alone as I am. And the host taunts us, reminding us how sad it is that we are watching this.

Occasionally a reminder of a competition that we might ring up and enter comes on the screen, reminding us that there are others out there watching with us. They are participating, phoning in. A stream of SMS messages also being sent in tickers across the bottom of the screen to let us all know that there is a we here. We are not alone in this watching of these people not having sex. We can all phone in, send text messages, enter competitions to affirm our hereness at this live event. We can talk to the two hosts while the people in the house lie in their beds and we watch them doing nothing, and then we will be “on the show” ourselves. And every move, every kiss, every shuffle under the blankets draws our attention.

And it’s all about who these people are, what ‘type’ of people they are, how desirable their personalities, their habits, their attitudes, to each other and to us. How outspoken they are, how articulate, how trustworthy, how ambitious, how gregarious, how shy, what values do they espouse?. Who might like them, what sort of people they might attract, who they might like, who likes whom among them. Whether they will get voted off. How the alliances are forming. It’s all about the assessment of these people, of their desirability as people; whether we like them and whether they deserve to remain in the house or be evicted.

And they sleep. And for minutes on end we watch them sleep on the grainy black and white security cameras. Watching them toss and turn, watching intently for the slightest move, every muscle, as their legs shift under the sheets, wondering whether they are touching; hoping, anticipating, in expectation of what we know is not going to happen.

And we can’t see each other in this audience. There is no perceptual contact with each other’s bodies. We are so removed from each other, so dispersed, so hidden, unthematized. And then to break the monotony of watching people sleep, the competition
reminder returns and we decide whether to participate, compete with the invisible others sending in the SMS messages from other lounge rooms and bedrooms just like ours. The host reminds people in Perth and Adelaide not to enter the competitions because of the time delay. They are not watching this yet, but will watch at the same hour their time: temporal as well as placial dispersion.

We join together, come to each other’s attention as fellow audience members in the voting and in the competitions, so that as I watch this live event on the TV, I know that I am not alone. I belong, even in the cynicism of the story of the non-belonging that I might tell myself. I make and proclaim my value and my belonging by bearing even the most desultory, condemning witness to this reality TV show.

I find myself being swept up into the intrigue, the politics, making judgements about who’s who, who’s right, who’s not, forming opinions on people, and I am aware that other people are doing this as well somewhere else in the background. I judge, everybody else is judging, we are judging each other’s judgements. We all judge on behalf of each other. We are counterparts. I think this house member should be evicted because they are not entertaining enough to be on the show; this one should be evicted because they are antisocial; this one is a dork, but lovable; this one is scheming but entertaining. We make the show as we go. And as we judge the house members we judge the judgements that the others among us have made. Why was this house member not evicted as they should have been? We are inculcated in this dense mesh of judgements which constitutes us as an audience as it constitutes the show we watch. Inculcated in this dense chain mesh of judgements judging judgements of value, of the worth and desirability of other human beings. The worth and desirability of other human beings as entertainment: there is something of the essence of drama in this.

And in this judging, I am given to myself as who I am. I rehearse my values, who and what I think is desirable and valuable in myself and others.

c) Pauline on Big Brother

Big Brother

7.30 13/6/05
When talking to BB, actors look so directly into the camera, looking at me, screen to screen. Direct but the actor is talking to someone else, bb. The hidden elements, other house mates, the physical body of big brother, the rest of the audience is mixed with heightened revelation, of bodies, private moments, ablutions, sleeping. Secrecy and openness both seem heightened, extended. “Say nothing of this to your housemates”.

When Gretel appears on screen in the house the actors become an audience who have an audience. I’m watching a screen where people are watching a screen where the host looks directly at them in real time with interactive conversation.

Audiences appear on screen, smaller one for nomination. Host makes snide remarks about actors and I can hear people laugh. These remarks are still squarely directed at my screen. Gretel faces me, talks to me, cracking these jokes that are not the same timbre as stand-up or sit com comedy. Audience has a heavy presence. Audience ripples out through the actors (as audience for Gretel and bb), live audience, TV audience, next day analysts in news print.

Actors audience each other when one is singled out for a particular task.

“Just remember Australia you do the voting, you do the evicting.” She stresses the word ‘you’ in this wrap up, dragging (or is it more luring?) us in to the house and its activities, its world. The audience here has power the power to alter what happens on a screen, usually much more impenetrable.

11.40 Up Late

The time clock on the corner of the screen says the same time as my clock on my video. It reminds me that this is a cocoon of time where the real time factor links me in a similar way to watching live footy. It’s a sharing, a connection, a same-ness, now-ness.

Interviewing rejects has a chat show kind of feel, two performers look at each other, not so directly at camera. Both look to the screen which shows the inside of the house they

58 BB refers to Big Brother himself, the voice which gives the rules, and metes out the discipline and punishments to the housemates.
have to turn their bodies slightly away from the camera, away from me, us. I am directed to the screen by the two performers and then they melt away as the screen enlarges and fills my TV screen. It’s like I’m being carried into the house, introduced to it, mediated by the commentary that makes it less of a raw experience.

It’s dark, night-time in the house, just like in my house. They sleep like I want to. I know it’s in Australia like I am.

Making the house mates do strange things makes me aware of the control from outside, it makes me aware of an outside. These people are being watched by several registers of audience. There must be proximal surveillance.

SMS messages run across the screen with idiosyncratic language of ordinary speak. People are speaking to this show, knowing that they become a part of it. This again is the bringing in of the audience, the revealing of the audience in a very real way in that they are named on the screen. This audience seems not to be edited, going by the grammar, and they speak in a similar way to the housemates, about who’s hot who’s not, some texters speak directly to one of the actors, some make suggestions about meeting after their time is done. This is a strong and real invitation to a connection between performer and audience, let’s make a date in the real world while the performance is in progress.

Behind the mirror shots reveals the hidden-ness of the watcher, like the police shows with two way mirrors, being watched when you can’t tell if you’re being watched but potentially there is always someone watching.

Actors fall in and out of posturing, forced behaviours and ‘natural’ behaviours like they become aware of audience and then forget.

“If you think Christie should be evicted …”, the opinions of viewers are sought and prized. Become involved, change the shape of this show.

Host introduces himself after every break. He is chatty and friendly, less bb than Gretel. Talks directly to callers, asks their opinions before they play for prize money “who do you like in the house?”
d) In Front of the Whole of Australia

The recently evicted house member spoke of being “in front of the whole of Australia”. The audience here is the whole nation. He is aware that he is being judged by the nation. The values which he, as the performer, feels he needs to espouse, embody and represent, in order to ensure his survival on the show, in order to seek the assertion of his worth in the eyes of his judges, are the values of the nation.

He has lured a girl into becoming sexually intimate with him on the show with words of love, but as soon as she has been evicted, he is planning his next conquest and bragging about it.

And the hostess said “every woman in Australia should condemn the man”.

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N. Other Writings from Audiences

§154 A Bad Performance

I went, with a playwright, to a clumsy, inconsistent performance of a clever and lively play she had written. The actors were unskilled, there appeared to be no overall directorial vision, the crowd was sparse yet sympathetic. I was trying to impress this playwright; I had been signed up to direct another of her plays.

As we sat together in the auditorium, I was acutely aware of her discomfort, and of the sympathetic response of the others in the audience, contrived to cover their own discomfort. This was an easy, forgiving crowd. There was a general mood of wanting to like the performance. It was an amateur theatre company, most of the audience were members. They had participated as actors in similar inept performances.

In my thinking, I set myself apart from them. I was not a member of a provincial amateur theatre company. Yet, as I sat with these people, thinking about what I knew to be good acting, about the play, about some of the directorial decisions, feeling what I thought the playwright must have been feeling, imagining the feelings of disappointment, acceptance and encouragement that the members of the company were feeling, following the story, being affected by the unfriendliness of the too high ceiling, the too echoing sound, and the too distant stage in the country church hall. And, despite what I knew to be what I would customarily call, in light of the knowledges and standards which I understand as constitutive of good theatre, a very bad performance, I gave myself over to the witnessing as fully as possible. I subjected myself to the demands of the performance.

In the process, in empathy with the other audience members, I saw the courage and desire of the actors in their ineptitude; in the missed timing of the jokes, I saw how funny they might have been, performed otherwise. I brought myself fully to the witnessing of an amateur theatre performance and was restored to myself, in my beliefs and values. I thought of what I would say to help the actors if I were directing them. I thought of what I would do differently.

I would observe that I didn’t have to like the performance. I didn’t have to think it was a
“good performance”, to get myself back reinforced or transformed in my values. It is not a question of whether “it did anything for me”, but whether I did something with it, alongside it. Even the most resistant refusal of an audience member, the most ignorant attendance at a foreign cultural event, the most critical faithless attendance at a church service, is an answer to the call for completion.

§155 An Amateur Theatre Production

A while ago I directed a provincial amateur theatre production; the staging of a farce (in both the worlds of the play and the production), a nasty, back-biting, thoroughly unpleasant affair, in which I got involved as a favour to a friend. As the experience has faded from my concern and the bad taste in my mouth has subsided, one event, illuminating in regard to this thesis, has stayed with me.

As I have said, the piece was a contemporary farce; dialogue driven, fast-paced, full of one-liners. I worked with the actors using the Practical Aesthetics system of David Mamet, William H. Macy and Gregory Mosher (Bruder, Cohn et. al.: 1986). Practical Aesthetics allows a wide margin for improvisation within the confines of the script, sensitizing the actors to each other and the circumstances in the pursuit of actions on the stage. Consequently, the performance differed substantially from night to night. As well as the different parrying of actions on stage across the season, I was able to see how the actors were susceptible to the audience from night to night, and how the audiences affected the performance.

The glaring difference between the audiences over two particular consecutive nights of the run was particularly revealing to me as a student of Audience. As the audiences on the two nights in question gathered, I saw the elusive object of my study more clearly than I ever had. In fact, it was one of the first occasions on which I was able to acknowledge the existence of the unpredictable, shadowy object and grasp it in its concreteness as I watched it form.

The first of the two nights was an audience of about 100 people, the second, slightly fewer, about 80, but the difference between the two gatherings was far more pronounced than could be explained by a difference of twenty people.
On the first of the two nights there were technical problems which necessitated keeping the audience in the small foyer for fifteen minutes longer than usual; it had been customary to allow them to trickle into the auditorium as they arrived, singly, in pairs and groups of 3 and 4. On previous nights they had talked quietly in their small groups as they purchased their tickets and moved directly through the foyer into the auditorium and took their seats, where they had talked quietly and discreetly, if at all. Each successive arrival took up their unreserved seating relative to whatever seats toward the centre and front of the room had already been taken, on a first come, best seated basis, leaving polite gaps between their own small group and their nearest neighbours.

On the first of the two nights in question, when the audience was forced to gather in the foyer for fifteen minutes, the area (little more than a corridor to the door of the auditorium) filled with the warmth and hubbub of bodies close together, buoyed on a cacophony of conversations competing and cutting across each other, talking in anticipation about what they had heard about the show. Members of separate groups recognized people they knew in other groups; introductions were made, tensions mounted, ice was broken, jokes told, stories recounted, wine drunk, as laughter and levity infected the mood.

When the doors opened and the group entered the auditorium, they carried the noise and social combustion with them. By the time the actors hit the stage, the auditorium was charged with Audience. From the first one-liner, the audience was keen to be pleased; the laughter was generous. The actors, sensitized to circumstances by the Practical Aesthetics method, ready to take risks, gave a loud, slapstick performance, fed by raucous laughter, whistles and constant outbreaks of applause. Jokes were timed, faces pulled, props moved around, blocking changed, in a performance in which everybody, performers and audience members alike, were swept up and carried away by their mutual involvement.

On the following night, the audience once again trickled quietly into the auditorium in their small separate groups as had been customary throughout the run. The performance returned to what it had been on the previous nights; more measured, more dependent on the dialogue rather than the physicality of the performance, laughter more contained and hard-earned.
It was obvious, in the comparison of the two nights, that in the first case the audience had been gathered into Audience before entering the auditorium. Their mutual expectation, shared knowledges and established social bonds had allowed a particular, intensified, well-meshed contexture of relations to thematize itself to my studently apprehension of the situation. The audience was concentratedly pre-gathered before the performance began. On the second night in question, the responsibility of gathering the audience members into Audience was put much more solidly on the shoulders of the performance itself.

The foyer acted as a kind of hothouse of audience formation, the sense of being together, being a part of something, belonging, the shared purpose and identity, the physical closeness, face-to-face relations, the real, physical, social actions in close proximity, all served to facilitate a particularly clear instantiation of the shared world of interpretive, co-affective intentional experience that is the soup of Audience.

§156 ‘Trivia’ by Stephen Vagg, Newtown Theatre, Tuesday May 2nd, 8pm.

I went to the theatre with a group of philosophy students, some schooled in poststructuralism, some in analytic philosophy, all sceptically, for various reasons, encountering phenomenology for the first time in a unit of study which explained the basic concepts of Husserl’s philosophy.

We had one lecture session together, in which I explained the basics of the group method and how it applied in the context of Husserl’s aims.

We went to see a play about contemporary life and values among people in their early thirties in Sydney. A similar age and cultural group to the students I attended with. Afterwards, we went to a pub a lot like the pub in the play we had just seen, and discussed our experience in the audience.

We continued the discussions via a web discussion board. These are the texts of those

59 It occurs to me as I write this that in established theatres in Sydney, at the Stables, at Belvoir, at the Opera House, the audience is always left to gather in the foyer. There is always a chance for gathering to occur before the entry to the auditorium.
discussions.

a) Thread 1—Brrring! Brrring!

Message no. 94

Author: Justin Tauber

Date: Tuesday, May 9, 2006 6:24 pm

When your phone went off, we were embarrassed, as if it were our phone, as if we were an invisible body, suddenly thrust onto the stage. Perhaps, our embarrassment was a kind of stage fright. Our invisible body had been so well-behaved up until that point, its laughter or silence selfless in its response to events onstage. From responsive witness to irresponsible (audibly bloated even) focus-puller.

Without our presence, including our voices and clapping hands, there is no performance. And yet we have such a limited range of responses—laugh, cry, clap, cheer. We must be embodied to be an audience. But we must also be inhibited in at least three ways—we cannot speak (hecklers just prove the rule, a heckler trades on everyone else’s silence) so language is out of bounds; we cannot move around; and we must be uncontactable. Let see, speech, movement, social networks. Would I be wrong to think that what is being suppressed here is individuality and personality? Can we compare the genesis of an Audience to military boot camp, I.e. the destruction and reconstruction of individuality into group mentality? Or perhaps a cult? Is an Audience an ineffective cult, or does a cult exploit our capacity for audience? Is the possibility of shared humiliation an essential part of Audience? When your phone went off, we were embarrassed, as if it were our phone, as if we were an invisible body, suddenly thrust onto the stage. Perhaps, our embarrassment was a kind of stage fright. Our invisible body had been so well-behaved up until that point, its laughter or silence selfless in its response to events onstage. From responsive witness to irresponsible (audibly bloated even) focus-puller.

Message no. 97 [Reply of: no. 94]

Author: ALEXANDRA JANE WHYTE

Date: Wednesday, May 10, 2006 1:25 am
Hello its Alex

Limitation…discipline!!!!! that’s just what we humans need!!!!!!! (I’m serious, I could do with a little boot camp order in my life that’s for sure!!)

This joint attempt to refrain from our usual bodily murmurs, this withholding of such a majority of personal/bodily self-expression does surely appear central to the structure of ‘the audience’.

In reflection on why such individual limitation appears necessary (apart from the simplistic historical answer) I would relate the notion of restraint—more so than inhibition—as pertinent to full participation, therein full embodiment and fulfilment!!! of the individual as a member and part within the whole of ‘the audience’. Are we not there to anticipate something other than our own selves ? (of course discounting those audience members who simply appear not to want to be there, or to otherwise exist in their own self-absorption—all of which are clearly still members).

To be drawn into, to lift out of our mundane natural attitude. Anticipation fills the silence with a different communion than would individual blah blah!!! From the swirl of anticipation follows the characteristic building, buzzing, bursting, spilling over—somewhat uncontrollably (or perhaps carefully executed)—of individual self-expression from discordant sections of the audience in a living, present and active performance (however subordinate and limited it may be against the backdrop of the main stage). This self-expression (in the form of laughter, applause, surprise, exasperation.) remains imbued with structural limitations—I.e. that polite (?) time limit to applause, the volume of laughter etc—however as the only possible outlet for individual expression it takes its varied individual forms in alignment with individual personalities present that provides the unique experience of ‘the audience’ to which we are part.

Message no. 100 [Reply of: no. 94]

Author: Stuart Grant

Date: Wednesday, May 10, 2006 11:33 pm

We must somehow give ourselves over to this "destruction and reconstruction of individuality into group mentality", but it’s somehow like a settling back into something,
almost as if we belong side by side facing towards this event that calls for our shared intention. It wants us to be there for it, to tell us what it has to tell, and we must obey the demand to sit quietly in the darkness in order to hear it. We must first be lured by it, we must submit to it, and we must submit together, so we must submit to the demands of the type of togetherness it demands—this boot camp.

Is our discomfort thematized against some expectation of comfort? How does the discomfort, the ringing phone, whatever else interrupts our handing of ourselves over to the witness and the withness, appear as disruption. What is disrupted, and how and what is disrupted?

Message no. 111 [Reply of: no. 100]

Author: VERONIKA COSIC

Date: Sunday, May 14, 2006 6:59pm

Just a thought…but could it be that our "trust" is somehow disrupted?

I have been thinking, over and over again, of what it is that is left "residual" in my experience of being an audience. I am beginning to recognise that my own experience is fundamentally altered by simple virtue of the fact that my self-awareness is greatly enhanced through my awareness of others. I hope this isn’t too reductive—but it seems to me that my intentional acts would be considerably different if I was alone, at home, and watching a recorded version of the play on DVD. I would act differently, primarily because I would be less self-aware. I would experience the play differently as well. That background of the living, squirming, laughing, coughing Other would not be present to "fill out" the experience. It is probable that I would not find the play as engaging—nor experience the immediacy of its emotional content without the reactions from the audience that I feel around me. I am not addressing the question of being called to "witness" here—I realise you have already been discussing the nature and experience of an audience watching Big Brother at home on TV—I think I am trying to get at something else. At the need for trust that arises in a social setting which calls for collective participation and witnessing.

The intention of my actions, in the particular social setting that is an audience, proceeds
from a sense of self and an empathy for others that I do not experience when I am alone. The need to trust that the Other will not disrupt my experience, and my own reciprocal sense of self-awareness and empathy for the Other, may provide the grounds, or conditions, for collective intentionality. The sense of "groupness" is preserved as long as that trust is not broken. If a member of the audience breaks the enabling conditions for our collective intentionality—breaks, in other words, our implicit trust—then my experience is disrupted and I feel as though our intersubjectivity has somehow been ruptured. Didn’t Justin mention that, although he could forgive the ringing of the mobile phone (it is feasible that the audience member simply forgot to switch it off), had he answered the call, his own internal response to that offending person would have been "Now, you’re on your own..."

I realise this may be a somewhat reductive response...and it could be seen to imply that the contextual aspect of collective intentional activity is cultural (i.e. that we submit ourselves to behaviours that obey certain social norms and that we trust that others will submit to them in the same way). However, is it valid (or worthwhile) to suggest that trust, as an affective attitude, is not simply delimited by cultural norms? Could the disruption be seen as a disruption of trust? Could trust be integral to the subjective/intersubjective conditions that help to create our experience of collective intentionality as an audience? Is it active submission? Or, an active commitment based on a trust of the Self and the Other, that is not purely instrumental? In "handing ourselves over to witness and the withness", are we committing ourselves to an active participation in an event and trusting that our commitment will somehow be completed—from within the audience and from the performance presented to us. When I go to see a performance that I am subsequently disappointed in—I do feel "let down"...not betrayed, perhaps...but the trust that I committed to the performance has not been met. Perhaps the experience of discomfort could likewise be considered in this light. When audience members disrupt my experience through thoughtless or inconsiderate behaviour, I experience that as a disruption of the trust that I have already committed to them...

Could trust be the necessary condition—and attitude—that enables both the “destruction and reconstruction of individuality into group mentality.” Again—is it submission, or trust that is the grounds for our collective intentionality? Or am I just drivelling here...?
Hi Justin,

Is our individuality really suppressed? I don’t think I agree. You compare the audience to military boot camp, I don’t want to state the obvious, but they are NOT the same thing. In a play or performance the structure is such that there must be a performer and a viewer. If the audience were allowed to do as they pleased then the relationship between the performer and audience would be transformed. Could it still work? Possibly, maybe it would be titled: “a deconstruction of actors and the audience”. Another point that I want to make is that prior to Stuart’s lecture I always experienced myself as alone in the theatre or the movies. The only time that others would be present to me was when someone coughed or when we laughed together. The other members of the audience appeared to me as an interruption, they stole my awareness of the performers or the movie. In a way when I was interrupted I would be reminded that I was viewing the movie or play with others. Am I just Nuts or do you guys sorta know what I mean?

Message no. 128 [Reply of: no. 125]

Author: ALEXANDRA JANE WHYTE

Date: Friday, May 19, 2006 11:17am

I definitely agree that there are moments when you are captivated and taken away by the production in various ways and then there are moments when you are woken up to what is in your immediate surrounds—the audience expressing their bodily presence. ‘Disturbed’ or ‘distracted’ would I’m sure be the most common terms for this occurrence. And I definitely don’t think you’re nuts to think of the other audience members as interrupting your moment to be swept away into the dramatic performance. Apart from the fact that we very well knew that the audience was our subject matter to be aware of—to experience ourselves as one of many watching the play—I think that dependent on your own personality and mood at the time, you will regard and as such respond to your fellow audience members with varying degrees of love and hate. You may have had an
argument with the friend sitting next to you, or you may not have seen this friend for a long time and feel all warm and fuzzy next to her! for example. You may really like what the man 3 rows ahead is wearing on his head, or you may think the fusty couple in front smells like moth balls. I don’t think your experience of the audience has to be one of joy and communion, rather it will be what it is!!! And although you may usually go and try your hardest to forget all your worries and immerse in the performance—I think you would agree that there is this something other going on off stage that you are part of whether you like it or not. This is the simple fact of a shared world. We will always have our own experience, but one cannot deny he is at once also sharing it with others! in various ways.

Alex

Message no. 131 [Reply of: no. 128]

Author: Stuart Grant

Date: Saturday, May 20, 2006 11:14pm

First, one of the primary uses of phenomenology is to approach the implicit structural foundations of our experience. I think you are right Min. The whole process of going to the theatre is apparently very subjective. We go because we want or need to go or feel we should go. We make judgements and exercise taste. We make decisions about the worth and value of the performance. However, when these positions and gestures and processes of the subject are submitted to the reduction, do they not show up as founded in intersubjective processes? Judgement presupposes a third party or standard, implied, explicit, ideal or real, against which the experience is measured. Values are only values to the extent that they are there-for-all-of-us who share them. Despite the subjectivation of aesthetics, can we really pretend to be the sole author of the tastes and judgements we exercise in the audience, or to what extent are we carrying forward a shared ethical position.

And second, the intersubjective dimension of audience seems to be necessarily hidden. I can only have my experience of our experience. The ourness of the experience is something that specifically requires the phenomenology of the epoché to be approached.
The subjective judgements and the content of the performance need to be bracketed in an attempt to reveal the relations with the others which we normally don’t experience, even though it appears that they must be in some way, to some degree, constitutive of our individual experiences.

Does this make sense?

b) Thread 2—Worlds

Message no. 101

Author: Stuart Grant

Date: Wednesday, May 10, 2006 11:44pm

Some of us talked about the overlapping worlds leaking into each other. If we go to the theatre or to any kind of performance to, as Ricoeur puts it, make worlds in front of the text, what worlds were made through us by that performance. The world of the characters overlapped, pierced, cut through with the world of the actors. The world of the Sydney we left out on the street, with our friends, our pubs, our social gathering, the attitude that is Sydney, the specific modern Australian, brash city with its attendant values that are not the same as Brisbane or Melbourne ; the Sydney in the play which called for us to recognize it as our Sydney. The pub in the play and the pub we went to afterwards. The world of the phenomenologist we went in there to make, in the reduction, the ideal opening that occurs when we flicker in the moment of hesitation when Dilthey’s "life which grasps life" slips between the natural and the phenomenological attitude, not putting out of play that which we bracket, but holding it in a kind of considered suspension, changing its role in the world which opens when we perform the reduction. Somebody said something about bringing beer into the auditorium, sharing a beer with the characters, or was it the actors, or each other.

Message no. 104 [Reply of: no. 101]

Author: VERONIKA COSIC

Date: Thursday, May 11, 2006 3:25pm
Did I leak into, or out of, your worlds? Did my individuality collapse into the folds of the group as others have described? I close my eyes to recapture a sensation from the shadows of memory. No...no boot camp there. No identification with my Sydney, your Sydney, our Sydney...she is a city...disjointed like any other...a place in which stories converge. But her story, your story...the dappled narratives that colour her streets...they are not mine. I listen to your words and steal glimpses into your worlds...but I can only look through the glass, darkly...I cannot feel what you feel. I acknowledge the ringing of the mobile phone and the surreptitious nipping from uneasily clasped bottles of beer. But these sensations are not—were not—mine. I cannot feel that sense of sharing in your experience. Yet, I am here...with you...what is my share in your experience? What do I feel from within your/our groupness? Only chance contiguity. Is the problem that we construct our own geography in our minds? Dislocation. Disarticulation. My experience is obviously not yours... But what am I here to experience? To feel? The performance did not call me. I came in order to be... part of a Spectacle. To participate...to search...for understanding. How do you do phenomenology? Will the audience guide me?

The lights flicker across your faces. I watch the performance reflected there. My attention sways onto the stage and then back again to you...to us...yes, I am here. Why do I not feel a part of you? I want to see what you see... The torrent of words is tumbling and swirling from the performers mouths...I am seated above them...beyond...how is it that the text rises up from the stage below and is able to wash over me? I look at you... at us. What are you feeling? Do you search for laughter...for recognition? Does the performance meet your desires...or do you quietly consent to believe that your narratives have melded, if only for a moment? Is it a comfort to know that your over-30 angst is shared...even if only fictitiously? How many of us are over 30? Gary trips over his words...the actor’s face belies his character’s cynicism...how can he possibly feel his character’s torment? How old is he—25? 26? The actor is young and hopeful—and cute!—no, how could he feel the anguish that comes with the creeping realization that your moment in the sun may already have passed you by? Over 30 and still stumbling through the shadows...still no certainty and even less hope...

My attention moves away from the performers and back to you...to us. You squirm in
your chairs. Moving forwards and backwards...shuffling...laughing again...looking to
your companion for a shared sense of acknowledgment. “Did you hear that?” your smile
suggests, “Was that funny? Are you having fun?” She nods and smiles back...”Yes, yes”
she seems to say, “I’m enjoying myself...I’m enjoying myself with you.” Attentions
creeping in and out. The performance goes on. Your hands stroke your faces...again and
again...but why do you only ever rub the left sides of your faces? Interesting. Hands
moving...where should they be placed? I am watching you...I want to be able to feel this
experience...to describe it phenomenologically...but how? I steady myself in the
performance only so that I can look back at you...at how it is affecting you. But what if
you knew? Would you be upset? Disconcerted by the knowledge that someone in the
back row had the temerity to peek into your worlds beneath the shadows of the
performance...would you be angry? I am an interloper into your little worlds...safely
screened by the dim lights and the spectacle before you. But you have become my
spectacle. How else can I do this? I am no longer we. Could I ever have been? I do not
laugh whenever you laugh. Our narratives are not the same. The birthday girl is onstage
now...is that the same actress who played the hippie? Wow... multiple parts...her
character comments that she desperately wants to sleep with Israeli men. I laugh... hard.
But you do not laugh with me. Enter my story...my partner is back from Israel
tonight...and I am not there with the kids to greet him. God—I miss him! I look at the
figures moving on stage—but for a moment, all I can think about is my Israeli man...
thank you, Vagg...now I’m even further away...When is intermission? I need to call him
and hear his voice...

Am I bracketing or hatcheting? Splitting myself off from you in order to be able to see
who and what we are. But what are we? I am here because of this project...and my own
endeavour is to try to understand it. I am sharing this experience with you—but in my
own way, in my own self-contained little universe. I do not feel a sense of oneness with
you. Where am I/we in all this...the sense of audience and attention I am/we are
seeking...is it the Unnameable?...I wonder...OK, really, how can you not love
Beckett?...“I don’t know, I’ll never know, in the silence you don’t know, you must go
on, I can’t go on, I’ll go on”...Isn’t that what this play is all about?

What does it mean that I didn’t see Sydney—see a geographical sense of us—in it at all?
Or that the we are was continually resolving itself before my eyes into the I am. The play spoke to me of despair—the other side of passion—which powerfully emerges in your 30s...when you slowly come to realize that the passionate hopes and longings of your youth may never return. But you also learn that your life is not only about what you feel...it’s about what you do...like giving your prize money to a friend so that she can go to London. But...none of that really matters...the question remains, what am I doing here? Even now—as I write this? For all its sincerity—does any of this come close to constituting a phenomenological description? Of course not—which is why I am now back in the present and writing of the experience in the past tense. How can I possibly describe something I could neither see nor feel? Certainly, we, the audience and the performers, shared a kind of closeness...a fleeting relationship to one another as we sat in a room...but was it merely a sense of proximity and a common point of visual reference? That ephemeral moment in space and time where we (each for our own reasons) had congregated to witness something did not feel like an intersubjective experience to me...and I cannot even attempt to approach the transcendental...

There was a moment though...after the lights came on...after the sighs of relief and the staccato applause...when liquid refreshments and the true communication of a shared experience with friends was beckoning. I came out into the light and saw Alex by the bar...as I went to greet her the anxious wondering slipped away...and the chasm between the subjective and intersubjective was bridged in a moment of shared communication and understanding. For a brief moment, I was no longer wondering what the hell I was doing in the midst of all these strangers. I felt a connection and a sense of association with someone who understood who I was and what I was experiencing...the sense of a shared experience then became real...but she was not transcendental...she had a face and a voice and she laughingly responded to my despair...

Message no. 105 [Reply of: no. 104]

Author: Justin Tauber

Date: Thursday, May 11, 2006 5:35pm

You’re post, which was brutally honest, has made me wonder whether I have not been focusing too much on the we, the collectivity or even the anonymity, of audience. I had
been paying attention solely to the way the darkness of the theatre allows us to slip into each other’s skin, to become a huge nocturnal organism (some sort of rat?). Your post reminded me that the intersubjective pole of Audience never escapes that inalienable subjective pole. I is my perennial starting point, even if it never captures this life without remainder. (I want to say immediately that the reverse is true as well—there is no solus ipse).

But it seems to me that you have shown that I cannot participate in a ‘we’ without opening myself to being identified and named by it. That intersubjective pole can draw me out of myself, but it can also act as hinge, turning back on me as a critique. I turn 30 in a few weeks, and some things were especially painful to laugh at when I realised I was laughing alone. Alienation is the other side of audience. It offers me a new home, but also the threat of being evicted from it.

Perhaps we could talk some more about audience and home?—this would probably lead to more talk about the theatre itself and its constitutive role as the abode of audience.

Message no. 106 [Reply of: no. 105]

Author: VERONIKA COSIC

Date: Thursday, May 11, 2006 9:33pm

I’m glad my honesty had something of value to say...surprised too...! You have beautifully extracted from my experience something that is far beyond me...that now becomes an abstraction of thought...so I must work harder to follow you...

I am reassured that "I" must be my perennial starting point but I’m still not sure how to get beyond it. I was also wondering if—perhaps?—the solus ipse can become manifest in the very act of writing and constituting an experience that will include, but also be beyond, my own? That maybe, sometimes, (as in writing), I alone do constitute the world...but I’m just toying with the idea...

You mention that you had been thinking of Audience as a huge nocturnal organism—a rat—funny, that makes me think of Beckett again… Darkness and rats feature again and again in his struggles to fight loneliness and his search for company. But in “Company” whom does he encounter as he explores the idea that the “I” cannot be left alone in the
world inventing my Voice, my hearer and myself…a dead rat…interesting company…

But let me squirm out of my solipsist skin for a moment and see if Audience can offer me a new home…albeit a short-term, foster one… Does this mean that I may be able to wriggle into the "we" if I can attribute to us a common beginning? If I can relate it to our common abode—the theatre…? I'll try…

My padded self enters into a chamber filled with empty seats that face a flat podium…a place that awaits the release of imagination and words…that can create and destroy innumerable worlds every night. Will my Self be restored or destroyed here tonight? There is a creative energy in the room—the dwelling encapsulates this force in its very names… it is "theatre" and "stage"…an arena inhabited by gatherings and happenings that play and sparkle…but never settle. I move into my new home and take my seat within it. I belong here now. For a moment. For a time. And you—strangers and outsiders—now come inside to inhabit this space with me. Under this roof, we are fused into an “intersubjective community of monads”…or is it, nomads? We…fellow travellers and idlers…

…and I lost it again…!

I was writing…trying to get that sense of belonging…of a place, a home, a "we", that I could describe somehow "from within"…but in that "hesitation" (remember that’s what Stuart said we are trying to be and describe?) I simply got lost…

Can you help? I lose all sense of authenticity the moment I begin to try to describe the amorphous "we"…in fact, the words become insensible and I start to feel ridiculous…

Message no. 108 [Reply of: no. 106]

Author: Stuart Grant

Date: Friday, May 12, 2006 2:20pm

Maybe homeworlds are useful here in the relation between the I which attempts to displace itself, disposition itself to make an expanded experience which includes a component of looking at itself doing what it is doing while it is doing it as well as doing it, and hold the different positions in some form of experiential relation. Is this a homeworld or an alienworld? It would seem that the suspension of the natural attitude
makes an alienworld, but maybe it’s just moving into a bigger home with more windows. Certainly, experience is always ‘my’ experience. But if I don’t experience your experience when we are laughing together at the performance, then is it the performance making you laugh and me laugh and every other individual laugh separately, or is your laugh making me laugh, or are we laughing with each other at the performance. Surely there is a complex intentional phenomenon here, which cannot be completely accounted for by a subjectivist explanation. Even an allowance for the performance as a third term which mediates both of our private experiences does not account for the effect of my laugh on your laugh. It seems to me that this ‘we’ phenomenon, though not a becoming of each other, or the formation of a ‘group mind’ or other such absurdities, is something which is left residual in any account rooted in the certainty of the subject. And I think the way we have to begin to speak of it is as something which entails all of these relations. Maybe some of our analytic philosophers can shed some light on this from Searle, Bratman, Gilbert, Sen, Sugden or other philosophers of collective intentionality. And again, according to Steinbock, homeworlds are prior to subjectivity and are necessarily intersubjective. According to generative phenomenology, by speaking of Becket, by asking whose Sydney, by dreaming of your own Israeli man, your own 30’s crisis, are you attempting to bring the play back home, to make it a part of the traditions which give you yourself? Are you not already a part of so many overlapping co-ordinated “we’s” which constitute you, which as Justin says, name you? And this unheimlichkeit, the “not-being-at-home”, which you describe as “getting lost”, “dis-location”, “anxious wondering”; is it the making of the alienworld of the phenomenological attitude?

Message no. 110 [Reply of: no. 108]

Author: VERONIKA COSIC

Date: Saturday, May 13, 2006 2:30pm

Is it possible? Is that why the project feels so alien—so foreign? In striving to be true to myself, to give an honest account of what appears to me as solely subjective insight—am I brushing up against the other… the real… the world… encounters that I have already collapsed into so many times that I can no longer even recognize them as being both distinct and a part of myself? “Am I attempting to bring the play back home?”…gasp of
recognition...Yes...Yes, I am. No question. Perhaps I have become accustomed to dismantling my traditions—the truths I can so readily deconstruct—thereby merely resigning experience and being to incoherence. In recognizing my limits—over and over again—I have found it easier to engage with the “critical” rather than the “transcendental”. Little miss Foucault! Why bother with philosophical questions of truth, when it is so much simpler to undermine them and expose them as historical contingencies.

My reflection upon my/our lived experience is articulated through an emerging sense of dislocation, anxiety and disorientation. The fear is that, in charting my steps through these sensations, I cannot attain the clear insight being asked of me—that I will remain bemused and, in speaking of the experience, I will merely succeed in publicly exposing my confusion. Perhaps I am blinded—not so much what is alien, but by what is so familiar? Can ideas become sedimented in a way that denies the possibility of new light shining through? Even though I move into a new home with bigger windows? Is it possible that I do not have the insight necessary to give a richer account of experience through phenomenological description—but that I have, at least, (and without realizing it!) a beginning?

In this beginning—this hesitant and, almost unwitting, initiation of the phenomenological attitude—perhaps I am still engaging in an intentional activity that seeks to fit the world to my mind...that is, my sedimented conception of it. From this perspective, it is impossible for me to see the existence of collective intentional behaviour. My intention remains individual—therefore I cannot experience our intention as audience. The two are totally different. I remain an individual—you’re right—and it is absurd to suppose that my subjectivity could ever evaporate into a “group mind”. But there is still the possibility that by participating in the collective activity of being an audience, there emerges an intentionality that is distinct and independent of my own. The question then, is how to get to that which is, as you say, left “residual” in my account of my own intentionality.

What is left, are the implicit intentionalities that construct our behaviours and values in being an audience. I have not explored these relations because I took them for granted while I was immersed in looking at myself doing what I was doing....as I was doing it...
The homeworlds that we live and inhabit—that remain so distinct for each of us—do they converge in a theatre in a way that constructs a new, shared world? Are there values—(essences?)—that motivate our behaviours in a way that (once within an audience) creates the possibility for a collective intentionality?

Is this it?... Am I approaching the phenomenological attitude?...Have I found my beginning...?

Message no. 116 [Reply of: no. 110]

Author: Stuart Grant

Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2006 9:45am

yes

V: the implicit intentionalities that construct our behaviours and values in being an audience. I have not explored these relations because I took them for granted while I was immersed in looking at myself doing what I was doing….as I was doing it…

S: it is these implicit intentionalities that the audience study tries to get at, and they are taken-for-granted. the question needs to be: how are these intentionalities given?

V: The homeworlds that we live and inhabit—that remain so distinct for each of us—do they converge in a theatre in a way that constructs a new, shared world? Are there values—(essences?)—that motivate our behaviours in a way that (once within an audience) creates the possibility for a collective intentionality?

S: I think that the implicit, elusive, unthematized intentionalities we are talking about do manifest as values and behaviours, and that in order to talk about them, to make them available as objects of experience, it is necessary to address the ways in which our behaviour is shaped and determined in the audience by the imperatives of the particular audience in which we find ourselves.

c) Thread 3—Presentation

Message no. 102

Author: ANDREW JAMES MATTHEWS
Hi All,

I have been thinking about the initiation of an audience quite a lot. When do we start as an audience? I believe that our speaking of our emotions as an audience are very much developing but at what period does this begin to develop? This is where I would like to pull in another phenomenon, that of the presenter. It is a thought to consider that we do not become an audience until we are presented with something. We go to the theatre prepared and willing to join in union with strangers as a sort of crude kinship. We are prepared to become an audience but we do not quite become one until we are ushered into the stands, this is when we take on this responsibility of being an audience. Our respect as a crowd being presented with something. This is just a thought could people please let me know what they think as I am eager to move in this direction.

Thanks heaps

Andrew.

Message no. 107 [Reply of: no. 102]

Author: Stuart Grant

Date: Friday, May 12, 2006 1:44pm

Andrew,

Do you mean that we are only an audience when we are in the same place and or time with each other? Or that it is only when actually before the show, ritual whatever that we become an audience? If the first, is an Australian Idol audience in their separate homes an audience (maybe by dint of shared time not place)? If the second, do we have no relation to the people who saw the show the previous night, or to the last time we took communion? Do we not become a part of an audience as soon as we have some form of intention towards that which calls for witness?

Message no. 109 [Reply of: no. 107]

Author: ANDREW JAMES MATTHEWS

Date: Friday, May 12, 2006 5:34pm
Hi Stuart,

I fully believe that space is not a requirement of what constitutes an audience and that we can become a collective with people who are nowhere near us. To expand, I do believe that people in different homes watching the same show are part of the same audience, but I also believe that we are preparing and prepared to become an audience as a collective and we do not start to become an audience until the opening credits of the show begin to show. Prior to this we are prepared to become an audience but are not yet an audience.

On the second point of the audience of the night before I do not believe that we are a combined audience rather people whom participated in a similar experience. We would not share the emotions of say a phone going off during the performance so our experiences would be different.

Maybe I am saying here that an audience exists in time but is not limited by space?!?!?!?!

Andrew.

Message no. 117 [Reply of: no. 109]

Author: Stuart Grant
Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2006 10:16am

Hi Andrew

I’m wondering about the type of presence that presents in your ‘presentation’.

And the "preparedness" that we undergo when we decide to attend this or that performance, or on the bus on the way to the theatre. How are we being prepared? In the preparing we are exhibiting specific intentionality precisely towards the performance (in phenomenological and propositional terms). How does the "being prepared for" intentionality differ from the "being presented to" intentionality.

And are the others who might be there not affective upon our motivation to attend in the first place?

To get transcendental about this, trying to clarify what you are saying: yes, I think it is a
matter of time. It is the performance which presents. It presents for a certain duration for an audience.

If it is not necessary to be in the same room to be in the same audience, if it is not a matter of spatial presence with each other, but a shared temporal presenting, then are you saying that the audience appears when the performance begins and disappears when the performance ends.

If I go to a bar after the show and there are a number of people who attended the performance talking in separate groups creating an atmosphere in the bar, are we still an audience? If I go with just the people I went with to talk about the show, are we still in audience? Does our continued intentional bearing towards that which we have been drawn together to witness maintain us in audience?

If not, are you saying that the minute the show ends the audience is no longer an audience? If that is the case then my definition of audience as gathering to witness doesn’t hold. If audience persists after the show, then for how long? If audience persists as long as I share intentional comportment towards the performance with others, spatially present or absent, then when and how does it begin and end?

§157 Candy—Dendy Cinema Byron Bay 24/05/06

A friend bought me a ticket to attend the premiere of the movie Candy, adapted by Luke Davies and Neil Armfield, from Davies’ novel of the same name. As a premiere, the showing was preceded by an hour long session of wine-drinking and finger-food eating in the foyer. This was a significant event on the Byron Bay social calendar. Byron Bay hosts a yearly writers’ festival, and is home to a community of stage and screenwriters, freelance journalists, novelists and poets. Part of this film was written in Byron Bay in accommodations provided by some noted local patrons of the arts. The town has an aristocracy of real-estate speculating media entrepreneurs, semi-retired actors and movie producers, who have, over a thirty year period, laid the groundwork which enables Byron Bay to trade in a reputation of being a haven for creative enterprise. As a work which straddles the worlds of movies and literature, there was a lot of interest (in both senses of
curiosity and personal stakes and involvement) in this work in this town. This was a hot foyer.

For me, as an audience member, there was also a complex involvement. As I have mentioned, I was bought a ticket by a friend. This friend and I, over a period of twenty years, have been part of a large group of friends and acquaintances who all spent their late teens and their twenties in Sydney, Australia, from the late 1970’s until the late 1980’s, as members of a large, active and enmeshed heroin using community from which there were an unusually large number of survivors. My friend, myself, and the writer of the play have all been acquaintances from this group of people for a long time. There were also at least thirty or so other people from this loose gathering of ex-drug addicts, musicians, writers and scene hangers-on, all of whom were acquainted to some degree with the writer, some very closely, some who had supported him. materially and personally throughout the process. I personally had spoken to him on a number of occasions over the years, and discussed whatever projects we were working on, and what might have happened to various acquaintances we hadn’t seen for a while. I was very closely acquainted with others who were closely acquainted with him, but by no means more than an Acquaintance with him personally.

People who survive heroin addiction, and who participate in communities of ex-addicts have a strong bond. It is a very special little club, akin to war veterans. We have seen and done many things which most people would not be able to stomach. We share a black humour born out of mutual knowledge of our ability to laugh at our own self-degradation, self-destruction and capacity for self-serving amorality.

Also, as a student at the Department of Performance Studies at The University of Sydney, I was aware of the reputation of the director Neil Armfield.

So, I went into the foyer of the premiere screening of *Candy*, laden with foreknowledges and prior involvements much more prominently thematized than in a usual attendance to a movie.60 This was as intense an experience of belonging to an audience that I could ever

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60 I believe that in attending theatre productions, particularly smaller ones, or church services, there is more likely to be this thematization of belonging than in a large impersonal movie cinema.
imagine for myself.

The movie was a depiction of a destructive love affair between two young junkies, and of the way heroin destroyed their lives and their love. It showed well how the demands of getting and using heroin, with the necessary crime, prostitution and lying, becomes the main priority, and gets put above all other relationships and values.

A couple of weeks earlier I had been to see a play called ‘Trivia” with a group of philosophy students who were learning how to do reductions. The students had pointed out and discussed the different worlds which intersected and overlaid in that play and in its audience. The awareness of those prior discussions thematized the same question of worlds in my apprehension of my attendance to the performance of *Candy*.

First, I went with a small group of friends who had all met earlier in a café. We discussed the writer, what we knew about him, the process by which the film was written. Our shared stories and opinions set up a reiterated world of values of who we were, what we thought, what we knew etc. We then joined other friends in the foyer. The same processes of reinforcing occurred. I was aware of my performance in the foyer, playing the persona that I usually play before these people, slightly exaggerated in the heightened energy of the social combustion in the foyer.

The small world we had made in the café merged into the world of our other friends in the foyer and into the broader foyerworld of the cultural aristocracy of Byron Bay. This audience knew who it was. There was a lot of recognition, a lot of backslapping, greetings, laughing, noise and familiarity. The area was packed tight with bodies. It took a long time to get a glass of the free champagne and you were always in contact with other people’s bodies, squeezed in amongst them, brushing up against them.

The group I was with entered the auditorium together. It was a large comfortable cinema. The lights were fully up. I sat next to people I knew. Laughter, camaraderie and discussion continued into the auditorium.

A well known TV film critic gave a small introductory speech about the film. He focused the audience’s self-impression by comparing the movie to *The Da Vinci Code*, casting that latter film as a somehow inferior piece aimed at people who were not as
sophisticated and intelligent as the current gathering. The audience laughed knowingly at this stroking of their collective identity. The reason we were at this elite preview was because we were a special bunch which knew something the others didn’t. The transparent strategy of this pop film critic bound the gathering of this already tightly gathered world of this audience more firmly.

The film was a love story. I had just ended an affair which had begun similarly to the romance of the film’s protagonists, with great abandonment and passion, and which had burned itself out also in similar manner to the film. Because of this, the emotional effect of the film on me was very strong. The lingering close-ups on kissing lips and eyes full of desire cut right through me. This recently past world, still a daily part of my emotional life, was activated by the film.

My experience of being a heroin addict for a long time drew me into the film. The portrayal of the mechanics of injecting drugs was very powerful: the trickles of blood, the bluish tied-up arms, close-ups of fingernails tapping syringe barrels, and the effect of the drugs on actors’ faces and bodies, revived physical memories, affecting me with an immediate metakinetic physical resonance stronger than anything I had ever experienced in a theatre or dance performance with actors in the same room. My life in the world of heroin addiction was very much a part of the experience, particularly because it was the world which underwrote the common shared history of such a large section of the audience.

I generally do not go to the theatre or the cinema in order to lose myself in a story or in characters. Unfortunately, my enjoyment generally derives from bringing the theoretical frameworks I deal with in my work to the performances. I have a degree in film production, another one in performance studies, I have directed and acted in a number of films and performances. The world of technique and theory, of philosophy and expertise determines my apprehension of the proceedings to a large extent. I am, after all, writing this as my response to the attendance. In this world, I saw great performances by the actors, questionable directorial decisions, and conventional film grammar.

The world of the writer was very important to this autobiographical film. It had originally been published as a novel, which evolved from some personal reflections on his own
experiences of drug addiction. He is renowned more as a poet than anything else. The film was full of the unique world of his poetic translation of his experience.

The film told a powerful story in its own right. This was very much a consistent narrative world, with a love affair, social relationships, and a portrayal of events that obeyed the unities. It was very much in accord with the set of cinematic conventions currently held to constitute realism. It had a beginning, a middle, and an end, motivated by moral dilemmas and decisions that had to be made by characters that were written to be believable.

The world of the characters, as is customary in this genre of film, was foregrounded. We shared their journeys, empathized with them, approved and disapproved of their actions, wanted things for them, felt for them as well as with them, liked and disliked them.

The world of the actors, their specific performances in this film was very obvious, They were given a lot of screen time and freedom by very generous directing. There were obvious moments of virtuoso performances, particularly from the older actors. The actors themselves, particularly Geoffrey Rush and Heath Ledger are very popular major Hollywood actors. The resonance of debate over Heath Ledger’s recent academy award nominated performance were unavoidable in the experience of this characterization. Geoffrey Rush was Geoffrey Rush playing an elderly gay junkie. But echoes of his former great roles haunted every gesture, every jaded raised eyebrow. Moreso than in most films, the world of the actors was very apprehendable.

Each of these worlds: the foyerworld, the world of Byron Bay, the junkieworld, my love story world, the world of film theory and criticism, the world of the writer’s life, the narrative world, the world of the characters, the broader social world of contemporary Australia in which the film was set, the world of the actors as known entities, as celebrities in their own right, were all overlaid and intersecting, mutually informing each other to constitute the experience of being in the audience of the film Candy.

§158 A Phenomenology of Coffee

The following is a short piece on the phenomenology of coffee. To locate it in context of the various phenomenologies we discussed on Thursday, I would say that it is primarily
detailed description of the specific experiential situation which aims towards eidetic insight. Also, as I point out in the piece, it is focused on a noetic rather than a noematic description. For the non-initiated, Husserl uses the terms noetic and noematic to name the opposite ‘poles’ of an intentional relation. The noetic pole in the case of thought is the thinking (as activity), whereas the noematic is that which is thought, or the ‘object’ of the act of thinking. The two cannot be divided, since any intentional relation is the unity of these two, but they can be distinguished, and one can focus on one or the other according to the sort of analysis one is after. As I understand it, the noema is not identical with the perceptual object as such- the object as transcendent in relation to consciousness- since part of the essence of a transcendent object is that we can never exhaust the possible perspectives and nuances which it reveals to us. Rather, the noema seems to be a certain unitary ‘meaning’ whether visual or conceptual, by which we intend the perceptual object. So, for example, in the case of an abalone shell used as an ashtray, one could distinguish two noematic ‘projections’ according to whether the object is understood as ‘an ashtray’ or ‘a decorative shell’. The noema seems to be the inexhaustible transcendent object experienced through a particular projection of meaning, which projection reveals a possible ‘facet’ of that object.

So in saying that I approach coffee from a noetic perspective I mean to indicate that I am interested in bringing out the distinctive activity which coffee exhibits as it affects consciousness. For me, one of the most phenomenologically interesting features of coffee is precisely the fact that it is not only an object for consciousness, revealing itself in various noematic shades, but also affects the noetic quality of consciousness.

Finally, you will notice that much of the piece is not written in the first person. This impersonal tone was not intentional, but arose quite naturally out of the experience. Because of this I left it as it was. So, here it is.

**A phenomenological description of coffee.**

First, let me set the scene. I have chosen to drink coffee in a cafe since I am interested in the specific experience of drinking and its effects, and not in the act of making coffee. The ritual aspect of making a beverage (think tea-ceremony etc.) is of course important and interesting, but it will not be my focus in this piece. Incidentally, the act of making a
Coffee is part of my ritual of sitting down to study, at least when I am studying at home. In that context the making prepares for the drinking in a phenomenologically interesting way. But that will have to be described on a different occasion.

I have abstained from coffee for the past 24 hours in order to be able to distinguish more clearly between the state of consciousness prior to drinking and the state subsequent to drinking. I choose a short black so as to pare down the experience as much as possible to its coffee-ness, excluding milk and sugar. I also drink on an empty stomach.

I begin with a sense of dullness. The dullness is not very strong since I have slept well, but there is a slight early morning heaviness and my mind wanders as I attend-to the sounds of the cafe. I can pick out the tap of the milk-jug on the counter, the click-click sound of the coffee dispenser, the hiss of the steam jet frothing milk, and the aroma of freshly poured espresso. This for me is already part of the experience. The coffee has already reached me and I have taken in the subtle scent of it. There seems to be a slight habitual reaction to the scent which involves an instant sharpening of consciousness. It is still very gentle but still distinguishable, as if my body has learnt a certain psychosomatic gesture associated with coffee, so that the mere aroma of it sets off the corresponding reaction.

The coffee arrives in a tiny pure white cup on an equally white saucer. There is nothing unusual about the cup and saucer. They are generic cafe crockery. The generic simplicity of the cup seems appropriate and contrasts beautifully with the deep brown of the coffee.

The phenomenology of coffee drinking certainly seems to start with the aroma, and this aroma seems freshest and most powerful as the coffee is poured. The small cup has a handle which is so petite that I can only pick it up between thumb and forefinger, with the finger supporting the handle. It seems inappropriate to grasp the whole cup in my hand, or cup it in my palm, and I cannot get a finger through the handle. The cup and the ‘rules’ of coffee drinking enjoin the making of this concentrated little gesture of bringing the three fingers together as if you are catching some small insect or holding a pen.

The short black has thick, almost oily consistency. It is a mixture of bitterness, sweetness, sourness, and a kind of metallic tang similar to the sensation of putting your tongue on the end of a battery. It is not an obviously pleasant taste, at least to me, and yet it is a
pleasure to drink it.

After drinking half a cup I wait for a few minutes, but almost immediately I detect a quickening of my heart rate. Also a slight discomfort in the stomach. After some more coffee and another few minutes I can detect a noticeable withdrawal of consciousness from my feet and hands and from the surface of my skin in general. This happens at the same time as a noticeable intensification of the focus and precision of my thinking. There is an emerging sense of increased clarity. The ‘focus’ refers both to the intensity of attention, and to its quality which becomes sharper and brighter. There is an increased ability to isolate elements in the visual and/or mental field and to consider them to the exclusion of others. For example, I look at someone walking past outside and the peripheral percepts of people and things seem to recede into the background more than is the case normally.

On the other hand there is a distinctly ‘physical’ sensation around the chest or heart area; a kind of nervous energy vaguely akin to apprehension or fear. I notice a peculiar sense of dislocation of the calm thinking and perceiving (though mostly thinking) activity from the various physical or bodily sensations I am currently experiencing. The bodily sensations appear now to be in a kind of ‘background’ which can be thematized and brought to the centre of attention, but they seem to be experientially ‘further away’ from the ‘centre’ of consciousness. Not further away in a spatial sense, but in the sense in which a memory of an past event, or even of a dream, can seem closer or further away as one struggles to recall it. ‘I’ seem very much to be ‘located’, in some hard to describe sense of ‘located’, ‘within’ this atmosphere of calm, crystal-like clarity, which is akin to the atmosphere of cold morning air at high altitude.

Coffee seems to have a noetic effect which is both distinctive and quite general. On the one hand it has certain quite clear features, which distinguish it from the phenomenology of other beverages. On the other hand, the noesis of coffee does not seem to be a single projection of ‘meaning’, but a general alteration of the noetic pole which has the quality of a ‘mood’ in the Heideggerian sense of a certain sort of attunement within which one finds oneself.

There is a distinct similarity to the experience of fasting and also to that of waking up. In
relation to fasting, the similarity extends to the sense of an experiential distance from bodily sensation, the sense of light-headedness, and of a certain sort of calm. Although the ‘light-headedness’ is in this case different insofar as it does not have the tendency towards a dreamy free-floating quality which going without food for a day or two can cause. The light-headedness is rather a free-headedness—it is sharper and much more amenable to willed and consistent thinking. At the same time, there is a sense that the clarity, the free-headedness, the focus themselves, in contrast to the thinking which occurs within them, are not ‘willed’ but transform consciousness involuntarily so that the mood of ‘normal’ consciousness and the mood of ‘coffee’ consciousness blend into each other in hardly perceptible gradations. The will is involved primarily in the choice of themes, of what to look at, what to think about. But the quality of effortlessness, of a lack of mental friction which makes possible a certain ‘free play of thought’ are ‘given’ as the parameters of the experience.

A little later, perhaps fifteen minutes after drinking, another effect becomes noticeable. My body temperature seems to drop noticeably. Actually, I am not sure if my measurable body temperature drops or if I simply ‘feel’ colder. If I touch my arm or my forehead the skin seems quite warm, and the sensation of cold appears to be ‘deeper in’. Nor is it a solely physical sensation. The experience also has a connected, if not actually indistinguishable, affective element. This is the experience of a certain emotional ‘coldness’, not in the sense of a ‘negative’ emotional state of indifference or unfeeling, but rather a kind of dis-interestedness, a lack of affective experience. It is hard to describe the experience without falling into descriptions which suggest a negative judgement of the state, such as when we call someone cold-hearted. It is neutral without being numb; inwardly-focused without being autistic. Of course there is not a complete absence of affective states. It is rather that all the other affective shades seem to be overpowered by the calm, crystal like mood of disinterested thought. Even the perceptual gaze has a ‘theoretical’ quality to it.

As I mentioned earlier, there is a parallel here to the experience of waking up, especially if the waking up is sudden, or if one has not slept long enough, e.g. waking up in the middle of the night, being woken up by a telephone next to the bed. There are other symptoms of waking up, such as disorientation, impaired balance, fuzzy-headedness, but
the one which seems to last longest, at least for me, is a certain affective neutrality or disinterestedness or equanimity. In waking up, the first thing to return is a distinctively bodily awareness, balance etc. whereas a rich and full-bodied emotional responsiveness and sensitivity seem to take longer to return, perhaps ten to fifteen minutes depending on the quality of the sleep. The coffee experience is similar to this as far as the disinterestedness is concerned.

I am indeed aware of each part of my body. I inhabit it with a bodily sensitivity, but this awareness lacks the intimate nuances of the emotive and affective (as distinct from the merely sensitive) layer. This emotive and affective layer seems to me to be that which gives an experience of concrete unity of consciousness with the bodily processes so that these are experienced as authentically ‘mine’. That these two need not go together is marked by the difference in meaning between the words sensation and feeling. The former has a more bodily, the latter a more psychological nuance. Within the coffee mood each part of the body and various bodily processes can be made the objects of attention, but the physical sensations which localise the body part or process, say the sensation of wiggling the toes, or the sensation of a slight stomach-ache, are filtered through a certain lens which distances them and dims their ‘personal’ significance. I can notice the slight stomach ache, or the pain in my lower back from having not stretched for a few days, but I cannot be ‘concerned’ about them in the same way I can when not affected by coffee.

In other words, the bodily sensations are there, but they are slightly muted and do not seem as authentically ‘mine’ and more of the nature of objects which I observe. It would be interesting to compare this to the experience of anaesthetic, which involves an almost total dislocation of feeling and sensation from the affected area, but without the same heightening of clarity. Coffee is of course extremely mild in comparison.

My next observation is that while the coffee attuned consciousness seems almost magnetically drawn to clear and intensive thinking, it seems repelled (not in the emotional sense of “I find that repellent”, but more on the analogy of a magnet) by the bodily sensations. I can focus on them, but to do so requires an exertion of attention which suggests that I am working against some resistance, a countering tendency in
marked contrast to the frictionless play of coffee-stimulated thought.

If, for example, I strongly pinch my arm, the sensation is less intense than normal. If I now attempt to focus exclusively on this sensation of pain, I notice the following two features: 1) the first feature is the above mentioned ‘disinterestedness’; 2) the second feature is that it takes a noticeable effort to focus on the sensation, and, strangely, the more I attempt to focus on it, the more it recedes and I find myself sliding back into the calm, slightly disembodied mood which seems characteristics of coffee. So, while coffee seems to have the effect of giving clarity, precision and logical consistency to thinking, it also seems to have this general mood of impersonality. This impersonality is apparent, as already mentioned in a slight disassociation of the thinking activity from sensitive and affective states. But another correlative of this is that things are not experienced in as strong a contrast to the body considered as the personal locus of consciousness. Since the body has receded to some extent it appears more like another object, or set of objects and processes within the sensorial field as a whole. It still retains it primacy in being ‘closer’ to consciousness than objects but it is more ‘objective’ than usual. On the other hand, this seems to free up the attention, which can now ‘identify’ itself more effortlessly with other ‘objects’, in particular ‘mental’ objects; in other words, to focus on thoughts, memories, mental images etc. Strangely, this increased concentration/identification has a decreased component of personal egoity. In other words, when I let the coffee mood have its way I become immersed in an awareness of my thought processes which is so intensive that for short periods of time ranging from a few seconds to a few minutes (approximately) I lose any reflective sense of myself. The more focused I am, the longer the loss of reflective self-consciousness lasts. By reflective self consciousness I mean the awareness of myself as quasi-object-like, as the self which ‘I’ refer to when ‘I’ say "I would like a short black".

At this stage I also notice a change in my visual experience. Whereas at the beginning of the experience I could pick out visual objects with increased focus I now find that my eyes tend to defocus almost by themselves. In other words, when the coffee mood really sets in, it becomes harder to have a sharp and steady perception of some external object. To really focus on something perceptual takes the same sort of exertion which is involved in focusing on bodily sensations. Consciousness seems inclined to retreat from the
sensory peripheries and turn ‘inward’, though not literally into the body. It seems almost impossible to localise this ‘inward’.

Turning for a moment back to the substance, it is interesting to consider that coffee is extracted from a bean, or rather, the ‘seed’ of the coffee plant, and not from a leaf as in the case of black tea, or from flowers as in the case of various herbal teas. Each of these parts of a plant seems to have its characteristic gesture. The seed, say the coffee bean, has a distinctive gesture of contraction and concentration. The seed represents a different phase in the life cycle of the plant than the leaf, or the flower, or fruit. The seed achieves its purpose after the flower and fruit are gone. The preceding stages have a direct reference to the life cycle of ‘this plant’ this particular instance of the species. Whereas the seed points not to the particular but to the continuation of the species through the unfolding of its potency. In the seed the plant participates in its own future. Whereas the flower represents a strongly aesthetic culmination of the life cycle, in scent and colour, in the attraction of bees etc. the seed has its place in continuity. In this sense it seems impersonal since it points beyond the individual plant. In a similar way we speak of seed thoughts, or seminal ideas. These ideas, though less directly related to my experience, suggest some possibilities for a phenomenological study of the relation between the ‘psychological’ effects of coffee and its ‘external’ phenomenology.

What is the contextual role of coffee. It is a liquid. Within a general notion of liquids we can distinguish it from certain liquids, such a hydrochloric acid in that it is drinkable (by human beings), and not (fatally) toxic. It is a beverage. It differs also from thirst quenching drinks like water, since its dehydrating and diuretic properties it is not a good thirst quencher. It does fall into the categories of drinks drunk for pleasure, and that of drinks consumed for their affect on consciousness. Obviously these two categories are not sharply distinguishable. As in the case of alcohol, the state induced by coffee is both pleasurable (though in a different way) and useful. As already intimated, coffee aids concentration, helps you to stay awake, and these uses have certain pleasures associated with them, e.g. the feeling of thoughts flowing clearly and uninterruptedly, of distractions melting away, of being ‘able’ to ward of sleep against the body’s natural inclination. But the pleasures associated with the actual drinking of the coffee, the distinctively sensual pleasures, seem distinct from these, at least conceptually. This seems to me to be because,
whereas the sensuous dimension of coffee drinking is intense the state of consciousness which enables coffee to serve its various purposes in human life, is unobtrusive and a means rather than an end. I do not drink coffee to focus explicitly on the state it produces, except in the exceptional situation of writing a phenomenological description. Rather, I drink it to facilitate a more effortless and a clearer focus on other things of concern: the book I am reading, the notes I am writing, the conversation I am having. So, coffee seems to be a tool which is a means to a means, in the sense that it sharpens our attunement to things which are themselves means: books, conversations, specific trains of thought. It is not the sensuous garment of the substance which act as a tool, since this is explicit in the enjoying of it and is not itself the affect it has on consciousness. The ‘function’ of coffee, its ‘actualisation’ to put it in Aristotelian terms, seems to occur within consciousness. On the other hand coffee as a substance can’t be strictly separated from the coffee-mood, as if the latter was merely something about human psychology and nothing to do with the coffee anymore. The entire ‘context’ of coffee seems to extend into the bodily chemistry and into the realm of consciousness. But in such a way that within consciousness the potency contained in the substance achieves a certain unique actualisation. (maybe it isn’t unique, I don’t know what effect coffee has on other animals.) This suggests that there is a distinction to be made between the sensuous appearance of coffee: its scent, its taste, its colour and consistency etc. and the activity of coffee in the realm of consciousness.

It is conceivable, in terms of a Husserlian eidetic variation, to imagine a number of substances which have precisely the same effects as coffee, but which are completely varied in their sensuous appearance. Some may be white and sweet, others green, thick and salty, others ice cold and aquamarine blue. It at least seems to be the case that a substance which was blue and cold but which had affected consciousness in exactly the same way would be closer to the essence of coffee than something which had the taste, colour etc. but as little effect as plain water. I will finish with a question: if no one had drunk coffee before and a drink was suddenly discovered which had exactly the same sensuous properties as a good coffee, but did not affect consciousness in any way, would people drink it as much as they do now?
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