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Music And What It Is Like: What A Phenomenology Of Perception Tells Us About The Experience Of Music

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MUSIC AND WHAT IT IS LIKE: WHAT A PHENOMENOLOGY OF PERCEPTION TELLS
US ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE OF MUSIC

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MASTER'S PROGRAM IN PHILOSOPHY

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Dedication

For those who were not able to.

MUSIC AND WHAT IT IS LIKE: WHAT A PHENOMENOLOGY OF PERCEPTION TELLS
US ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE OF MUSIC

by

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Abstract

Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op.125 is one of his most brilliant and influential musical compositions. However, at the time that he writes his *Ninth Symphony*, Beethoven is completely deaf. Beethoven exhibits a unique situation where his mind is unaffected in its ability to continue creating new music even though his body is effected in its ability to experience music. Theories of mind, like reductive physicalism and non-reductive dualism, offer a way of understanding Beethoven's conscious experiences of music in relation to physical or non-physical information about mental phenomena associated with conscious experience. Yet, these theories of mind are unable to fully explain conscious experience because there is information about conscious experience that eludes physical and non-physical information about mental phenomena associated with conscious experience because conscious experience does not depend on the mind. Rather, a phenomenological approach to conscious experience reveals information about conscious experience that is only available because of the body. Through a phenomenology of perception, we can understand how it is that the body provides information about conscious experience that makes it possible to understand how a deaf Beethoven is able to continue to participate in the world of music as a composer, but not as a listener.

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Chapter 1 - Problem: Music and the mind

What is an experience of music?

An experience of music can be as complex as playing an instrument or as simple as just listening to Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. Yet, when he wrote his *Ninth Symphony*, Beethoven had already spent several years of his life unable to hear certain sounds and tones.¹ At this point in his life, Beethoven is believed to have endured the loss of his hearing for more than twenty years.² The cause of Beethoven's gradual hearing loss and eventual deafness are still debated and not completely understood.³ Two years prior to the first performance of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, during a rehearsal of his work *Fidelio* in late November of 1822, friend and musician Anton Schindler accounted to a friend that "from the beginning of the duet in the first act, it was clear that [Beethoven] heard nothing of what was going on, on the stage".⁴ During this same rehearsal, the seventeen year-old soprano Wilhelmine Schröder recounted of Beethoven:

"At that time the Master's physical ear already was deaf to all tone. With confusion on his face, with a more than earthly enthusiasm in his eye, swinging his baton to and fro with violent motions, he stood in the midst of the playing musicians and did not hear a single note!" (Davies, 56)

Both Schindler and Schröder describe in their accounts of the rehearsal that the usual conductor of the orchestra was aware of Beethoven's inability to conduct the rehearsal.⁵ Schindler describes that "fatal

¹ Davies, P. J., 2001 & MacCarthy, M., 1936.

² Davies, P.J., 2001, pp.42-43. Beethoven mentions his "strange deafness" in a letter to friend, physician Franz Wegeler, but does not date the letter. The estimated date of the letter is the 29th of June in 1801.

³ Davies, P.J., 2001 & MacCarthy, M., 1936.

⁴ MacCarthy, M., 1936, pp.51.

⁵ Davies, P J., 2001, pp.56-57, & MacCarthy, M., 1936, pp.50-51. Schröder's account alleges that Conductor Umlauf "had to charge himself with the heart-rendering business of calling [Beethoven's] attention to the fact that the opera could not be given under his direction". Schindler, on the other hand, suggests that the conductor had "proposed a pause of rest, without giving the reason" after the chorus had become confused, after which "the same thing began again with the same confusion". It was after this break that Schindler claims that he wrote in the notebook Beethoven used to communicate, 'I beg you not to go on. I will tell why, at home.' Whether or not Beethoven was spared the humiliation of being told he was unable to conduct is not important, but what does matter is that it is clear from both accounts that Beethoven was affected by his hearing loss and could no longer conduct.

November day” as one in which Beethoven “had been smitten to the heart, and to the day of his death he lived under the impression of that failure”.⁶ Faced with this reality, Beethoven secluded himself after the incident and it is during this time he completes one of his most influential and brilliant compositions, his Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op.125. How is it possible for Beethoven, in spite of lacking an ability essential to the experience of music, still able to compose a piece of music that he cannot fully experience? Beethoven’s disabled experiences of music help show how complex our conscious experiences of music are. Despite that he was lacking the ability to experience music aurally, Beethoven’s mind was not affected to the extent that his ability to compose and write music was also affected. Beethoven’s disabled experiences of music show that the mind is engaged with and enabled by experience.

What Beethoven helps show is that in order to fully account for conscious experience, we must understand how the mind is engaged with the experience of music in such a way that the mind is not disengaged with the world of music because of sensory disability. Our best theories of mind ought to provide what is necessary for understanding conscious experience and how Beethoven is able to continue to be a part of *the* world of music and share *a* world of music. The aim of this chapter is to show that reductive and non-reductive theories of mind fail to fully account for our conscious experiences. This is a problem for understanding what an experience of music is because such theories do not clarify the relationship between mind and experience. First, I will argue that reductive theories of mind cannot fully account for conscious experience through a purely physical understanding of the mind. This kind of physical approach to the mind helps show that conscious experience involves non-physical properties. In a parity of this argument, I will further argue that non-reductive theories of mind also cannot fully account for conscious experience through a purely non-physical understanding

⁶ MacCarthy, M., 1936, pp.52.

of the mind. Next, I will suggest that both of these theories of mind are unable to clarify the relationship between the mind and disabled experience's like Beethoven's because theories of mind cannot account for the first-person dimension of experience. It is my contention that this dimension of experience cannot be fully captured in physical and non-physical properties because conscious experience is not enabled by the mind. Rather, conscious experience enables the mind. For this reason, both reductive and non-reductive theories of mind are not in a position to explain everything about conscious experience. In failing to account for the first-person dimension of experience, I will suggest that reductive and non-reductive theories of mind cannot possibly explain what a subjective experience of music is like for someone with a sensory disability. By accounting for the first-person dimension of experience that escapes reductive and non-reductive theories of mind, we can begin to understand how Beethoven is able to participate in the world of music as a composer but not as a listener.

I. Theories of Mind and the Experience of Music: What reductive physicalism and nonreductive dualism cannot tell us about conscious experience

In this section, I will examine how the neurological findings of the differences in the brains of musicians and non-musicians, in conjunction with reductive and non-reductive theories of mind, are understood to relate to the experiences of the subjects. Similar to reductive theories of mind, the interpretation of the data suggests that physical information is able to explain something about the conscious experience of music. By a similar argument, non-physical information should also be able to explain something about the conscious experience of music. What physical and non-physical information are unable to explain is what conscious experience is like.

Both reductive and non-reductive theories of mind understand the mind in relation to available information about mental phenomena. Reductive theories of mind are views where complex thoughts or mental states can be reduced to physical phenomena. In the case of neuroscience, the mind is

reducible to the brain and neural activity. On this view, the mind and the sorts of activities associated with mental processes come together in the body and the two do not exist separately. On the other hand, non-reductive theories of mind maintain that the mind and the body exist separately but interact, causally or otherwise. These two theories attempt to provide an account of how the mind and body interact, and whether they interact at all. There are numerous token explanations compatible with each theory.⁷ In the case of reductive theories of mind, consciousness and intentional states can be reduced to cognitive processes, whereas non-reductive theories preserve the separation of mind and body. Frank Jackson offers an argument opposing reductive theories of mind using the famous example of achromatic Mary⁸. This thought experiment in conjunction with what has become known as the knowledge argument (Jackson 1982, 1986), provides support against a purely physical understanding of the mind. A reductive approach to the mind presents a theory that fails to account for what conscious experience is like. As a result, reductive theories of mind cannot provide a purely physical understanding of the mind and conscious experience if we want to account for the entirety of subjective experience. On the other hand, non-reductive theories of mind also fail to account for what conscious experience is like and cannot provide a purely dualistic understanding of the mind and conscious experience. In order to gain a more comprehensive and thorough understanding of the mind and what conscious experience is like, we must understand what the mind has to do with subjective experience. In being able to account for the relationship between mind and subjective experience, we can begin to understand how Beethoven's sensory disability does not disengage him from the world of music.

⁷ Bermudez, J.L., 2006.

⁸ Jackson, F., 1982. "Epiphenomenal Qualia", *The Philosophical Quarterly* 32: 127-136.

A. Reductive Physicalism and What It Is Like

Reductionism is aimed at explaining mental phenomena described in one theory in terms of mental phenomena described in another theory.⁹ This suggests that reductive theories of mind then are in a position to explain mental phenomena described by commonsense psychology¹⁰ in terms of mental phenomena described by neuroscience. Reductive theories of mind contend that “consciousness” as a mental phenomenon is capable of being simplified in terms of the neurological findings of the brain. If this sort of reductive physicalism is able to explain mental phenomena associated with consciousness. Neuroscience, similar to reductive theories of mind, understands conscious experience using neural activity and processes that come together in the brain. This means that with the support of neuroscience, it is possible that our conscious experiences can be fully explained by information about the physical states of the brain, which would suggest that physical information about the brain should be adequate for understanding what relationship the mind bears to subjective experience.

Considering how intellectually and physically demanding the activity of playing music is, examining the brain of a musician should provide the kind of physical information that is essential to understanding how the mind is engaged with the experience of music. Through a reductive physicalist approach, the extent to which a musician is mentally engaged in experiences of music in comparison to a non-musician¹¹ can be evaluated using physical information about the brain. A musician was considered to be someone who has had exposure to musical education and is proficient in reading music as well as performing it, whereas a non-musician was defined as someone who has never played

⁹ This understanding of reductionism is modeled after what is presented in this article: Churchland, P.S. & Sejnowski, T.J. “Neural Representation and Neural Computation” in *Philosophy of Psychology: Contemporary Readings*, edited by Jose Luis Bermudez, pp.151-181.

¹⁰ Bermudez, J.L., 2006, pp.203-214.

¹¹ Non-musicians are considered those who have never played a musical instrument with little to no education in music. Musicians are considered those who play musical instruments, as amateurs and professionally, and have had some kind of formal education in music.

a musical instrument and has little to no education in music. Data collected from studies that were focused on evaluating the brains of musicians in comparison to those of non-musicians¹² suggested that physical information about the brain of a musician is reflective of a musician's skills and abilities. What these studies help show is that a musician as well as a non-musician, are defined by their experiences of music because the physical information collected about the brain reflects these experiences. So if the experiences of music attribute to the physical structure of the brain, then physical information about the brain is able to tell us something about the experience of music because the brain *is* the relationship between the mind and subjective experience.

These studies found that there are structural differences in the brains of musicians that correlate to the complex physical and mental operations that musicians perform.¹³ If physical information about the brain is able to explain how the mind is engaged in the experience of music, then a reductive physicalist approach is able to tell us something about conscious experience because of the brain. For example, the corpus callosum is a part of the brain that is associated with inter-hemispheric communication that underlies motor sequences. Studies found that this area of the brain was significantly larger in musicians, particularly in those who began musical training before the age of seven years old.¹⁴ Musicians also exhibited symmetry between the left and right hemispheres of the brain which was found to have strong correlations to the age of commencement of musical training.¹⁵ Through this sort of physical information, the symmetry exhibited by the hemispheres of the brain of a musician is understood as having to do with the motor cortex and handedness.¹⁶ This sort of physical

¹² I am referring to two particular articles by Dr. Gottfried Schlaug. Please see *References* for both articles.

¹³ In this study, a musician was defined as someone who was either enrolled as a student in a full time music program whose main income is derived from a professional career in music, whereas a non-musician was defined as someone who did not have any formal training in music and never played a musical instrument for any reasonable period of time.

¹⁴ Schlaug, G, 2003, pp.368-69.

¹⁵ Schlaug, G., 2003, pp.369.

¹⁶ Schlaug, G., 2003, pp.369.

information suggests that the kinds of complex motor skills involved in playing a musical instrument engages both hemispheres of the brain and as a result, there is increased communication between the two hemispheres that attributes to their physical symmetry. This sort of reductive physicalist approach would conclude that the brain is that the relationship that the mind bears to subjective experience, which is why we are able to explain something about the musician's experiences of music.

Yet, if the physical structure of the brains of musicians correlates to the complexity of their experiences of music, then what does the physical structure of the brains of non-musicians suggest about their conscious experiences of music? Part of what defines a non-musician is that they have not been afforded the kinds of musical experiences that define a musician. These studies found that musicians exhibited a higher grey matter concentration in certain regions of the brain in comparison to non-musicians.¹⁷ In addition, what these studies observed was that there were differences in gray matter in regions of the brain of musicians that were not expected to show differences.¹⁸ Similar to the way physical information about a musician's brain is reflective of the mental phenomena associated with the conscious experience of music, a reductive physicalist approach would contend that the difference in gray matter also serves as a reflection of the mental phenomena associated with the conscious experiences of the non-musician. Reductive physicalism would contend that this physical information about their conscious experiences of music thus revealing that a non-musician's conscious experience of music is markedly different than that of a musician. Although we can gain an understanding of the relationship between the mind and conscious experience from physical

¹⁷ The particular regions where gray matter was measured in the brain- the perirolandic region, the premotor region, the posterior superior parietal region, the posterior mesial perisylvian region bilaterally, and the cerebellum.

¹⁸ This difference was observed in superior parietal cortex. This region of the brain is understood to play an important role as the integrator of visual and auditory information with motor planning activities. Schlaug, G., 2003, pp.373.

information about the brain, what exactly does physical information about the brain tell us about an agent's conscious experience?

B. Non-Reductive Dualism and What It Is Like

The data collected in these studies suggest that a musician's experiences of music are mentally demanding in a way that is not reflected in physical information about the brains of non-musicians. If physical information about the brain is able to tell us something about the conscious experiences of musicians and non-musicians, then the brain should also be able to tell us something about the conscious experience of music. Yet, even if physical information is able to tell us something about conscious experience, what about conscious experience can it tell us? In his example of achromatic Mary¹⁹, Jackson shows that if physical information is able to fully explain conscious experience, then Mary should know everything there is to know about the experience of color if she is given all the physical information about color and color vision. However, what Jackson shows is that although Mary may be an expert on all the physical information about color vision, Mary does not know everything there is to know about the experience of color because she has never experienced seeing color herself.²⁰ Upon being let out of her colorless world and into a colored world, Mary would undoubtedly learn *what it is like*²¹ to visually experience color which is something she could not have known prior to her experience.²² If Mary can only know *what it is like* to see color through her own experience, then physical information about conscious experience does not provide Mary with everything she needs to know because Mary is lacking the conscious mental phenomena associated with the experience of color. According to reductive physicalism, "consciousness" is a mental phenomenon that

¹⁹ Jackson, F., 1982, pp.130.

²⁰For whatever reason, for her entire life Mary has been confined to a black and white room that is completely devoid of color.

²¹ Nagel, T., 1974. "What Is It Like To Be A Bat?" *The Philosophical Review*, 83(4), 435-450.

²² Just to clarify, Mary has always had the ability to perceive colors but she has only had achromatic experiences; that is, she has only had. experiences devoid of colors.

is associated with physical information about the brain. However, if Mary cannot possibly know *what it is like* to experience color from physical information about color and color vision, then contrary to reductive physicalism, “consciousness” as a mental phenomenon is not reducible in terms of the neurological findings of the brain. That is, information about the physical events of the brain cannot entirely account for conscious experience because there are certain mental phenomena associated with “consciousness” that are left out of a reductive account. What achromatic Mary shows is that because she acquires new knowledge about *what it is like* to experience color that she is not given in physical information about color and color vision, there are non-physical aspects of conscious experience that are left out of a physical account of the mind.

Jackson’s Physical Knowledge Argument

1. Reductive theories of mind provide all the **physical information** about experience. (premise)
2. There is some information about experience that **reductive** theories of mind do not provide, namely the ‘**what it is like**’-experience. (premise)
3. Thus, some facts about experience are left out of a **reductive** account. (1,2)
4. Therefore, some aspects of experience are **not physical**. (3)

Jackson’s argument helps show that there are aspects of conscious experience that are left out of a reductive physicalist account of the mind. Through the example of achromatic Mary, Jackson shows that reductive theories of mind leave out the non-physical aspect of conscious experience because physical information cannot provide knowledge of the conscious states of *what it is like*. In other words, Mary does not have knowledge of the conscious states associated with the experience of color before her release because she has not experienced *what it is like* to see color. It is only after Mary experiences seeing color for herself that she has knowledge of the conscious states associated

with the experience of color. This suggests that physical information about mental phenomena associated with consciousness cannot explain conscious experience because *what it is like* is an aspect of conscious experience that must be non-physical.

In being unable to account for *what it is like*, what reductive physicalism reveals is that there is a non-physical aspect of conscious experience that physical information about mental phenomena cannot account for. Although the physical information from these studies about the brain of musicians is able to tell us something about the intellectual and physical complexity of their conscious experiences of music, this sort of information is not able to tell us *what it is like* to experience music because physical information about the mental phenomena associated with “consciousness” does not entirely explain conscious experience; that is, reductive physicalism cannot tell us what conscious experience is like. If *what it is like* is a non-physical aspect of conscious experience that is left out of a reductive physicalist account, then it might be possible for Mary to know *what it is like* if she is instead provided with all the non-physical information about color and color vision. In a parity to Jackson’s knowledge argument, a non-reductive dualist approach would contend that if *what it is like* is non-physical, then this aspect of conscious experience cannot depend on anything physical. A non-reductive dualist approach offers the argument that the entirety of experience is fully explainable in terms of mental phenomena *and* conscious experience. This means that non-physical information about conscious experience should provide Mary with what she needs to know *what it is like* to experience seeing color. That is, non-physical information should be able to fully account for conscious experience. As it turns out, the lack of knowledge about the physical aspects of experience leaves out just that.

Churchland's Non-Physical Knowledge Argument²³

1. Non-reductive theories of mind provide all the **non-physical information** about experience.
(premise)
2. There is some information about experience that **non-reductive** theories of mind do not provide, namely the **physical aspect** of experience. (premise)
3. Thus, some facts about experience are left out of a **non-reductive** theory. (1,2)
4. Therefore, some aspects of experience are **physical**. (3)

Despite knowing all the non-physical information about conscious experience, Mary lacks knowledge of the conscious states of *what it is like* because she has not experienced the physical properties of color for herself. Mary cannot possibly know *what it is like* to experience color because non-physical information cannot provide knowledge of the conscious states of what it is like. What this suggests is that non-physical information associated with conscious experience cannot entirely explain what conscious experience is like because conscious experience includes an aspect of experience that is entirely dependent on the physical. Although a non-reductive dualist approach is unable to fully explain conscious experience, what this theory of mind reveals about conscious experience is that “consciousness” is a mental phenomenon associated with experience that is not independent of the physical world. Yet, a reductive physicalist account of the mind showed that “consciousness” is not entirely physical. So what do reductive and non-reductive theories of mind show us about conscious experience? These theories show us that conscious experience cannot be reduced and restricted to an account of “consciousness” that fails to appreciate the aspects of conscious experience. The challenge of fully explaining conscious experience is due in part to the complexity that composes the entirety of “consciousness”. As both theories of mind show, “consciousness” is a mental phenomenon that

²³ This is an argument attributed to Paul Churchland's work in *Matter and Consciousness* (1988).

includes aspects of experience that cannot be accounted for without experience. This is because “consciousness” includes an awareness of what one’s own experience is like. By suggesting that reductive theories of mind are unable to account for *what it is like*, Jackson is able to show that conscious experience involves an awareness of oneself that is not gained from information about the physical world. However, a non-reductive theory of mind shows that this awareness of oneself is not gained independently of physical information about the world. This means that if we are to fully account for conscious experience, we must understand consciousness as being a mental phenomenon that involves an awareness of oneself and the world.²⁴ In other words, consciousness should be able to fully explain conscious experience because “consciousness” is a mental phenomenon in that it is an act of consciousness. For this reasons, only consciousness itself can explain and provide knowledge of *what it is like*.

Jackson’s argument against reductive physicalism shows that physical information about the experience of color vision is insufficient for knowing *what it is like* to experience color. In parity to his argument, non-physical information about the experience of color vision is also insufficient for knowing *what it is like* to experience color. In being unable to explain *what it is like*, these theories of mind offer the insight that conscious experience is better understood as an act of consciousness. Since a full explanation of conscious experience and *what it is like* involves an awareness of oneself and the world, what reductive and non-reductive theories of mind cannot provide is knowledge of subjective experience. Knowledge about subjective experience escapes both of these theories because they reduce knowledge of consciousness to aspects of experience that are either physical or non-physical. Reducing our knowledge of consciousness to certain aspects of conscious experience shows that we lack

²⁴ This includes an awareness of the physical and non-physical aspects already explained by reductive and non-reductive theories of mind.

knowledge about the entirety of consciousness and conscious experience. Namely, what is lacking is knowledge of what subjective experience is like, an aspect of experience that only consciousness can provide. Yet, how is it possible for conscious experience to provide consciousness with the knowledge and information that is necessary to explain what subjective experience is like? How does understanding conscious experience as an act of consciousness help us understand what an experience of music is?

II. Music and What It Is Like: A subjective dimension of experience

In this section, I will suggest that conscious experience is best approached as an act of consciousness in which consciousness is in a position to know what subjective experience is like. Given the nature of the relationship between consciousness and the knowledge of what subjective experience is like, the act of consciousness that accurately captures this relationship is perception. The nature of this relationship and how a phenomenological approach to conscious experience is important for understanding what an experience of music is.

Although reductive physicalism and non-reductive dualism cannot provide knowledge of subjective experience, these theories of mind help show that knowing *what it is like* has something to do with an aspect of experience that can only be explained by consciousness. These theories of mind help show that it is possible for consciousness to know what subjective experience is like because this act of consciousness is a conscious experience of *what it is like*. In other words, conscious experience provides consciousness with knowledge of *what it is like* because this experience *is* subjective. This means that if consciousness is able to gain knowledge of subjective experience, then conscious experience must ensure that consciousness is in a position to be able to know *what it is like*. That is, conscious experience must be able to accommodate consciousness in a way that allows it to appropriate the relationship it bears to experience. The only act of consciousness that can guarantee

this conscious experience for consciousness is perception. Perception is an act of consciousness that is a conscious experience of *what it is like*. That is, *what it is like* is a perception of conscious experience. This means that in order to know *what it is like*, consciousness must be able to know what it is perceiving about experience. In a letter to friend and physician Franz Wegeler, Beethoven accounts the beginning of his deafness:

“In order to give you some idea of this strange deafness, let me tell you that in the theatre I have to place myself quite close to the orchestra in order to understand what the actor is saying, and that at a distance I cannot hear the high notes of instruments or voices. Sometimes too I can scarcely hear a person who speaks softly; I can hear sounds, it is true, but cannot make out the words. But if anyone shouts, I can’t bear it. Heaven alone knows what is to become of me.” (Davies, 43)

Yet, if consciousness must be able to know what it is perceiving in order to explain what it is like, then what does Beethoven perceive if the auditory sensations of the experience of music are not available for consciousness? The way that Beethoven physically experienced music demonstrably changed throughout the course of his life because of his disability. Beethoven’s disabled experiences of music force us to reconsider what conscious experience offers consciousness in perception since his mind is not affected by his sensory disability in that he is able to continue creating new musical compositions that he cannot fully experience. What Beethoven’s conscious experiences show is that despite his disability, he is not completely cut-off from the world of music. Beethoven’s experiences of music show that conscious experience is more than an event, process or occurrence. Beethoven is in a position where he is not able to participate in the world of music as a listener, but he is able to participate as a composer. This means that conscious experience of what it is like involves an aspect of experience that does not depend on having certain knowledge about conscious experience. That is, Beethoven is able to know *what it is like* because of what perception affords consciousness. Perception as an act of consciousness affords consciousness the position of being able to know an aspect of conscious experience that would not be available otherwise.

Perception show that *what it is like* is information that is only available to consciousness because of conscious experience. Perception puts consciousness in the position to know the conscious mental states of subjective experience. This means that perception not only allows consciousness access to the world of music through conscious experience, but it allows consciousness access to a world of music in subjective experience. That is, Beethoven may not be able to access the world of music as a listener, but in knowing what this conscious experience is like, Beethoven knows what the world of music offers him. In having knowledge about what conscious experience is like, consciousness is in a position to know what subjective experience offers consciousness in perception.

“But how humiliated I have felt if somebody standing beside me heard the sound of a flute in the distance and I heard nothing, or if somebody heard a shepherd sing and again I heard nothing- Such experiences almost made me despair, and I was on the point of putting an end to my life- The only thing that held me back was my art. For indeed, it seemed to me impossible to leave this world before I had produced all the works that I felt the urge to compose; and thus I have dragged on this miserable existence- a truly miserable existence, seeing that I have such a sensitive body that any fairly sudden change can plunge me from the best spirits into the worst of humors.” - The Heiligenstadt Testament (Davies, 45)

This description provided by Beethoven about his inability to experience the world of music shows that he does not only know what he is and is not experiencing, but that in knowing, Beethoven has a world of music. Music is a world that almost made Beethoven despair, but also urges him to drag on his miserable existence. Most importantly, Beethoven shows that music is a world that is shaped and influenced by his body. What disabled conscious experience shows is that perception is the relationship that consciousness bears to conscious experience because the body is what makes this act of consciousness possible. The body makes perception possible because the body provides the sort of information for consciousness to know an aspect of conscious experience that physical and non-physical cannot provide consciousness with. That is, the body provides consciousness with knowledge of *what it is like* in perception because this is the only act of consciousness that can provide consciousness with subjective information about conscious experience. Yet, even if the body provides

subjective information about conscious experience, how is the body able to provide this information in perception?

Since perception is an act of consciousness, then this act is done intentionally and purposefully in that it is an act that provides consciousness with information about subjective experience that physical or non-physical information about conscious experience cannot provide. As Jackson suggests, subjective information about conscious experience that only perception can provide takes the form of being a description of what conscious experience is like. Beethoven's description of what his experiences of music are like show that an aspect of conscious experiences includes knowledge of one's body in experience. However, the knowledge that the body provides consciousness with, even in disabled conscious experiences, does not inhibit consciousness but rather enables consciousness to act intentionally. For this reason, only a phenomenological approach to conscious experience can account for the sort of subjective information and knowledge about conscious experience that escapes reductive and non-reductive theories of mind. Phenomenology will open the dialogue about the mind and mental phenomena to include an aspect of experiences that is intentionally provided by the body. In other words, phenomenology will be able to help explain how consciousness is not cut-off from the world of music or from being able to continue creating new musical compositions to share a world of music because of disability.

III. Conclusion: Phenomenology and Subjectivity

As both Beethoven and Mary show, conscious experience is not something that can be fully explained by reductive or non-reductive theories of mind because it is more than an event, process or occurrence. There is a dimension of conscious experience of that cannot be accounted for in physical or non-physical information about conscious experience. Beethoven's conscious experiences afford him knowledge of what conscious experience is like because this conscious experience is *his*

experience. This means that conscious experience is situated according to the subject; that is, according to the experiencing consciousness. Jackson's knowledge argument shows that there is knowledge about subjective experience that is accounted for in descriptions of one's conscious experience, namely, of *what it is like*. However, how is Beethoven provided with the knowledge necessary to not just describe *what it is like*, but to write music he cannot hear? Beethoven's disabled conscious experiences show that to gain a more complete account of consciousness and conscious experience, the mind and mental phenomena must be understood in relation to the body. The phenomenological approach offered by Maurice Merleau-Ponty will make it possible to account for the subjective information about conscious experience that eludes reductive and non-reductive theories of mind. This is because Merleau-Ponty understands the relation that the body establishes between consciousness and conscious experience in perception. Understanding how the body provides subjective information in perception is only the first step in understanding how Beethoven perseveres as a composer in the world of music without being able to participate in the world of music as a listener.

Chapter 2 - Music and Consciousness: What a phenomenology of perception offers conscious experience

Chapter 1 helped show that consciousness bears a relationship to conscious experience that is evinced in the description of *what it is like*. The description of *what it is like* captures a dimension of conscious experience because that is significative of an agent's subjective experience. What reductive and non-reductive theories of mind show is that conscious experience goes beyond physical and non-physical facts about the mind and mental phenomena. This dimension of experience is what affords consciousness to be in the position as to know and describe *what it is like* to be the agent in subjective experience.²⁵ Since information about subjective experience is only available to consciousness in perception, then description of what it is like must be evidence that information about subjective experience is available to consciousness; that is, the subjective dimension of experience is available to consciousness in perception. As Beethoven helps show, then entirety of conscious experience is not accounted for in reductive and non-reductive theories of mind because the role that the body has to do with conscious experience is overlooked. Disabled conscious experiences like Beethoven's show that there is a subjective dimension of conscious experience that physical and non-physical information about the mind and mental phenomena cannot account for. This is because only the body can guarantee that there is a subjective dimension of conscious experience for consciousness to describe.

Perception as an act of consciousness is a conscious experience of what conscious experience is like. This act of consciousness is done intentionally as a means of obtaining knowledge about the

²⁵ I believe that 'knowing *what it is like*' and 'describing *what it is like*' both entail being in a position to describe subjective experience. Both cases are instances where a subject is in a position 'to know' and 'to describe' her experiences as being *her* experiences. Much debate about Mary revolves around issues of knowledge and what Mary knows about her experiences so that she can describe what it is like. I believe that knowledge of *what it is like* and the description of experience are ultimately possibilities that are only afforded by the body. Jackson uses Mary to help show that there are aspects of conscious experience that are left out of physical and non-physical theories of mind. I want to know what conscious experience has to do with the consciousness and what mental phenomena tell us about the mind.

subjective dimension of conscious experience with the knowledge consciousness has about conscious experience, consciousness is in a position to describe what conscious experience is like. That is, to describe subjective experience. However, how does consciousness gain knowledge about the subjective dimension of conscious experience in perception? The aim of this chapter is to understand how consciousness can bear an intentional relationship to conscious experience in perception. Understanding that subjective information about conscious experience is markedly different than physical and non-physical information about conscious experience is important because of the intentional circumstances in which consciousness comes to know this information. A phenomenological approach to conscious experience will allow us to understand how the subjective information of conscious experience is intentionally provided to consciousness in perception so that it can be described. Beginning with Brentano, acts of description are considered intentional acts of consciousness because consciousness directs itself toward the sensations that are perceived. This means that consciousness is only directed toward the sensations perceived by consciousness because perception is an intentional act of consciousness. However, Twardowski picks up on a distinction in perception between the sensations of consciousness and the sensations of experience. What Twardowski helps show is that sensations are not present in perception because of consciousness, rather sensations are present in perception because of experience. Focusing on this distinction in sensations, Husserl suggests that experience is able to provide consciousness with sensations in perception because sensations are lived, that is, by the body. Using this distinction in sensations, Merleau-Ponty suggests that if sensations are lived by the body, then the intentionality that marks the relationship between consciousness and conscious experience *is* the body. But how does the body provide consciousness with sensations to describe if conscious experience must already contain what consciousness is directed toward in perception? That is, how does Beethoven's disabled body provide

consciousness with the sensations that comprise an experience of music if he is unable to fully experience music? What all of these phenomenologists offer this investigation into the conscious experience of music is the insight that the intentional relationship that consciousness bears to experience is the body.

I. Music and What It Is Like: What the description of sensations shows about consciousness and conscious experience

In this section I will examine what descriptions of *what it is like* suggest about conscious experience and how consciousness is able to describe this dimension of experience.

In a letter to friend Franz Wegeler, Beethoven describes the treatment his physician has prescribed him at this time:

“For the last few months [Vering] has made me apply to both arms vesicatories which, as you doubtless know, consist of a certain kind of bark. Well, it is an extremely unpleasant treatment, inasmuch as for a few days (until the bark has drawn sufficiently) I am always deprived of the free use of my arms, not to mention the pain I have to suffer. True enough, I cannot deny it, the humming and buzzing is slightly less than it used to be, particularly in my left ear, where my deafness really began. But so far my hearing is certainly not a bit better; and I am inclined to think, although I do not dare to say so definitely, that it is a little weaker.” (Davies, 44)

Beethoven is able to show that what he describes about his conscious experiences are the sensations that are available in his conscious experiences. For this reason, without the sensations that only conscious experience can provide, physical and non-physical information cannot provide Jackson’s Mary with knowledge of the conscious mental states associated with conscious experience. Mary show us that knowledge of conscious experience is only available for consciousness because of the sensations of conscious experience. This means that information about subjective experience is only possible because of the sensations of conscious experience. Without the conscious experience of sensations, it is not possible for consciousness to know what the conscious experience of sensations is like because the conscious mental states of conscious experience are not available for consciousness. If

consciousness is able to know the sensations of conscious experience, then consciousness comes to know the sensations of conscious experience intentionally. Yet, it consciousness acts intentionally to know the sensations of conscious experience, how does Beethoven have knowledge of what sensations are not available to consciousness in conscious experience? Beethoven is unique in that his testimonies of *what it is like* show that his conscious experiences of music consists of sensations that are not necessarily available to consciousness because of his disability. While out on a walk one day, Ferdinand Ries accounts the beginning of Beethoven's deafness:

“I called [Beethoven's] attention to a shepherd playing a flute in the woods. For half an hour Beethoven could not hear any such sound, and although I repeatedly assured him that I no longer heard anything either (which was not the case), he became quiet and gloomy.” (Davies, 47)

In the Heiligenstadt Testament, Beethoven writes:

“But how humiliated I have felt if somebody standing beside me heard the sound of a flute in the distance and I heard nothing, or if somebody heard a shepherd sing and again I heard nothing.” (Davies, 45)

Although Beethoven's disability does not provide consciousness with the auditory sensations of the experience of music, his conscious experiences provide consciousness with knowledge about *what it is like* to not be able to hear music. Whereas Jackson's example of Mary suggests that *what it is like* involves the description of the sensations of conscious experience, Beethoven's descriptions of *what it is like* are about sensations not present in conscious experience. While Jackson makes use of the subjective information provided by conscious experience to show that conscious experience is more complex than the physical and non-physical information gathered about the mental phenomena associated with conscious experience, Beethoven is able to show that is we want to fully explain conscious experience, we must understand what the mental phenomena associated with conscious experience tells us about consciousness.

Conscious experience provides consciousness with the sensations to describe *what it is like*, but how does conscious experience provide consciousness with the sensations that are not experienced? Since Beethoven can describe the sensations that he does not experience, *what it is like* is a dimension of experience that does not depend on conscious experience because this dimension of experience is *presented* to consciousness. That is, this subjective dimension of experience is presented to consciousness in perception because this dimension is not present in conscious experience. Rather, this dimension of experience is only made intentionally present because of consciousness.

Although conscious experience makes sensations available for consciousness, sensations are only present to a consciousness that is intentionally directed toward them in conscious experience. In this regard, knowledge of the auditory sensations of music that Beethoven does not experience is information that is made intentionally present in perception. What sort of information does a disabled conscious experience like Beethoven's show about the signification of sensations in conscious experience? That is, if Beethoven is not inhibited by his disability and lack of auditory sensations, then what do sensations signify to consciousness? What sensations signify to consciousness is conscious experience. Conscious experience cannot be entirely accounted for in information about mental phenomena because conscious experience is an intentional experience. That is, the act of perception is the ability of an intentional consciousness to present the sensations of conscious experience. The conscious experience that gives presence to the sensations of perception is an intentional experience, firstly, because sensations would not be available to consciousness without conscious experience, and secondly, because knowledge of these sensations is not possible without conscious experience. For both of these reasons, the signification of subjective experience that sensations present to consciousness are only available to consciousness in perception.

Perception is an intentional conscious experience that guarantees that sensations are present to consciousness in such a way that they are significative of what conscious experience is like. In this sense, perception is the intentional relationship that consciousness bears to conscious experience because perception guarantees that consciousness is in a position to describe what conscious experience is like. This means that without perception, sensations would not present the significance of subjective experience to consciousness because the conscious experience associated with this act of consciousness has not occurred. Without conscious experience, perception would not provide consciousness with the necessary information to know what conscious experience is like. Descriptions of *what is it like* brings us closer to understanding what the experience of music is by showing that sensations are significative of one's subjective experience. This information about the sensations of conscious experience shows that consciousness can only intentionally know what conscious experience is like. Perception, as an intentional act of consciousness, ought to provide the sort of information about subjective experiences that is necessary for consciousness to know conscious experience and *what it is like*.

II. Music and What It Is Like: What consciousness reveals about conscious experience

In this section I will examine what information perception offers consciousness about sensations such that consciousness is able to know subjective experience and what it is like. It is my contention that only a phenomenological approach to perception offers a way of understanding subjective experience and what this information tells us about consciousness and conscious experience.

In perception, consciousness can direct itself toward sensations thus guaranteeing that consciousness can know what conscious experience is like. This would suggest that knowledge of sensations is the information that consciousness is missing in order to provide a more complete account of conscious experience. If perception is able to guarantee that consciousness can know the

sensations of conscious experience because this act of consciousness can guarantee that consciousness has the conscious mental states associate with conscious experience. That is, perception provides consciousness with the information about subjective experience that eludes reductive and non-reductive theories of mind.

Perception as an act of consciousness has its phenomenological beginnings with Franz Brentano. Brentano suggests that perception is a mental phenomenon in which consciousness is directed toward objects of perception. This means that the sensations perceived by consciousness are objects present to consciousness in the act of perception. In this regard, Brentano suggests that sensations are objects of conscious experience that the act of perception presents to consciousness. Treating sensations as objects of conscious experience suggests that sensations are present to consciousness similar to the way that other objects of experience are present to consciousness in perception. Brentano believes that it is only in perception that consciousness is intentionally directed toward the objects of conscious experience.²⁶

Interested in the ideas that Brentano introduces, Kazimierz Twardowski also believes that perception is an intentional act of consciousness that presents sensations to consciousness as objects of conscious experience.²⁷ Recognizing the importance of intentionality for objects in perception and the

²⁶ To a certain extent, the criticism about Brentano's position on intentionality in perception is about the distinction between the objects of experience, like sensations, and objects in experience; that is, between the presentation of a sensation itself and what a sensation presents. Both are entailed in the act of perception, but Brentano does not clarify this distinction. However, considering what Brentano does suggest in his works, I believe that this distinction is not a matter of difference in objects but is rather the consciousness of a distinction in what conscious experience presents to consciousness. Nonetheless, Twardowski picks up on this distinction and tries to amend this issue in his own philosophy about perception.

²⁷ Twardowski makes a distinction between the object that is present in conscious experience and the object that is present in the perception of conscious experience. This is how Twardowski distinguishes between *content* of conscious experience and *object* in a mental act. By distinguishing content from object in this manner, content is presented in the mental act of perceiving the object. This means that the object is presented separately from the content that is presented in the mental act of perceiving the object. Although Twardowski's position that content is given in intentional mental acts is problematic, as I will be discussing, his understanding of content and object offers the point that content is not present in perception in the same manner as an object. That is, content is not intentionally present to consciousness in the way

role that it plays for consciousness, Twardowski recognizes that objects of perception present sensations as objects to consciousness in two different senses. In one sense, sensations are intentionally present to consciousness as *objects* in perception in that they are ideal qualities or properties separate from an agent's conscious experience.²⁸ In another sense, sensations are present in perception as *objects of* conscious experience. That is, as objects significative of subjective experience because they are inseparable from an agent's conscious experience. This means that consciousness can be intentionally directed toward sensations as objects of perception and as objects of conscious experience. Twardowski, however, makes the distinction that the sensations that are objects of conscious experience are only present to consciousness *through* the object of perception.²⁹

According to Twardowski, perception provides consciousness with access to conscious experience through sensations because perception is an intentional act of consciousness. Twardowski suggest that the sensations of subjective experience are not present to consciousness without the presence of an object to consciousness in perception. This means that sensations as objects of conscious experience are only present because of the act of perception. In other words, sensations are only intentionally present to consciousness because of consciousness, not because of conscious experience. However, Beethoven shows us that the sensations of conscious experience may not be present even though an object is present to consciousness in the act of perception. For example, at a rehearsal of Beethoven's Trio in D major, Op. 70, No. 1, composer Louis Spohr recounts of Beethoven's playing that day as one in which he was overcome with sadness:

that an object of perception is intentionally present to consciousness. This distinction is important to both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty.

²⁸ In this sense, '*object(s)*' is independent of subjective experience, '*object(s) of*' is dependent on subjective experience.

²⁹ Twardowski uses language, e.g. "through" and "presented", along with the mind to make important philosophical distinctions between content and object. Here I merely intend to use the word to introduce the idea that sensations are presented to consciousness in a different manner than objects. According to Twardowski, without the object of perception then content would not be given to consciousness.

“This was no pleasure, for in the first place, the piano was very much out of tune, which was of very little consequence to Beethoven for he could not hear it; and secondly, the artist’s deafness had left little trace of his once famous powers as a virtuoso. The poor deaf-man played the *forti* so loudly that the strings clattered, and the *piani* so softly that whole groups of notes were inaudible, thus rendering an understanding of the work impossible unless one could look over the piano part. The contemplation of so hard a fate, made me profoundly melancholy. If deafness be a heavy misfortune to an ordinary man, how is a musician to bear it without despairing? Beethoven’s constant gloom no longer seemed a mystery to me.” (Davies, 50)

Spohr’s account of Beethoven’s performance shows that although Beethoven has knowledge of what to play and how to play it, Beethoven is lacking crucial information about his conscious experience that hinders him in his ability to successfully perform his own music. What this shows is that the sensations of conscious experience are not necessary for the objects of perception. Rather, sensations of conscious experience are ancillary objects not essential to consciousness and the act of perception. As Spohr’s testimony suggests, the lack of auditory sensations in Beethoven’s conscious experience leaves out just that; namely, the sensations of conscious experience. While consciousness is not inhibited in the act of perception without the sensations of conscious experience, consciousness cannot present in perception what is not available in experience. This is why Beethoven’s knowledge of what he is playing is insufficient for overcoming the lack of knowledge about conscious experience he is missing because of his sensory disability. This means that consciousness alone cannot provide the knowledge that is necessary to know what conscious experience is like. In other words, conscious experience does not depend on consciousness. However, if consciousness is able to act without information about conscious experience, then how is consciousness able to know the information it is missing from conscious experience? How does Beethoven know that his sensory disability affects his conscious experiences of music?

It is through acts of consciousness like perception that sensations are presented to consciousness in a way that they are significative of subjective experience. In order for sensations to capture this aspect of conscious experience, as Twardowski suggests, sensations of conscious

experience must be present to consciousness if consciousness is to know what conscious experience is like. However, if the sensations of conscious experience only subjective signification in perception, then the sensations consciousness perceives must already be bound to conscious experience. That is, in order for the sensations of conscious experience to convey what subjective experience is like to consciousness, sensations must be consciously experienced. Through his view on perception and intentionality, Twardowski reveals an important distinction between sensations as objects in perception and sensations as objects of experience. Since sensations of conscious experience are not objects made intentionally present to consciousness in perception, sensations can only be objects of conscious experience because sensations *are* experienced.

Aware of the distinction Twardowski shows between the sensations of perception and the sensations of conscious experience, Edmund Husserl takes the position that the sensations of conscious experience cannot possibly be made intentionally present by consciousness or any act of consciousness. Rather, Husserl suggests that it is entirely because of conscious experience itself that sensations are present as objects of conscious experience because conscious experience is not an act of consciousness.³⁰ However, if conscious experience does not depend on consciousness, and sensation of conscious experience signify subjective experience to consciousness, then sensations must already be bound to experience for consciousness in perception. Husserl claims that perception itself is a conscious experience in which consciousness “remains directed upon its object”.³¹ This means that the description of *what it is like* is an intentional act of consciousness in which consciousness knows what

³⁰ In reference to Brentano’s “psychical” phenomena, Husserl is interested in the differences of the intentional relations between an object that is *presented* and an object that is *experienced*. “There are essential, specific differences of intentional relation of intention (the generic descriptive character of “act”). The manner in which a “mere presentation” refers to its objects, differs from the manner of a judgment, which treats the same state of affairs as true or false.” Mooney, T. & Moran, D., 2001, pp.79.

³¹ Mooney, T. & Moran, D., 2001, pp.100.

conscious experience is like because perception is a conscious experience. Since conscious experience does not depend on consciousness, then conscious experience does not hinge on perception. However, conscious experience is necessary for perception, that is, for consciousness. Through the act of perception, Husserl reveals an intentionality in conscious experience that is not 'of consciousness' but rather 'of experience'. Perception shows that conscious experience cannot be fully explained by consciousness alone because the conscious experience of sensations does not depend on consciousness. This is why physical and non-physical information about the mental phenomena associated with consciousness can only account for certain aspects of consciousness and conscious experience but run into problems when trying to fully account for the consciousness of one's conscious experience.

Perception shows that there are two aspects of conscious experience necessary for this act of consciousness. Perception makes the signification of sensations possible because this conscious experience is useful to consciousness because the intentionality of perception is 'of consciousness'. This means that consciousness is a necessary aspect of conscious experience. Without consciousness, the act of perception would not be possible because there would not be a conscious experience. That is, consciousness is bound to conscious experience in the sense that consciousness cannot act without it. However, consciousness does not just bear a relation to conscious experience, but it is through the conscious experience of perception that consciousness is useful to conscious experience. Husserl helps show that consciousness finds conscious experience already latent with the information and signification of subjective experience. In this sense, conscious experience enables consciousness. Information about conscious experience escapes reductive and non-reductive theories of mind because although consciousness bears a relationship to conscious experience in perception, conscious experience is not an act of consciousness. That is, consciousness does not guarantee an agent's

conscious experience. Yet, if consciousness alone does not guarantee conscious experience, then what additional aspect of conscious experience is necessary for perception?

According to Husserl, the description of *what it is like* is an act of perception that provides a sort of “interpretive sense” for consciousness that allows for the sensations of conscious experience to be described.³² Perception, then, is an act of consciousness that aims to elucidate something about conscious experience that cannot consciousness cannot intentionally present on its own. Namely, what perception reveals about conscious experience is that sensations *are* experienced. This suggests that experience itself is necessary for an agent’s conscious experience. However, how does consciousness bear a relationship to conscious experience and vice versa? What guarantees perception if not consciousness? Brentano proposes that sensations are made intentionally present for consciousness, by consciousness. Continuing on this idea, Twardowski suggests that if sensations are present to consciousness in a way that is significative of subjective experience, then it is only through the act of perception that the sensations of conscious experience are intentionally present in this manner. However, Husserl shows that the sensations of conscious experience because the act of perception is a conscious experience. While these contributions about perception help clarify the relationship between consciousness and conscious experience, what we are still unable to explain what conscious experience is like. We know now that consciousness and conscious experience make it possible to know *what it is like* and that conscious experience, not consciousness, is responsible for the presence of this information for consciousness. We also know now that Beethoven is able to continue to compose music despite his sensory disability because consciousness does not guarantee an agent’s conscious experience. What, then, does guarantee conscious experience if not consciousness?

³² Mooney, T. & Moran, D., 2002, pp.104.

In order to answer this question, we must begin with understanding what conscious experience is. Perception suggests conscious experience *is* the sensations of conscious experience. This means that we must understand what the sensations of conscious experience offer consciousness in perception. That is, we must understand what information the sensations of conscious experience offer consciousness about conscious experience. Analyzing the signification of sensations in conscious experience should bring us closer to understanding how sensations can guarantee conscious experience so that we can explain how Beethoven is able to continue to be a part of the world of must even though his conscious experience is inhibited by his sensory disability.

III. Music and What It Is Like: What perception shows about the sensations of conscious experience

In this section I will examine what the sensations of conscious experience provide consciousness with in perception and how this helps explain a sensory disabled conscious experience.

Through the thoughts of Brentano, Twardowski and Husserl, perception shows that the sensations of conscious experience provide consciousness with knowledge of what conscious experience is like because sensation *are* conscious experience. Since consciousness cannot guarantee conscious experience, then conscious experience must be ensured some other way. The sensation of conscious experience that consciousness perceives exposes an intentionality in an agent's conscious experience that is uniquely human.

A. Consciousness and Sensations: A Lived Signification

According to Husserl, sensations are experienced and this is not more apparent than in perception because this act of consciousness is a conscious experience. Perception is a conscious experience that allows for the sensations of conscious experience to be objects present to

consciousness in such a way that they are significative of subjective experience to consciousness.³³

What Husserl ultimately reveals about sensations is that they are first and foremost objects of conscious experience rather than objects of consciousness. In contrast to Brentano and Twardowski, Husserl exposes an intentionality in experience through the act of perception that had previously gone unaddressed. Since sensations must be consciously experienced in a way that does not depend on consciousness, perception as an act of consciousness does not see to it that there is a conscious experience. Rather, consciousness finds conscious experience already filled with the sensations that contain the latent signification revealed to consciousness in perception.

In order for consciousness to know what conscious experience is like, Husserl helps show, consciousness is only able to grasp a sense for this first-person dimension of experience through its very absence in perceptual experience. That is, the perceptual experience that underlies an act of perception affords consciousness the means to place itself in the very experience it aims to perceive. The means by which consciousness is able to situate itself in experience are sensations. Yet, this requires of perceptual experience that sensations are latent with the sort of signification that affords consciousness to catch hold of itself in experience through the fundamental commitment sensations have to experience without consciousness. Perception reveals that sensations are a relationship between consciousness and conscious experience, which express a relationship between consciousness and conscious experience that is not solely between physical bodies. That is, conscious experience cannot be entirely explained by physical information about mental phenomena associated with consciousness. Yet, conscious experience cannot be entirely explained by non-physical information about mental phenomena associated with consciousness. Husserl points out that while objects in the

³³ "Everything experienceable in this way is the object and domain of possible positive knowledge; it lies on the "plane," in the world of actual and possible experience, experience in the natural sense of the word." Mooney, T. & Moran, D., 2002, pp.163.

world may appear as physical objects, this is not the only manner in which objects exhibit their existence. This is why information about what conscious experience is like cannot be entirely explained through one aspect of experience. To understand the sensations of conscious experience entirely in one manner of existence amounts to restricting consciousness to one manner of existence. Beethoven shows us that consciousness is not restricted to one mode of existence because Beethoven's mind and his ability to write music is not affected. Since he is able to adapt to his changing experiences of music, Beethoven shows that consciousness is able to exhibit existence outside of being a disabled body. Husserl suggests that the living body exhibits the existence of consciousness in a manner beyond being just a physical body.³⁴

“If we pay attention now purely to the bodily aspect of the things, this obviously exhibits itself perceptively only in seeing, in touching, in hearing, etc., i.e., in visual, tactual, acoustical, and other such aspects. Obviously and inevitably participating in this is our living body, which is never absent from the perceptual field, and specifically its corresponding “organs of perception” (eyes, hands, ears, etc.). In consciousness they play a constant role here; specifically they function in seeing, hearing, etc., together with the ego's motility belonging to them, i.e., what is called kinesthesia. All kinestheses, each being an “I move,” “I do,” [etc.] are bound together in a comprehensive unity – in which kinesthetic holding-still is [also] a mode of the “I do.” Clearly the aspect-exhibitions of whatever body is appearing in perception, and the kinestheses, are not processes [simply running] alongside each other; rather, they work together in such a way that the aspects have the ontic meaning of, or the validity of, aspects of the body only through the fact that they are those aspects continually required by the kinestheses – by the kinesthetic-sensual total situation in each of its working variations of the total kinesthesia by setting in motion this or that particular kinesthesia– and that they correspondingly fulfill the requirement.” (Mooney & Moran, 153).

The act of perception expresses a relation between an intentional consciousness that perceives the sensations of a conscious experience, whereas the conscious experience that is this act expresses a relation between an intentional conscious experience and a perceiving consciousness. What Husserl is able to show through perception is that conscious experience and consciousness are bound to each

³⁴ “[Being related] “through the living body” clearly does not mean merely [being related] “as a physical body”; rather, the expression refers to the kinesthetic, to functioning as an ego in this peculiar way, primarily through seeing, hearing, etc.; and of course other modes of the ego belong to this (for example, lifting, carrying, pushing, and the like).” Mooney, T. & Moran, D., 2002, pp.154.

other in a way that allows consciousness access to the sensations of perception and also access to the sensations of conscious experience. Consciousness is able to express its existence both objectively as an intentional perceiving consciousness, and subjectively as conscious experience. If perception is able to accommodate this dual existence of consciousness so that consciousness can what conscious experience is like, then this unity is ultimately a *lived* unity. That is, this lived unity of consciousness is an existence of consciousness as much as it is a conscious experience.

B. Consciousness and the Body: A lived signification

Husserl claims that this lived unity can only be the attribute of the living body. If consciousness can know what conscious experience is like, then it is because the sensations of conscious experience exhibit a lived unity of consciousness and conscious experience. Maurice Merleau-Ponty suggests that sensations of conscious experience are *lived*.³⁵ For this reason, consciousness can know *what it is like* because the sensations of conscious experience are brought together for consciousness in perception as a lived experience. Perception reveals a dimension of conscious experience that is not just lived, objectively, but that is lived subjectively. That is, lived experience is the adoption of sensations as one's own.³⁶ In this sense, Merleau-Ponty suggests that perception is an act of consciousness that allows "the sensible gives back to me what I had lent to it, but I received it from the sensible in the first place".³⁷ By emphasizing the importance of lived experience through perception, Merleau-Ponty shows that the sensations of conscious experience *are* lived experience. Lived experience serves as the

³⁵ In reference to the experience of sensations as not being one in which there is a sensing being and the sensible - "Myself as the one contemplating the blue of the sky is not an acosmic subject standing before it, I do not possess it in thought, I do not lay out in front of it an idea of blue that would give me its secret. Rather, I abandon myself to it, I plunge into this mystery, and it "thinks itself in me". I am this sky that gathers together, composes itself, and begins to exist for itself, my consciousness is saturated by this unlimited blue." Merleau-Ponty, M., 2013, pp.222.

³⁶ "But the perceived spectacle does not belong to pure being. Taken precisely as I see it, it is a moment of my individual history, and, since sensations is a reconstitution, it presupposes I me the sedimentations of a previous constitutions; I am, as a sensing subject, full of natural powers of which I am the first to be filled with wonder." Merleau-Ponty, M., 2013, pp.222-223.

³⁷ Merleau-Ponty, M., 2013, pp.222.

foundation or background in which consciousness not only exists as consciousness and conscious experience, but in existing, consciousness is able to grasp itself as lived experience.

Although Husserl helps show that sensations are situated in conscious experience rather than consciousness, Merleau-Ponty shows that if sensations are situated in conscious experience because they are lived, then sensations must express this given situation in conscious experience to consciousness. Sensations as a whole exhibit a unity that is lived both by consciousness and conscious experience. While this lived unity of sensations is exhibited through manners of consciousness, namely, as an intentional consciousness and conscious experience, this unity is not brought together by consciousness. That is, this lived unity cannot exist because of consciousness.³⁸ Rather, the act of perception exposes to consciousness sensations that are already united in lived experience.³⁹ It is precisely because sensations are lived that consciousness is able to know *what it is like*. If sensations were not lived experience, then consciousness would not be able to understand conscious experience and the information sensations provide about subjective experience. Since the sensations of conscious experience express the unique situation of lived experience, consciousness is able to access information about conscious experience through perception. The information consciousness is able to gain about subjective experience, namely, knowledge of *what it is like* reveals a dimension of experience that is first lived in conscious experience, not by consciousness, but by the body. However, suggesting that the body lives conscious experience rather than consciousness is not to deny the

³⁸ "By saying that this intentionality is not a thought, we mean that it is not accomplished in the transparency of a consciousness, and that it takes up as acquired all of the latent knowledge that my body has of itself." Merleau-Ponty, M., 2013, pp.241.

³⁹ In reference to cases of synesthesia, Merleau-Ponty suggests: "It makes sense to say that I see sounds or that I hear colors if vision or hearing are not the simple possession of an opaque quale, but rather the experience [*l'expérience*] of a modality of existence, and the synchronization of my body with it." Merleau-Ponty, M., 2013, pp.243.

existence of consciousness in experience.⁴⁰ Rather, Merleau-Ponty suggests that consciousness is not limited to one mode of existence because the body lives experience so that consciousness can perceive itself and conscious experience. This means the body is the actuality of lived experience. In other words, the body is evidence of the lived unity of sensations that exists for consciousness, by consciousness.

IV. Conclusion

Through the unity that is lived experience, Merleau-Ponty is able to show that the body provides the certainty of conscious experience. However, the body is not only the actuality of lived experience but it is also the means by which consciousness lives experiences. Merleau-Ponty believes that perception is a personal act in which sensations create a situation because they establish a sort of perspective on the world.⁴¹ Since the sensations of conscious experience are the body, consciousness is able to establish itself in perception as an acting consciousness that can know *what it is like*. It is through the body that consciousness can know what it is like because sensations are the accomplished unity of the body. This means that the body provides consciousness with the lived signification of subjective experience. The body exists as an object for consciousness that experiences other objects in the world in that the body is a vehicle of sensations that provides consciousness with a world. This means that the body is a means for consciousness to exhibit its existence in the world among other objects, while also providing consciousness with the means to exist as an entire world of experiences with its own history.

⁴⁰ "Either consciousness must be denied, or it must be acknowledged as total. We cannot relate certain movements to bodily mechanism and certain other ones to consciousness, the body and consciousness are not mutually limiting." Merleau-Ponty, M., 2013, pp.125.

⁴¹ "My perception, even seen from within, expresses a given situation: I see blue because I am sensitive to colors; whereas personal acts create a situation: I am a mathematician because I decided to be one." Merleau-Ponty, M., 2013, pp.223.

According to Merleau-Ponty, consciousness is more appropriately understood as an affective intentionality in conscious experience because of the body. As Beethoven is able to demonstrate through his disabled experiences of music, consciousness is much more than the mental phenomena associated with conscious experience. Beethoven is able to continue creating new music in spite of the fact that he cannot hear his own musical creations because consciousness is a lived unity of experiences past, present and future. If the entirety of consciousness were confined strictly to moments in time, to particular mental phenomena, then conscious experience would be no more than what consciousness is at that particular moment. In other words, to break consciousness away from, and even out of, the lived unity of conscious experience, will not help us understand how consciousness is both subject to the body and the subject of the body. If this information about consciousness accounts for the entirety of consciousness and conscious experience, then what is knowledge about *what it is like*? That is, descriptions what conscious experience is like express what about the conscious experience of music?

Chapter 3- Conclusion: Embodied consciousness and the experience of music

Consciousness bears a relationship to conscious experience that theories of mind, like reductive physicalism and non-reductive dualism, cannot entirely explain. In being unable to fully explain conscious experience, reductive and non-reductive theories of mind show that knowledge of *what it is like* is information about conscious experience that only a phenomenological approach can explain. Rather than trying to account for the entirety of conscious experience through physical and non-physical facts about mental phenomena, a phenomenological approach considers the relationship of consciousness and conscious experience as being *intentional*. This allows for the inclusion of consciousness in conscious experience, that is, of an agent in her own conscious experience. Knowledge of *what it is like*, then, is knowledge of what conscious experience is like. Beginning with Brentano, consciousness is intentionally directed toward the sensations of conscious experience in perception. Twardowski then makes the distinction that the sensations of conscious experience exhibit two different modes of existence to consciousness in perception. Husserl goes on to suggest that the sensations of conscious experience exhibit this dual existence because sensations are lived and united by the body. This reveals an intentionality in conscious experience that is not consciousness, but rather the body. Husserl suggests that the lived intentionality of the body provides consciousness the means to live the sensations of conscious experience. In this regard, Merleau-Ponty claims that the body offers consciousness information about conscious experience and all that it has to offer. This means that the body provides the sort of information about conscious experience that physical and non-physical information about mental phenomena cannot explain. consciousness is intentionally directed toward sensations in the act of perception, then it is ultimately because the sensations in experience make the intentional relationship to them possible. As Husserl points out, this intentional relationship is not ‘of consciousness’ but rather ‘of experience’. What Husserl offers a phenomenology of

perception is a way to account for the intentional relationship that consciousness bears to experience by suggesting that this relationship is lived. By suggesting that this intentional relationship is lived, Husserl's contribution not only links consciousness to experience but in doing so, this lived intentionality provides consciousness with a world comprised of experiences. In this regard, the sensations of experience provide consciousness the means to have a world because this world is a lived world. In aiming to access this world of experience and all that it has to offer, Merleau-Ponty suggests that the lived intentionality that links consciousness to experience is the body. This means that the sensations of experience are brought together by consciousness through the body, providing consciousness with the means to have a lived world of experiences.

This sort of phenomenological analysis allows for an examination into what conscious experience affords consciousness in perception. In understanding what conscious experience is, we are in a position to explain how it is that Beethoven is not completely cut-off from the world of music because of his hearing disability. A phenomenology of perception that centers the body as the means by which consciousness has a world of music opens the dialogue for understanding how it is that Beethoven is able to create and express a new world of music through a disabled body that is unable to fully experience music. Cases of disabilities like Beethoven's exemplify the unique subjectivity of conscious experience that a theoretical application of the mind cannot account for because conscious experience does not only center on mental phenomena or on certain aspects of conscious experience. This is because the subjectivity of conscious experience is much more complex and intricate than an act of consciousness alone can accommodate, much less entirely explain. That is, *what it is like* accounts for a lived unity of experiences.

The knowledge that Beethoven has about *what it is like* has allowed his mind to be unaffected in its ability to create new music. This information about consciousness shows that Beethoven has

knowledge that his body at present is disabled, but that in the past he was once able-bodied in his experiences of music which is why Beethoven remains open to the world of music. Consciousness is unique to the body because the body experiences the world, however, how does the body translate to consciousness? That is, how is consciousness the body? Understanding how consciousness is embodied through a phenomenological analysis will not definitively establish what an experience of music is per se, because this sort of analysis is not aimed at investigating the normativity of conscious experience. Rather, the phenomenological approach of embodied consciousness is aimed at analyzing conscious experience in its entirety, which will offer an understanding of what the experience music offers consciousness in conscious experience so we can know why Beethoven is able to participate in the world of music as a composer but not as a listener. Information about what the experience of music affords the human mind will help explain why music is unique to the human world and how the experience of music is able to help humans overcome disabilities beyond sensory disabilities, like emotional or psychological disabilities and even cognitive disabilities.

I. Embodied Consciousness and Experience: What a phenomenology of perception shows about consciousness, the body and experience

In this section, I will analyze what information the body provides to consciousness about conscious experience. That is, I will understand how the body lives the unity that enables consciousness in perception and how consciousness is the lived unity that is the body.

The knowledge that Beethoven has about music at the time that he writes his *Ninth Symphony* is comprised of his present experiences of being unable to hear music as well as his past experiences of being able to hear music. This shows a dimension of conscious experience in which consciousness is situated within a world of history comprised of experiences past, present and future that is subject to

the body.⁴² The knowledge that consciousness is provided with about conscious experience in perception is not information about an experiencing mind but is information about an experiencing body. Since consciousness is only able to perceive the sensations of conscious experience, consciousness requires a body for conscious experience. Perception reveals a consciousness that is seated in the body so that consciousness may turn its gaze toward the object in the world, that is, toward the world of music. The body affords consciousness the ability to exist ‘in and toward’ the world as an intentional consciousness. An intentional consciousness that exists in the world is able to catch hold of itself as the authoritative perspective on the world; namely, as “the” perspective on the world. In other words, consciousness knows what it is like because consciousness not only exists as a consciousness capable of knowing, but because consciousness is able to grasp its existence as a perspective on the world. This information about consciousness shows that consciousness must be able to contrast between its presence in the act of perception and its presence in conscious experience. This means that consciousness is able to polarize the world and possess a body because sensations are brought together by consciousness in the body. That is, the body founds and fixes the world for consciousness.

The information about conscious experience that the body offers consciousness in perception establishes the world for consciousness. Yet in his later years, Beethoven’s body is not able to hear the auditory sensations that are an essential component to the experience of music. With Beethoven’s body unable to experience the auditory sensations of music that once guided consciousness in perception and that fixed the world of music for consciousness, no longer do either of these things. This change in conscious experience is evident in Wilhelmine Schröder’s account of Beethoven’s inability to conduct

⁴² The temporality of experience is particularly important for the experience of music since this temporality can only be lived. Without getting too bogged down in how sensations offer consciousness a sense of time, what is of importance to this project is that sensations provide consciousness with a temporality that is significative of its subjective experiences.

a rehearsal of his *Ninth Symphony* as Schröder recalls that “with confusion on [his] face”, Beethoven “stood in the midst of the playing musicians and did not hear a single note!”⁴³ Although Beethoven’s body is unable to provide the auditory sensations necessary to conduct, Beethoven is not entirely severed from the world of music and his experiences of it. While a disability of the body can account for why Beethoven is unable to conduct a live orchestra, it does not clarify how Beethoven is still able to write a musical composition that he will never fully experience for himself. The sensations of conscious experience offer information about conscious experience, but since he does not experience the auditory sensations that are necessary to conduct, then how is Beethoven not inhibited by this lack of information in his ability to continue creating and composing music? What information about conscious experience does the body provide consciousness with such that consciousness is not complete subject to conscious experience?

The body is a way for consciousness to bear a relationship to conscious experience because it is a means of experience for consciousness. The body exists as an object in the world so that consciousness may also exist in the world. For this reason, consciousness directs itself toward the sensations of conscious experience, that is, toward the body as an object in perception. The body provides the means for consciousness to orient itself in perception as a certain hold on the world. It is through the body that consciousness experiences the world. That is, the body is an object that exists for consciousness. Consciousness makes use of the body as an object to place itself in the world among other objects. Merleau-Ponty points out that “an orientation in space is not a contingent property of the object, it is the means by which I recognize the object and by which I am conscious of it as an object”.⁴⁴ In other words, the perspective that the body affords consciousness does not belong to the

⁴³ Please refer to Chapter 1, page 1, for the entire account by Schröder.

⁴⁴ Merleau-Ponty, M., 2013, 264.

body. Rather, this perspective on lived experience is how consciousness comes to know other objects. Consciousness is able to make use of the objects in the world because the body is in the world. That is, the perspective consciousness has is oriented toward objects in space because the body is *of* space. This means that the orientation of consciousness in space is always already given because of the body. This perspective provides consciousness with a sense of space in which it occupies space and exists among other objects, and a sense in which consciousness does not occupy a space among other objects and exists as an object in itself.⁴⁵ In this regard, Merleau-Ponty claims that a sense of space for consciousness is contingent on the fact that consciousness has a body, or that there is a body through which consciousness can exist in the world.⁴⁶ This means that knowledge of what it is like is only obtainable to a consciousness that occupies a space in the world. That is, consciousness is given the means to establish itself as a physical presence in the world through the body. This is why reductive theories of mind, like reductive physicalism, are able to associate physical information about mental phenomena with conscious experience. Similarly, non-reductive theories of mind, like non-reductive dualism, are able to associate non-physical information about mental phenomena with conscious experience because consciousness is able to establish its existence as a non-physical presence in the world. What both of these theories of mind have in common is their association of consciousness with its existence as a presence in space. However, the presence of consciousness in space is a *lived* space. Consciousness can only be given in conscious experience because the body places consciousness in an indeclinable position to always be subject to the world. The body guarantees that consciousness can know what it is like because the body is the source of information about conscious experience.

⁴⁵ For example, although my body may be *here* and the object of my perception may be *there*, I am neither 'here' nor 'there'. I am only *in the world*.

⁴⁶Merleau-Ponty, M., 2013, pp.262-265.

According to Merleau-Ponty, conscious experience is a lived unity brought together by the body in which “I have a flow of experiences that implicate and explicate each other just as much in simultaneity as they do in succession”.⁴⁷ The body allows consciousness to anchor itself in lived experience as a lived unity. Consciousness is a lived unity that links lived experiences together. This means that the unity of lived experiences provides conscious experience with a depth that can only be the feature of the perspective that the body affords consciousness. The depth of lived experiences past, present and future show that consciousness is not limited to what is lived in conscious experience. Consciousness is able to live more than what is explicitly present in conscious experience. Beethoven is able to live experiences of music without the sensations of conscious experience because the body allows consciousness to make use of the information it has about music and conscious experience so that Beethoven can create new music as a deaf musician. However, what information about music is the body able to provide? What does Beethoven’s disabled conscious experience show about the experience of music?

II. Embodied Consciousness and Experience: What a phenomenology of perception shows about the experience of music

In this section, I will analyze what an embodied consciousness shows about the experience of music. Understanding consciousness as embodied helps reveal how the experience of music is able to provide consciousness with the means to overcome a disability.

By suggesting that the world is given in relation to the body, Merleau-Ponty opens up the phenomenological dialogue about consciousness as being a lived unity of experiences that accounts for conscious experience as an entirety. That is, the lived contribution of the body offers an understanding of conscious experience as an embodiment of the situation that consciousness is in. So what perception

⁴⁷ Merleau-Ponty, M., 2013, pp.293.

helps reveal about conscious experience is that consciousness must be able to place itself as the subject in experience. Consciousness is only able to do this if it has a body by which it can live the world. An embodied consciousness is able to live the world and the experience of music in particular reveals this point more clearly than the experience of visual art. While experience of visual art is also a lived experience, by the body, the information about this conscious experience is centered on the existence of an object that need not be experienced to exist. That is, an oil painting by artist Paul Cézanne does not need to be perceived by consciousness to exist as object in the world. However, music does not exhibit this same existence as object in the world because its existence is contingent on the fact that it is lived.⁴⁸ Although Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* exists as a musical composition, the entire existence of this object centers on lived experience. Since music is an object that is established by lived experience, music allows consciousness to have knowledge about conscious experience that would not otherwise be available. In other words, the experience of music provides consciousness with knowledge of an object that is as deeply committed to the moment of perception as it is to the lived unity of consciousness.

Jackson's example of achromatic Mary helps show that physical information about mental phenomena associated with conscious experience cannot fully explain conscious experience because conscious experience has to do with what is lived by the body. This is also why non-physical information about mental phenomena associated with conscious experience cannot provide knowledge of *what it is like*. Conscious experience is centered on the lived experience of the body. Ultimately, no amount of thought experiments about Mary will explain *what it is like* because Mary is not an embodied consciousness. While Mary hypothetically has a body to experience the world, Mary is not

⁴⁸ The existence of music as object cannot depend on memory, as if the mind carries the existence of music the way that a painting carries the image of a landscape.

an embodied consciousness that lives in the world. On the other hand, Beethoven is able to explain what conscious experience is like as an existing consciousness in the world, despite his hearing disability. As an embodied consciousness, Beethoven is able to maintain the existence of a world of music because while his body lives music differently, it still lives music, just differently. The body is the means for consciousness to assert itself and its existence in the world so that consciousness has a world that exists for it. The experience of music requires consciousness to live in the world as a perspective situated in the experience of music. So long as consciousness is embodied, the experience of music will oblige consciousness in its existence in the world. Music assists consciousness with its existence because music exists in the world. Since consciousness lives music, consciousness exists in the world as the lived body. This is why music is unique to humans and the human world.

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Vita

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After completing a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy at the University of Texas at El Paso, I chose to continue my education in philosophy and applied to the graduate program to pursue a Master of Arts in philosophy at the University of Texas at El Paso. My areas of interest include philosophy of mind, phenomenology and philosophy of action. Since working on developing my thesis, I have chosen to dedicate my focus to understanding what current theories of mind offer our understanding of consciousness and conscious experience and how the phenomenology of perception established by Maurice Merleau-Ponty can be used to help understand the conscious experiences of those with sensory disabilities. I hope to continue advancing my education and ultimately pursue a PhD in philosophy at a university that will encourage and support my development of these ideas.

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PUBLICATIONS, PAPERS AND CONFERENCES

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