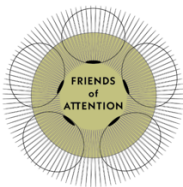


Chat Thread –
Friends of Attention
“First Friday” of 3 December 2021
Attention as Action
(With Wayne Wu)



14:50:52 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

<https://philpapers.org/rec/DEBLOI>

14:58:20 From Caleb Smith to Everyone:

Does attention move the agent into or out of habits?

14:58:43 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

James actually argues that differential applications of attention IS WHAT CONSTITUTES “WILL” — it is, for him, the locus of our freedom.

14:59:32 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

In that context, “habit” (or the canalization of our attentional capacities) serves to pull us away from the condition of freedom that is central to any idea of virtue...

15:00:26 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

Another thought...

15:00:31 From Sonali to Everyone:

How do we pay attention when expertise leads us in the wrong direction (e.g. making legal judgment in the context of a systemically racist legal system)?

What are the signals that the quality of our attention is not adequate for the task at hand?

15:00:45 From Caleb Smith to Everyone:

(p.s. I always like to remember that a “habit” is also a penitent’s/nun’s clothing)

15:00:52 From Jessica Gallucci to Everyone:

Consider that the socially inept man in the “vice” example is practicing a pure and perfect form of attention. How do we speak about ethics in this context while taking into account both the attention’s object, not the attention itself?

15:01:24 From Jessica Gallucci to Everyone:

Edited: Consider that the socially inept man in the “vice” example is practicing a pure and perfect form of attention. How do we speak about ethics in this context while taking into account both the attention’s object and the quality of the attention itself?

15:02:35 From Sal Randolph to Everyone:

Some thoughts from our group:

15:02:38 From Sal Randolph to Everyone:
William James, attention and the will

The idea of practice or practices as a method to respond to implicit bias (rather than just intellectual awareness, recognition).

Making the connection between attention and virtue.

Some external influences are bad teachers, you are teaching yourself a bad habit.

Metacognition - recognizing there's a problem to be solved.

Improving is dynamism in action. The unquantifiable nature of virtue.

Training the direction of attention in different ways.

Athletic training system to combat implicit bias.

There's something more about virtue than mere athleticism.

15:03:04 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

James actually argues that differential applications of attention IS WHAT CONSTITUTES "WILL" — it is, for him, the locus of our freedom.

In that context, "habit" (or the canalization of our attentional capacities) seems to pull us away from the condition of freedom that is central to any idea of virtue...

15:03:12 From Sonali to Everyone:

How do we pay attention when expertise leads us in the wrong direction (e.g. making legal judgment in the context of a systemically racist legal system)?

What are the signals that the quality of our attention is not adequate for the task at hand?

15:03:12 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

Margaret: Feminist phil science and STS: importance of picking the right questions

Dominic: concerns about positivism (paradigm of looking, disembodied, input/output)


Jesse: individualistic

Paul: objective vs. system

Margaret: neural networks come to mind (we are wrong about what they are attending to, and whether there are even things)

15:03:24 From Logan Dennison to Everyone:

Logan Dennison: notes on group 3

Alyssa Loh: Interesting questions first surfaced during 12 theses. The kind of attention where you give for a specific purpose vs when you don't have a purpose in mind. This convo was strongly oriented toward the kind that is for use. 

The questions of, do we as a group,(focused on attention) have (control?) over our collective and individual attention?


Publication: The Fuze. Discussing the 'refusal' concept brought up by Jose.

Re: Wu's question "When you loose a pattern of attention... how do you recultivate it?" I used to know exactly where I wanted to take information in 1/1s. Now after two years of fewer 1/1s I've lost some of that and am now sure how to get that back. Might need a factory reset.

15:03:30 From Logan Dennison to Everyone:

Kristin Lawler: Found herself having a critical sensibility to virtue and vice tension. The values mean everything. The idea that virtue is attending to the pathology, rather than the healthy structure. There are other traditions about health. Speaks to the importance of specifying values.

There's always consciousness toward something. Intentionality. Have to decide on what is virtuous and what is a vice. What do you mean by 'good, the good life, intention.'

These diagrams of attn are models of a little Cartesian,  split between the perceiver and action. This is an important discussion, the distinction we between these two. Vs more Heidegarin way of seeing it.

15:03:36 From Logan Dennison to Everyone:

Jose Luis Blondet: Surprises to hear vice and virtue as categories. Took adjustment to process these new definitions.(?) Vice and virtue is polarizing in the William James quote.

Fascination between withdrawn and attention. What's the connection between these two and 'refusal?' Jonathan White - artist, project in Geneva? "The Right to be Lazy" - A museum asked not to cut the grass.

15:03:51 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

Of value on this stuff: Losing Oneself : On the Value of Full Attention
Dorothea Debus
European Journal of Philosophy 23 (4):1174-1191 (2015)

15:04:04 From Brad Fox to Everyone:

Jeff: aesthetic experience when biases are neutralized — what role does aesthetics have in all of this?


15:04:11 From margaret wertheim to Everyone:

Our discussion revolved around the issue of who's conception of virtue and rightness gets to prevail. A lot of STS studies since the 1970's has been to question the very frameworks that have determined the concept of right goal or right outcome.

15:04:15 From Caleb Smith to Everyone:

Does attention move the agent into or out of habits? 


15:04:21 From Rebecca Rickman to Everyone:

I mentioned my struggle to both narrow my focus to that which requires  my attention and the desire to remain open to new ideas.


15:04:26 From Logan Dennison to Everyone:

Logan practiced concept of refusal and opted to take notes and maintain the balance of his healthy node self.

15:05:00 From Julian Chehirian to Everyone:

Jeff brought up Daneil Wegner's book on the illusion of conscious will. Idea of intention as something we impose upon action rather than the other way around. 

Brad brought up practices such as playing music instruments, of honing and refining attention.

Susan brought up developing better habits, and the idea of narrowing one's focus on the world. A dilemma of narrowing it down sufficiently but being able to bring one's energy together and focusing on what needs to be focused on, without narrowing down one's experience of the world. Also, the way that age shifts priorities for attention. 

Julian brought up question of intention, and whether it belongs among the other categories such as values or personal history, because of how recursive it is. Jeff's Wegner reference followed.

15:05:07 From Julian Chehirian to Everyone:

Illusion*


15:05:14 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

Big question: What about AESTHETICS??

15:05:30 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

hey people! i unfortunately had to be part of a meeting and couldn't come today. would anybody be willing to have a chat with me to talk about how the gathering went today? my email is anacgmarques@gmail.com


15:05:43 From Jeff Dolven to Everyone:

An interesting thread on INTENTION: how does this account relate to the idea (Benjamin Libet et al.) that intention actually follows action, rather than preceding/causing it? So agency in a strong causative sense seems difficult to achieve in the case of particular actions. But might therefore be displaced to habit or even to character, which may also be to say, bias. 

15:06:21 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

Aesthetics: very much NOT about specific ends-orientation.... (i.e., "Purposiveness without purpose...")

15:07:01 From Margaret Wertheim to Everyone:

Feminist STS scholar Evelyn Fox Keller has done a lot of work questioning the goals of molecular biology and noting how much has been left out by traditional focus on DNA to the exclusion of many other things such as the cytoplasm and factors that determine how the DNA will be activated. See her wonderful book "Secrets of Life, Secrets of Death." 

15:07:06 From Jeff Dolven to Everyone:

Also: the importance of getting the ratio right between prediction and perception, downstream and upstream. Can the downstream competence of the expert still admit the unpredictable challenge of upstream perception? (And what about the case of aesthetics, as a disabling of expertise?)

15:07:23 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

I can fill you in, Ana.

15:08:02 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

<3 <3 <3

15:09:59 From Sal Randolph to Everyone:

Wayne also brought up in our conversation the idea that most of these skills (athletics, music, zen, etc.) require a teacher to learn. Who can we imagine as the teacher for shifting questions of implicit bias? What are the practices they teach, corrections they make? Forms of coaching?

15:10:03 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

Shall we go to JD for a sec....?

15:10:06 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

Arnold Isenberg (1949) says criticism is direction of attention

15:10:30 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

(art criticism)

15:13:06 From Sal Randolph to Everyone:

The attentional gymnasium.

15:13:28 From Jeff Dolven to Everyone:

I want a membership!

15:13:46 From Kristin Lawler to Everyone:

PLAY

15:14:19 From Caleb Smith to Everyone:

Interesting to think how knowing how to recognize a surprise/anomaly/unassimilable detail might itself be an aspect of expert looking.

15:14:47 From sonja 's iPhone to Everyone:

Thank you, Wayne!! Thank you, Graham! Thank you everyone for this wonderful session. Look forward to continuing the conversation

15:14:49 From Sal Randolph to Everyone:

Attentional free weights? Attentional treadmills? Attentional rowing machines?

15:14:53 From Kristin Lawler to Everyone:

Spontaneity as the attentional intention we want to cultivate in the gymnasium

15:15:10 From Sal Randolph to Everyone:

^^ love that Kristin.

15:15:13 From Caleb Smith to Everyone:

Yesssss Kristin

15:15:20 From Sal Randolph to Everyone:

Could a museum be a kind of attentional gym?

15:15:29 From Kristin Lawler to Everyone:

If we did it right

15:15:44 From Julian Chehirian to Everyone:

@ Caleb - yes, that -

15:16:22 From Julian Chehirian to Everyone:

I love the challenge of designing an attention gymnasium that is somehow informed by the history of what those spaces have meant to do. Somehow walking the line between honing and transcending being a means to an ends (to goals, as Wayne Wu just mentioned)

15:16:26 From Sal Randolph to Everyone:

Attention trainers!

15:16:58 From Julian Chehirian to Everyone:

(Informed by that, and wielding an intention to not simply repeat those guiding intentions)

15:17:10 From Kristin Lawler to Everyone:

^^^

15:18:10 From Logan Dennison to Everyone:

How can we utilize NFTs as a platform for these attentional practices?

15:18:20 From Kristin Lawler to Everyone:

Like a craft

15:19:04 From Wayne Wu to Everyone:

Thanks everyone!

15:19:14 From margaret wertheim to Everyone:

This discussion has analogs with the issue of outsider art or folk art and how such practitioners were long overlooked (not attended to) by the mainstream art world. Yet now outsider/folk art exhibitions draw huge audiences and there's a whole parallel stream of art/culture reflection and study of these peoples.