

15

NORMALITY AS EMBODIED SPACE

The body as transcendental condition for experience

Maren Wehrle

While embodiment is crucial for Husserl's theory of perception and his account of empathy, it is also the beating heart of his transcendental philosophy. For Husserl, there is neither a purely formal transcendental ego, nor pure forms of intuition. Transcendental subjectivity, as in every possible and thinkable consciousness, must necessarily be embodied to make spatially and temporally concordant experience possible and thereby guarantee an objective perception of the world and others. Consciousness is never merely for itself, but always about something other than itself; consciousness is intentional and must be open to the world. Although there are various modes of consciousness other than perception, all these modes (such as imagination, memory, judgment, and thought) are somehow linked to the primary mode of experiential access, namely, perception. In this sense, it would seem natural that the sensing and moving body, with its materiality and spatiality, functions as the entry point to our experiential access to this world, i.e., to the givenness of the "things themselves." But, as one might ask, why can something supposedly as contingent and factual as our bodily makeup have such a central and even transcendental status? This seems especially strange in light of the fact that Husserl's sharp critique of reductive naturalism is a central recurring theme in his writings – so, how can, and why does, the body play such a central role as well?

To understand the centrality of the body in Husserl's thought, we must begin by revisiting the meaning and method of transcendental philosophy. Indeed, the transcendental ego is for Husserl nothing separate from the concrete worldly person. The empirical and the transcendental ego are not two different realities, nor do they differ in their qualitative content; rather, the difference lies in the (reflective philosophical) attitude that we take up in regard to ourselves and whether we can judge some aspects of subjectivity to have a necessary status. The transcendental lies thus, not beyond, but *within* the empirical ego (Heinämaa, Hartimo, and Miettinen 2014, 8–9). It is a minimal or reduced version of the concrete worldly person in that it only comprises of functions and aspects that are judged as necessary conditions of possible experience. The transcendental attitude does not merely reduce subjectivity to its essential features. It also brings its constitutional force, i.e., its sense-making abilities, to light. As I will show, this paradox or "double-sidedness" of subjectivity (Mohanty 1997, 25), as being in (and to) the

world and as constituting it, is rooted in a human embodiment that is both simultaneously *Leib* and *Körper* (Wehrle 2019).

The transcendental status of the body can thereby be presented with a focus on Husserl's theory of perception and the constitution of space. Contrary to Kant, who thought that the apperceptive unity of the manifold sensations is the result of the active synthesis of understanding, Husserl argues that (passive) synthesis is inherent to the process of perception itself. Rather than unifying and conceptualizing raw impressions top-down, coherent perception takes place bottom-up as a temporal and horizontal process of coinciding: it is the immanent tone that coincides with retentions of past tones; the current profile that coincides and is concordant with previous ones; or, the former (empty) perceptual intention of the backside that later finds its validation in actual presentation. What coincides is the object of perception as the "same" in manifold profiles (Jansen 2015, 63). Rather than a legitimization of transcendental arguments (i.e., a deduction), in Husserl we find a dynamic and pre-predicative process of validation through intuitive self-grasping. For such a lateral unity of apperception (Jansen 2015, 49), the body with its kinesthetic abilities is necessary to bring about a coherent and concordant givenness of objects and the world.

In Husserl's theory of mind, we thus find a genuine philosophical way of addressing human embodiment, distinct from treating it from a merely physical, naturalistic, or psychological stance. A phenomenology of the body that describes how every experience of objects and space is related to the experiencing body also makes clear that our bodily constitution (through sensation and movement) and its capacities are crucial for any sense of individual or intersubjective normality (through concordant and optimal experience). The body is thus crucial for the experience of objectivity, shared meaning, and familiarity in relation to the external world as well as to ourselves.

In the following, I will discuss three dimensions of normality and objectivity as embodied space. With this I want to highlight the necessity of the body for both the constitution of normality and objectivity. I assume thereby that this necessity is expressed in the general and individual ways subjects embody, that is live, constitute, and inhabit space with and through their bodies. I will begin by introducing the double constitution of the body as both "*Leib*" and "*Körper*" that defines the primordial spatiality of embodiment. Subsequently, I will highlight the general necessity of a sensing and moving body for the constitution of space and a concordant and optimal disclosure of the world. In the third part of this chapter, I will describe embodiment in terms of concrete subjectivity so as to understand the relevance of the body for habitually inhabiting the world and for developing a concordant and stable identity. In all three parts, embodiment plays a crucial role for the construction of individual and intersubjective normality and thus of objectivity. Embodiment, as I will argue, can be understood first as a general transcendental condition of every possible experience and of objectivity, and second as a genetic condition of individual (and intersubjective) experience, i.e., as "*concrete a priori*" (Husserl 1960, 81; Jansen 2015, 70). Thus, embodiment governs the experience of individual subjects and corresponds to a *habitual style* of experience.

The original spatiality of embodiment: *Leib* and *Körper*

The most prominent treatment of the lived or, more precisely, living body¹ (*Leib*) and material body (*Körper*) can be found in Husserl's *Ideas II*, written as early as 1912. The body appears here as central for a philosophy of science. Detailed analyses of the constitution of specific ontological regions (i.e., nature, soul, body, spirit) facilitates Husserl's aim to provide clarification on how and why we need different means of access to different aspects or regions of

being, including ourselves. Husserl asserts that we are able to address the respective regions with different attitudes that are either naturalistic (i.e., with regard to nature and physical body) or personal (i.e., with regard to subjects and culture). These different attitudes, the naturalistic and the personal, are moreover characteristic of the division of the sciences into the natural sciences and the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*). The fact that we are able to take different attitudes towards the world, as expressed in the different orientations of various scientific approaches, has its source in the very structure and essence of human embodiment as constituted in a double way, namely, as *Leib* and *Körper*.

This two-sidedness is illustrated in Husserl's famous description of the so-called "double sensation" of the body: when touching my own hands, my hands both touch and are touched. In that instance, I can conceive one hand as an object and thereby perceive its physical or objective attributes like smoothness or roughness; at the same time, I can attend to the localized sensations of my other hand which is touching. This change of attention does not function merely by adding to the experience of the body as a physical thing (*Körper*); rather, in this very moment the body functions as a living body (*Leib*), a body that senses (Husserl 1989, 152). This does not mean however that our sensing remains an inner occurrence or a mere awareness of an expanding quality: "the sensing 'here', in one part of our body, is at the same time experienced in another part of the body as a sensed 'there'" (Heinämaa forthcoming). Our *own* body, in contrast to other bodies, is thus given to us from the interior as well as from the exterior depending on our attitude in that moment (Husserl 1989, 168, 299).

As Sara Heinämaa rightly points out, these alternative attitudes should not be mistaken for different perspectives. Perspectives disclose objects from a plurality of different locations, and this is not the case with our own body, from which we cannot step aside to take a "better look." Rather, our body and its current location in space determines our respective perspective on the world and other objects. Attitudes are more comprehensive manners by which one accesses the world; that is to say, "they give us the whole world" and, in this case, our body "in different manners" (Heinämaa forthcoming). It would thus also be imprecise to relate these two attitudes, in which we can address our body as either *Leib* (which senses) or *Körper* (which is extended), to a *first-person perspective* and *third-person perspective* respectively. Within this double sensation, one's body is experienced primarily as subjectively "living" and as a spatial and material object.² One could therefore argue that the possibility to develop a third-person perspective, as detached from "I" and "you," lies in the double constitution of embodiment which enables us in turn to address worldly things or organisms either as "causal-thingly" parts (i.e., the naturalistic attitude) or as "motivational-expressive" wholes (i.e., the personalistic attitude) (Heinämaa 2012, 230).³

Contrary to other worldly things, our body appears in the first-person perspective to be an "imperfectly constituted" object precisely because we cannot perceive it from different perspectives as we do other material objects (Husserl 1989, 167). Although the living body is not a full-fledged constituted object with simultaneous sides and aspects (because, for this, one would need the possible perspectives of other perceivers), it appears nonetheless to us as a spatial thing (Husserl 1973b, 6–9, 14, 57, 60–63, 77; Husserl 1973c, 127–128, 268; Husserl 1989, 167; Mattens 2006; Lotz 2007, 88–89). One must distinguish between two senses of objectivity here: namely, spatial givenness and intersubjective givenness. Only the latter can be called "objectivity" in the full sense, i.e., something that is experienceable as identical and valid for all (Husserl 1973a, 240, 116–117; Heinämaa forthcoming). As such, our body will never be experienced as a *mere* thing either. The very fact that I can experience myself as physical and spatial *Körper* presupposes that I live in and as this very body. Thus, Husserl explicitly depicts the living body as sensing thing, describing it in one word as *Leibkörper* (Husserl 1989, 121, 138, 144, 155).⁴ Although the sensing *Leib* as subject is taken as phenomenologically prior to

the sensed one (*Leib* hence comes first in *Leibkörper*), this very sensing is in turn only made possible because it is bound to an extended *Körper* – because it is embodied. Human embodiment, with its two “faces,” is thus the “point of conversion from spiritual to natural causality” (Husserl 1989, 299).

Nevertheless, by way of phenomenology, we can endeavor to distinguish between aspects that belong more to *Leib* than to the *Körper*, and vice versa. From *within*, the body appears as field of localized sensations, indeed, as the organ of the will and thereby as the seat of free movement. Moreover, bodies comprise of general and specific practical capabilities (*Vermögen*), such as skills and habits. This is why Husserl coins the expression of the living body as an “I can” (Husserl 1989, 178) that provides our practical horizon of freedom (Husserl 1973b, 456). The *Leib*, or better, the *Leibkörper* is furthermore our “zero-point of orientation” (Husserl 1989, 166). Here, the intertwining of *Leib* and *Körper* becomes more apparent. If the living body were merely a sensing system (and so, without extension or materiality), it could not provide us with perspective nor with orientation in the world. But, if it were merely a thing, it could neither provide us with a perspective because its position would be equally relative with regard to other things. As the zero-point of orientation, however, it is the reference point to which all other spatial objects are oriented: as either left or right, above or beneath, near or far, etc.

Alternatively, from *without*, the human body appears as the permanent, material, extended presence that is embedded in the causal relations of nature. Here as well, however, the description exceeds the merely physical dimension: we cannot indifferently observe causal effects on our bodies from a distance, but we also feel them from the inside as sensations, for instance, as pleasure, pain, etc. (Al Saji 2010). We experience our bodies as sensing, perceiving as well as moving subjects and simultaneously as visible, touchable, measurable, and localizable objects. This duality – the simultaneity of interior and exterior, subjective and objective aspects – is thereby not something we can dialectically overcome; it remains essential for embodiment and the constitution of full-fledged objectivity itself. Husserl’s theory of embodiment is therefore not primarily a move away from the Cartesian notion of *res extensa*, nor does it merely point to the difference between life and the material world. Rather, with the term *Leibkörper*, Husserl seeks to demonstrate how both ontological layers or regions and their respective attitudes are intertwined so as to ensure any kind of experience, i.e., a coherent and comprehensive perception of objects. Moreover, it allows us to credit other perceived physical bodies with a subjectivity (inner life, sensations, etc.), the very subjectivity, we experience first-hand. The double-sidedness of the body can thus be seen as a presupposition for concrete acts of empathy (see Zahavi 1997).

The body as transcendental condition for normal spatial perception

Prior to Husserl’s actual thematization of the body as a phenomenological topic, he already begins to broach its relevance in his analyses of the intuition of numbers and later that of external objects. In investigating the concept of numbers, Husserl is puzzled by the fact that although we have a concept of large numbers, we are unable to intuit them. And yet, every concept must be somehow founded in, or related to, intuitive experience. For this reason, he argues for a differentiation between that which is intuitively given in a proper sense and that which is merely indicated by intuition or, as he later terms it, that which is empty intended. This differentiation between the actually and the non-actually intuited becomes central to his philosophy of perception and to his theory of intentionality as a dynamic process of intention and fulfillment. Indeed, this differentiation points to an essential characteristic of every

perception, namely, that it is perspectival and thereby discloses the respective object only from one side at a time. Thus, perception always implies a horizon that is not yet determined, i.e., other aspects that are not yet actually (intuitively) given but are merely empty or co-intended (Husserl 1982, 52, 94; Husserl 2004, 26).

In this sense, perceptual experience is always partial, but this partiality is not experienced as such. In fact, quite the opposite: we tend to trust our perceptions and that they provide us – albeit, with some exceptions – with optimal access to, and orientation of, our surroundings. Although only the frontside of a house might appear, our intention is directed to the house as a whole. In turn, we tend to assume that what we perceive is a house, with all its sides attached, even though in actuality only the forefront appears to us. Perception, albeit partial and sometimes fragmented, is thereby normally experienced as holistic, coherent, concordant, familiar, or typical; we see or “know” our environment and hence easily orient and act within it. To clarify this sense of trust and faith in our “natural” (i.e., usual) attitude is the starting point of Husserl’s analyses of perception and space.

That we can indeed perceive the house instead of merely fragments of it is due to the fact that what is merely “empty intended” (and thus not yet actually seen) can still be transformed into a proper givenness provided further perception by, for instance, walking around the house. The former co-intended backside is now actually intuited or “given in flesh,” (*leibhaft da*) as Husserl often puts it. Perception can therefore not be a snapshot or static picture of what is out there, like a representation. It must instead be a temporal process of getting to see (and hence know) the thing itself.

The very fact that an external object cannot be given in its totality is for Husserl evidence of its *transcendence*, that is, of its being as objective external object. Here and now, a variation of current sensations and perspectives are synthesized and in turn integrated with past perceptions which then build the basis for anticipation of not yet perceived sides of objects (i.e., the *inner horizon*) or their surrounding spatial domains (i.e., the *outer horizon*) (Husserl 2001, 43). In object perception, a variation of sensations and perspectives are thus combined to one perception of an identical and permanent object over time, in this case, the house. If these different impressions and perspectives are experienced as my perception of this house, they must somehow belong to the same subjective process of perception that presents the one object in multiple and different ways.

It is at this point that the body enters the stage of phenomenological analyses of perception. Husserl therefore discovers the necessity of bodily orientation, movement, and sensation to solve the riddle of how a subjective consciousness can have objective external (and spatial) perception (see Mattens 2018).

The intimate link between embodiment, perception, and space

Husserl’s analysis of perception does not merely assume a body as the provider of sensual input. Instead, he shows that bodily sensations and perceptive appearances must be linked in a rule-like way in order to enable a coherent object perception, that is, a constant appearance of an object over time that appears as an object for and to me, the perceiver. In the lectures on *Thing and Space* (1907), he begins by analyzing how eye movements, the interplay of two eyes, the movements of one’s head and torso, as well as bodily locomotion are relevant for constituting a coherent experience of three-dimensional objects and space. Rather than beginning with an already assumed objective space, whereby we measure the distance among objects with a fixed position, Husserl endeavors to discover how the concept of such an objective space comes about via the subjective experience of space.

Following the application of the transcendental reduction, wherein prior claims or assumptions about reality and hence any proper meaning of an external, physical object, or space are bracketed, Husserl begins with his constitutional analysis. This means that he starts with a noematic clue (*Leitfaden*), in this case a present three-dimensional perceptual object, and asks what had to be in place in order to make this experience of a coherent three-dimensional object possible in the first place. Husserl therefore does not take inner sensations as his starting point despite being that which is most subjective (and thus, phenomenologically, most directly accessible). In a classical model, sensations as inner states are merely qualitative and thus cannot represent any spatial information or information about expansion. How then, as the problem goes, can these sensations represent spatiality? How do external spatial criteria enter a non-spatial inner consciousness? Husserl undermines this dualism by arguing that within the interplay of object-sensation and movement, a pre-empirical spatiality is generated. To do so, he differentiates between two kinds of sensations that are functionally different: one presents aspects of external objects (perceptual sensations) while the other, called *kinesthetic sensations*, refers to the perceiver in terms of their lived experience of self-moving. Every visual sensation has a necessary link to kinesthetic sensations, i.e., to the implicit awareness of one's (possible) movements. Kinesthetic sensations thus run in parallel to the modifications in visual perception (different profiles) of the perceived object.

Husserl exemplifies this with the example of color sensation. Following Carl Stumpf, who stressed that one cannot imagine a color independently from an extended field in which the color appears, Husserl provides phenomenological evidence of this in order to show how color sensation is intrinsically related to spatial expansion dependent on eye movement: color thereby presents not a static quality, but a visually lived sense-field, i.e., an *oculomotor* field of color-expanses. A color sensation necessarily covers or fulfills, as Husserl formulates it, a “pre-empirical expanse.” “The red-moment, with such and such a brilliance and saturation, is what it is only as the fullness of a certain extension; the red-moment expands” (Husserl 1997, 66–72, 135). When I turn my gaze, the pre-empirical color-expanses in the visual field will be modified respectively. Due to such perceptions and experience (in one's experiential past), one is now able to (implicitly) anticipate specific patterns of modification when one initiates certain movements. In this sense, Husserl can argue that *kinesthetic sequences motivate* apparent changes in the visual field (Husserl 1997, 158; Mattens 2018, 5).

So even a simple sensation of color must be necessarily linked to possible bodily movements and to a certain kind of operative (and so, *not* thematic) awareness by the bodily perceiver. Color sensations are not by themselves spatial, but they are experienced as spatial through and in combination with self-movement. The interplay between the experience of colors and the experience of our bodily movements generates the appearance of objective extension (Mattens 2018, 6). The various impressions become manifestations of something (i.e., a permanent object) for someone because these appearances are *motivated and directly linked to someone's perceptual activities*. Although the object unfolds in different profiles, it presents the “same something” throughout the course of perception. This is because the different impressions form a continuous and connected series that are part of an overall concordant experience of a bodily subject. This does not mean, however, that I have to be explicitly aware of kinesthetic sensations or that I must decide to carry out specific movements in order to ascertain the respective sensations. Rather, some kind of agency must be presupposed here; that is to say, kinesthetic sequences must be initiated at will by a bodily subject and cannot be something that merely happens to me, otherwise they would lose their motivating function. As Mattens rightly puts it, what is crucial, “is not that I feel myself moving, but the implicit awareness of me doing it” (Mattens 2018, 8). Such an intimate linkage between

my bodily perceptual activities and the visual appearances is necessary for coherent perception and an apperceptive unity. Only when bodily sensations and motivations “match” respective incoming impressions can we speak of a stable and concordant, i.e., of a “normal” experience.

The body as the condition for normal experience and objectivity

Like Kant, Husserl is concerned with the problem of the unity of experience which is necessary to provide us with a stable and continuous access to objects and world despite its manifold and changing perceptions. Although such a unity must be achieved with the help of the perceiving consciousness or bodily subject, we in no way construct this world out of undefined impressions. Instead of constructing it, we discover the necessity of this external world bit by bit through ongoing temporal and horizontal perception. Thus, the unity of objects and the world emerges parallel to the “autopoietic unity of the lived body” and its perceptual activities (Jansen 2015, 68).

For Husserl, in order to guarantee the experience of a stable and coherent world, all consciousness, and primarily perception must be characterized by normality and therefore consist of an ordered, coherent, continuous, familiar, and optimal content and quality. Fragmentations, chaos, interruptions, hallucinations, or break downs of perception are experienced as exceptions to this rule. Indeed, they can only be experienced as such because there is always already an underlying basis of normal experience (however minimal this might be) from which they can deviate. The presupposition for objectivity in a proper intersubjective sense is that human subjects share the same bodily constitution, at least in general, and thus disclose the world in a similar normal (i.e., rule governed) way (see Husserl 1973b, 67–70, 120–124, 133–136; 1973c, 152–156, 227–236; 2008, 638, 648–649, 662). Generally speaking, every concrete perceptual access that I have to an object could be potentially experienced by any other bodily (human) subject if they were able to realize my spatial position and perspective.

Normal perception must in this sense be concordant; that is, it must guarantee coherence between experiences whether this be between past or current ones of the same individual or between the experiences of different subjects. Normal perception must also guarantee optimality with respect to the experienced objectivity, thereby providing the most clear and rich sense of experience. Both aspects of phenomenological normality are required for the constitution of perceptual meaning. Abnormality, in turn, translates into a lack of or disruption to (former) sense or coherence. While concordance relates to a mutual coherence between past and current experiences, optimality highlights the correlation between the perceiving subject (i.e., the clarity of appearances, actions, interests) and the intended object or the experienced environment (Steinbock 1995; Wehrle 2010, 2015a; Taipale 2012, 2014; Heinämaa 2013; Heinämaa and Taipale 2018).

Normal perception that enables the constitution of a stable, comprehensive, and shared world (i.e., the spatial objective environment) can thus be said to be dependent on the body in two ways. First, it is bound up with the implicit experience of a “lawlike dependence of one’s sensations on one’s movements” (Mattens 2018, 5). This lawlike connection is made explicit in the negation of its existence, that is, when this correlation or concordance of experience is interrupted and thereby when sensations and perceptions deviate from what we anticipate. We in turn experience a certain irritation with or alienation from the environment and ourselves.⁵ Second, perception is bound to the body in a less fundamental but more obvious way: every perception of objects is partial or perspectival; that is to say, each one has a horizontal structure and thus allows for further presentations, requiring the locomotion of the body. Indeed, the

side of the house that is facing me (the frontside) continues to appear within a horizon of other profiles beyond that which is currently given (e.g., the backside).

Central to Husserl's dynamic theory of perception is the point that we do not simply see permanent and identifiable objects, rather that we *can* see them. This means that we can fulfill or enrich our first intuitions or empty intentions by exploring our surroundings and its objects. This actualizing or realizing of the horizons of every perceptual object is what *makes us see* them in a concordant and coherent way, rendering our surroundings familiar and typical and therefore a place that we (can) inhabit. Perception and experience are in this sense necessarily bodily endeavors.⁶

Embodiment as a genetic condition for inhabiting the world

Already in his early lectures on perception and attention, Husserl emphasized that perception is not merely an epistemic process of intention and fulfillment, but also an expression of tension and resolution of the perceiving subject. In an 1898 manuscript on attention as interest, Husserl introduces the notion of interest as an essential part of intentionality (Husserl 2004, 159–189). In every perception, a concrete interest has to be involved, an interest that is either directly motivated by or refers at least indirectly to intended objects. Husserl adopts Carl Stumpf's notion of interest, which the latter defines as a motivational force, a pleasure in the act of noticing [*Lust am Bemerken*]. Contrary to Stumpf, however, Husserl defines it, not as a theoretical category, but primarily as a perceptive and hence as a practical tendency (Husserl 2004, 103). Perception is thus never a neutral intake of impressions or apprehension of things but structured by concrete “motives for preferences” (Husserl 2004, 108).

In his later genetic works, Husserl again takes up the notion of interest. In *Experience and Judgment* (Husserl 1973d, 81), interest is defined as a general perceptual drive or tendency. Already in sensation and receptivity, passive processes of differentiation, such as association and preferring, take place so as to structure the experiential field. Such a general interest in perceptually exploring the world expresses itself in specific preferences for concrete bodily subjects: more specifically, it either implicitly or explicitly discloses or makes manifest what is relevant for an individual subject at a given time. The involved interest operates as a concrete motivational necessity for object constitution, i.e., for full-blown object perception.

Husserl's supplementing of intentionality with an emotional aspect (i.e., desire and interest) indicates that successful object perception is contingent on the capacity of attention and noticing of a subject. It thereby requires a subjective motivation, something like an emotional motor of perception (Husserl 2004, 110, 118; Wehrle 2015b). If we take perception in its concrete bodily realization, then in addition to a clear and adequate perception of an object other criteria become relevant such as intensity, practical relevance, and personal interests (Melle 2012, 58). These tendencies show on all genetic levels, beginning with the temporal and associative structuring of the perceptual field in passive synthesis, to their expression in the striving towards a kinesthetic realization (Husserl 1973d, 84) and up to a genuine theoretical interest in an already given object.

For Husserl, interest represents the actual and practical expression of the “tendency of the ego in experience,” which motivates further perceptions and “doings” (Husserl 1973d, 81–85), such as the kinesthetic realizations of the noematic horizons of the perceived objects (Husserl 1973d, 84). Genetically, specific interests must first be awakened by affection and then translate into practical possibilities which enable and motivate concrete subjects to explore the respective object or its surroundings from various angles. At higher stages of intentionality like thinking, such a perceptive or practical tendency takes on the form of an explicit will or of interest in

knowledge. Therefore, every form of intentionality must be concretely motivated by the (emotional, bodily and personal) involvement of subjects with their lifeworld.

If we include these genetic aspects into a phenomenological account of experience, we see that the horizontal (including, temporal and spatial) character of external perception not only calls for embodiment in general, but also for an individual bodily (or personal) involvement that motivates and determines the course of the realization of these perceptual horizons (see Bernet 2004, 8; Hugo 2017, 15). As such, within perception, we do not only have to differentiate between actually seen profiles and co-presented profiles, but also between foreground and background along with changing degrees of attention and intensity.

These motivational aspects and the accompanying intensity concretely turn possible objects of perception into my (desired and willed) objects. The motivations and interests are in turn neither arbitrary nor singular, but rooted in and developed through prior experiences, individual abilities as well as through acquired habits and skills. Due to this, a prior and mostly implicit history of embodied experiences establishes the continuity, concordance, and meaningfulness of the perceptual world and of the perceiving subject. Most of the worldly objects we encounter and their surroundings therefore appear familiar to us; even not yet seen profiles are easily and immediately anticipated. In this regard, the body already knows its way around insofar as it can easily orientate and find its path and the possible ways of moving in a situation.

Here we can identify a *bodily form of habituality*, including the bodily acquisition and performance of capacities and skills. Habit on this level represents the concrete individual *I-can* in reference to the abilities of a subject that define its possible actions within a current situation. By including intersubjective and cultural aspects in his notion of embodiment, Husserl neither reduces the notion of the “I-can” to mere physical aspects, nor does he define the spiritual [*geistige*] ego as a bodiless mind. Instead, in defining the “ego as subject of faculties,” Husserl is presupposing human embodiment as a foundational basis for the development of these faculties in a “normal typical style following the stages of infancy, youth, maturity, and old age” (Husserl 1989, 266–267). Such faculties are therefore not empty but positive (i.e., concrete and practical) possibilities of subjects. This is why Husserl makes a distinction between that which is possible for conscious and embodied subjectivities in general and that which is concretely do-able for a particular subject.

Concrete embodiment incorporates past experiences, acquired practical meanings, and possible ways of acting, thereby establishing a concordant and optimal way of interacting with one’s environment. Through repeated experience, embodiment also leads to the self-continuity of the experiencing subject: it turns merely perceivable objects and space into my objects and my inhabited lifeworld, while I as bodily subject in turn develop my own recognizable ways of living and inhabiting.

The actions of concrete subjects are thus always in accordance with their general or particular abilities. In turn, the subject “constantly transforms them, enriches, strengthens, or weakens them by means of its own action” (Husserl 1989, 267). In such a temporal and personal “unity of the system of the ‘I can’,” (newly) acquired faculties are integrated with primal faculties (i.e., faculties that do not have to be acquired and are possessed by all human subjects alike). The constitutive genesis of the identity of the person begins as such with drives and primal faculties. It continues through the acquirement of bodily faculties and habits, reaching a culmination in the convictions and attitudes of the autonomous acting ego (Husserl 1960, 66; Jacobs 2010). This ego can thereby reflect on, but also resist and adjust instincts or unthematic bodily habits. Every personal identity implies bodily self-continuity over time, implying a remaining and recognizable bodily “style” of perception and action. This bodily-habitual profile motivates

and structures perception in typical and implicit ways, enabling in turn an experience that is concordant with past experiences and optimal with regard to current activities.

From such a genetic perspective, it becomes clear that the transcendental subject cannot be left unaffected by its own constitutional activities: it needs a past as well as a means to practice sedimented meanings and habits so as to apprehend the world “normally,” meaning in a concordant and optimal manner such that experience of the world appears “objective” and therefore transcendent and stable. We do not merely develop types (like, “tree”) in ongoing processes of perception (of particular trees). It is within these processes that we develop and remain ourselves a recognizable “type” – like a bodily style of gesturing or walking, a pre-personal identity that can be recognized and even anticipated by others.

Just as we learn that “things in experience generally change in a familiar way” and anticipate them accordingly in the future, we can apprehend people according to the “general rule” of their kind (Husserl 1989, 284). If we know a person from repeated interactions, we can very likely begin to anticipate how this person might behave in certain situations and provided the circumstances. That the general conduct of other subjectivities can make sense to me is due to the basic embodiment that we share. I anticipate their behavior “according to my habitual modes of behavior and motivations” (Husserl 1989, 285). This does not mean, however, that we can access the intrinsic motivations of other subjects as we have not lived through their actual experiences. Rather, for empathy proper, we have to try to reconstruct the course of their life in terms of their “unity of I can or I cannot” and make it intuitable to us. Husserl invites us to place ourselves in the other’s situation, “his level of education, his development as a youth, etc.” so as to empathize with their thinking. Feelings or actions are, in this sense, not enough; we must instead try to *follow* the other in their motivations, rendering these in turn my quasi-motives (Husserl 1989, 286). Concrete bodily or habitual identity makes this possible in that it generates a remaining style, kind, or type of interacting and reacting that expresses how one inhabits the world.

If everyone inhabits the world in a different way, however, and if everyone has their own private sense of normality, how can we then secure an objectively shared world? Here, Husserl provides two means of response. First, he notes that every habitual style is developed in an already intersubjective world and community. Such style is thus both individual and social: it can neither be reduced to the respective social milieu, nor is it entirely individual. If identity were purely individual and thus purified of customs and social norms, we would be unable to recognize or understand it as such or even associate with it. If identity were merely a representation of the respective discourse or social field, then all persons within such field would indeed be identical. Second, although concrete individual subjects have differences in regard to their abilities, habits, interests, and styles, in order to guarantee a normal experience in a strong sense of the term, the respective experiences have to be in concordance with other subjects. Differing conditions, abilities, and interests can lead to different experiences that can be nonetheless “normal” for the respective individuals (that is, concordant in relation to and optimal with regard to their goals). Yet in order to establish a proper and stable normality, all these various and individualized senses of normality have to be integrated in concordance with an intersubjectively shared normality.

What I can and cannot see (e.g., hidden profiles or specific colors), as well as what I can and cannot do, occurs within a context of intersubjectivity – in a world that is shared such that I can never inhabit it alone. For this reason, what I experience has to be constantly verified and complemented by others. In order to call my experience “normal” and hence my inhabited lifeworld a “world,” these experiences need to be generally and potentially accessible to every bodily perceiver who could take over my spatial position as if they were in fact here.⁷ This does

not mean that all profiles or aspects of an object are accessible to all perceivers: they don't have to be a practical experiential possibility for a concrete bodily perceiver, but they have to be accessible as a potential possibility for perception.

Conclusion: the transcendental and concrete necessity of the bodily I-can

In the first section of this chapter, I have shown how the fact that we are able to feel and experience ourselves as extended objects and as subjects enables us to constitute and thereby experience the receptive meaning of objectivity and space. In the second section, I endeavored to highlight how in Husserl's writings the Kantian apperceptive unity turns from a mere static representation into an active presentation, something more akin to a continuous practice (Jansen 2015, 70), which is directly linked to a bodily "I can." In a general sense, this means that corporeality, sensation as well as the possibilities of physical movement are considered necessary conditions for perception. As such, one can argue that the bodily makeup of organisms and more specifically of human organisms, although factually contingent, has a transcendental status. Our bodily makeup is thus the presupposition for the possibility of the experience of a concordant (temporally and spatially ordered) "world" (Ainbindner 2020). In the last section, I addressed the genetic role of the body in the Husserlian mind that concerns the concrete necessity of individual bodies to inhabit their world in a typical-habitual way in order to experience it as "normal" and so, as coherent, objective and optimal. Here, past experiences, acquired habits, including practical abilities, faculties, and possibilities of an individual bodily subject function as concrete conditions, motivations, and guidelines of experience. In this sense, we can speak of a *concrete a priori* in which every specific perception is linked to an individual "I can" or "I cannot."

As such, concrete embodiment engenders the practical possibilities and disabilities with regard to the environment or lifeworld – a fact, which is highly relevant for feminist, critical, and medical phenomenological analyses of situated dominated, inhibited, disabled, and diverse embodiment beyond classical transcendental philosophy (Young 1990; Ahmed 2006; Fanon 2008; De Beauvoir 2011; Murphy, Salamon, and Weiss 2019). Although, or precisely because, embodiment has a transcendental (necessary) status for every possible experience, concrete experience can never be neutral: it is situated and shaped by physical, material, political, historical, traditional, and generational forces, for better or for worse. But as bodily subjects, "We-can" potentially shape these concrete situations by embodying them, and thus change what (normal) embodiment is supposed to mean (Jansen and Wehrle 2018).

Notes

- 1 In the following, I will translate *Leib* as "living body" even though "lived body" tends to be used more frequently. I propose that "living body" instead points more accurately to the active first-person perspective of sensing that Husserl sought to emphasize.
- 2 Therefore, we experience our body as spatial, independently from possible second- or third-person experience, i.e., distinct from the gazes of others. This becomes especially clear in Husserl's analysis of the experience of other egos in the Fifth Cartesian Meditation (see Heinämaa forthcoming; Sartre 1993).
- 3 The personal attitude or mode of apprehension is phenomenologically primary, while the naturalistic apprehension is secondary or derivative. From a naturalistic stance, the body appears layered as both a physical and psychological stratum whereas from a personal stance we perceive the bodies of others as expressive wholes, that is, as a unity of nature and spirit (Husserl 1989, 153, 158–159, 214–216, 248–259).
- 4 Citation refers to the original German version of *Ideas II* as the English translation of *Leibkörper* as corporeal body misses the aforementioned point.

- 5 Such a disconnection or interruption of experience can lead to psychopathological disturbances. When past sensations and experiences are no longer coherently synthesized with current ones, one cannot anticipate upcoming sensations and experiences incoming stimuli as abrupt or sudden because they no longer align with the subject's experiences. This is the case for patients suffering from schizophrenia (see Bovet and Parnas 1993; Fuchs 2013).
- 6 For a more exhaustive thematic account of the concept of horizon see Geniusas 2012.
- 7 On Husserl's argumentation in *Cartesian Meditation*, see Heinämaa, Chapter 3 in this volume. On Husserl's argument against hallucination and illusion, see Doyon, Chapter 13 in this volume.

References

- Ahmed, Sara. 2006. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Ainbindner, Bernardo. 2020. "Questions of Genesis as Questions of Validity: Husserl's New Approach to an Old Kantian Problem." In *Husserl, Kant and Transcendental Philosophy*, edited by Iulian Apostolescu and Claudia Serban. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Al Saji, Alia. 2010. "Bodies and Sensings: On the Use of Husserlian Phenomenology for Feminist Theory." *Continental Philosophy Review* 43: 13–37.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. 2011. *The Second Sex*. Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. New York: Random House.
- Bernet, Rudolf. 2004. "Husserl's Transcendental Idealism Revisited." *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* 4: 1–20.
- Bovet, Paul and Josef Parnas. 1993. "Schizophrenic Delusions: A Phenomenological Approach." *Schizophrenia Bulletin* 19: 57–97.
- Fanon, Frantz. 2008. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Books.
- Fuchs, Thomas. 2013. "Temporality and Psychopathology." *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 12: 75–103.
- Geniusas, Saulius. 2012. *The Origins of the Horizon in Husserl's Phenomenology*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Heinämaa, Sara. 2012. "The Body." In *The Routledge Companion to Phenomenology*, edited by Sebastian Luft and Soren Overgaard, 222–233. New York: Routledge.
- . 2013. "Transcendental Intersubjectivity and Normality: Constitution by Mortals." In *The Phenomenology of Embodied Subjectivity*, edited by Dermot Moran and Rasmus T. Jensen, 83–103. Dordrecht: Springer.
- . Forthcoming. "On the Transcendental Undercurrents of Phenomenology: The Case of the Living Body." *Continental Philosophy Review*.
- Heinämaa, Sara, Mirja Hartimo, and Timo Miettinen. 2014. "Introduction." In *Phenomenology and the Transcendental*, edited by Sara Heinämaa, Mirja Hartimo, and Timo Miettinen, 1–19. New York: Routledge.
- Heinämaa, Sara and Joonas Taipale. 2018. "Normality." In *The Oxford Handbook of Phenomenological Psychopathology*, edited by Giovanni Stanghellini, Matthew Broome, Andrea Raballo, Anthony Vincent Fernandez, Paolo Fusar-Poli, and René Rosfort, 284–296. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198803157.013.30
- Hugo, Zachary John. 2017. "Horizon, Modality, and Reason: Another Look at Husserl and the Normativity of Perception." *Études phénoménologiques – Phenomenological Studies* 1: 65–93.
- Husserl, Edmund. 1960. *Cartesian Meditations*. Translated by Dorian Cairns. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- . 1973a. *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1905–1920). Erster Teil. Husserliana. Gesammelte Werke XIII*, edited by Iso Kern. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- . 1973b. *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1921–1928). Zweiter Teil. Husserliana. Gesammelte Werke XIV*, edited by Iso Kern. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- . 1973c. *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1929–1935). Dritter Teil. Husserliana. Gesammelte Werke XV*, edited by Iso Kern. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- . 1973d. *Experience and Judgment*. Translated by James Churchill and Karl Ameriks. London: Routledge.
- . 1982. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book*. Translated by Fred Kersten. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

- . 1989. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Second Book*. Translated by Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- . 1997. *Thing and Space. Lectures of 1907*. Translated by Richard Rojcewicz. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- . 2001. *Analyses Concerning Active and Passive Synthesis*. Translated by Anthony Steinbock. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- . 2004. *Wahrnehmung und Aufmerksamkeit. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1893–1912)*. Edited by Thomas Vongehr and Regula Giuliani. Dordrecht: Springer.
- . 2008. *Die Lebenswelt. Auslegungen der vorgegebenen Welt und ihrer Konstitution. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1916–1937)*. Edited by Rochus Sowa. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Jacobs, Hanne. 2010. “Towards a Phenomenological Account of Personal Identity.” In *Philosophy, Phenomenology, Sciences: Essays in Commemoration of Edmund Husserl*, edited by Carlo Ierna, Hanne Jacobs, and Filip Mattens, 333–361. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Jansen, Julia. 2015. “Transcendental Philosophy and the Problem of the Necessity in a Contingent World.” *Metodo. International Studies in Phenomenology and Philosophy* 1(1): 47–80.
- Jansen, Julia and Maren Wehrle. 2018. “The Normal Body: Female Bodies in Changing Contexts of Normalization and Optimization.” In *New Feminist Perspectives on Embodiment*, edited by Clara Fischer and Luna Dolezal, 37–55. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lotz, Christian. 2007. *From Affectivity to Subjectivity: Husserl’s Phenomenology Revisited*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mattens, Filip. 2006. “On the Introduction of the Concept of the Phantom in *Ideas II*: A Case-study in Husserl’s Theory of Constitution.” *New Yearbook of Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* 7: 83–107.
- . 2018. “From the Origin of Spatiality to a Variety of Spaces.” In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Phenomenology*, edited by Dan Zahavi, 559–578. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Melle, Ullrich. 2012. “Husserl’s deskriptive Erforschung der Gefühlserlebnisse.” In *Life, Subjectivity and Art. Essays in Honor of Rudolf Bernet*, edited by Roland Breuer and Ullrich Melle, 51–99. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Mohanty, Jitendra N. 1997. *Phenomenology: Between Essentialism and Transcendental Philosophy*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Murphy, A., Gayle Salamon, and Gail Weiss (Eds.). 2019. *50 Concepts for a Critical Phenomenology*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. 1993. *Being and Nothingness*. Translated by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Steinbock, Anthony. 1995. “Phenomenological Concepts of Normality and Abnormality.” *Man and World* 28 (3): 241–260.
- Taipale, Joonas. 2012. “Twofold Normality: Husserl and the Normative Relevance of Primordial Constitution.” *Husserl Studies* 28: 49–60.
- . 2014. *Phenomenology and Embodiment: Husserl and the Constitution of Subjectivity*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Wehrle, Maren. 2010. “Die Normativität der Erfahrung.” *Husserl Studies* 26: 167–187.
- . 2015a. “Normality and Normativity in Experience.” In *Normativity in Perception*, edited by Maxime Doyon and Thiemo Breyer, 128–139. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2015b. “‘Feelings as a Motor of Perception?’ The Essential Role of Interest for Intentionality.” *Husserl Studies* 31: 45–64.
- . 2019. “Being a Body and Having a Body. The Twofold Temporality of Embodied Intentionality.” *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*. DOI:10.1007/s11097-019-09610-z
- Young, Iris M. 1990. *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Zahavi, Dan. 1997. “Horizontal Intentionality and Transcendental Intersubjectivity.” *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 59 (2): 304–321.