

Carl B. Sachs. *Intentionality and the Myths of the Given: Between Pragmatism and Phenomenology.* Pickering & Chatto 2014. 208 pp. \$150.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9781848935075).

This book offers a new account of intentionality, one that offers a different perspective and new solutions to an old set of problems. At the center of Sachs's book is his theory of *bifurcated intentionality*. In his attempt to do full justice to both our rationality and our animality, Sachs draws on contemporary analytic neo-pragmatism as well as the phenomenological tradition.

Sachs is inspired by John Haugeland's suggestion that neo-behaviorism might be compatible with neo-pragmatism on intentionality, if it could be divided into primitive and higher types, the former in accord with what we share with non-linguistic animals, the latter unique to language animals such as ourselves. Sachs departs from Haugeland's proposal by dropping neo-behaviorism as the best option for developing the primitive form of intentionality for one along lines traced by Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodiment, a form of intentionality Sachs calls *somatic* intentionality to differentiate it from the socio-linguistic version. This second, higher level of intentionality Sachs calls *discursive* intentionality and his account adheres closely to Robert Brandom's neo-pragmatist account of original intentionality. Taking a transcendental approach rooted in cognitive semantics, Sachs's bifurcated intentionality is compatible with a liberal naturalism committed to 'empirically-specifiable role-players' for 'transcendentally-specifiable roles'.

Sachs accepts much of Brandom's account of the capacity of beings with minds like ours for engaging in the game of 'giving and asking for reasons' to account for discursive intentionality. He turns to Merleau-Ponty in his account of the somatic branch, which accounts for the capacities unique to organisms with bodies like ours. Sachs argues that somatic and discursive intentionality 'are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for all reasoning with empirical content, and thus are essentially bound up with perception and action' (2). He aims to show that both discursive and somatic intentionality must be considered *equally original* in their respective spheres.

The plural 'Myths' in the title refers to a distinction Sachs argues is implicit in Sellars's critique of Lewis between an epistemological and a semantic version of the Myth of the Given. Faithful to Sellarsian orthodoxy, Sachs assiduously avoids both Myths. Not all that is given, however, is mythical, and Sachs finds an acceptable, non-mythical version of the Given in Merleau-Ponty, the perceptuo-practical Given that constrains cognitive capacities without playing any foundational role. That is, the perceptuo-practical Given allows for nonconceptual content that avoids the Myth of the Given.

This constraint offered by the perceptuo-practical Given is Sachs's answer to what he calls the demand for transcendental friction, the requirement that 'it must be possible, by reflecting on our most basic conceptual and perceptual capacities and incapacities, to guarantee that we are in cognitive contact with a world we discover and do not create' (13). That we need to meet this demand, and that Brandom and McDowell have each failed to do so, is one of the main problems Sachs tackles in the book, since it is the primary rationale for developing a new account of intentionality. According to Sachs the problem with Brandom and McDowell is that they think only the conceptual is intentional. Despite differences, this is their shared premise. But where this leads McDowell to develop a conceptualist account to save experience, it leads Brandom to excise experience altogether. Sachs's most original contribution is to isolate and attack their common presupposition by developing the notion of nonconceptual somatic intentionality whereby the habitual interaction between the organ

ism and the environment may be understood to be a kind of intentionality to complement Brandom's account of our socio-linguistic capacities, one that offers more by way of 'friction' than mere causation.

Sachs develops his theory throughout the first five chapters before turning to contemporary problems in chapter six. The first chapter offers a brief sketch of bifurcated intentionality, a summary of Sachs's motivations and influences, and an explanation of his methodological standpoint, including his commitment to naturalism. Chapters two and three delve into the relevant history, focusing on the Sellars-Lewis debate. Here Sachs argues convincingly that Sellars has the Myth of the *semantic* Given in mind in his critique of Lewis, thus establishing the historical pedigree for the semantic version of the Myth of the Given.

Chapter four is important mainly because of the burden it bears in Sachs's overall argument. It also continues the stage-setting by examining Brandom's and McDowell's arguments against non-conceptual content, and argues that they both fail to meet the demand for transcendental friction. Sachs agrees with Brandom that the very idea of experience requires nonconceptual content, but disagrees with both Brandom and McDowell on the question whether nonconceptual content necessarily commits one to a mythical Given. This proposal is at the heart of Sachs's understanding of bifurcated intentionality. Although earlier chapters are light on criticism of Brandom, here we get a clear and often compelling critique of Brandom's blithe rejection of experience—indeed, it is one of the highlights of the book. It is here that the case is most persuasively made for the viability of a different kind of intentionality.

Previous chapters are light on phenomenology. Chapter five makes good on earlier promissory notes by focusing on Merleau-Ponty's account of lived embodiment. Drawing lines of comparison with Sellars, including their shared rejection of the sensory-cognitive continuum, Sachs rounds out his original take on somatic intentionality. In this chapter Sachs also draws out the perceptuo-practical Given from Merleau-Ponty's work, and presents a persuasive argument that it satisfies the demand for transcendental friction without falling foul of any mythical nonsense such as besets the epistemic and semantic versions. We are not only creatures of rules, conceptual norms of doxastic scorekeeping, but also creatures of bodily habits, and this is the basis for Sachs's argument for the idea of habitual normativity, a kind of normativity 'that our habitual ways of engaging with objects are subject to implicit norms of correctness, insofar as our engagement with objects comes with varying degrees of success and failure, and that this engagement is bodily and habitual in that it is not instituted by the social practices of deontic scorekeepers' (102). He also makes the case that the perceptuo-practical given is not mythical on the grounds that 'it lacks the right kind of logical or epistemic structure and normative force to play the kind of semantic or epistemic role' to be mythical. Likewise, the perceptuo-practical Given 'lacks the *authority* that deontic scorekeepers exercise with regard to each other' and so, presumably doesn't compete with the conceptual. 'The difference', Sachs explains, 'is that habitual normativity is located at the organism-environment relationship...whereas deontic normativity is located at the level of the social practices *between* organisms. The kinds of normativity at work constrain perception, thought, and action in different dimensions, and are orthogonal to one another, although in normal human life they interpenetrate so smoothly as to be, strictly speaking, inseparable' (126). Sachs also distinguishes a non-apperceptive consciousness that 'makes rational animals like us a kind of *animal*' (130).

The sixth and final chapter completes Sachs's picture of intentionality by applying it to several contemporary problems, where, he argues, it fares well compared to existing options. The most

intriguing, and increasingly timely, issue taken up in this chapter is the Dreyfus-McDowell debate. Sachs also considers Alex Rosenberg's eliminative challenge to the very idea of intentionality. This also allows Sachs the opportunity to sketch his understanding of how intentionality might be naturalized if we drop the standard picture of naturalism for reductive, scientific naturalism. It is here, perhaps, that the influence of John Dewey, which Sachs acknowledges in the introduction, makes itself felt strongest.

There is little to complain about, overall. The argument is clear, and consistently argued throughout. Although it is refreshing to see such a robust engagement between analytic and continental 'camps' in philosophy, one that doubts 'there are any substantive philosophical views found in one camp that are not found in the other', the book is, on the whole, light on the phenomenology. One remedy for this might have been to include the material from the substantive appendix which deals more widely with the phenomenological tradition in an examination whether phenomenology necessarily commits the Myth of the Given. This is also more than tangentially relevant to the main argument of the book, and deserves its own chapter.

The book will be of interest to a wide audience. Anyone whose research involves the intersection of analytic neo-pragmatism and phenomenology will *need* to read the book, but it will also be interesting to those engaged with Merleau-Ponty, who may want to see what the more analytic-minded of their colleagues find promising in the work of the phenomenologist. Finally, graduate students approaching the questions and problems that are the focus of the book, or who are interested in the history of the Myth(s) of the Given, will find the book has clear and helpful explanations of the relevant philosophical background.

Perhaps the most outstanding aspect of the book is the theory of bifurcated intentionality. It promises to make experience one of our words again, and to make the primacy of practice extend again beyond the penumbra of socio-linguistic games, as important as the giving and asking for reasons are for sapient animals like us. Sachs does not solve all the problems raised by intentionality, but in the spirit of classical pragmatism, he is keeping the conversation going.

Phillip W. Schoenberg, University of New Mexico