

Review of Anelli Janssen's paper proposal
Philosophy & Cognition, Andreas van Cranenburgh,
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This paper proposes to give a treatment of cognitive dissonance in the light of phenomenology. This seems to me a very interesting thing to do. The expected conclusion is that they are compatible and can enrich each other.

Something which immediately struck me is the choice to use Merleau-Ponty and Dreyfus, both anti-representationalists, while cognitive dissonance seems to depend on representations — from the proposal: “dissonance arises when two psychological representations are conflicting.” This might be an obstacle in connecting Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology and cognitive dissonance straightforwardly.

Moreover, by speaking of “beliefs A and B” it seems to be suggested that A and B are propositions, which might exclude such things as emotions from playing a role. For example it seems reasonable that the charisma of a cult leader must somehow make up for people tolerating the bad things happening in cults. On top of that, conflict is probably a more subtle phenomenon than strict logical contradiction.

Phenomenology has given much attention to perception. Perhaps then it could be useful to draw an analogy between conflicting ideas in cognitive dissonance and illusions or hallucinations in perception.

To conclude, I think the topic is good and well connected to the course. Either the expected conclusion will be reached, or a diagnosis of obstacles can be formulated, which ensures that the paper has potential.

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