

Contributions To Phenomenology 97

Natalie Depraz · Anthony J. Steinbock
Editors

Surprise: An Emotion?

 Springer

Contributions To Phenomenology

In Cooperation with The Center
for Advanced Research in Phenomenology

Volume 97

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Surprise: An Emotion?

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ISSN 0923-9545

ISSN 2215-1915 (electronic)

Contributions To Phenomenology

ISBN 978-3-319-98656-2

ISBN 978-3-319-98657-9 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98657-9>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018960386

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The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Introduction

The contributions that are gathered in the present volume were first given as talks during a conference entitled “Surprise, an Emotion?” that took place at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, on September 25–27, 2013.

It was co-organized as a collaborative colloquium by N. Depraz and A. Steinbock and jointly sponsored by the Phenomenology Research Center at SIUC, the SIUC College of Liberal Arts on the one hand, and the ANR (Agence Nationale de la Recherche) EMCO (Emotion-Cognition)-Emphiline Research Program (2012–2015) entitled “Surprise at the core of the Spontaneity of Emotions: an Extended Cognition,” the Centre de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) and the Archives-Husserl de Paris at the Ecole Normale Supérieure (UMR Pays Germaniques) on the other. It was also generously sponsored by Springer Publishers to produce this edition. We want to give our heartfelt thanks to all of these institutions, without which such a conference and book edition would not have been possible.

Surprise is a theme that has not been dealt with directly and systematically in philosophy, in sciences, in linguistics or in spiritual traditions, even though many philosophers of different traditions, a number of experimental studies in the last decades, recent works in linguistics and ancestral wisdom testimonies mention it as a crucial experience of both rupture and openness in bodily and inner life. Thus, it is often described thanks to some closely related words, concepts and exclamations-interjections such as startle, astonishment, event, wonder, whoa! or ah!, but very rarely thematized at length and in its full meaning.

As a unique predecessor presenting a pioneering integrated psychological model of surprise taking into account its subjective component, let us just mention the Bielefeld School, which was particularly active during the 1990s in the twentieth century, namely, around the psychologist Rainer Reisenzein. Following up the 40th Conference of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Psychologie*, organized in 1996 in Munich, N. Frijda edited a volume entitled *Proceedings of the 9th Conference of the International Society for Research on Emotions* (Toronto, Canada, 1997). An initial inaugurative article was in this volume, one jointly published by R. Reisenzein,

W. U. Meyer and A. Schützwohl under the title, “Analyse von Reaktionen auf überraschende Ereignisse: Ein Paradigma für die Emotionsforschung.”¹

The ANR Research Project Emphiline “Surprise at the core of the spontaneity of emotions: an extended cognition” (2012–2015) conducted by Natalie Depraz takes up the issue of surprise anew and wishes to study it under the light of multidisciplinary approaches: philosophy, psychophysiology, psychiatry and linguistics. Some first collective volume editions begin to reveal the importance of the question, either at the interface of philosophy and linguistics,² at the crossroads of phenomenology and psycho-neuro-physiology³ or again in philosophy-phenomenology alone.⁴

As a transversal issue, it is our insight that surprise may be best broached and examined through an interdisciplinary lens; this alone allows for a genuine enriched descriptive understanding of a complex and multidimensional intentionality: the active-passive, i.e. receptive phenomenon of both surprising and being surprised.

The present volume is an attempt to offer some initial perspectives on the theme of surprise crossing philosophical, phenomenological, scientific and linguistic contributions. It has been made possible thanks to the long-standing friendship and shared phenomenological interest of both editors, each of whom has developed previous research and decided to share them: Anthony Steinbock is the director of the Phenomenology Research Center at SIU and has dedicated many years to the study of emotions (pride, shame, guilt, repentance, hope, despair, trusting, loving, humility). He recently published *Moral Emotions: Reclaiming the Evidence of the Heart*.⁵ Following his book, *Phenomenology and Mysticism: The Verticality of Religious Experience* (Indiana UP, 2007/2009), he draws on his theory of personhood and inter-personality and focuses on moral emotions, distinguishing in them three main modes of givenness: emotions of self-givenness, emotions of possibility and emotions of otherness, respectively. Natalie Depraz, as the director of the ANR Emco-Emphiline, chose as its leading theme the phenomenon of surprise; she explores it in a multidisciplinary way, jointly with a research seminar at the Husserl-Archives (ENS/CNRS) about emotions generally (2012–2015) and more specifically about

¹N. Frijda (ed.), *op. cit.*, R. Reisenzein, W.-U. Meyer, & A. Schützwohl, « Reactions to surprising events. A Paradigm for Emotion Research », in N. Frijda (ed.), 1997, *Proceedings of the 9th Conference of the International Society for Research on Emotions*, Toronto, Canada, 1997, pp. 292–296. Some other articles were published in the following years (see Depraz’ article in the present volume), but it seems to be that broader manuscripts remained then unpublished.

²N. Depraz and Cl. Serban eds., *La surprise dans les langues*, 2015, Paris, Hermann, and N. Depraz and A. Celle, *Surprise at the intersection of phenomenology and linguistics*, Amsterdam, J. Benjamins Press, 2018.

³Th. Desmidt, M. Lemoine, C. Belzung & N. Depraz, « The temporal dynamic of emotional emergence », *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, Emotion Special Issue*, 2014, Springer, Heidelberg; N. Depraz & Th. Desmidt, « Cardio-phénoménologie », in: *La naturalisation de la phénoménologie 20 après*, J.-L. Petit ed., Cahiers philosophiques de Strasbourg n°38, 2015.

⁴“La surprise”, *Alter* n°24, Revue de phénoménologie, Paris, 2016, N. Depraz and V. Houillon eds.

⁵A. J. Steinbock, *Moral Emotions : Reclaiming the Evidence of the Heart* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014).

aesthetic and traumatic emotions (2015–2016) and in the framework of a translation group at the Husserl-Archives co-organized with Maria Gyemant dedicated to Husserl's *Studien der Struktur des Bewußtseins* and, more particularly, focusing on *Gefühl*, *Wunsch* and *Begierde*.

Is Surprise an Emotion? Such is the leading question of the present volume. Two main theoretical frameworks are available here to help us let the specificity of surprise emerge. In psychology, surprise is commonly considered as a primary emotion; in philosophy, surprise is related to passions as opposed to reason. Are such entries into surprise satisfying or sufficient? To what extent is surprise also a cognitive phenomenon and primitively embedded in language, be it expressive or inserted in the very structure of language? How is surprise opened to personhood, the interpersonal and moral emotions?⁶

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⁶We would like to express our gratitude to Aaron Darrisaw for his unflagging and generous help in preparing this manuscript for publication.

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Part I
Surprise and the Heart

Surprise as Emotion: Between Startle and Humility



Anthony J. Steinbock

Abstract I consider the experience of surprise within the context of my current work on the emotions. To do this, I examine surprise in terms of its belief structure, distinguishing it from a startle (1). I then suggest that surprise is a being caught off-guard that is related to being attentively turned toward something (2). As the latter, I qualify surprise as an emotion in its being thrown back on an experience in a way that is different from affectively turning toward something (3). This constitutes surprise as a disequilibrium in distinction to a diremptive experience like we find in the moral emotions of shame or guilt (4). Finally, I distinguish surprise from a gift, which is peculiar to the experience of humility. I then suggest that surprise is an emotion while being neither an affect, like a startle-reflex, nor a moral emotion, like shame, guilt, or humility.

Keywords Surprise · Startle · Humility · Gift · Phenomenology

Although the experience of surprise is prevalent in everyday experiences and seems to be self-evident, it is a distinctive experience that is anything but clear. Indeed, while many philosophers and scientists of different traditions do mention it as a crucial experience, surprise as a theme has not been dealt with systematically in philosophy (or in the sciences). In contemporary literature in which the gift becomes a topic of discussion, the gift is commonly and simply assumed (somehow) to be coupled with surprise. In this chapter, I am interested in how surprise can be considered to be an emotion, its difference in relation to startle and humility. This, in turn, concerns how surprise is related to a gift, and the essential, crucial distinctions between them.

To do this, I want to ask: Does surprise have an affinity with perceptual and general epistemic functions and acts? What is its relation to the future? Does it have an epistemic import? Is surprise an affect? An emotion? What is surprise's relation to moral or interpersonal emotions? It would be too ambitious to respond in detail to all of these questions. But I do want to bring them into focus by determining surprise within the problem-field of feeling and then situate it in relation to the gift.

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More specifically still, I examine surprise in terms of its belief structure, clarifying it as a believing what I cannot believe, and ultimately distinguishing it from a startle (1). I then suggest that surprise is a being caught off-guard, which is related to being attentively turned toward something (2). As the latter, I qualify surprise as an emotion in its being thrown back on an experience (3). This constitutes surprise as a disequilibrium in distinction to a diremptive experience like we find in the moral emotions of shame or guilt (4). Finally—and contrary to a common interpretation—I distinguish a surprise, which presupposes an expectation, from a gift, which is peculiar to the experience of humility and which (while it has its own futural temporality) is that in which precisely nothing is expected. I then suggest that surprise is an emotion while being neither an affect, like a startle-reflex, nor a moral emotion, like shame, guilt, or humility.

1 The Belief Structure of Surprise

Surprise can be characterized by a peculiar relation to being. Allow me to describe this relation by examining its “belief structure,” especially where the future is concerned. I do this because it is commonly held that surprise is simply a rupture of what is expected.

1.1 *Expectation: Acceptance of What Is to Come*

Within the phenomenological tradition, we discern temporal modes of time-consciousness relating to the present, the past, and the future. Where the future is concerned, we can observe a “protention,” or an anonymous sketching out of the future that is based on a present occurrence and how that occurrence was retained as past. This takes place without any egoic activity or explicit attention to what is to come; it takes place through the “passive synthesis” of sense. An expectation is similar to a protention insofar as it is open to a futural occurrence arriving in the present, and it is also unfurled from the present and the past. Expectation is different from protention, however, insofar as expectation is an active comportment toward the future. In relation to this, we can see how an anticipation can be a more intensive attentiveness to the futural event.

For example, as I run to Times Square on New Year’s Eve, my steps protend an even pavement; I place one foot in front of another without even thinking of it. All of this happens as I expect the taxi to come to a stop so that I can cross the street; and this takes place as I anticipate with bated breath the ball to drop in Times Square. These are all distinctive orientations toward the future, even though they all may be lived simultaneously. In order now to discern how surprise is dependent upon this futural orientation in the latter’s various modes, let me describe the belief structure inherent in such a futural temporal mode of givenness.

For the sake of simplicity, let's stay with an expectation. Intrinsic to the act of expectation is the fact that the existence of something futural is posited. Expectation is carried out in the mode of belief as an unbroken, straightforward relation to something in the future. When I see the police car in my rearview mirror with its lights flashing (after I know that I have been going too fast), I expect the police car to pull up behind me and signal for me to pull over. When I expect this, I implicitly posit the existence of the officer, the police car, the lights, the forthcoming ticket, etc. That is, the being of the officer, and so forth, is accepted in terms of the sense or meaning it has as going to come to pass; I live in the mode of natural, straightforward acceptance. This is another way of saying that when I expect something, I expect it as actually going to happen, not as something possible, or as possibly going to happen.

When I see the police car I "posit" or accept it as actually behind me and as going to pull me over; when it speeds past me, going after the car in front of me, I accept with relief! its actual passing, its "going to pull over that car." Further, expectation in all of its forms is not a rupture of belief; it is another kind of belief as a mode of time-consciousness, a straightforward one oriented in the direction of future actuality. In expectation, I count on the futural event as it is foreshadowed in the present. Thus, expectation is a temporal belief-act that is oriented toward the future as a mode of time-consciousness; it arises as motivated on the basis of, is demanded by what has occurred in the present and is immediately retained as past.

Now, there are ways in which this straightforward futural acceptance can be modified or modalized. For example, something can be given as *possibly* going to occur, as *likely* to happen, as *probably* going to arrive, and so forth. For instance, I believe that the experiment to confirm the existence of the Higgs boson will probably work. Or, if there are too many counter-indicators—let's say that the equipment malfunctioned—I am *doubtful* it will work this time. The point here is that likelihood, possibility, probability, even doubt, are all kinds of belief postures or modes of belief. Aristotle seems to place the phenomenon of surprise here. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle connects *ekplektikon/ekplexeos*—which can be translated as "surprise" or being *struck* in "awe" or "astonishment"—with subjective discoveries through probable incidents.¹ *Thaumaston*, from *thaumazein* or wonder, on the other hand, is more open for the improbable; in fact, it is produced through improbable (or unexpected) incidents in relation to one another, which yields a great epistemic effect.² Wonder [*thaumaston*] for Aristotle, then, is a different phenomenon and cognitively "higher" than surprise [*ekplektikon/ekplexeos*]³—both related to the probable and improbable.

¹Aristotle, *Poetics*, ed., and trans., Stephen Halliwell (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 1454a 4; 1455a 17. Regarding wonder [*to thaumazein*] as the beginning of philosophy, see Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Books I-IX, trans., Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 982b 12–17.

²Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1452a 4–6; 1460a 12–14. See 1460a 26–27: "Things probable though impossible should be preferred to the possible but implausible." Impossibilities are justifiable if they make that portion of the work more astounding (1460b 23–29).

Initially we might want to say that surprise is the experience of the unexpected, and in this way it may well sever its relation to belief. Adam Smith, for example, distinguishes between three “sentiments” that can initiate philosophical inquiry: wonder, surprise, and admiration. Wonder is excited by the new and novel; admiration is provoked by the beautiful; surprise is motivated by the unexpected, which for him is tied to the sudden, but not the rare.³ Where Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology is concerned, Smith’s surprise would be a “disappointment,” whereas Smith’s wonder would be a “discordance.”⁴

1.2 *I Believe What I Can’t Believe*

Let’s return to the experience of surprise in relation to an expectation. How do we characterize its peculiar belief-structure? When we are surprised, it often feels like an “I can’t believe it,” an “I can’t believe what has just happened,” or an “I can’t believe what is happening.” This experience entails a being caught off guard. This is why we can even be surprised in relation to ourselves (i.e., I can also surprise myself): “I can’t believe what I just said” (say, I lost my temper, but I never lose my temper!). Or, “I can’t believe what I just said; I know I said it” (I accept it), “but it goes against what I expect of myself.”

The expressions given above that we find in our everyday experience are important clues to the experience of surprise. But if we were to remain simply with this aspect of the experience it would conceal the deeper process of the constitution of sense in surprise. By “belief,” I understand a basic “doxic” attitude, posture, or disposition that accepts the being of what arrives, has arrived, and what is to come in a straightforward manner. In this respect, “belief” does not have to be an active reflective commitment to or positing of being, but it can be a “pre-supposing” or “passive-positing” of being in a kind of pre-predicative “taking in” what takes place or what is.

With this understanding we can more accurately portray what is happening in surprise. Surprise can be characterized as a movement of an “I am now believing what I could not believe at first,” or again, “I am somehow accepting what I can’t (in other circumstances) accept,” or “I am living what I did not expect.” In short, we have an “I believe what I can’t believe,” “I accept what I can’t accept.” For example, I never expected a birthday party, but here it is! Or more tragically, I can’t believe she took her own life; she seemed so happy and successful, but she did commit suicide! In surprise, it is as if what happens comes out of nowhere, precisely because

³Adam Smith, *The Early Writings of Adam Smith*, ed., J. Ralph Lindgren (New York: Augustus M. Kelly, 1967), esp., 30–31, 33, 39. Wonder is an elaboration of surprise, concerning the singularity of the succession.

⁴See Edmund Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic*, trans., Anthony J. Steinbock (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001), esp. Part 2, Division 1.

it is otherwise than the expected flow or unfolding of what is to come. But in order for the event to be experienced *as* surprise, *I must still accept it*. Thus, in surprise there is an overall *reconstitution* or *reconfiguration* of sense where the event in question is concerned.

Accordingly, surprise, even on this descriptive level, is more complex and more “pre-reflective” in its doxic posture than, say, Donald Davidson or Daniel Dennett portray it.⁵ Davidson is too judicative, holding that surprise is the realization that the previous belief was false, in the sense that there is an objective reality independent of previously held beliefs.⁶ On the other hand, Dennett is partially correct when he writes that “Surprise is only possible when it upsets belief,” but he does not specify how surprise is also the acceptance of this so-called “upset.”⁷

If the “I can’t believe” were entirely decisive, and not encompassed with an “I now believe what I didn’t believe would happen,” then we would have something like a *shock* instead of surprise. Here, the event would not be reconstituted and reintegrated in its belief-attitude. In this case, we would experience an “I cannot accept what I cannot accept.” If there were not an acceptance of what I cannot otherwise accept—if the rupture of the straightforward relation to such a peculiar event were not accepted in some way—I would not live this experience as a surprise.⁸

Epistemically, we might want to classify surprise under the category of a disappointed perception, a disappointment that arises through a short-term or long-term rupture or discordance that is gradually reconstituted in sense. But due in part to its severity, intensity, and because in part it issues in an immediate reconstitution of sense, surprise is distinctive from a disappointment. Put in more Husserlian colorful terms, we could say that surprise is the experience of the “shattering” of the noema, the sense-content of my ongoing intentional acts. Such a shattering of the noema in surprise is exemplified in the film, *The Crying Game*: When Fergus (Stephen Rea) discovers that his new lover, Dil (Jaye Davidson) is a man, not a woman! What is demanded is a radical reconfiguration of sense, a new one supplanting the old (Husserl also writes of being “thrown from the saddle”). As is the case with any like reconfiguration of sense, the presence of the previous sense is retained, not erased, but as retroactively crossed-out in its very reconfiguration as it is held onto in the

⁵I would like to thank Natalie Depraz for bringing these works to my attention.

⁶Donald Davidson, *Rational animals*. *Dialectica* 36: 318–27 (1982). And Donald Davidson, *Problems of Rationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁷Daniel Dennett, “Surprise, Surprise,” Commentary on O’Regan and Noe, in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 24 (5), (2001), 982.

⁸I do not consider here the protraction of a shock or the relation of shock to trauma, how it can be repressed, etc. Nor am I considering the experience of grief as a possible subsequent response to surprise or shock.

Hegel never uses the term “Überraschung” in his *Phänomenologie*. However, for experiencing consciousness (not absolute Subject) every new structurally distinct encounter would throw this consciousness back on its experience such that it provides a motive for a step back or rather, discovery, and re-conceptualization. Perhaps “surprise” is a suitable term for the encounter of what seems incidental and alien to its own making (positing), rupturing its expectation, and being thrown back on experience, and then testing, experimenting, and eventually reconceptualizing it.

past in the retention or primary passive condition of remembering.⁹ For this reason, in surprise we find constituted an acceptance of what occurs against all expectation. This is one reason why surprise is something other than a mere disappointed or discordant perception, where certain aspects are modified only to yield a coherent sense of the whole.¹⁰

Thus, we can discern two moments of the surprise-experience in relation to its belief structure. On the one hand, there is a “being caught off guard,” a radical “otherwise” in relation to expectation and the unfolding of sense: an otherwise expressed in the “I can’t believe,” which is the noetic expression co-relative to the “shattering” or “explosion” of the noema or sense-content. On the other hand, there is precisely a belief, an acceptance of the very non-acceptance. In terms of the belief-structure, this rupture is more than a disappointment; nevertheless, this rupture is not decisive, since it is encompassed by a belief in what I otherwise could not believe at first.

1.3 *Startle and Surprise*

I would like to distinguish further between a startle and a surprise. In a still different example, we can imagine being in deep concentration while reading a book, then, suddenly someone who just came in let the screen door slam! I jump; I am startled. The startle is certainly a response to an unexpected givenness, a rupture, and it is sudden; but the startle in this instance takes place affectively *without any reconstitution of sense*. This has to do in part with the instantaneity of the startle. That is, if surprise is a believing what I cannot believe such that it entails a reconfiguration of sense, and shock is an I can’t believe what I can’t believe as a resistance to the reconstitution of sense for my meaningful world, then startle is neither of these. Accordingly, startle can be viewed in two registers, a static and a genetic one. A startle is characterized temporally with a suddenness, “now.” We have two possibilities as to its constitution. On the one hand, it is neither reconstituted nor integrated in a flow of experiences—even if it presupposes a futural protention, which is why we can be startled in the first place! But, on the other, if the startle is viewed over time in the flow of experiences, it can be said to be “integrated” in the flow, but now as a “mere” disruption or rupture (or discordance) in the otherwise concordant or harmonious flow of meaning. But this does *not* mean that its presence demands a reconfiguration of the sense in order to be a startle.

Here, startle takes place under the threshold of the surprise and the shock. It is not a matter of not believing what I can’t believe (shock), or believing what I can’t believe (surprise). A startle takes place on a purely passive level of experience, and this is why it is appropriate to speak in terms of a *startle-reflex*.

⁹ See Husserl, *Analyses*, esp. Part 2, §7.

¹⁰ See Husserl, *Analyses*, esp. Part 2, Division 1. There is no feeling necessarily in the latter, no existential import.

The question of suddenness has been a tricky issue in traditional descriptions of the surprise phenomenon. For example, in *The Passions of the Soul*, Descartes considers wonder [*admiration*] to be the first among the six passions. When we judge something to be new or very different from what we formerly knew or from what we supposed that it ought to be, it surprises us, and this causes us to wonder.¹¹ Hence, Descartes can write that “wonder is a sudden surprise of the soul.”¹² It is wonder that makes the soul consider the objects with attention—objects that seem to it rare or extraordinary. Notice that it is surprise that is even more “primary” than wonder and is itself founding for wonder. Further, Descartes’ statement can be read in such a way that surprise is itself not essentially connected to the sudden. For Descartes, surprise arises from a judgment of something being new or quite different. So, while surprise for him is connected to novelty and founded in a judgment, it is ambiguously tied to suddenness. When surprise is sudden, it issues in wonder.¹³

For me this is a clue. While suddenness as a temporal experience can accompany surprise, suddenness need not accompany the rupture of experience in order to have an experience of surprise.¹⁴ From a phenomenological perspective, it is startle that is essentially tied to suddenness, not surprise. Let’s take another example, this time of the experience of a jack-in-the-box. I want to maintain that we are startled, not surprised, when we—especially when we were children—turn the crank of a jack-in-the-box: We know that “jack” is going to pop out, we turn and turn the crank, we wait and wait (we expect, without knowing precisely when), and then “pop!” out springs “jack.” In fact, if “jack” does not pop out (something goes wrong), we will become disappointed (and maybe surprised, but not startled). This is similar to buying a ticket to go on a haunted house ride: We know we will be scared (or startled!), but we are not surprised by what happens. In fact, we expect it. Again, we might instead be surprised (and certainly disappointed) if the so-billed haunted house were just an ordinary open house tour listed by a real estate agent as a ploy to get us to see the house. Similarly, when the police car in back of me turns on her lights, I fully expect her to pull me over, turn on her lights, etc., but when she turns on her siren, I am startled.

¹¹ René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, trans., Stephen Voss (Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1989), Art. 53. It is the first of six primitive passions: love, hate, desire, joy, sadness. See also, Sara Heinämaa, “Love and Admiration (Wonder): Fundaments of the Self-Other Relations,” in *Emotional Experiences: Ethical and Social Significance*, eds., John J. Drummond and Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl (London: Rowman & Littlefield Int., 2018), 155–74.

¹² See Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, Art. 70.

¹³ In order of foundation we would find: judgment, surprise, wonder, attention. Natalie Depraz concludes that wonder is *the emotional immediate after-effect* of surprise while attention is its cognitive after-effect. See Natalie Depraz, “[Surprise, Valence, Emotion: The Multivectorial Integrative Cardio-Phenomenology of Surprise](#),” this volume, chapter 2.

¹⁴ It is also interesting to observe that a startle has an immediate bodily resonance, usually expressed in a kind of “jump,” a violent twitch, or sudden reflex movement. While surprise is often expressed in raised eyebrows, a widening of eyes, or a stepping back, etc., I can still experience surprise without any such facial or bodily gestures.

Temporally speaking, therefore, we can say that while startle demands the temporal feature of suddenness, surprise does not. It is the suddenness of the jack-in-the-box that contributes to the startle, not the unexpected *per se*. By contrast, I can still be surprised without suddenness (contra Smith and possibly along with Descartes) or without the rareness or extraordinariness of the event (contra Descartes, but along with Smith). For example, it surprises me, and *continues* to surprise me that my friend acted in this way and that he continues to act the way he does, though there is nothing sudden about this. If fact, it may not be entirely unexpected. Discrepancy, contrast with, and interruption of the expected are not necessarily sudden. If my friend's actions no longer surprise me it is because they have been integrated into a familiar pattern of action.

In short, a surprise has to be understood as more than an experience of an unexpected givenness, though it entails that, and it must be more than a startle. Whereas a startle does not necessarily entail a reconstitution of sense, but can issue in an integration of sense; whereas it is sudden, and is a reflex (and can still remain passive in this respect), a surprise entails a reconstitution of sense, need not be sudden (it can have duration), and is minimally the initiation into egoic activity of some kind. In view of its epistemic import, surprise has been connected to discovery, wonder, and philosophical inquiry. But I think that there is more here. It also has *existential* import insofar as it allows us to go on when confronted with the blow of the unexpected. Rather than being stymied with the shock of the "I can't believe what I can't believe," surprise is the accommodation of us to the situation by being the acceptance of what I cannot accept. But this is not merely an epistemic posture; it does it through the sphere of *feeling*, which has its own style of cognition and evidence.

2 Being Caught Off Guard and Attentive Turning Toward

In the previous section, I considered surprise as a believing what I cannot believe, having placed it in the context of an acceptance of what is to come, and I distinguished surprise from a shock and a startle. Let me now examine what takes place in being caught off guard, and in accepting what I can't accept in the experience of surprise. Determining this will have important implications for whether surprise is a purely passive experience (passive in Husserl's sense), or whether it takes place in transition to or within an active, egoic sphere.

We can recognize that just because a passive protention is interrupted, this interruption does not constitute a surprise. I noted earlier that a protention is a passive, pre-egoic sketching out of the future that is based on a present occurrence and how that occurrence was retained as past. For example, as I take notes while reading a book, my bodily comportment is directed implicitly to what follows—from sitting on the chair, to the movement of my hands and eyes as I continue to read, (all of which may be fulfilled or disappointed by the oncoming events). Now, I go to take