Perspectival Thinking:
A Phenomenological Approach to Knowledge Management

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Abstract

This paper examines a phenomenological approach to knowledge management. In particular, the paper examines the peculiar nature of Phenomenology to (a) distinguish between explicit knowledge and what is revealed to be implicit knowledge, and (b) Phenomenology's reflexive capacity to articulate itself in the same way in which it articulates the essence of the phenomenon under review, namely implicit knowledge. The paper also provides a viewing of the relation between Perspectival Thinking, theme and implicit knowledge in a management setting under the general heading of Thematic Management.

Key terms: content, form, implicit knowledge, Phenomenology, dasein, reflexivity, subjectivity, objectivity, Thematic Management.

Introduction: What is Phenomenology?

Phenomenology is a very well recognized branch of philosophy, largely developed by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger and generically by Nietzsche in the twentieth century and prior to that by Hegel. The movement of the philosophical explication of a Phenomenology can be traced back as early, generically, as Plato, Hericlitus and to Plotinus. What Phenomenology, most particularly Heideggarian Phenomenology, asserts is that there is a critical distinction between a thing (*Ding*) and a thing-in-itself (*Ding-an-sich*). The thing-in-itself is the essence of its corresponding thing-ness. So a table is a thing, that is, it has both 'tableness' and its physical semblance, but it does not have any thing-in-itself. Dasein, Heidegger's special term for a human's essential human-ness or little spark of spirit, which belongs specifically to humans, is an example of a thing-in-itself. The human body or content is its thing-ness and dasein is indicative of its thing-in-itself. Our human-ness is made expressible through our body and our thoughts. But our body and our thoughts are things, whereas our human-ness is the 'form' in which our essence as a human being expresses itself via the content of the human body and human thoughts. Things are often seen in terms of content in space and time and thing-in-themselves are seen in terms of form or concept (neither of which have spatial or temporal characteristics, yet they both 'appear' in space and time). Following this view, some things have content as well as form, for

example humans. Some things have content but have no form, for example tables. 'Form' is not viewed here (in this paper) in terms of space and time, but rather in a similar way in which Heidegger treats dasein (a term he himself coined). While dasein (form) applies specifically to the content of humans, we can certainly conceive of a form that is not dasein.

The 'tableness' of a table is not an essence; it is rather its design (as distinct from its content). Humans, on the other hand have their 'thingness' in their physical body and their physical characteristics, but they also possess an expressible essence, or character, unlike tables. Tables certainly contain a design, but it is far short of the expressive essence of humans. Hence humans are things-in-themselves as well as things, while tables are things but not, as well, things-in-themselves. The point that Phenomenology takes at issue with other philosophies is that Phenomenology tries to articulate the essence (the thing-in-itself) in things. If, of course, the 'thing' in question possesses one, see in particular Heidegger [Heidegger, 1967]. Insofar as Phenomenology does this it is interested in the phenomenon itself rather than the word, or label, that points to it. In much the same way as Heidegger is interested in dasein (not the word, but the phenomenon that it points to, i.e., human-ness) rather than which type of human, man or woman, possesses it. Therefore Heidegger is being considerably more interested in the phenomenon than its definition. Definitions for Heidegger obscure our openness to the phenomenon, a phenomenon that may be elusive, but nevertheless is able to be grasped conceptually and articulated Phenomenologically.

Moreover, in all of Heidegger's (considerably prodigious) work he never mentions either of the words 'Man' or 'Woman'. This was no oversight. He replaced the word 'man' and 'woman' with dasein. Heidegger's 'dasein' points to a human's essential human-ness. One clear reason for the introduction of dasein is the provision for the shift from the need to define things-in-themselves. Indeed, he wanted to get away from the need to define any thing or any ideal, rather he chose to (thoroughly) reveal. More particularly the subjective side of humans, as reflected in their feelings and their thoughts is implicit and indicative of implicit knowledge which is not, as such, definable, and is often unintelligible, anticipating some future explicit action or destination in intelligible explicit knowledge.

The Notion of Tacit or Implicit Knowledge

The 'form' or concept or idea of Being (as distinct from the thing-ness or content of being or being-in-the-world), as discussed above, is an example of implicit or tacit knowledge. Almost all of Heidegger's work is the attempt to reveal, and render in all its beauty, the form or idea of Being in its relation to being. He states again and again that our Being shines forth in the (good) actions of our being or being-in-the-world. B.C. Birchall in "The Dialectic of Con-ception" (see Appendix 1), see also Birchall's *The Importance of Being Obscure* [Birchall, 2002], gives this distinction between content/thing and form/thing-in-itself great clarity insofar as he treats the level of per-ception as applying to things or content, and the mode of con-ception as appropriate to form or thing-in-itself (or idea or concept). At the level of perception things are open to perception (by which they may, or may not, be perceived), but, importantly, we are not able to perceive an idea or concept – simply because neither have any identifiable 'thingness' about them to enable them to be perceived. Birchall connects the light in

Plato's cave with things – things are illuminated by the light and are therefore available to be perceived. In the mode of conception, which Birchall associates with the dark in Plato's cave, the invisibility of ideas, (or concepts, or form) provides the ground from which we can conceive such ideas, concepts, form. Another phenomenological (albeit generically) writer of note on tacit or implicit knowledge (but beyond the scope of this particular paper) is Michael Polanyi [Polanyi, 1967], see also Haynes [Haynes, 1999b].

The Revelation of Implicit Knowledge

So for Birchall, the shadows on the wall anticipate the mode of conception – this is beginning or dawning of the possibility of implicit knowledge. Implicit knowledge is necessarily hidden from the light of day, because in the light of day its form is mistaken for a thing. Conception itself is an idea hidden from the light and can only be comprehended in terms of its own darkness or hidden process of coming-into-being. In this sense conception is its own becoming, insofar as the idea that is conceived is its being conceived. That is how we come to know the idea, by conceiving of it, including conception itself. This is the darkness or hidden aspect of becoming. What emerges from that darkness is the manifest idea, the resultant knowing that has transpired in the darkness that (the level of) perception cannot comprehend. Explicit knowledge (as the development or manufacture of the original conceived idea) comes into the light from the darkness of conception, and back into the level of perception, and if need be, can also be re-experienced again by darkness of conception.

What is Reflexivity?

In Birchall (specifically from Appendix 1) we see that the way in which we conceive is in the process of shifting, given the Plato cave analogy, from the light (of things) at the level of perception to the light-absent mode of conception. This shift is its own conception, we become conceivers by avoiding the light: the conception of becoming is the becoming of conception (see, in particular, Haynes [Haynes, 1999a]). So the way in which we conceive any idea or concept is the same thematic way in which we conceive of the idea of conception itself, this is reflexivity: the way in which phenomenologically we articulate thought in general is the same way-in-process in which we articulate Phenomenology (the process) itself. And this conception of conception itself is at one with itself. It should be noted that interpretations, for example, are characteristic of the level of perception, but interpretations are absent from conception, there is no 'thing' to interpret. The shift to conception, before conception is reached, can be regarded as a perception-in gestalt. Haynes [Haynes, 1999a, p 17] indicates the following:

> That bird's eye view or perception-in-gestalt is a mode that diffuses, like conceiving taken as a mode, a multiplicity of so-called interpretations into a modal shift. If one or the many so-called interpretations do not conform to a conception, i.e., leaving behind the perceiving of the [words as] objects or things, then we have a so-called interpretation, which is still operating at the level of perceiving. But if we consider the case of an interpretation that is conceived, then we have made one modal shift to that of conception. .. this arises out of the

> experience of undergoing the perception-in-gestalt. So there are three distinct stages in the comprehension of a central idea .. (1) perception, moving to (2) perception-in-gestalt, shifting to (3) conception.

From Haynes [Haynes, 1999a] we can see that reflexivity, like conception itself, is a three-step process. In terms of the Plato's cave analogy, reflexivity and conception arise from the light (of interpretation by perception) to the shadows (of reflection, of seeing the duality of things, the beginning of the gestalt of things) to the darkness of conception. Out of the darkness of conception comes a new light, a light to illuminate what has been conceived, a light that turns the implicit knowledge of conception into the explicit knowledge of the product of conception (a thing or objective knowledge of some type).

Perspectival Thinking

Perspectival Thinking [Haynes, 2000], [Haynes, 2001], is an attempt to reconcile objective actions in the world as exemplified by perceptions with subjective feelings and thought as characterized by conception with a view to an explication of intuition. Perspectival Thinking (a term coined by Haynes) takes its foundation from Heidegger [Heidegger, 1967], [Heidegger, 1987] and its basis from Phenomenology. In relation (and to cite but a few examples) to Phenomenology in a Computing Science, Information Systems, and Management setting, see [Hirschheim, 1985], [Hirschheim et al, 1995], [Winograd and Flores, 1986]. In support, and very briefly, in Hirschheim [Hirschheim, 1985, p 45] we see that "a phenomenological study is required as the appropriate measurement instrument for an interpretivist perspective", and, for a sympathetic need to reconcile the subject with the object, which is a basic aspiration of Phenomenology, in [Hirschheim et al, p 62], Hirschheim, Klein and Lyytenin, discuss the need for a synthesis of subjectivist and objectivist interpretations. In [Flores and Winograd, 1986], Flores and Winograd in *Understanding Computers and Cognition – A New Foundation for Design*, give a detailed explanation of Phenomenology for the computing sciences.

In terms of Perspectival Thinking, consider the following two quotations. In Haynes [Haynes, 2001, pp 30, 31]:

> In [Hegel's] Speculative Thinking the subject-matter is self reflection and so it is very appropriate that subject and object are reconciled, since the subject itself is the formative element of the object, and so clearly the subject is revealed as the object: subject As object. We can now see one clear case of subject As object. The As structure is the hermeneutic 'as'…, one term (in this case the subject) reveals itself as another term (in this case the object). This As structure is distinct from the apophantic 'as' (the 'as' of comparison). An example of the apophantic 'as' would be comparing things, that were, for example, the same. Clearly the subject referred to above is not the same as the object referred to above. In [Hegel's Speculative Thinking] … the subject <u>becomes</u> the object; the subject disappears and constitutes, by its becoming, the object: the subject is <u>revealed</u> As the object. An example of this in an organizational setting is the transformation that takes place when an Information System is working in harmony with its various components. There is a distinct feeling of cohesion. The Information System is the object and the various subjects within that object act (in an ideal case) as one: in unison with

> each other. It could be said that the subjects reveal themselves As the Information System, precisely because there is a distinct feeling of belonging. This same feeling of belonging applies, for example, to subjects playing their various instruments in a symphony that is performing at its peak.
>
> Imagine now a kind of thinking that reconciled the past with the expectation of the future into what we shall term the "Perspectival Now". The Perspectival Now is the sphere of influence that reconciles our knowledge of past events with our expectation of future events, but it is precisely what we do now that affects and effects our future actions. This is precisely why we have another example of the subject As object in Perspectival Thinking. Clearly in Organizational decision-making the past is an object. We have objective records of what has happened. Equally clearly for an Organization the future – as we consider it - is subjective. If we begin to think in terms of the present as a sphere of influence on the future based on the past, clearly we begin to reconcile the objectivity of the past with the subjectivity of the future.

In Haynes [Haynes, 2001, p 32]:

> At the outset two terms need to be clarified: perspective and perspectival. Perspective is meant in the ordinary sense while "perspectival" has two functions. Firstly, perspectival functions as the action of perspective. Making a perspective begins the process of the action of being-in-the-perspective or being perspectival. When we see things from the point-of-view of taking a perspective we are being perspectival (as distinct from, perhaps, taking things literally). Secondly, there needs to be some conceptual assistance in coming to terms with a perspective itself of perspectives. In taking this elevated sense, we are, again, being perspectival. When we are being perspectival in terms of our thinking, we are thinking conceptually, that is, if we consider ourselves, it is the concept of ourselves that is being considered, not ourselves for any personal benefit. Similarly when we consider anything outside of ourselves, again we are thinking in terms of the concept of that object. In this way what is viewing is the concept of subjectivity and what is viewed is the objective concept, or if more than one, then objective concepts. This process is referred to as subjectivity As objectivity, which is seen to be the natural outcome of Perspectival Thinking. In Organizational terms, Perspectival Thinking functions as the <u>past As the future</u>. It is not so much that "history repeats itself" in the future, but that objective history must pass through the Perspectival Now in order to eventuate in some modified form from the perspective of the Perspectival Now. So the past is revealed as the future, but only after passing through the sphere of influence of the Perspectival Now.

From the above quotations we can clearly see that Perspectival Thinking takes seriously Hirschheim, Klein and Lyytinen's hope for the reconciliation between subjectivity and objectivity. Perspectival Thinking not only articulates that reconciliation between subject and object, but in its tenet of subjectivity as objectivity (hermeneutic 'as'), it requires that reconciliation to sustain itself. In other words, one cannot be in the mode of absolute Perspectival Thinking without a reconciliation of subjectivity as objectivity. Birchall (in Appendix 1) also critically recognizes the importance of the subject/object reconciliation and draws an explication of the reconciliation between Subjective Idealism and Objective Idealism in terms of Absolute Idealism out of the Plato cave analogy. On the last page of Appendix 1, we see:

> As con-ception cannot do without a conceiver, this is, in one way or another, what we mean by *Subjective Idealism*, where the *Thing* is assimilated phenomenologically to the *Idea* or *Concept*. In the second case, the idea or concept is "illuminated" in the modality [level] of perception such that [there is an] … attempt to give an account of the mystery of form in terms of a "mysterious content." This I take to be the hall-mark of *Objective Idealism*, where the Idea or Concept is assimilated phenomenologically to the *thing*.

As indicated above, we discover further on in Appendix 1, Absolute Idealism brings the two together:

> However, in *Absolute Idealism* both light and dark, thing and Idea/Concept are retained whilst being overcome in the light that is darkness and the darkness that is light. In short, the "opposition" between light (Objective Idealism) and dark (Subjective Idealism) is overcome in the journey or movement of the soul from dark to light.

In much the same way as Hegel's Absolute Idealism reconciles a subjective and an objective approach, so too does Perspectival Thinking, but with one important difference, Perspectival Thinking recognizes the relationship between feeling (in its subjective mood) and thought (in its objective elevation) and in turn provides for the relation between feeling and thought toward intuition.

Perspectival Thinking and Knowledge Management: Data, Information, Knowledge

In relation to Data, Information and Knowledge most of the existing MIS literature takes a somewhat 'surface' approach to the distinction, but the distinction should be a crucial one in Knowledge Management. Quite often we see, following the Nonaka [Nonaka, 1994] definition, Data as the bare facts, Information as data applied within a context and Knowledge as applying information to a new need. Or we see Knowledge, following Boisot [Boisot, 1995], as "mental models", and Information being a product of Data and Knowledge.

A significantly better approach is to see the Data, Information and Knowledge distinction as dimensions and begin with a taxonomy as identified by Land et al, [Land and Kennedy-McGregor, 1987]. Or to further extend this dimensional approach to a form of thinking and action. Consider, for example, Boland et al in relation to Perspective Taking [Boland and Tenkasi, 1995], or Churchman re Inquiring Systems [Churchman, 1971], or Courtney et al, re Inquiring Organizations [Courtney, Croasdell and Paradice, 1998].

The approach taken by Perspectival Thinking is phenomenological: go to the essence (character, theme) of the issue and ask, not what is knowledge, but how is knowledge and how is information? That is precisely why a taxonomy, for example, is an excellent starting point, because it begins to reveal how such dimensions are different aspects of the same three-term distinction. We can ask 'what' is data because data are (from a conceptual standpoint) things and no more than that and therefore 'data' needs a definition. In asking

'what' of some 'thing' we thereby elicit a definition. In asking 'how' of what points to a thing-in-itself we experience or re-experience, perspectivally, both the question and the consequent answer, and in that experience come to know it.

So in Perspectival Thinking, data[1] are the raw facts that comprise information, but information must be transformed to become knowledge. Knowledge may not necessarily arise directly from either data or information, but could be deduced out of an indirect process. We certainly see data in graphs, etc., but we also can create information that explains those graphs. The question becomes: is the information that explains, like the information explaining graphs example, meaningful as knowledge? Is it importantly significant to the graph, or is it distinctly of meaningful to us? Or do we need to seek other examples of information that articulate, explain, argue, and so on? The former example of information connected to graphs is not meaningful in the same perspectival way and we shall label the "graphical" kind of information as significant. We believe that there is a third category reserved for meaning as knowledge.

So we suggest, in relation to Perspectival Thinking, that information can be broken down into two distinct categories: significant information and meaningful information. When information is significant it remains (or is) Information. When information is meaningful it is knowledge. We further suggest two distinct ways, in which, as a relationship for us, those two categories can be related:

(1) in significant information (Information), we relate to by understanding (or possibly not understanding at the very least initially) in terms of our perception of that kind of information;

(2) in meaningful information (knowledge) we relate with, in coming to know, (either immediately, slowly or otherwise) in terms of our conception of what it is that is potentially "in-forming" us (see Boland [Boland, 1987]). In coming to know that which is meaningful we have thereby come to know knowledge.

Information is: Significant (Information)

For this type of information we perceive[2] that there are logical elements that comprise the information as a collection of parts and no more. Raw facts (data) are converted and arranged into a content that exemplifies their logical or possibly mathematical composition. Significant information can be extremely important and in this sense the choice of "significant" in relation to "meaningful" as a term is independent of its value, but significant information as distinct from meaningful information has no transcendent qualities. Significant information is content-based and has no conceivable viewing of "form". Hence, significant information comprises objects that we relate to and insofar as the relation is "to", we are at the level of perception. The instance of "relating to" can also be

[1] From here to the end of the next page is paraphrased from Haynes in [Haynes, 2000, pp 97-99].
[2] We perceive significant information, but it is a realized perceiving from the perspective of the distinction between significant and meaningful information. That is, the recognition of the fact that we are perceiving arises from the conception that there is a meaningful distinction between significance and meaning.

appreciated from the point of view of machine interpretation, such as in the case of a computer program.. In this sense, a computer program is certainly an example of significant text. The upshot is that significance is perceived by the intelligence of humans and decoded (interpreted) by the artificial intelligence of machines.

Knowledge is: Meaningful Information

Meaningful information requires reflection on what it is that we are perceiving that - if it turns out to be meaningful or at the very least potentially meaningful - leads us to conceive "what is the information pointing to?" which then leads us to ask "how is that information?" When we are in the mode of conception we are moving with the information in seeking a solution to our conceptions that we relate with. If we are successful, we move with the information until our conception leads us to a 'coming to terms with' what the information is pointing to.

In coming to terms with what the information is pointing to, we need to have a sense of the relation between our experiences and the record of experience that is presented to us in the arrangement of information. Significant information is concerned with what is. Meaningful information, once discerned or at least potentially discerned, is experienced as what it could be or what we believe it could be, until we are, or are at least, or are more than, experiencing it as it was intended to be experienced, that is, as knowledge.

Knowledge has undergone the process of humans relating with (experiencing and re-experiencing) instances of meaningful information. This includes what is being said now, not so much in the words themselves (their dictionary definitions) but with the words, by way of pointing to, or sign-posting, what is my intent in using those words. The resolution of whether the information in view is actually meaningful (i.e., whether it gives rise to an experience of meaning) is the extent to which our experiences coincide with what is being viewed. We relate to significant information, and we relate with meaningful information. We need this distinction in order to prepare ourselves for the journey of coming to know what is being pointed to in the case of meaningful information and appreciating what is explained to us by way of significant information. In this paper we are principally concerned with how meaning "emerges" in relation to meaningful information to become knowledge.

The Management of Implicit Knowledge: Thematic Management

The upshot of the forgoing is that in taking a Perspectival Thinking approach we look for evidence of significance and meaning, rather than attempt to define such apparent 'structures'. In seeking evidence we need to experience and/or re-experience what is in view, until the 'evidence' co-incides with our own experiences. Then we experience what is really (in the deeper sense) in view for the 'first time' (of perhaps many times). But we continue to define data as the raw facts. Whereas we experience the mode of meaningful information or knowledge that arises out of conception, and we experience the level of significant information that arises out of perception. What is implicit in meaningful information or knowledge may eventually be made explicit as significant information.

Einstein's famous E=MC**2, was once implicit in Einstein's mind, now it is generally rendered significant, but that is not to say that one cannot take the journey again to re-experience it as meaningful information, as knowledge, and further, to conception itself. There is a continual potential cycle from implicit knowledge to its own counterpart in explicit knowledge and back again to implicit knowledge. What is emerging from our discussion is a theme. It is the theme of the recognition of the journey, the process, the becoming, that takes place in the movement of the implicit to the explicit and back again to the implicit.

This is the same journey that takes place in the recognition of a work of art, of music, of mathematics, of philosophy, of management. At some point the "experiencer" sees (or many experiencers see) that work for the very first time. In that experience of seeing the 'artistry' of a work of art, in that becoming, is the seed of the process of conception, and hence, potentially, the movement toward the 'centre' of creativity itself.

In that potential is the distinct possibility of the centre of creativity because what is being conceived is conception itself. We see the work in its being conceived. The fact that someone else conceived it in its original 'form' before us is, of course the greater conception, but it nevertheless provides us with a crucial experience that when explored allows us to see not only the thing in itself (that which is really viewed) but the process of conception itself, the becoming itself, that sees it.

With the discovery of the process that sees conception comes the realization of the need to care for and preserve opportunities for conception itself. The process of conceiving cannot, in the long-run, be self-managed. What manages this implicit knowledge is a type of management that recognizes the crucial difference between a thing and a thing-in-itself. The becoming of creativity in conception is a thing-in-itself. It is not a structure that can be defined. It is a reflexive process that can only be experienced. Heidegger's "the essence of technology is not itself technological .. Technology is a way of revealing" [Heidegger, 1977, p 4] is of importance here. The essence of reflexivity is not itself reflexive (there is no logical mechanism in 'there' doing it), but rather, it is a becoming (a non-logical way) of itself as reflexive. Its essence then is that (uniquely instantiated) becoming, and that (particular) becoming can be grasped in thought as a thematic movement, and with further reflection to discover that there is a one-ness about this becoming in general.

We see that theme in the case of reflexivity itself as we see it elsewhere. We take the next step to a general thematic movement, when 'Becoming' becomes its own sign. A sign that so many good thinkers come to know. The good thinker who is asked 'what is your identity?', does not turn to his occupation, or to his name badge or his social security number, but to the fruits of his reflexivity of himself. There may not be an answer that can be logically or rationally created to be communicated to others, but there is a response to the question itself, a deep response that allows the question to be (to let it be), and to come into being in all its myriad forms to be asked again and again. In that asking;

in that exploration, creativity expresses itself. And that creativity requires genuine management.

A non-genuine management will try to freeze that shift, to grasp it as a structure, to define it and to measure it. This is the whole problem with definitions. Definitions freeze such a shift, and in freezing that which is so defined, dissolves that which is defined in its essential idea-hood; in its articulation in thought as an idea; in its grasping.

So how could a management of implicit knowledge proceed?

Firstly such a management needs to recognize the crucial difference between a thing and a thing-in-itself. Out of this recognition comes a need to break an organization into aspects that allow for these differences. The conceivers and the perceivers could constitute the major division, but such a division need not be categorical. By this I mean that the division itself could be thematic; it could be two thematic organizational aspects. All humans both conceive and perceive. Some choose to stay at the level of perception. But they often stay there unwittingly. The management could attempt to emulate the process itself of conception by rotating the organizational members from in and out of organizational aspects of conceiving and perceiving. What could constitute such aspects between conceiving and perceiving in an organization? That would be apparent given the context of the organization in question. In this paper we refer to this type of management as Thematic Management.

As conception often brings together apparently contradictory elements, so too would Thematic Management. In any conception questions of alternatives are, if the conception succeeds, resolved. At the level of perception alternatives abound, hence, at that level, we have many interpretations, and, such interpretations also entail many viewpoints that apparently contradict each other. Thematic Management is in a position to resolve those differing interpretations.

Consider for example, the notion of 'creative' errors: errors that lead to a new discovery. If a strictly perception level approach to management were adopted the possibility of reflection upon an error of this kind would largely be ruled out, but if a sense of discovery inherent in the mode of conception approach to management flourished in an organization, then it is very likely that the 'error' in question would lead to an investigation and exploration that in turn may lead to a new discovery.

Consider another example. Apparently, "nothing succeeds like success", but if the succeeding is in an area that the person has no real competence in, then the success will sooner or later sour into failure, and often, if the position "succeeded to" is a prominent one in the organization, then that eventual failure is often at the expense incurred from the departures of many good and valued employees. Thematic Management would largely preclude such a possibility, because the enthusiasm of discovery inherent in a culture of conception arises from a competence in what is being done, and so in this scenario incompetence is, or should be, difficult to disguise.

Conclusion

We have seen how the distinction between form and content is essential to Phenomenology, and therefore, in part, to Perspectival Thinking. We have seen how form is not a structure with spatial and temporal characteristics yet it makes its presence felt - it reveals itself as a phenomenon - in space and time. We extended the notion of form to idea and concept and realized that it is implicit knowledge. From an exploration of implicit knowledge we came to realize that it is conception that allows us to conceive of itself as conception and conceive of the presence, hidden though it is, of form. Insofar as conception is its being conceived, conception is its own becoming. Insofar as knowing conception can only take place during the process of conception itself: what is conceived is its being conceived. In the absence of that knowing we are bereft of a most crucial human quality of mind. We compared the mode of conception with the level of perception and arrived at a strategy for managing implicit knowledge and implicit knowing (conception) namely Thematic Management. If anything is more urgently needed in a world in which measurement and so-called rational thinking have been elevated to the status of sacredness (without a genuine comprehension of a sense of the sacred in those who have elevated them) it is the general Phenomenology and Knowledge Management category under which, it is hoped, would sit Thematic Management.

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Appendix: 1

The Dialectic of Con-ception

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The Dialectic of Conception
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Most of us have heard of Plato's parable of the cave. But what does it really mean? Socrates explains it to Glaucon, but there is no reason to believe that his explanation is the explanation. Socrates says of the parable that, "The realm of the visible should be compared to the prison dwelling, and the fire inside it to the power of the sun. If you interpret the upward journey and the contemplation of things above as the upward journey and the contemplation of things above as the upward journey of the soul to the intelligible realm, you will grasp what I surmise since you were keen to hear it. Whether it is true or not only the god knows, but this is how I see it, namely that in the intelligible world of the Form of the Good is the last to be seen, and with difficulty; when seen it must be reckoned to be for all the cause of all that is right and beautiful to have produced in the visible world both the light and the fount of light, while in the intelligible world it is itself that which produces and controls truth and intelligence, and he who is to act intelligently in public or private must see it."

According to Socrates, there is an "upward journey of the soul to the intelligible realm" which is to say, to the realm of the Forms and that this "journey" on behalf of the soul constitutes, in some sense, intelligence. Socrates continues his interpretation by explaining to Glaucon that "Education then is the art of doing this very thing, this turning around, the knowledge of how the soul can most easily and most effectively be turned around; it is not the art of putting the capacity of sight into the soul; the soul possesses that already but is not turned the right way or looking where it should. This is what education has to deal with." Education, then, is the movement of the soul from dark to light, from appearance to reality. Taken literally, such an account presupposes that there is a soul that moves from one realm to another. What I wish to suggest is that the soul is the movement; that the movement so-called is the *becoming* of the soul and the becoming of the soul is nothing more than the becoming of con-ception. Education, in this sense, is the transfiguration or sublimation of body as soul; of the visible as invisible, what Hegel called "the labour of the concept", and by "the labour of the concept" I do not mean that there is a concept *that* labours, but that the concept is the coming-to-be of the concept, an idealist position that cannot be explained from the outside, as it were, but only enacted and re-enacted.

We begin with the soul that cannot see, that is not, if you like, embodied. But it has to be able to see if only in order not to see. Paradoxical as it might sound, it contains, in my

view, the meaning of the parable of the cave. In the darkness of the cave, things are in-visible; in the light of the sun, things are visible, but the visible and in-visible are understood in the terms of perception: we are able to perceive or not perceive what is there to be perceived, viz, things. We cannot perceive ideas or concepts, which is to say that the idea or concept is *neither* visible *nor* in-visible, unless, of course, ideas/concepts are assimilated to things-in-the-world. How do we come to know the idea or concept? Only in con-ception, for the idea or concept is its being conceived. There is, in other words, no idea or concept "out there", existing independently of its being conceived. On the level of per-ception, what is perceived is *not* its being perceived. On the level of con-ception, on the other hand, what is conceived is its being conceived. Now, what does this have to do with the dialectic of light and dark? In order to per-ceive, we need to leave the darkness of the cave, but only in order to return to the darkness; not a darkness of the in-visible, mind you, but a darkness of the not-visible, which is, at the same time, an illumination of the idea or concept. We cannot perceive things; we need to be able to perceive things, but only in order not to perceive, which is to say, to conceive. There is a crucial distinction between not perceiving x (x is in-visible), perceiving x (x is visible), and not-perceiving (the idea or concept is neither visible nor invisible.) So education, properly interpreted, is the passage from pre-ception to con-ception; the passage from thing to idea or concept, but such a passage is dialectical in the sense that con-ception is the passage.

Such a "passage", in other words, is not "something" that can be perceived or understood, but is a notion to be per-formed, and in that performance we have the coming-to-be of what is per-formed i.e. what is per-formed is its being performed. Needless to say, the very idea of that which has no being apart from its coming-to-be cannot be accommodated by the logic of either-or or by the Phenomenology of per-ception. The idea or concept is *both* visible *and* invisible yet *neither* visible *nor* in-visible. This is to say that it is both light and dark yet neither. We need to move from the darkness of the in-visible, to the light of the visible but only to "return" to the darkness of the notvisible, which is, at the same time, the light of con-ception. And we need to remember that con-ception, the idea or concept is not an end-result or outcome, but is the passage or movement itself – its own becoming.

There are characteristic ways, however, in which such a "passage" or "movement" can be interrupted. You can *stay* in the cave, in the dark, so that nothing is visible, or you can leave the cave and *stay* in the light of the sun where the only consideration becomes that of the visible. But what happens to the idea or concept? In the first case, nothing can be perceived because of the darkness of implicit con-ception. As con-ception cannot do without a conceiver, this is, in one way or another, what we mean by *Subjective Idealism*, where the *Thing* is assimilated phenomenologically to the *Idea* or *Concept*. In the second case, the idea or concept is "illuminated" in the modality of perception such that we generate phenomenologies of "intuition" that attempts to "explain" the mystery of conception in the form of perception; attempt to give an account of the mystery of form in terms of a "mysterious content." This I take to be the hall-mark of *Objective Idealism*, where the Idea or Concept is assimilated phenomenologically to the *thing*. And these interruptions come into conflict: *either* light (thing) *or* dark (idea/concept) – one attempts

to explain light (the visible) in terms of dark (the invisible) while the other attempts to explain dark (the invisible) in terms of light (the visible). But light requires darkness just as darkness requires light, so that the apparent opposition cannot make sense of either the other or itself and, on both sides, we have examples of what "suffers violence at its own hands". We lose, in other words, *both* light and dark, both *thing* and *Idea/Concept*. However, in *Absolute Idealism* both light and dark, thing and Idea/Concept are retained whilst being overcome in the light that is darkness and the darkness that is light. In short, the "opposition" between light (Objective Idealism) and dark (Subjective Idealism) is overcome in the journey or movement of the soul from dark to light, and importantly, in its return to the darkness of conception, which is, of course, the journey or movement itself – the becoming of soul – the metamorphosis of body (light) as soul (dark). As long as we stay in the cave, we have soul without body (education without training). As long as we stay outside the cave, we have body without soul (training without education). But, as it turns out, we end up with neither body nor soul; neither training nor education – the decadent nothingness of neither light nor dark; otherwise known as the instrumentality of invisibility. Despite claims to the contrary, we no longer per-ceive or con-ceive. We have degenerated into the either-or of prisoners of "light" or prisoners of "dark" – the either-or of the counterfeit adolescent or the counterfeit child, the journey from dark to light and back again being the coming-to-be of the adult soul or spirit, and that, need I say it, is the coming-to-be of the educated.