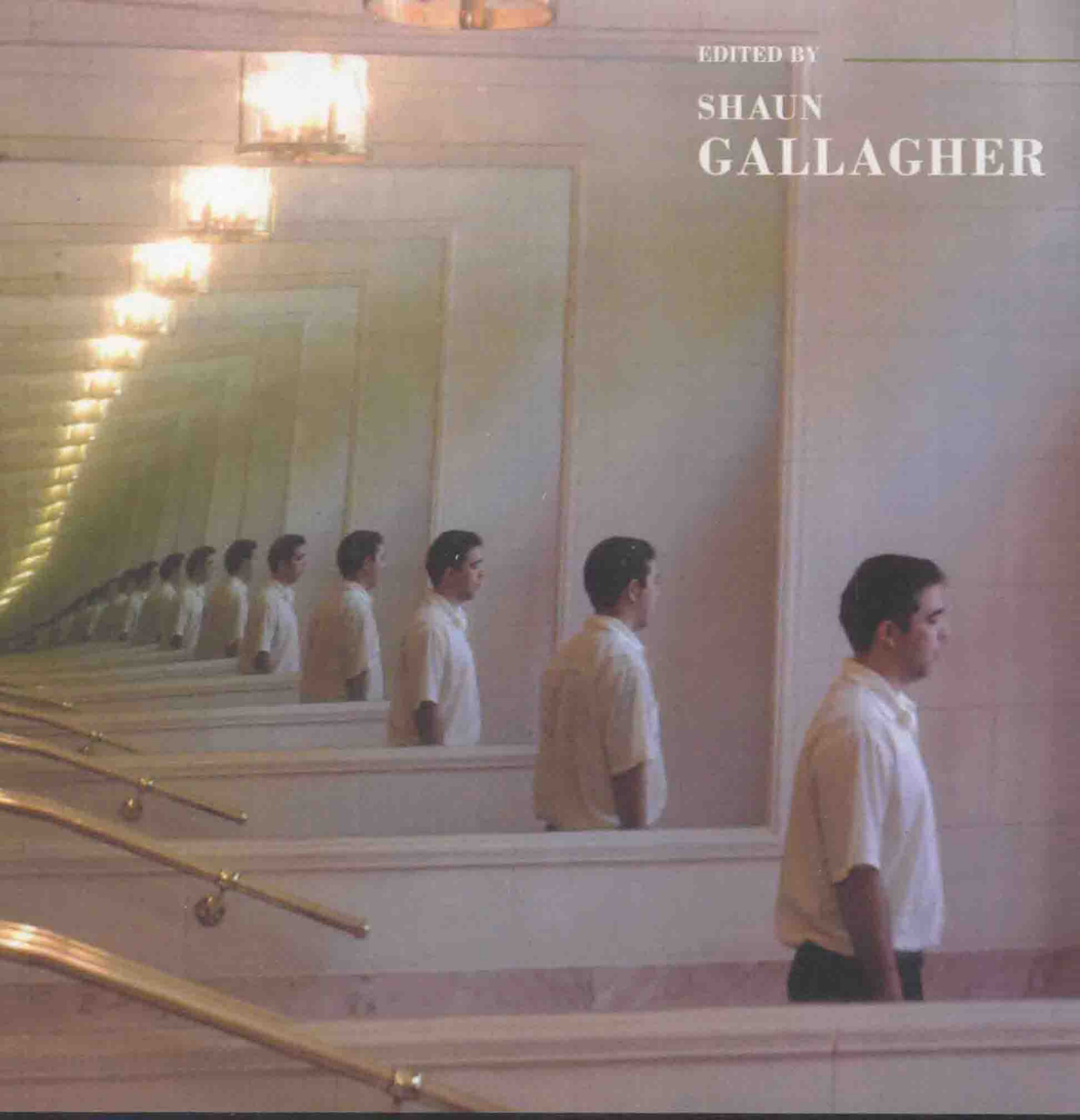

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SHAUN
GALLAGHER

The Oxford Handbook *of*
THE SELF

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

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SHAUN GALLAGHER

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INTRODUCTION

A DIVERSITY OF SELVES

SHAUN GALLAGHER

Research and publications on the topic of the self have increased significantly in recent years across a number of disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience. This increase of interest in the concept of self has been motivated by a number of factors in different disciplines. In philosophy and some areas of cognitive science, the emphasis on embodied cognition has fostered a renewed interest in rethinking mind–body dualism and conceptions of the self that remain too Cartesian. Poststructuralist deconstructions of traditional metaphysical conceptions of subjectivity have led to debates about whether there are any grounds (moral if not metaphysical) for the reconstruction of the notion of self. Recent interest in Buddhist conceptions of no-self has motivated questions about whether such a thing as self even exists. In light of new understandings of dynamic and distributed processing in the brain, philosophers and neuroscientists are exploring similar questions about whether the self might be an illusion. With respect to the self, understood as an agent, similar questions arise in experimental psychology. Advances in developmental psychology have pushed to the forefront questions about the ontogenetic origin of self-experience, while studies of psychopathology suggest that concepts like self and agency are central to explaining important

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aspects of pathological experience. Finally, an increase of interest in narrative has also played a role in generating renewed interest in how we understand, not only '*the* self', but also how we understand *our*selves in social and cultural contexts.

This volume explores a number of these recent developments, and is not limited to any one approach. It is meant to introduce the reader to the complexity of the concept (or plurality of concepts) of self and to the many different approaches to its (their) analysis. It includes essays by leading representatives from areas such as analytic philosophy of mind, phenomenology, pragmatism, Buddhist studies, psychology and psychiatry, neuroscience, feminism, and postmodernism. These various analyses do not necessarily have the same target. Some critically focus on the notion of self as it has been constructed in social and cultural arrangements; others conceive of the self in terms of psychological continuity; others as a bodily manifestation. Some of the authors explore how certain aspects of self are constituted in brain processes, narratives, or actions; others explore how some aspects of self come apart in anomalous experiences, experiments, or pathologies.

In this introduction I will try to provide a map of this broad area of research by summarizing the problems and the conclusions that we find in the following chapters. The details of analyses and arguments are developed in the relevant chapters, and the reader can find them there.

Making a Start

The first part, 'Self: Beginnings and Basics', covers a number of large areas, including questions of development and neural underpinnings. We start, however, with the history of the notions of self and person. *John Barresi* and *Raymond Martin*, a psychologist and a philosopher respectively, review ancient, medieval, and modern ideas about the self and focus on a central issue of whether the self is something spiritual (an immaterial substance), and therefore beyond any natural scientific analysis, or something that can be explained naturalistically. In the twentieth century the development of this issue is reflected in the fact that, with respect to the self, 'during the first half of the century [philosophy] labored to separate itself from science and in the last half to reintegrate itself with science'. History also shows us that many of the ideas about the self that we explore today were foreshadowed by past thinkers, from fission examples in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writings of Clarke, Collins, Priestley, Hazlitt, and Bradley, to the idea that the self may be a fiction, in Hume and Nietzsche, or that it originates in social relations, as suggested in writings by Hartley, Reid, and Hazlitt. As such ideas have developed in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, the challenge,

Barresi and Martin suggest, is to provide an integrated theory of selves that makes sense out of their *experiential*, *ontological*, and *social* dimensions.

An important question that may help us to address these different dimensions and to sort out what we mean by self is to ask when and how something like self, or self-consciousness, emerges. Ontogenetically, can we say that something like a self is present in the newborn, or is the self something that emerges as the child develops? Even to attempt an answer to these questions, we need to distinguish between different aspects of self. While William James (1890) distinguished between the material self, social self, and spiritual self, Ulrich Neisser's (1988) distinctions between ecological, interpersonal, extended, private, and conceptual dimensions of the self are perhaps more directly relevant to the developmental question. Although it may be clear that newborns lack episodic memory required for an extended self, or the ability to entertain a self-concept, this does not mean that they are necessarily without self or self-awareness.

Philippe Rochat, from the perspective of developmental psychology, reviews the evidence for such self-awareness in newborns, specifically a minimal and phenomenal self-awareness in the context of feeling, perception, and action. In this regard, Neisser's concepts of *ecological* and, importantly, *interpersonal* aspects of the self are most relevant. There is good evidence that what some philosophers call the 'minimal self' or minimal self-awareness is already operative in newborn humans, if we understand it to include embodied ecological and interpersonal aspects. Rochat is especially interested to explore the phenomenal and emotional aspects of this self-awareness, how organized the experience of the body is in infants, and the role of intersubjective interaction. Over the course of the first months of life, however, and especially in contexts of intersubjective interaction, self and self-awareness develop to the significant point of an objective and conceptually born self-recognition. The notion of self-recognition, however, is itself complex, ranging from primitive non-conscious bodily processes (as in the immune system) to sophisticated aspects of self-consciousness in human adults.

Gordon Gallup, James Anderson, and *Steven Platek* focus on one of these more developed aspects of self-consciousness, namely, mirror self-recognition, the ability to recognize one's own image in a mirror. Gallup (1970) provided the first experimental report of mirror self-recognition. He showed that chimpanzees are able to learn that the chimps they see in the mirror are not other chimps, but themselves, as evidenced by self-directed behavior. There is evidence (some more convincing and some less so) that this phenomenon can be found in elephants, dolphins, magpies, some gorillas, chimpanzees, and human infants starting around fifteen months. Gallup, Anderson, and Platek suggest that this ability correlates to large brain size (relative to the animal's body size), and they review evidence for a neural network for self-recognition and self–other differentiation. They cite evidence that frontal cortex and cortical midline structures are implicated in self-recognition tasks.

Again it seems important to ask precisely what aspects of self and self-processing are being considered in the various experiments and tasks that inform any conclusions about self and self-consciousness. This is equally so in regard to determining what neural processes and brain areas might be involved. Although a large number of studies point to frontal and cortical midline structures as important for self-specific experience, *Kai Vogeley* and *Shaun Gallagher* reconsider this idea in light of several recent reviews of the neuroscience literature on this point. Depending on the precise nature of the questions being asked, there seems to be overwhelming evidence that the self is both everywhere and nowhere in the brain. A widely cited review by Gillihan and Farah (2005) suggests that there is no specialized or common area responsible for self-related representations; when the entire survey of self-related tasks is considered, the entire cortex seems to be involved. As LeDoux suggests, 'different components of the self reflect the operation of different brain systems, which can be but are not always in sync' (2002: 31).

In other words, frontal cortex and the cortical midline structure are *not* the only areas involved in self-related tasks. In addition, however, these areas may be involved not because the tasks are self-specific, but because they are tasks that involve a specific kind of cognitive operation, namely, reflective evaluation (Legrand and Ruby 2009). The question is then whether these areas are activated because they are self-specific, or because the experimental tasks used to test self-recognition, for example, involve reflective evaluation. The question of how self and brain are related, however, is not localized in one chapter; it is distributed across a number of other essays in this volume (Chapters 3 and 7 especially).

On some conceptions, what we call self may be nothing other than the product of brain processes. On other conceptions, what we call self involves a larger system that includes the whole body and the environment. The second part of this volume, 'Bodily Selves', explores questions about how bodily processes contribute to self. *Quassim Cassam*, in his chapter on the embodied self, focuses on three questions: the metaphysical question about the relation between body and self; the phenomenological question about the nature of our awareness of our own body; and the epistemological question of whether anything is special about the knowledge we have of our own bodies. Although these questions can be treated separately, they are also knotted together and, as such, in various ways they weave through a number of the chapters in this section, and the next two sections, which deal with phenomenological, metaphysical, and epistemological problems. Cassam considers various arguments for and against the claim that I (the person) am identical with my body, demonstrating how unsettled the various answers are. He also considers answers to the question of whether bodily awareness is a form of *self*-awareness, showing that it may depend on whether bodily awareness targets the body qua object or the body qua subject. This distinction is central for anyone who considers the question of bodily self-awareness and its status with respect to the possibility of misidentification. Cassam thus begins a discussion of the principle of immunity to error through misidentification (IEM) that is continued in a number of the following chapters.

IEM

The idea of immunity to error through misidentification can be traced back to Wittgenstein (1958), but was explored more fully by Sydney Shoemaker (1968) and subsequent thinkers. IEM characterizes judgments about self, and the information sources on which such judgments are based, *iff* the information source can be only about the self *as subject*. When, for example, I use the first-person pronoun *as subject* I cannot be mistaken in regard to whom it refers. If I happen to have a toothache, Wittgenstein suggests, it would be nonsensical to ask: 'someone has a toothache, is it I?' I may be wrong about it being a toothache—it may be some kind of referred pain. But I cannot misidentify who it is who is experiencing it. My use of the first-person pronoun in this case ('I have a toothache'), my judgment, and the nocioceptive information source that is the basis for my judgment, are IEM. In contrast, uses of the first-person pronoun *as object*, that is, in judgments based on sources of information that deliver only objective knowledge about ourselves, are not IEM. For example, when I look at a live video it is possible that I mistakenly identify the person in the video as myself when it is actually someone else.

John Perry, in his chapter on self-knowledge, considers the possibility that the first-person pronoun has this characteristic of IEM because it refers to something special, for example, a Cartesian ego. He, in agreement with Elizabeth Anscombe and Sydney Shoemaker, rejects this idea, not because, as Anscombe (1975) famously argued, the 'I' does not refer at all, but because the way of referring, rather than the referent itself, is special. 'I' is an indexical that follows the rule of a reflexive reference (the token-reflexive rule): the word 'I', without any further intention accompanying the utterance, refers to the speaker of that utterance. It's not clear, however, that this rule reflects the difference Wittgenstein noted between the use of 'I' as-subject, and 'I' as-object. It also motivates questions, pursued by *Peter Hobson*, about what happens to the use of the first-person pronoun in some pathologies.

A number of different positions are staked out in various chapters when it comes to the question of extending IEM to proprioception (bodily position sense which allows one to know where one's limbs are), an extension originally suggested by Gareth Evans (1982). Cassam argues, in agreement with Evans, that bodily self-ascriptions based on proprioception are IEM, but IEM *per se* is not the thing that guarantees that proprioceptive awareness, or any other form of self-consciousness is awareness of one's self qua subject, because some judgments (e.g. demonstrative judgments) about things that are not self are IEM. In the case of making a judgement about an object, for example, a new car, when it is perceptually present, and I refer to it as *that* car, my reference to it cannot involve misidentification. Cassam

goes on to make the further point that if a judgment is IEM it is because it is based on a source of information that is IEM.

In contrast, *José Bermúdez* turns this around and suggests that an information source is only derivatively IEM, based on the fact that judgments based on it are IEM. That is, the property of IEM is primarily a property of judgments rather than information sources. It is not clear, however, that this would reduce the reliability of the self-experience of the agent, or, as *Elizabeth Pacherie* suggests, that it implies a high reliability for judgments about self-agency. Bermúdez agrees, however, that, like introspection, proprioception (including what Gibson calls 'visual proprioception', that is, information about the bodily self originating in the visual modality and linked to our bodily position or movement through the environment) is IEM. On the one hand, this is a kind of non-conceptual awareness that has implications for agency which are constitutive for self-consciousness and are 'grounded in the IEM property'. On the other hand, IEM is not sufficient for something to count as self-*consciousness*, since some non-conscious sources of information (e.g. vestibular system processes) are IEM.

IEM, then, is said to apply to the use of pronouns and demonstratives, the judgments that include those uses, and the information sources on which those judgments are based. There are debates about various issues concerning IEM, but there is general agreement that if an information source or a judgment is IEM, then it is highly reliable with respect to the kind of self-consciousness that may be associated with it. As we'll see later, this may include our awareness of ourselves as agents. It may also apply to the sense of body ownership insofar as it is based on proprioception.

Body Ownership and Some Phenomenological Details

The question of body ownership is explored in the chapters by *José Bermúdez* and *Manos Tsakiris*, from two very different perspectives. Bermúdez pursues a philosophical analysis of the concept. He reviews deflationary and inflationary conceptions of the sense of ownership and rejects the strong (inflationary) claim that the sense of ownership is a distinct and phenomenologically salient dimension of bodily awareness. On the deflationary view, ownership is not a first-order sense (a feeling or experience) at all, but simply a fact about or a label for a certain aspect of bodily experience. Although it seems clear that one can distinguish between a first-order experience of one's body, and a second-order judgment about that experience, it is not so clear that there is an important difference between saying

that the experience of bodily ownership derives from a particular fact about bodily experience (e.g. the spatial content of bodily sensations), and that the sense of ownership is an implicit feature of bodily experience. On the inflationary view, the issue may simply be a question of how implicit (recessive) or explicit (phenomenologically salient) it is, and that may depend on circumstances and individual differences. On the deflationary view, there is no feeling of ownership over and beyond the judgments of ownership and the facts about bodily experiences that ground them.

Tsakiris follows the more inflationary view and reviews a growing body of empirical research on the sense of body ownership that suggests that the latter depends on the integration of somatosensory signals. The latter may include proprioceptive, kinaesthetic, tactile, visual, and vestibular signals generated as feedback from our movements or actions. In experimental settings, the distinction between a reflective attribution or judgment of ownership and the first-order experience of ownership is also important. The Rubber Hand Illusion (RHI), which is the focus of much of the research on body ownership, involves the experiential level, and not just the level of judgment. When one sees a rubber hand being tactilely stroked in synchrony with tactile stimulation of one's own unseen hand, one begins to feel the rubber hand to be part of one's own body (Botvinick and Cohen, 1998). In other words, the sense of ownership extends to the rubber hand. Tsakiris argues that this depends not simply on bottom–up somatosensory integration, but also on top–down modulation effected by a pre-established representational model of the body.

Beyond rubber hand experiments, Tsakiris discusses recent research on out-of-body experiences (OBE). He shows that the neurocognitive processes involved in the RHI (and thus for body parts) are also involved in OBE (and thus for the body as a whole). Accordingly, multisensory integration together with the modulation of internal models of the body generate the experience of the body as being one's own as well as the experienced discrimination between one's body and other objects. This experience of bodily ownership may, Tsakiris suggests, be a critical component of self-specificity as defined by Legrand and Ruby (2009; see Vogeley and Gallagher, in Chapter 4 below).

In her chapter on the phenomenological dimensions of bodily self-consciousness *Dorothée Legrand* explores in detail our awareness of the bodily self-as-subject. She starts with the central distinction between self-as-object and self-as-subject, and goes on to show its relationship to the transitivity and non-transitivity of self-consciousness. Consciousness of myself-as-object, for example, in my reflective evaluation of my posture, is transitive in so far as it considers my body as an intentional object. Consciousness of myself-as-subject is intransitive in the sense that this form of self-awareness does not take my body as an intentional object. When I reach for a hammer, for example, I am transitively aware of the hammer (I may have to consciously look for and locate the hammer to successfully complete