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Annual report: January 1 – December 31, 2009

Content

1. Highlights	2
2. Staff	3
3. Research	4

1. Highlights

The Center is an interdisciplinary "Center of Excellence" funded by the Danish National Research Foundation, with supplementary funding from the University of Copenhagen (Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Theology and Faculty of Health Sciences). The current research program of the Center, which runs from March 1, 2007 – February 28, 2012, is entitled "The Self: An Integrative Approach".

The Center's research is divided into six sections:

- Self and consciousness
- Core self and extended self: A viable distinction?
- Infantile self-experience: A developmental perspective
- Self, emotions and understanding
- Disorders of self
- Self and normativity

During 2009 the Center organized, co-organized, and/or co-sponsored 15 conferences and workshops (with more than 140 speakers) as well as 11 individual guest lectures by invited speakers, and it had more than 50 foreign visitors. The staff of the Center published 58 books and articles, and presented papers in Australia, Belgium, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, and the USA. The Center's interdisciplinary meetings have attracted foreign PhD students from Austria, China, Estonia, France, Hungary, Italy, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the UK, and the USA.

Among the conferences and workshops organized by the Center in 2009, the following three might be singled out as having attracted particular attention in terms of international attendance:

April 15-16: "Self-No-Self"

August 27-28: "Atrocities, Emotion, Self"

October 8-9: "Self, Ego, Person"

Among the Center's many 2009 publications one might highlight the following:

Legrand, D., Grünbaum, T., Krueger, J. (eds.): *Dimensions of Bodily Subjectivity*. Special issue of *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 8/3, 2009, 279-408.

Mors, O., Kragh-Sørensen, P., Parnas, J. (eds.): *Klinisk Psykiatri. 3. udgave*. København: Munksgaard, 2009. (700 pp.)

Legrand, D. & Ruby, P.: "What is self-specific? Theoretical Investigation and critical review of neuroimaging results." *Psychological Review* 116/1, 2009, 252-282.

Grøn, A.: "The Limit of Ethics - the Ethics of the Limit." In T. Brudholm & T. Cushman (eds.): *The Religious in Responses to Mass Atrocity. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 38-59.

Zahavi, D.: "Is the self a social construct?" *Inquiry* 52/6, 2009, 551-573.

During 2009, two of the Center's PhD students successfully defended their theses:

Morten Sørensen Thaning: "The Space of Dialogue. Revisiting Hans-Georg Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics in the Light of John McDowell's Minimal Empiricism"

Ulrik Houliind Rasmussen: "The Memory of God: Hans Blumenberg's Philosophy of Religion"

Claudia Welz, one of the Center's Postdocs, successfully defended her Habilitation thesis ("Vertrauen und Versuchung") at the Theological Faculty, University of Zürich. Earlier in the year, she also received the 2009 Templeton Award for Theological Promise.

2. Staff

Director

- Professor, dr.phil., PhD, Dan Zahavi, Director

Scientific personnel

- Professor, dr.theol., Arne Grøn
- Professor, dr.med., Josef Parnas
- Post.doc., PhD, Carsten Fogh Nielsen
- Post.doc., PhD, Joel Krueger
- Post.doc., PhD, Kasper Lysemose
- Post.doc., PhD, Søren Overgaard (since 01.09.2009)
- Post.doc./assistant professor, PhD, Thor Grünbaum
- Associate professor, PhD, Anne Marie Pahuus (until 30.06.2009)
- Post.doc., PhD, Borut Škodlar
- Post.doc., PhD, Claudia Welz

PhD students (all are enrolled at the University of Copenhagen)

- Cand.mag., Christian Beenfeldt
- MA, Wenjing Cai
- Cand.scient.soc., Gry Ardal Christensen
- M.Phil., Johan Peter Gersel
- Mag.art., Johan Eckart Hansen
- Mag.art., Mads Gram Henriksen
- Cand.mag., Line Ryberg Ingerslev
- MD, Andrea Raballo
- Cand.theol. Ulrik Houliind Rasmussen (until 30.10.09)

Research assistant

- Cand.mag., Rasmus Riis (05.10-30.10.09)

Technical staff

- Ditte Sæbye, statistician

Administrative personnel

- Pia Kirkemann, administrator (until 30.09.09)
- Merete Lynnerup, secretary (until 31.05.09)
- Merete Lynnerup, administrator (since 01.06.09)
- Simon Rodovský, student assistant (until 15.10.09)
- Tinna Kryger, student assistant (since 15.10.09)

Visiting professor

- Philippe Rochat, Emory University, Atlanta, USA (10.05-30.05.09)

Visiting researchers

- Attila Szigeti, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania (31.05-30.06.09)
- Hengwei Li, Zhejiang University, China (until 15.10.09)
- Rick Anthony Furtak, Colorado College, USA (05.08-31.08.09)

Visiting PhD students

- Adrian J.T. Smith, Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz, Germany (01.02-01.10.09)
- Morten Thaning Sørensen, University of Aarhus, Denmark (until 20.11.09)
- Maren Wehrle, Albert-Ludwigs Universität, Freiburg, Germany (02.02-15.03.09)

- Thiemo Breyer, Albert-Ludwigs Universität, Freiburg, Germany (01.04-31.05.09)
- Somogy Varga, Institut für Sozialforschung, Frankfurt am Main, Germany (01.01-31.12.09)

3. Research

Christian Beenfeldt has primarily worked on: 1. The history of scientific experimental introspection in psychology, with respect to, a) its roots in the British associationist psychology of Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Hartley, James Mill and John Stuart Mill, b) its development, by E.B. Titchener, into a mature system of experimental psychology, and c) various interpretations of the history of introspection advanced by philosophers and historians of psychology throughout the twentieth century. 2. The development of a comprehensive philosophical response to the family of experimental work in social psychology, most notably by Nisbett and Wilson, putatively establishing the unreliability of introspection (in the form of verbal reports by experimental subjects) for the scientific study of conscious mental functioning.

Thiemo Breyer has worked on the following topics: 1. Attention and its relation to a) the notion of consciousness, especially intentionality, temporality, passive and active genesis, from the perspectives of phenomenology and cognitive science and to b) intersubjectivity, with respect to the theoretical reflections on triangulation and indexical reference in analytical philosophy of mind and the empirical findings in anthropology on the evolutionary and genetic-epistemological relevance of joint attention for the constitution of a “theory of mind”. 2. Experience and self-understanding, in particular how the noetic and noematic horizons of consciousness pre-structure the way we experience the (“inner”) world of mental processes (e.g. remembering, imagining) and the (“outer”) world of objects and how this pre-structures are transformed by way of linguistic articulation (e.g. in narratives).

Wenjing Cai has worked on the project “The Problem of Reflection in Phenomenology”. She has focused primarily on: 1. the phenomenological reflection as a method in Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology; 2. the criticism and justification of reflection as a valid method for phenomenology; 3. Heidegger’s criticism of reflection and his method of hermeneutic intuition; 4. the relationship between reflection and language.

Gry Ardal Christensen has continued to work on research for the PhD project “Trust and Ethical Selfhood”. The main thesis is that trust is a part of our ability to orient ourselves morally in the world, and that our trusting and distrusting are consequently to be understood as resources for or parts of the moral judgments that we pass on what goes on around us. Two endeavours have been central to the work: 1. An investigation into the notion of judgment with the aim of understanding the nature of our relationship to the world when we judge about moral matters; and 2. an investigation into the feeling of distrust in order to understand the function of it with regard to the self, the thesis being that distrust is not primarily or necessarily the sign of damaged self, but a vital ability for a well functioning self’s ability to navigate morally in the world.

Johan Gersel has primarily worked on the following projects: 1. The conditions for the ascription of significance to mental states. Particular focus has been given to the possible manifestation of knowledge, and the reasons for considering grasp of significance to be a form of knowledge. This research has focused heavily on readings of Dummett and Campbell. 2. The necessary conditions for mental states appearing as concerning mind-independent states of affairs. The focus has especially concerned the role of objects appearing as spatio temporal. This research has primarily been inspired by Kant, Strawson and Evans.

Thor Grünbaum has been working on the following projects in the domains of philosophy of mind and philosophy of psychology: 1. Self-consciousness and consciousness, 2. Perceptual attention, action-control, and knowledge of one’s own action, 3. Perceptual control and action-individuation, and 4. Imagination, narrative perspective and the self.

Arne Grøn has primarily worked on the following projects: 1. Studies on ambiguities of subjectivity in terms of a) nature and freedom (“Homo subiectus”), b) the limits of self-understanding and self-explanation, c) self-relation and self-giveness, d) the notion of leading a life, and e) the concept of trust. 2. Studies on religion and rationality in terms of a) the question of how to reformulate a critique of religion taking human self-understanding as a lead, and b) in-visibility. Articles have been written on the above-mentioned sub-projects.

Johan Eckart Hansen has worked on different topics related to his PhD project. 1. The relation between temporality and self-consciousness and how different types of memory make different forms of self-experience possible. 2. The relation between self-consciousness and bodily self-awareness, especially a) the different forms of bodily self-awareness and their relation, and b) the notion of body memory and its different forms. 3. Narrative theories of selfhood, especially the ones that stress moral agency as crucial for selfhood. 4. Different ways of being or losing one’s self in an existential/moral understanding of the self in contrast to the loss of self in a psychopathological form.

Mads Gram Henriksen has primarily worked on the following projects: 1. analyzing empirical data collected from patients suffering from schizophrenia spectrum disorders with the purpose of defining anomalies of experience and self-awareness, structural changes in the field of awareness and the relation between symptoms, 2. developing a Heideggerian framework to study how autism and perplexity is experienced in schizophrenia, 3. studying the supposedly incomprehensibility of schizophrenic delusions and the role of this concept in the contemporary classification systems, 4. examining the efficacy, validity and theoretical premises of the cognitive behavioural-therapies for schizophrenia, 5. identifying core features of a phenomenologically informed psychotherapy for schizophrenia.

In 2009 *Line Ryberg Ingerslev* has been focusing on the following subjects: 1. The relation between philosophical anthropology and phenomenology, especially the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl. She has been co-teaching with Zahavi on Husserl’s phenomenology (fall) and co-arranging a conference on Husserl’s conception of self, ego and person (fall). 2. The social relevance of a theory of expression has been discussed in dialogue with developmental psychology and psychiatry; the notions of perspective, self-distance and pretence play a special role in Ingerslev’s understanding of the social experience of expression.

Joel Krueger has primarily worked on the following projects: 1. Investigating the enactive nature of music perception, and particularly how music is perceived as a tool for cultivating new relationships and forms of self-experience, even by the very young. 2. Investigating the interactive, bodily-expressive dynamics of social interaction and interpersonal understanding. 3. Comparing and contrasting Buddhist and phenomenological conceptions of consciousness of self. 4. Situating the extended mind thesis within current debates in social cognition to see if the former might fruitfully contribute to the latter.

Kasper Lysemose has studied the relation between subjectivity and self-preservation – primarily within two fields: philosophical anthropology and phenomenology. The concept of self-preservation has given rise to new perspectives on a number of topics with anthropological as well as phenomenological importance, i.e. habituality, visibility and immortality. Various distinctions regarding the relation between subjectivity and self-preservation have been investigated, i.e. a) the relation between a substantialistic and a functionalistic concept of self-preservation, b) the relation between a transcendental and an anthropological concept of self-preservation, c) the relation between the self-preservation of reason and the self-preservation of life and d) the relation between three fundamental conceptions of subjectivity: self-annihilation, self-transcendence and self-preservation. Important books by Claessens, Gehlen, Leroi-Gourhan, Jonas, Merleau-Ponty and others have been studied.

Carsten Fogh Nielsen has primarily been working on the following projects: 1. Philosophical and empirical studies on moral development with particular focus on a) defining the basic elements in the moral developmental process, b) clarifying the ways in which these elements interact and relate to each other in order to c) develop a philosophical adequate model of moral development. 2. The relationship between philosophical and empirical approaches to moral psychology and the extent to which these disparate approaches can be brought into fruitful dialogue. 3. The moral philosophy and contemporary relevance of German Idealist thinkers, in particular Kant and Hegel. 4. The question of how to employ popular cultural artefacts as heuristic tools for illuminating and illustrating philosophical inquiry.

Søren Overgaard has primarily worked on the following projects: 1. Issues in social cognition, in particular a) the role of inference in social cognition and b) the contribution of phenomenology to the social cognition debate. 2. Questions concerning philosophical methodology, in particular a) the phenomenological method and b) the appeal to intuition in analytic philosophy and recent criticisms of this practice, e.g., by the defenders of so-called 'experimental philosophy'.

Josef Parnas conducted research in three major domains: 1. Philosophy and phenomenology of psychopathology, with special emphasis on the essential structure of the pre-reflective self and its relation to the narrative level. 2. Empirical studies of disturbed selfhood in schizophrenia and schizotypal disorders. 3. Relation of psychopathology to neuropsychological dysfunctions.

Andrea Raballo has worked primarily on the following empirical projects: 1. Anomalous subjective experiences in schizophrenia spectrum disorders, 2. self-disorders and schizotypic vulnerability phenotypes, 3. psychopathology of experiential-existential vulnerability and sovrastructural psychotic phenomena. Subsidiary, theoretical and disseminative projects involved: 1. Qualitative exploration of psychotic modes of consciousness in movies, 2. spectatorial empathy and jaspersian limits of understanding, 3. development of didactic formats based on phenomenological analysis of movies.

Ulrik Houliind Rasmussen successfully defended his PhD-thesis "The Memory of God: Hans Blumenberg's Philosophy of Religion" on October 30, 2009. In his dissertation Rasmussen argues that the category of memory makes a philosophical reconsideration of God possible that avoids the widespread but regrettably misleading alternative between the "death of God" one the one hand and his alleged "return" on the other.

During his visit at the Center, *Philippe Rochat* worked on a manuscript in collaboration with Professor Zahavi on Mirror self-experience. The article, now ready for submission, revisits Merleau-Ponty's ideas and current developmental as well as comparative research on the experience of seeing oneself in the mirror. In addition, he had a series of daily research meetings with Carsten Fogh, Post Doctoral fellow at the Center, designing an empirical research on the self and moral sense by young children as well as the preparation of a manuscript on what constitutes a moral agent in the perspective of child development. They continued this work during the month of October when Carsten Fogh visited the Emory Infant and Child Laboratory in Atlanta, USA.

Borut Škodlar was in 2009 a postdoctoral research fellow at the Danish National Research Foundation's Center for Subjectivity Research. He was primarily working in the following fields: 1. Despair and suicidality in schizophrenia from the clinical and phenomenological perspective (using EASE scale) as well as the Kierkegaardian perspective (with Josef Parnas and Arne Grøn). 2. Subjective experience of schizophrenia, analyzed by Heidegger's notion of *care* (with Mads Gram Henriksen). 3. Critical evaluation of psychological treatments of schizophrenia from the phenomenological perspective (with Josef Parnas, Louis Aaron Sass and Mads Gram Henriksen). 4. Formation of a phenomenologically-informed treatment approach for schizophrenia (with Josef Parnas, Louis Aaron Sass, Mads Gram Henriksen and Barnaby Nelson).

Adrian J. T. Smith was a visiting student at the Center from February 1st – October 1st, 2009. During this period he worked on three projects. The first was the final drafting of an article (“Acting on (Bodily) Experience,” *PSYCHE* 15, no. 1 (2009): 82-99) on mereological problems in bodily experience and body representation, and the virtues of endorsing an action-oriented account of both. The second project consisted in refining a functionalist analysis of affordances: as a ubiquitous yet distinctive relation between abilities and situations; and providing a personal level explanation of perceptual sensitivity to particular affordances: as practical knowledge of the constraining relationship between abilities and situations. This was a sub-project of his dissertation research. The third project consisted in researching the phenomenological connection between spatial phenomenology and bodily subjectivity (as found in Husserl’s work), highlighting the role of bodily self knowledge in a modest account of that connection, and exploring its virtues in relation to similar contemporary work in the philosophy of perception. This was also a sub-project of his dissertation research.

Attila Szigeti was a visiting assistant professor at the Center in the period May 28 – June 25, 2009. During his visit, he worked on his research project as a fellow of the “New Europe College – Institute for Advanced Study” from Romania. His research focused on the phenomenological interpretation of the cognitive science of embodied social cognition. During his stay he developed his work on the role of the kinaesthetical and emotional responsivity, and of the reciprocal emotional expression in embodied intersubjectivity.

Morten Sørensen Thaning successfully defended his PhD-thesis “The Space of Dialogue. Revisiting Hans-Georg Gadamer’s Philosophical Hermeneutics in the Light of John McDowell’s Minimal Empiricism” on November 20, 2009. In his dissertation Thaning departs from the question: In *what sense* can Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics be conceived as a transcendental form of philosophy? Thaning reinterprets Gadamer’s thinking as a transcendental form of philosophy by comparing it with John McDowell’s minimal empiricism.

Maren Wehrle has primarily worked on the following project: 1. Studies on the topic of attention in phenomenology and cognitive sciences/cognitive psychology, neuroscience, focusing on a) methodological questions of interdisciplinary research, b) integrating phenomenological concepts like horizon, situational context, habituality, interest and affection into the attentional research debate, c) comparison of phenomenological concepts and ‘embodied cognition’. 2. Critical analysis of the prerequisites in cognitive science and their anthropological implications (e.g. mind/subject as information-processing-, problem-solving and goal directed system). 3. Studies on normativity and influences of intersubjective and cultural norms in the realm of experience, Husserl and Foucault.

Claudia Welz has primarily worked on five projects: (1) She has finished her “habilitation” thesis *Vertrauen und Versuchung* and has successfully defended it at the University of Zurich. The thesis aims to clarify the meaning and forms, the potential and the limits of trust as a phenomenon and concept. It focuses on conflicts, in which trust is put to the test, and the ambiguity of subjectivity that at the same time bears and undermines trust. In preparation of the manuscript, C.W. arranged the conference “Trust, Emotion and Uncertainty” at the CFS and gave a research-based Master course called “Tillid, tro og tvivl” at the Faculty of Theology in Copenhagen, discussing approaches from philosophy and theology, developmental psychology, neuroscience and sociology. Further (2) she has done editorial work on the volume *Trust, Sociality, Selfhood*, (3) examined the relation between shame and selfhood, (4) the in-visibility of the self as surfacing in self-deception, and (5) self-transformation as described by Kierkegaard, Luther, and Rosenzweig.

Dan Zahavi has primarily focused on the following projects:

1. Ongoing work on the nature of empathy.
2. Work on mirror self-recognition.
3. A critical discussion of no-self doctrines.
4. An analysis of the relation between self and self-conscious emotions (in particular shame).
5. A discussion of McDowell’s and Dreyfus’ respective views on mind.

Our various research activities have resulted in a large number of manuscripts that are either in press or have recently been submitted. These forthcoming publications demonstrate that we have basically met our milestones for 2009. Our annual report for 2010 will contain more extensive information about these publications, but here are some of the highlights:

Raballo, A. Sæbye, D., Parnas, J.: "Looking at the Schizophrenia Spectrum Through the Prism of Self-disorders: An Empirical Study." *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, in press.

Raballo, A., Parnas, J.: "The Silent Side of the Spectrum: Schizotypy and the Schizotaxic Self." *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, in press.

Rochat, Ph., Zahavi, D.: "The uncanny mirror: A re-framing of mirror self-experience." submitted

Siderits, M., Thompson, E., Zahavi, D. (eds.): *Self, no self? Perspectives from Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian Traditions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, in press.

Welz, C.: *Vertrauen und Versuchung*. Mohr Siebeck, in press.

Welz, C. & Grøn, A. (eds.): *Trust, Sociality, Selfhood*. Mohr Siebeck, in press.

Zahavi, D.: "Shame and the exposed self." In J. Webber (ed.): *Reading Sartre*. Routledge: London, in press.

Dan Zahavi
Director