



Comments on Shaun Gallagher's "Explaining body self-awareness"

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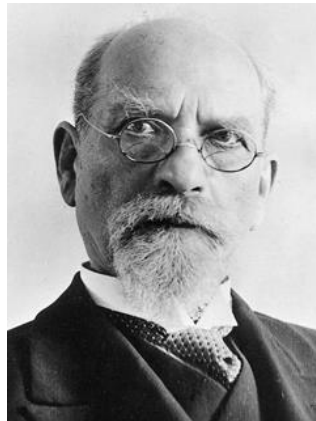
Three remarks

This commentary picks up on three themes in Shaun Gallagher's paper.

1. Merit of the philosophical project and a link to psychiatric research.
2. The social and cultural aspects of bodily self-awareness and its relations to anti-reductionism.
3. The role of the "pattern theory of self" in clinical practice.

Designing conceptual schemes

It was part of Husserl's project to design a conceptual scheme for the study of the psyche.



This task is analogous to the one Galileo set himself when designing notions to describe classical dynamics.

The value of new concepts

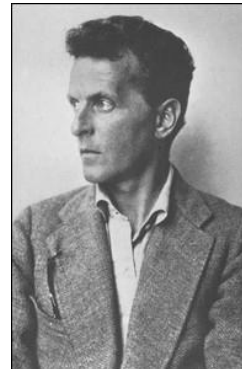
Refining and expanding our conceptual space is highly valuable.

- › The empirical human sciences have arguably suffered from a lack of theorizing.
- › And they have been fairly singularly focused on what can be inter-subjectively ascertained.

Developing a sharp and shared understanding of the experience of mental illness can enrich the empirical study of these illnesses.

Social and cultural aspects

Gallagher argues that the notions of ownership and agency are socially and culturally situated, or perhaps even constituted.



Externalism and the impossibility of private language suggest that these notions are indeed irreducible.

Pattern theory of self

Mental illness is related to a deficient sense of self. This sense in turn derives from patterns of features in a wide range of domains.



Is that like the Humean idea of the self as a stable cluster of properties?

Practical use

Ideally we can use the pattern theory of self in research and clinical practice.

- › How may it help to predict course of illness or suggest interventions? Possibly by tracing the dynamics of the features.
- › What “practical kinds” of illness can be designed on the basis of that?
- › How does the careful vocabulary on ownership and agency tie in with the pattern theory?