

consciousness can only be temporally self-given when it relates to something foreign (Hua 14/14, 379). But, of course, that point was already made in Husserl's theory of intentionality:

The I is not thinkable without a non-I that it is intentionally related to (Hua 14/245. Cf. 13/170, 14/51, 13/92.).

If, however, the self-givenness of the subject goes hand in hand with an encounter with alterity, subjectivity cannot be defined as pure self-presence. Once again, the claim that Husserl should advocate a naive philosophy of presence has consequently been proven wrong.¹⁹

B. The Body

As I have mentioned several times, a pervasive feature of Husserl's analysis of perception is his reflection on the perspectival givenness of the perceptual (spatio-temporal) object. The object is never given in its totality, but always in a particular profile. A careful consideration of this apparently banal fact reveals several implications that are of direct relevance for an understanding of the importance attributed to the body by Husserl. These reflections can be traced all the way back to the lecture course *Ding und Raum* from 1907.

The Body and Perspectivity

Every perspectival appearance not only implies something that appears, it also implies someone that it appears for. In other words, an appearance is always an appearance of something for someone. Every perspectival appearance always has its *genitive* and *dative*.²⁰ When we realize that what appears spatially always appears at a certain distance and from a certain angle, the point should be obvious: There is no pure point of view and there is no view from nowhere, there is only an embodied point of view. Every perspectival appearance presupposes that the experiencing subject is itself given in space. Since the subject possesses a spatial location only because of its embodiment (Hua 3/116, 4/33, 13/239), Husserl can claim that spatial objects can only appear for and be constituted by *embodied subjects*.²¹ The body is characterized as being present in any perceptual experience as the zero point, as the indexical 'here' in relation to which

the object is oriented. It is the center around which and in relation to which (egocentric) space unfolds itself (Hua 11/298, 4/159, 9/392). Husserl consequently argues that the body is a condition of the possibility for the perception of and interaction with spatial objects (Hua 14/540), and that every worldly experience is mediated by and made possible by our embodiment (Hua 6/220, 4/56, 5/124).

These reflections concerning the body's function as a condition of the possibility for perceptual intentionality are radicalized the moment Husserl no longer analyzes the body simply in its function as a center of orientation, but also starts to examine bodily *mobility* and its contributions to the constitution of perceptual reality. As James Gibson points out, we see with 'mobile' eyes set in a head that can turn and is attached to a body that can move from place to place; a stationary point of view is only the limiting case of a mobile point of view.²² In a similar manner, Husserl calls attention to the role played by movement (the movements of the eye, the touch of the hand, the step of the body, and so on) for our experience of space and spatial objects (Hua 11/299), and, ultimately, he argues that perception presupposes a particular type of bodily self-sensitivity. Our experience of perceptual objects are accompanied by a co-functioning but unthematic experience of the position and movement of the body, termed *kinaesthetic experience*.²³ When I play the piano, the keys are given in conjunction with a sensation of finger-movement. When I watch a horse race, the running horse is given in conjunction with the sensation of eye movement. This kinaesthetic experience amounts to a form of bodily self-awareness and, according to Husserl, it should not be considered as a mere accompanying phenomena. On the contrary, it is absolutely indispensable when it comes to the constitution of perceptual objects (Hua 16/189, 11/14–15, 4/66, 16/159, 6/109).

Husserl's reflections on these issues were originally motivated by the following question: What is it that enables us to take several different appearances to be appearances of one and the same object? What is it that enables us to perceive one and the same object in a series of changing appearances? Needless to say, these appearances must have certain qualities in common. The appearance of the underside of a dining table and the appearance of the front of a haystack are too diverse to be taken as appearances of one and the same object. But even a qualitative matching is merely a necessary and not a sufficient condition. After all, the front of one piece of paper

and the back of another match excellently, but we nevertheless conceive of them as being appearances of two similar but different objects (Hua 16/155). A further necessary condition is that these appearances are experienced as belonging to the same continuum. Different appearances are only taken to present us with one and the same object if the appearances can be given in a continuous synthesis, that is, if there exists a sliding transition between them. According to Husserl, our awareness of such a continuity presupposes the contribution of kinaestheses.

Let me illustrate Husserl's line of thought with a concrete example. Whereas the actually given front of the wardrobe is correlated with a particular bodily position, the horizon of the cointended but momentarily absent profiles of the wardrobe (its backside, bottom, and so on) is correlated with my kinaesthetic horizon, that is, with my capacity for possible movement (Hua 11/15). The absent profiles are linked to an intentional if-then connection. If I move in this way, then this profile will become visually or tactually accessible (Hua 6/164). The absent backside of the wardrobe is only the backside of the same wardrobe I am currently perceiving because it can become present through a specific bodily movement.

All possible profiles of an object, as a spatial object, form a system that is coordinated to one kinaesthetic system, and to this kinaesthetic system as a whole, in such a way that 'if' some kinaesthesia or other runs its course, certain profiles corresponding to it must 'necessarily' also run their course (Hua 9/390).

It is against this background that Husserl can claim that every perception contains a double performance. On the one side, we have a series of kinaesthetic experiences and, on the other side, a motivated series of perceptual appearances that are functionally correlated to these experiences. Although the kinaesthetic experiences are not interpreted as belonging to the perceived object, and although they do not themselves constitute objects, they manifest bodily self-givenness and, thereby, a unity and framework that the perceptual appearances are correlated with (Hua 11/14), and which furnish them with a coherence allowing them to gain object-reference and become appearances *of* something (Hua 4/66, 16/159, 6/109). One might, consequently, say that perceptual intentionality presupposes a moving and therefore incarnated subject (Hua 16/176).²⁴ In short, the crucial point made by Husserl is not that we can perceive movement, but that our very perception presupposes movement.

The Body as Subject and the Body as Object

Once we realize that the body, qua subjective ‘organ of experience,’ plays a constitutive role in every type of perception (Hua 4/144, 11/13), one still needs to clarify the relation between subjectivity and embodiment, just as the relation between the functioning, subjective body (*Leib*), and the experienced, objective body (*Leibkörper*) needs to be analyzed. We immediately encounter the problem, however, that Husserl’s entire argumentation seems to be threatened by a vicious circularity. How can one claim that the body is a constitutive condition of the possibility for spatial objects when the body is itself a spatial object? Husserl repeatedly emphasizes, however, the importance of distinguishing between 1) the unthematic prereflective lived body-awareness that accompanies and conditions every spatial experience, and 2) the subsequent thematic experience *of* the body as an object. One needs to distinguish between the *functioning* body and the *thematized* body and clarify their relation of foundation. My original body awareness is not an experience of the body as a spatial object (Hua 13/240). On the contrary, we are here dealing with a self-objectivation—which just like any other perceptual experience—is dependent on and conditioned by an unthematic co-functioning body awareness:

Here it must also be noted that in all experience of things, the lived body is co-experienced as a functioning lived body (thus not as a mere thing), and that when it itself is experienced as a thing, it is experienced in a double way—i.e., precisely as an experienced thing and as a functioning lived body together in one (Hua 14/57. Cf. 15/326, 9/392.).

Husserl, consequently, argues that I originally do not experience my body as an object in objective space. The body is not given perspectively, and I am not given for myself as belonging in a spatial object. Originally I do not have any consciousness *of* my body as an object. I am not perceiving it, I am it. Originally my body is experienced as a unified field of activity and affectivity, as a volitional structure, a potentiality of mobility, an ‘I do’ and ‘I can’ (Hua 11/14, 1/128, 14/540, 9/391). When the body moves and acts, *I* am moving and acting (Hua 14/540). To put it differently, the constitution of the body as an object is not performed by a disincarnated subject. On the contrary, we are dealing with a self-objectivation of the functioning body. It is performed by a subject that already exists bodily.

How does this constitution of the body as a spatial object take place? According to Husserl, there is an intimate connection between the constitution of an objective, that is, intersubjective communal space, and the self-objectivation of the lived body. Objective space is exactly a space that is *constituted* as transcending egocentric space. Its coordinates are no longer taken to depend upon my indexical 'here,' but are independent of my orientation and movement. But it is exactly by objectifying the body, by viewing it as a mere object among objects, that its indexicality is surmounted or suspended, something that has already happened when we have an experience of walking *through* space. The constitution of objective space as a homogeneous system of coordinates consequently presupposes an objectivation of the functioning body, where the indexical reference to my absolute here is suspended. But once again, how does this objectivation take place?

As already mentioned, Husserl claims that the body is originally given as a unified volitional structure, as a potential of movement—as an 'I can' and 'I do.' Subsequently this system is split up and apprehended as belonging to different bodily parts, it is only subsequently that the sensing is *localized* and that we are confronted with the experiencing subsystems of the fingers, eyes, legs, and so forth (Hua 4/56, 155, 5/118).

If I touch a table, I am confronted with a series of appearances that are apprehended as belonging to the table. When my hand slides over the table, I perceive the hardness, smoothness, and extension of the table. It is also possible, however, to undertake a change of attention (a kind of reflection) so that, instead of being preoccupied with the properties of the table, I thematize the touching hand and am then aware of feelings of pressure and movement that are not apprehended as objective properties of the hand, but that are, nevertheless, localized in the hand and that manifest its function as an *experiencing* organ (Hua 4/146). One and the same sensation can, consequently, be interpreted in two radically different ways, that is both as an appearance of the experienced object and as a localized sensing in the correlated experiencing bodily part (to denote this duality Husserl makes use of the terms *Empfindung* and *Empfindnis*) (Hua 15/302, 13/273, 5/118–119). However, as Husserl is well aware, the touched object and the touching hand do not at all appear in the same manner. Whereas the properties of a material object are constituted adumbrationally, this is not the case for the localized sensations (Hua 4/149–150). As Husserl quite aptly remarks, 'Sensations of touch are not in the skin as if they were parts

of its organic tissue' (Hua 13/115). In fact, the *Empfindnis* is not at all a material property of the hand, but the very embodied subjectivity itself. Thus, rather than to say that one and the same sensation can be interpreted in two different ways, it might be better to say that the sensation contains two radically different dimensions to it, namely, a distinction between the *sensing* and the *sensed*, and that we can focus upon either.

In the course of the localization, that is, the interpretation of the sensations as belonging to specific bodily parts, the kinaesthetic sensations become associated with the visually perceived movement of the body, a movement that can be interpreted both as the expression of a willed intention and as simple movement in space (Hua 15/268, 13/283). As a tentative illustration of the difference between these two apprehensions of one and the same movement, one can compare the experience of a gesture as seen and as felt. While the visual experience in its objectivation of the hand presents space as something existing independently of the gesture—as something that the hand moves through—the kinaesthesia does not furnish us with an experience of space independent of the experience of the gesture. Space is experienced precisely as the hand's field of mobility.

When I realize that my hand feels something or moves itself, that my ankle is throbbing or that my back hurts, I am localizing the sensing in different parts of the body. In itself this process of localization does not yet confront us with the body as an object. When my hand touches the table and when I pay attention to the very touching, I am, after all, conscious of an *experiencing* organ and not of an *experienced* organ. However, this changes the moment the body objectifies itself, as will happen if I gaze at my foot or if one hand touches another.

Thus, Husserl is anxious to emphasize the peculiar two-sidedness of the body (Hua 9/197, 14/414, 462, 4/145). My body is given as an *interiority*, that is, as a volitional structure and a dimension of sensing (Hua 14/540, 9/391), as well as a visually and tactually appearing *exteriority*. But what is the relation between that which Husserl calls the '*Innen-*' and the '*Aussen-leiblichkeit*' (Hua 14/337)? In both cases I am confronted with my own body. But why is the visually and tactually appearing body at all experienced as the exteriority of *my* body? If we examine the case of the right hand touching the left hand, the touching hand feels the surface of the touched hand. But when the left hand is touched, it is not simply given as a mere object, since it feels the touch itself (Hua 4/145). (Had the touched

hand lacked this experience, it would have lacked bodily self-givenness and would no longer have been felt as *my* hand. Anybody who has tried to fall asleep with his arm as a pillow will know how strange it is to wake up with an insensible arm. When it is touched, it doesn't respond and could just as well be the arm of an Other.) The decisive difference between touching one's own body and everything else, be it inanimate objects or the body of Others, is, consequently, that it implies a *double-sensation*. Husserl also speaks of a *bodily reflection* taking place between the different parts of the body (Hua 1/128. Cf. 15/302.). What is crucial, however, is that the relation between the touching and the touched is reversible, since the touching is touched, and the touched is touching. It is this reversibility that demonstrates that the interiority and the exteriority are different manifestations of the same (Hua 14/75, 13/263, Ms. D 12 III 14). The phenomenon of double sensation consequently presents us with an ambiguous setting in which the hand alternates between two roles, that of touching and that of being touched. That is, the phenomenon of double sensation provides us with an experience of the dual nature of the body. It is the very same hand that can appear in two different fashions, as alternately touched and touching. Thus, in contrast to the self-manifestation of, say, an act of judging, my bodily self-givenness permits me to confront my own exteriority. For Husserl this experience is decisive for empathy (Hua 15/652), serving as the springboard for diverse alienating forms of self-apprehension. Thus, it is exactly the unique subject-object status of the body, the remarkable interplay between *ipseity* and *alterity* characterizing double-sensation, which permits me to recognize and experience other embodied subjects (Hua 8/62, 15/300, 14/457, 462, 9/197, 13/263). When my left hand touches my right, I am experiencing myself in a manner that anticipates both the way in which an Other would experience me and the way in which I would experience an Other. This might be what Husserl is referring to when he writes that the possibility of sociality presupposes a certain intersubjectivity of the body (Hua 4/297).

Although the body as touched or seen has a number of properties in common with objects in the world, such as extension, mass, softness, smoothness, and so on, it is still important to emphasize that, qua field of localization for kinaesthetic and tactile sensations, it is radically different from ordinary objects (Hua 4/151–152, 16/162). Although our exploration of the body entails an objectivation of it, it does not imply a complete sus-

pension of its subjectivity, exactly because the touched hand feels the touch. This does not imply that it is impossible to view one's own body as a mere object, but, according to Husserl, this self-understanding is not immediately accessible: It is only via another subject's perception of my body (which, in certain respects, is superior to my own [Hua 5/112], for instance when it comes to a visual presentation of my neck and eyes), and through an appropriation of this perspective that I can adopt a reifying and abstractive view on my own body (Hua 14/62–63), regarding it as an object among other objects, situated in and determined by a causal network.

Husserl occasionally speaks of the reciprocal co-dependency existing between the constitution of spatial objects, on the one hand, and the constitution of the body, on the other. The very exploration and constitution of objects implies a simultaneous self-exploration and self-constitution. This is not to say that the way we live our body is a form of object-intentionality, but merely that it is an embodied subjectivity characterized by intentionality that is self-given. The body is not first given for us and subsequently used to investigate the world. On the contrary, the world is given to us as bodily investigated, and the body is revealed to us in this exploration of the world (Hua 5/128, 15/287). To phrase it differently, we are aware of perceptual objects by being aware of our own body and how these two interact. That is, we cannot perceive physical objects without having an accompanying bodily self-awareness, be it thematic or unthematic (Hua 4/147). But the reverse ultimately holds true as well: The body only appears to itself when it relates to something else—or to itself as Other (Hua 13/386, 16/178, 15/300). As Husserl writes, 'We perceive the lived body but along with it also the things that are perceived "by means of" it' (Hua 5/10 [transl. modified]). This reciprocity between self-affection and hetero-affection is probably nowhere as obvious as in the tactual sphere—the hand cannot touch without being touched and brought to givenness itself. In other words, the touching and the touched are constituted in the same process (Hua 14/75, 15/297, 15/301), and, according to Husserl, this holds true for our sensibility in general.²⁵

If, however, the self-givenness of the touch is inseparable from the manifestation of the touched, if, more generally, self-affection is always penetrated by the affection of the world (Hua 10/100), it seems untenable to introduce a founding-founded relation between subjectivity and world, since they are inseparable and interdependent. As Husserl himself says,

every experience possesses both an egoic and a nonegoic dimension (Ms. C 10 2b). These two sides can be distinguished, but not separated:

The ego is not something for itself and that which is foreign to the ego, something severed from it, so that there is no room for the one to turn toward the other; rather, the ego is inseparable from what is foreign to it . . . (Ms. C 16 68a. Cf. Ms. C 10 2b.).²⁶

As Merleau-Ponty would put it (with Husserl's approval, I believe), subjectivity is essentially oriented and open toward that which it is not, be it worldly entities or the Other, and it is exactly in this openness that it reveals itself to itself. What is disclosed by the cogito is, consequently, not an enclosed immanence or a pure interior self-presence, but an openness toward alterity, a movement of exteriorization and perpetual self-transcendence. It is by being present to the world that we are present to ourselves, and it is by being given to ourselves that we can be conscious of the world.²⁷

So far I have only described the constellation subjectivity, body, world. Husserl, however, also claims that our body plays a crucial role when it comes to an understanding of intersubjectivity, just as intersubjectivity can have a significant impact on the constitutive function exerted by the body. I will, however, postpone this aspect until the next section.

Husserl argues that the constitution of an egocentric space presupposes a functioning body, and that the constitution of objective space presupposes a bodily self-objectivation (Hua 16/162). In short, the constituting subject is embodied, and since this bodily subject is always already interpreting itself as belonging to the world, it must once again be concluded that the thesis concerning a worldless subject is highly problematic. To put it differently, in his analysis of the body Husserl himself is providing arguments against his Cartesian position in *Ideen I*.

To forestall misunderstandings, let me just add that I am not arguing that Husserl would claim that every type of experience is a bodily experience. I am only claiming that he takes the lived body to be indispensable for sense experience and, therefore, of crucial (founding) significance for other types of experience. As Husserl writes in *Ideen II* and *III*:

Hence in this way a *human being's total consciousness is in a certain sense, by means of its hyletic substrate, bound to the lived body*, though, to be sure, the intentional lived experiences themselves are *no longer* directly and properly *localized*; they no longer form a stratum on the lived body. (Hua 4/153 [transl. modified]).

Of course, from the standpoint of pure consciousness sensations are the indispensable material foundation for all basic sorts of noeses . . . (Hua 5/11).

By now it should be clear that Husserl's analysis of the body is more than a mere regional-ontological investigation. On the contrary, we are faced with a transcendental philosophical investigation with extensive implications for the more fundamental understanding of the relation between subjectivity and world. Let me conclude my treatment of Husserl's phenomenology of the body by mentioning two further arguments in support of this interpretation.

1. In Part 1, I mentioned the role played by the sensations in Husserl's theory of intentionality. According to Husserl, the sensations were nonintentional, that is, they lacked reference to objects and only acquired this the moment they were subjected to an objectifying interpretation. This theory has often been criticized by later phenomenologists, who claimed that formless and meaningless sensations, far from being the result of a proper phenomenological analysis, merely reflect a theoretical prejudice that Husserl inherited from British empiricism.²⁸ Not only does it seem very difficult to locate these (supposedly) meaningless sensations in ordinary life, in which we are always already faced with meaningful experiences: that which we perceive is always already interpreted *as* something. Additionally, the attempt to interpret our sensation as a *per se* meaningless affection also makes it incomprehensible how the sensed could ever guide and limit our interpretation. If the sensations are taken to be meaningless, the mediation between sensuous experience and conceptual thinking becomes arbitrary.

To a certain extent this criticism is justified, but it does not tell the whole story. Husserl's concept of sensation is notoriously ambiguous, and it changed during the course of his philosophical development. When speaking of a sensation, one can refer to the very process of sensing, but also to that which is sensed. And, needless to say, it makes a difference whether one is speaking about an impressional episode in one's own sensibility or about the sensible presence of something transcendent.²⁹ To put it differently, Husserl's investigation of the body makes it clear that one should distinguish between two very different types of sensations. On the one hand, we have the kinaestheses that should be interpreted noetically. These constitute bodily self-awareness and do not intend objects. On the other hand, we have hyletic sensations, which Husserl occasionally describes as *Mermalsempfindungen* or *Aspekt Daten*. These sensations are neither formless nor senseless, but are always imbued with meaning and configured in correlation to the kinaesthetic field.³⁰ As sensed, the hyletic datum is not an immanent or

worldless content or quality, nor is it a medium between subjectivity and world. Rather, our sensing is already an openness toward the world, even if it is not yet a world of objects, and the hyletic datum is the primordial manifestation of this worldly being. Nevertheless, the differentiation between hyletic sensations and objects remain. It remains possible to distinguish between hearing an increasing loudness and hearing an approaching car, feeling a local pain and feeling the prick of the needle. The sensation itself is underdetermined, for it is only by apprehending and interpreting it as something that a full-fledged object is constituted.

2. When Husserl writes that the transcendental subject is embodied, it should be clear that we are dealing with a significant departure from the concept of transcendental subjectivity that Kant originally introduced. According to Kant, transcendental subjectivity is a transpersonal abstractly deduced principle of justification, whereas for Husserl it is a concrete and finite subject. Against this background it is quite understandable that Husserl's analysis of the body eventually led him to the problems concerning the *birth* and *death* of transcendental subjectivity.

Initially, Husserl considered it to be something of a category mistake to discuss the birth and death of the transcendental subject. Qua constitutive principle, qua being the source of temporality and the condition for every kind of presence and absence, transcendental subjectivity was simply not the kind of 'thing' that could arise and perish. Since the body does die, however, Husserl was forced to say that transcendental subjectivity can persist disembodied and that 'death' should therefore be regarded as a separation from the world, something analogous to a dreamless sleep (Hua 11/379–381, 13/399). It should be clear, however, that in this case we are talking about an impoverished subject (Hua 13/464–465), or, to be more exact, the notion of subjectivity that we thereby approach is an absolute limit-concept.³¹

In the beginning of the 1930s, Husserl seems gradually to have changed his mind, however, no longer regarding birth and death as something that pertains only to the empirical subject, for, as he writes, birth and death, as well as generativity (the change of generations), are all conditions of the possibility for the constitution of an objective and historical world (Hua 15/171–172). In my analysis of Husserl's notion of lifeworld, I will attempt to interpret this surprising claim, but already now it can be mentioned that Husserl conceived of our situatedness in a living *tradition* as having constitutive implications.

It would be an exaggeration to claim that Husserl managed to solve the very perplexing problem about the birth and death of subjectivity, but his sporadic reflections on these issues can nevertheless serve as an illustration of the constant development of his thinking. Ultimately, it must remain an open question whether we are dealing with an issue that can be treated by phenomenology at all, or whether, rather, we are faced with something that can only be addressed by speculative metaphysics.³²

C. Intersubjectivity

Husserl considered intersubjectivity to be a topic of immense importance, and, from a purely quantitative point of view, he devoted more pages to this issue than any of the later phenomenologists.³³ For a number of reasons, Husserl's analysis of intersubjectivity deserves a detailed treatment, not the least because it constitutes an important corrective to his 'system.' To be more precise: Only a consideration of his analysis of intersubjectivity permits a correct understanding of Husserl's transcendental-idealistic position. Although Husserl has often been regarded as a *methodological solipsist*,³⁴ he in fact undertook what Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas have later become known for: *An intersubjective transformation of transcendental philosophy*.

Solipsism

Husserl's phenomenology has very frequently been accused of being solipsistic in nature. By solipsism one normally understands a position that either claims that there only exists one single consciousness, namely one's own, or that argues that it is impossible to know whether there are in fact any other subjects besides oneself. But why this criticism? Because the very effectuation of the epoché and the transcendental reduction seem to restrict the field of research of phenomenology in advance to the phenomenologizing individual's own consciousness and phenomena. If the purpose of the intentional-constitutive analysis is to investigate the world's givenness for me, how should it then ever be capable of disclosing the world's givenness for another subject, not to speak of the self-givenness of this foreign subject? If one is meaningfully to speak of a foreign subject, of an Other, it is evident that we are dealing with something that cannot be reduced to its mere givenness for me. But if phenomenology calls for a return to that which is evidentially given to me, there appears to be a problem.