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SOFT, SMOOTH HANDS: HUSSERL'S PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE LIVED-BODY

Donn Welton

One must, as far as possible, make science ocular.

M. A. Petit (1797)

Ein bloss augenhafte Subjekt könnte gar keinen erscheinenden Leib haben.

Husserl (1912–16)¹

We are often amused, sometimes saddened, by what posterity does with the works of a great philosopher. Many times the appropriations are faithful to the intentions of the original thinker, or at least we can recognize the architectonic of the original in the reconstructions of those who follow. In other cases they are nothing short of a total distortion. But often what we find are appropriations of *parts* of a philosopher's thought, often those parts that were not central to the thinker's own vision of philosophy. The mark of a great philosopher, we realize, is that in forging a new path he or she sets the surrounding world ablaze, and we come to see much that, while marginal to his or her concerns, nevertheless remained in darkness until sparks flew from his or her pen.

No doubt Husserl worked on the idea of the body² in several different texts. The first place seems to be his 1907 lectures entitled "Ding und Raum."³ After writing *Ideen I*, Husserl returns to the question in 1912 in his efforts to work out regional ontologies. What we now have as *Ideen II*, a text we will concentrate on in this study, contains his most fruitful insights on the body.⁴ Finally there are what is known as the D manuscripts, scattered texts that were composed after 1920 and as late as 1932.⁵ Given the central vision of Husserl's thought, however, all these texts are "margins" – margins as only Husserl could write them, running to several hundred pages.

Husserl is not, it must be said, a philosopher of the body but a philosopher of consciousness. Moreover, the long-range goal of his work is not to describe the sensuous texture of incarnate existence, but to establish the autonomy and efficacy of reason. Yet in his effort to ground reason, he discovers its horizontal character and its dependency on types of constitution that exceed, and thereby escape, its closure; his relentless pursuit of these types sheds so much light on what would have otherwise remained concealed. Thus while Husserl is not a philosopher of the body, his phenomenology of the body, that hidden source of not only the presence but also the meaning that the perceptual world has for consciousness, envisions what no other philosophy had previously seen.

Given this fact and given the tremendous importance of this concept for phenomenologists like Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Gurwitsch, and Erwin Strauss, it comes as no small surprise to realize that Husserl's concept of the body has received little direct analysis in English. While everywhere assumed and often appropriated, the extensive critical analysis necessary to assess its value has been lacking.⁶ This is all the more surprising since his most important text on the body, *Ideen II*, has been available for consultation in the Husserl Archives in Louvain for some 55 years and was used and noted extensively in Merleau-Ponty's groundbreaking *Phenomenology of Perception*, published in 1945.⁷ It was also one of the first of Husserl's texts published in his collected works, appearing some 45 years ago. This essay, and the one following by Elmar Holenstein, can thus be thought of as two attempts to remedy the situation.

At the same time, I do not think of this essay as primarily an historical study. Rather, I am after a rather nasty philosophical issue, at least for phenomenologists: how does one understand the relationship between a natural scientific description of the body and a phenomenological characterization of the body? Is there a point at which these descriptions, or these bodies, if it turns out that we have two, intersect? Are we left with an irreconcilable difference in grammars, or even a confrontation of kinds of beings that calls upon us to reject one and affirm the other? This statement of the issue is quite provisional, for part of the problem is to show how the issue is generated. I propose to do this in the first part of this essay by tracing Husserl's own effort to characterize the body from within what he calls the "natural attitude," by placing this characterization in relation to Descartes, and by asking how the presence of things indicates the presence of the body as lived-body. The second part will raise the question of access: what "phenomena" give us a point of entry into a description of the lived-body in its own terms, and how are we then to envision such a body? The third part, returning to our problem, will ask if there is a sense in which we can see the lived-body as a part of nature and if we can place it in relation to an "objective" description of the body. Finally, I will conclude by briefly returning to our starting point in the nature of things and deepening our first descriptions.

1 The Presence of Things

Things of nature, first of all, are things of and for perception. Nature, in turn, is a "sphere of mere things [*blosse Sachen*]."⁸ In describing their essential features, Husserl reaches for that very idea that first gave rise to modern science and sets the physical thing in contrast to another kind of object, an object that can be thought of only as outside the realm of nature:

Descartes designates extension as the essential attribute of material things – accordingly, it is also simply called corporeal – over against psychic or spiritual being, which, in its spirituality as such, has no extension and, indeed, essentially excludes it.⁹

When thought of as extended in time and space, material in composition, and governed by rigid laws of causality, things bow and finally assume a posture that allows us to become the true "lords and masters of nature" as Descartes put it.¹⁰ The essences of things become reduced to their mathematizable features, their measurable spatio-temporal extension, their geometric configurations; this means that they are reducible to quantity, for, as Descartes was the first to show, geometry can be reconstructed as algebra. At least Descartes was clear as to the implications of this approach: the body, as one of these things, is brought under the "rules in medicine."¹¹ It is taken in hand as a "corpse."¹²

But in what sense are such things actually seen in perception? Does a physical characterization describe the only legitimate, or the most basic, way in which things are present to us? When I look at a blooming rose or hear the plaint of an Indian funeral song, do I see electromagnetic waves 650 nanometers in length or listen to compression waves between 27 and 1,000 cycles per second? Do I not rather see a blooming rose and sometimes a velvet red, alive with passion? Do I not rather hear a funeral song, and perhaps a wail trembling with lost love?

Husserl is quite clear that the Cartesian analysis of nature takes things as though they were free of values and void of "practical predicates."¹³ This analysis must assume what does not exist, namely, a free-standing, constituting agent beneath the practical agent engaged with nature, "a pure, 'objectivating ego-subject' that does not carry out value judgments [*Wertungen*] of any kind."¹⁴ Instead of seeing it as the correlate of a "pure" mind or agent – assumed to be free of human values only so that its products, understood as they "really" are, might assume them – Husserl thinks of nature physically characterized as the correlate of a particular *interest* brought to it by the subject. The perceiver is "indifferent" towards the objects that appear; "it" has no interest in their value or in practically changing them. To put it positively, "this subject values the knowledge of appearing being."¹⁵ This is not a matter of bald construction

for we are still speaking of experience, even a form of vision. But this experience, which Husserl boldly calls "theoretical experience,"¹⁶ introduces its own value, the value of knowing something "as it is" and "how it is," and its own praxis, the experimental procedure.¹⁷

Let me pause to set up an idea to which we will return in the third part. If the physical body, projected by the canons of physical science, were a manifest given to which we could correlate an independent objectivating ego, or an independent level of constitution, then its presence would be not only concrete but also absolute, and its relation to other entities describable only in its own terms. But if not, if the body as probed by the gloved hand of science arises only in correlation with a specific interest, then we can open the question of how it is related to other entities given through other interests. But for now let me return to an inventory of the things of nature.

With the correlation between physical thing and interest established, we, in turning our attention to the range of such things, do find an object that is peculiar, an object that is indeed a thing and yet something more, an object that in the very style of its visibility suggests a certain invisibility. It is this surplus, this excess, that requires us to introduce a second order to nature:

The objects of nature in a second, broader sense are, when taken in their full concretion, animal realities. We may characterize them as ensouled bodies. Here we have founded realities, which in themselves presuppose material realities, the so-called material bodies as their founding stratum. These have, and this is what is new, besides their specifically material determinations, yet new systems of properties, psychic [properties]. . . . In experience the new properties in question are given as *belonging* to the body under consideration, and it is precisely because of them that it is called lived-body [*Leib*].¹⁸

Having discovered a unique set of objects among the objects of nature, Husserl first attempts to clarify them in terms of nature:

Insofar as men and animals *have* material bodies, they have spatiality and materiality. But according to what is specifically human and animal, i.e., according to what is psychic, [men and animals] *are* not material, and, accordingly, they, taken as *concrete wholes*, are *not material* realities in the proper sense.¹⁹

The lived body then is that concrete whole which is simultaneously material and not material. This characterization of the lived-body strains traditional categories and is quite unsatisfactory, for here the concept is but an amalgam of incompatible elements. Husserl does attempt to explain himself:

Material things are divisible parallel to the extension belonging to their essence. Men and animals are not divisible. Men and animals are *spatially localized*; even

what is psychic for them, at least by virtue of its essential foundation in what is bodily [*Leiblichen*], can be ordered in relation to what is spatial. We would even say that much of what is counted as psychic, unclear as that title is, has something like extension [*Ausbreitung*] (although it is not extension [*Verbreitung*] in space). But in principle *nothing* on this side is extended in the proper sense, in the specific sense of extension we have described.²⁰

This explanation is itself wrought with tension: the lived-body is a peculiar blend of what is not extended and what is spatially localized, what is not extended yet ordered into space. It has something like an extension that is not extension, or at least not an extension in space. How can what is in principle not extended ever achieve a connection with what is extended, let alone go on to gain a location in the extended by virtue of this connection? As Kant constantly reminds us, putting two worlds in the same book does not make them one. Is not the concept of lived-body nothing more than the admission of a failure, not only by Husserl but by a whole tradition?

It took the rest of *Ideen II* for Husserl to rethink this issue and, in effect, to displace his first set of contrasts by other, more basic ones. In fact, his analysis there may be the first clear example of what he comes to call depth-history in *The Crisis*,²¹ for what he does is not to discard the initial formulation but to show its origins, to discover those transformations or articulations of the basic structure making it possible. What is most suggestive about Husserl's account, then, is that it asks us, first of all, to carry out the analysis of materiality from within the natural attitude. He does not attribute such an analysis to philosophical prejudices and then leap, as if by magic, into a realm beyond. Rather, it is a further interrogation of the object as material that will provide the *Leitfaden*, the thread guiding us to a phenomenological analysis of the body from *within* the natural attitude.²² Let me show how an analysis of the materiality of things requires the introduction of the notion of the lived-body.

Remember that we began by suggesting that things of nature are things of and for perception. If one envisions perception as a simple passive process in which the things of nature are replicated in the mind as images or ideas, then the body functions, as in Descartes, only as a conduit or transmitter of such ideas and does not directly contribute to the configuration or the content of what is perceived. But, as the history of modern philosophy endlessly reminds us, this leaves us with a *phenomenal* object and the tedious alternatives of realism, which attempts to locate it in nature, and idealism or conceptualism, which argues that such objects are found only in the mind. In *Ideen II* Husserl undercuts these alternatives in a very suggestive way by asking what we would have to do with perception to create such a phenomenal object. If we take the thing, first of all, in isolation from other things and from the circumstances in which it is found, and if we fix it before our eye, then we would have something approaching

what is usually meant by a phenomenon. We would be presented with a spatial Gestalt filled out with various qualities. But if this is what we begin with, Husserl argues, then we will never be able to build up a real object out of such phenomena. There might even be "a synthetic unity of many strata of 'sensuous appearances' of different senses,"²³ but what would be missing is precisely the materiality of the thing, for this is not a phenomenal feature that can be found in any of the appearances so given. Thus we will never know if the experienced thing is real or a mere illusion,²⁴ real or conceptual. To discover this we must lift the methodological abstraction in play and reinsert the thing into its environment:

Reality in the proper sense, what we are calling here materiality, does not lie in the simple sensuous [i.e., the filled out Gestalt], not in what is at hand in the perceived. . . ; rather it lies in its relation [to circumstances] and the manner of apprehension corresponding to this relation.²⁵

Husserl, then, understands the material presence of things to be a *relational* presence. Without their web of conditional dependence on other things and other dimensions of the environment, things would be but "phantoms" floating at a distance somewhere between world and mind. But kept in this web, the thing takes on its flesh. Changes in lighting affect the radiant appearance of a blue sky, fluctuations in temperature the consistency of maple syrup, changes in ingredients the taste of a plate of spaghetti. All of this follows a formal rule: "Under the same circumstances we get the same results."²⁶

What Husserl realizes, as he presses the analysis, is that the lived-body is the third item making it all possible, that the lived-body is constitutive of the flesh of perceived things. Things have a relation to other things because they are perceptually situated, and they are perceptually situated because of the orientation they have to our perceiving and moving bodies. This orientation is constitutive of the thick space that things have. If the body were reducible to just another thing in space, it could not be the source of that space. Even if the body were a "fixed eye," it would give us a space lacking all depth, all thickness, all paths. Thus in order to account for the materiality of things, a new way of envisioning the body must come into play. The body that constitutes the space of perceived things, then, is not simply that center in terms of which all things are situated but also the lived-body of free movement, of approaching and distancing, of grasping and repelling, of resisting and penetrating. These movements of the body are experienced not like the movement of ever so many things, but from within. Husserl calls them kinaesthetic sensations. "The courses of kinaesthetic sensations are here free courses and this freedom in our consciousness of their transpiring is an essential part of the constitution of spatiality."²⁷

What this leaves us with, then, is the idea that the materiality of perceived things requires that they be situated spatially and the idea that the space of perceived things exists by virtue of the body as a center of motility and of action. It is the very materiality of experienced things that demands that the body be characterized not as physical body but as lived-body. In fact, this bond between the lived-body and perceived things is primary and underlies the later interpretation of them using the mathematical notion of extension.

If we return to our initial bewilderment about how the body could be both extended and non-extended, we have a first answer: the primary correlation between material things and bodily experiences undergoes an interpretation in which it is construed as a relationship between physical (extended) and psychological (non-extended):

This entire system of conditionality, binding sensible things and subjective events in lawful fashion, is the basis of a higher stratum of apperception built on it; it becomes [interpreted as] the psycho-physical conditionality between my lived-body and its causal intertwining in nature outside the lived-body, on the one hand, and subjective courses of sensations, aspects, etc., on the other.²⁸

Of course, this is only a first answer, for we do not yet have a clue as to how the lived-body is itself spatial, how it not only orients the things of perception but is also itself one of the things oriented. There are other problems as well: saying that the lived-body belongs to a second order of nature means that the scientific methods of description appropriate to the first order may not apply. How can we both secure the presence of the lived-body as lived-body and then introduce an analysis appropriate to it? What we have in this section is a clue that required the introduction of the lived-body but nothing more. We do not yet have a full description of the "evidence" Husserl would require. Securing this requires another approach.

2 The Presence of the Body

The analyses until now have this in common: they treat the body as a thematic object. The characteristics that Husserl attributes to it – kinaesthetic sensations, its role in constituting the spatiality, and thus materiality, of things, its function of bearing the soul – clearly go beyond traditional theories in that the correlation between body and world is understood as a whole with interdependent moments. Even for our initial analysis, the body is something more than a mechanism; as "ensouled" or, better, as living, its involvement with things runs much deeper than Descartes could imagine.²⁹ Yet the lived-body is still viewed

from the perspective of another person, the phenomenologist, and thus it is viewed as *phenomenon* in correlation to other phenomena.

This approach changes when we ask how the lived-body comes to know itself. A second moment in the dialectic of our analysis emerges, for now it is a question not of how we discover a *Körper* as *Leib*, as in the first moment, but of how we can know the *Leib* as *Leib*. Since this is not a categorical act but an aesthetic synthesis, the question becomes one of understanding how the lived-body senses, feels, has a "sensation" of itself or, better, lives itself. In this analysis the lived-body is not a "theme" as in the first moment, nor a referent of an act of understanding, nor is our experience of it gained through an act of reflection upon it (though our phenomenology of that experience is so gained). Rather it is now a question of how, in our awareness of things, we come to experience the lived-body as experiencing.

Let us focus on what our initial analysis described as the correlation between sensations of motility and sensations through which features of material things are given. What Husserl discovers is that the very process of touching is *reflexive*; in touching an object I become aware of the fact that I am being touched by it:

The hand lies on the table. I experience the table as solid, cold, smooth. Moving it over the table I experience it and its determinations as a thing. At the same time, however, I can always pay attention to the hand and find on it tactile sensations, sensations of smoothness and coldness, etc. In the interior of the hand, running parallel to the experienced movement, I [also] find sensations of motion, etc. Lifting a thing I experience its weight, but at the same time I have sensations, related to the weight, located in my lived-body. And thus, in general, my lived-body, coming into physical contact (striking, pressing, pushing, etc.) with other material things offers not only the experience of physical events relating the lived-body to things, but also specific lived-bodily events of the kind that we call *sensings* [*Empfindnisse*]. Such events are missing in "merely" material things.³⁰

Thus the very process of touching something establishes a new kind of experience. It is rare to find Husserl constructing neologisms, but in this case he introduces the term *Empfindnisse*, a lived experience (*Erlebnis*) that is not an experience-of (*Erfahrung*), a sensorial event (*Empfindung*) that is not a perception (*Wahrnehmung*), a finding of oneself (*sich befinden*) that is not a finding of something. *Empfindnisse* are those peculiar sensorial events that offer the body as lived to itself in the very process of being offered to the world. They arise at the intersection of tactile sensations and kinaesthetic sensations and, at precisely that juncture where all distance is traversed, undergird the flesh of things with the flesh of the lived-body.

Notice that *Empfindnisse* offer the body to itself in a way fundamentally different than those tactile sensations presenting the world. The lived-body is

present but not yet visible, or is present only as invisible. This all changes when the lived-body itself is one of the things that we come to experience. The text where Husserl first brings this out is sufficiently important to merit quoting it at length:

Let us choose the special case where the spatially experienced body perceived by means of the lived-body is itself the physical lived-body [*Leibkörper*]. . . . Touching the left hand I have tactile appearances, i.e., I not only sense [*empfinde*] but I perceive and have appearances of a soft, smooth hand formed in a certain way. The indicating sensations of movement and the representing tactile sensations, which are objectivated as features in the thing "left hand," belong to the right hand. But also in the left hand being touched I find a series of tactile sensations; they are "localized" in it but do not constitute properties (such as roughness and smoothness of the hand, of this physical thing). If I speak of the *physical* thing "left hand," I abstract from these sensations "in the left hand" (a bullet does not have these sensations, nor does any "mere" physical thing that is not my lived-body). But if I include these sensations it is not that the physical thing becomes enlarged; rather it becomes lived-body, it senses [*es empfindet*]. The tactile sensations belong to each appearing, objective spatial position on the touched hand as it is touched precisely at that particular place. In like manner the touching hand, which for its part appears as thing, has its tactile sensations on the spatial surface where it touches (or is touched by the other).³¹

In the very process of touching the lived-body something new enters: the object touched also becomes the object touching. It is this unique structure of touching while being touched, of being touched while touching, that makes the lived-body palpable to itself and comes to constitute it as an object. Thus there is a circuit running not only between the world and the lived-body but also between the lived-body and itself. In this circuit there is a doubling of touch: the touching is touched and the touched is touching. There seems to be a blending of what is felt and what is perceived, such that I come to perceive the lived-body as it is feeling. We will leave open until the next section the question of whether this account is sufficient to place the lived-body in the same order as things. For now we at least have secured not just the "felt" presence but also the "experienced" presence of the lived-body to itself. It is the latter that guarantees that, contrary to Sartre,³² the lived-body also belongs to the order of the in-itself, that it is an object, though of a special order, at least to itself, and that it comes to build up not just those sets of lived coordinates (over – under, back – front and left – right) that give things their spatial orientation, as in the first moment, but also locations "in" it and "on" it that constitute its own spatiality, its own extension.³³

Keep in mind, too, that the lived-body is not stationary but in constant movement. The process of touching is a process of moving the touching

hand, and thus the *Empfindnisse* convey a unity between "lived-body and [the lived-body as a] freely moving thing."³⁴ In this way the lived body acquires various possibilities of spontaneous movement or, as Piaget will call it, various schemata of appropriation and accommodation.³⁵

While this dimension of Husserl's analysis is clearly the most creative and innovative inasmuch as it integrates body and conscious life in a way never envisioned by the tradition of Western philosophy, I do not want to tarry here but to go on to the problem we have set for ourselves in this essay. Before doing so let me summarize the course of our considerations thus far.

Our first attempt to characterize the body, in short, discovered a *Körper* as *Leib*. Among the multiplicity of things there is one set that stands out from the rest and has the singular determinations we mentioned in section 1. Yet we also saw in this context that Husserl, although he does not embrace, at least reinscribes Descartes' mapping. These considerations, however, were undergirded by a certain *Einstellung*, a type of categorial analysis inhabiting the natural attitude and treating its themes as objects, for it looks at the body as manifest phenomena and not as self-constituting presence.

In section 2 this attitude is replaced by a phenomenological analysis that treats the *Leib* as *Leib*. In a certain sense this remains within the framework of the natural attitude, for persons as part of nature³⁶ are in view. Yet the lived-body is given not as the theme of an objectivating act but rather as a proto-thematic presence enlived. We suggested that this self-presencing can be taken apart into three interweaving moments.

In the process of touching an object, the lived-body senses itself as the one touching. It knows itself not as object, for the object is what is touched, but as the non-object doing the touching. I have spoken of this as a *reflexive* sensing by the lived-body.

This changes when, in the second moment, the lived-body touches itself, for then the one touching is the object touched, and the object touched, in turn, senses itself as the one being touched. Moreover, the hand being touched can in this case become the touching hand. In this circuit of exchanges, this self-referentiality that in fact involves no act of referring at all, the body is offered to itself as lived. The reflexive but preconscious (in Freud's sense) sensing by the body which we discover in the first moment is now enriched into the body's *reflective* and conscious sensing of itself in this second moment: the one sensing is sensible *as* sensing, the experiencing can be experienced *as* invisible.

The third moment makes a decisive advance in the analysis by seeing the hand that touches as a hand that *moves*. In a certain sense this third moment cuts across the first two. To say that the lived-body reflexively senses itself, as we find in the first moment, means that the lived-body moves itself in the ongoing course of perception. In exploring an object we move closer, pick it up, and

turn it over in our hands. The determinations we come to find, the tactual qualities of smooth, hard, and cold, arise in correlation with the various movements of the hand and the lived-body. When the lived-body touches itself, as in the second moment, its very touching is a function of its moving. The one sensing is sensible as sensing because the one moving is sensible as moving. The enlived-body, accordingly, is present to itself not only as nexus of sensing but also as locus of movement, even as a system of movements.

3 The Flesh of the Body

It is tempting to stop the story here. All the accounts that I have seen do. In fact, one could ask whether Merleau-Ponty did not rest content with these results in *Phenomenology of Perception*.³⁷ Certainly Sartre did, at least in *Being and Nothingness*. To conclude our account here, however, would be to bypass what is most problematic about any account of the lived-body. For as the analysis stands, we have not just another perspective on the phenomena with which we began, but also another object, another body. The physical body is an extended thing which can be penetrated by the usual weapons of scientific analysis and medical technology. If one places the lived-body in this mapping of things, nothing seems to change. For in Husserl's own terms, the lived-body is a *Nullpunkt*, a point that may have a place but no extension, or, better, a point in terms of which all position, and thus extension, is defined, but which does not itself have that place or extension characteristic of the things it perceives.

Even when we take into consideration the way in which the lived-body comes to know itself as an object, we still have the nasty question of whether its spatiality and its extension are the *same* as those possessed by things. To argue that the lived-body simply becomes manifest, becomes visible much like other objects, will not suffice, for the fact that it is necessarily given in a way that things are not might entail that it is not a thing, is not something that can have extension and location in the same way that they do. It could very well belong to a second order of nature, but not to the first; it could very well be an object, but not a thing. Thus while the lived-body not only is constitutive of the presence of the world but also possesses a unique self-presence and even its own objecthood, it still seems displaced, a shade shimmering on the edge of existence. If this is so, then it seems that all we have is a replication of Cartesian dualism in another register, for now it becomes not so much the mind-body problem as the body-body problem.

What I find most intriguing about Husserl's analysis is that he attempts to handle this problem in two ways: first, the initial analysis of sensing is extended

into an account of localization; second, the description of movement is inserted into an analysis of "motivational" interdependency.³⁸ These ideas are somewhat fragmented in Husserl's text but they show promise.

Unlike acts of perception that depend upon it, the activity of touching an object involves certain feelings that are localized in the lived-body. In touching a glass there are feelings in the fingers, in sensing the cool waters of the ocean there are sensations in the feet, while in perceiving the glass as smooth or the water as cold the intentional act cannot be placed in any part of the lived-body. "The co-intertwined contents of sensation . . . do have a localization that is actually intuitively given while the intentionalities do not."³⁹ Localization, Husserl wants to argue, is constitutive of the "objectivity," albeit "appropriate objectivity" (*eigene Objectivität*) of the lived-body. But how? How can localization bridge body as lived and body as physical object?

Interestingly enough, Husserl rejects the idea that sensations (as lived) and locations in the physical body are related as two dependent moments: "It is not like the sensorial content tone-quality and the sensorial content intensity having an essential unity, nor like the sensorial content color [being united] with the moment of expanse."⁴⁰ We could take this to mean that it might be possible to have sensations for which there is no location on the real body (phantom limb) or to have changes in the receptors for which there are no feelings (holding a hand in ice-water during hypnosis). The moments in these examples could not be dependent because sensations and stimulation of the physical body can exist without each other. But I think that Husserl is emphasizing the fact that localized sensations do belong to a different order than locations on the body under a physical description. In a special sense of the term, they are causally tied and not, at this level, interdependent. We can describe stimuli applied to the body as causing local sensations but we cannot speak of color qualities as causing their extensions (or vice versa). Because they belong to a different order of analysis, they cannot be dependent moments. But this only aggravates the problem. How can we understand this relationship?

At this point Husserl undertakes a significant shift in emphasis. Instead of concentrating on how the lived-body gives rise to the determinations and places of things, he thinks about what happens when the lived-body is affected by something, when things, in a certain sense, place the body. If an object is rubbed "mechanically" on the skin of my hand I obviously

have a series of sensings ordered determinately: if it always moves in the same manner, with the same pressure, touching the same places on the lived-body with the same speed, then the result is always the same. All this is obvious. What is important is the interpretation: this lived, physical body behaves in such a way that under such circumstances it not only is stimulated in general but in a determinate manner under determinate circumstances, that all effects of

stimuli have their system, that differences in location correspond to the appearing thing-body. . . . To the localization in extension there corresponds a locale-moment in sensation, and to the strength and manner of the stimulation there correspond determinate moments that make the sensation concrete and modifiable.⁴¹

With this shift in emphasis, then, Husserl begins to study the way in which the sensations that I experience neither come one by one nor simply arise from within; rather they are ordered series dependent upon circumstances. It is in terms of certain properties in the physical stimuli that our sensations are changed along certain lines. Thus the experiential order of sensations, their functional dependence upon circumstances, and the manner in which they are modified all arise as a result of what happens to and with the physical body.

Effects of stimuli appear not as something foreign and only [externally] effective [*Bewirktes*] but as something *belonging* to the appearing lived, physical body and its order of extension [*extensive Ordnung*] In each sensation of the lived-body the mere sensation is not grasped but it is apprehended as belonging to a system of possible functional consequences corresponding exactly to the order of extension.⁴²

Husserl's point, then, is not only that there is a functional correlation between locations on the body as material and those locations accompanying all tactile sensations, but also that such sensations are themselves presentational, exhibiting an order of antecedent and consequent that is not of their own making but belongs to the world of material things and events. Notice that Husserl is working with a modified form of the constancy hypothesis only in the sense that he resists collapsing the difference between sensorial events and physical events. Instead he displays a dependency that crosses the two orders, one which he can only call a motivational dependency, such that at this level of *Empfindsamkeit*, the material body carries the sensorial, the lived, and the order of extension determines the order of felt locations.

Since these ideas are somewhat complex, let me suggest that there are four steps to an Husserlian analysis of the materiality of the lived-body:

- 1 In our direct and immediate awareness of the body we know it primarily through the various *tactile sensations* involved in any activity of touching something. In fact, Husserl's argument is that a subject that had only vision would never know the body as lived-body.⁴³
- 2 One of the unique traits of tactile sensations is that they are given as having a *location* in the lived-body. Their location is not a series of discrete points but a *field*.

- 3 The field of sensations is experienced as functionally dependent upon a *real order* of circumstances and events. Each significant change in things and the actions of things upon the surface of the physical body produces a change in the field of sensations according to a scheme of *conditional dependency*, an "if-then" scheme.
- 4 Since changes on the surface of the body are experienced as changes in the field of sensations having that location, the lived-body is manifested as material.

Let me quote Husserl's own summary of this discussion. It elaborates on the perceptions involved in our apprehension of the lived body, and it gives us a clue to the last point I want to make in this section:

Thus the sensitivity [or receptivity, *Empfindsamkeit*] of the lived-body is constituted throughout a "conditional" or psycho-physical property. And this is ingredient in the apperception of the lived-body as it is "externally" perceived. To the apprehension of corporeality as such there belongs not only an apprehension of a thing [i.e., of the body as a thing] but the co-apprehension of the sensorial fields and, indeed, they are given as belonging to the appearing, lived physical body [*Leibkörper*] in the mode of localization. "Belonging to": phenomenologically that expresses relations of the phenomenal "if-so." When the hand is touched, bumped etc., I undergo sensations. In this case the hand does not stand there as a physical body to which there is linked an extra-physical body to which there is linked an extra-physical effect [i.e., sensations]; from the very outset it is apperceptively characterized as a hand *with* its field of sensations, with a continuously co-apprehended sensorial state that changes as a result of external actions, i.e., [it is apperceived] as a *physical, aesthesiological unity*. In the abstract I can sunder physical and aesthesiological strata but, indeed, only in the abstract. In concrete perception the lived-body stands there as a new kind of unity of apprehension. It is constituted as an objectivity in its own right, which can be ordered under the formal and general concept of reality, which preserves its identical properties over against changing external circumstances. But even here the relations of dependency in which it stands to external nature are different than those of material things among themselves.⁴⁴

One does not find Husserl adding much light to the question of the materiality of the body in his other writings but there is a very suggestive late text, written in January 1934, that addresses this issue. In it Husserl repeats his claim that the lived-body is not to be treated simply as a physical body among other physical things. There is a "pure" difference to be made between "outer bodies" and my own physical body as an "inner body." The inner body is "a unity of organs, kinaesthetically and sensibly moved," whose "directions of activity" make possible various "courses of appearances."⁴⁵ He adds: "*The lived-body is at one with the physical body*, membered thus and so, and, through the actual and potential kinaestheses belonging [to it] in their special way, [it is] precisely organ and system of organs."⁴⁶ This analysis of the lived-body as organ rejoins the account of touching-touched:

If the lived-body becomes an object as physical body, if some particular part that otherwise functions as an organ becomes objective, then this is preceded by a kinaesthesia that is itself localized in the physicality [*Körperlichen*] of what, functioning by virtue of this, is called an organ.⁴⁷

With the notions of conditionality and receptivity, Husserl comes to understand the lived-body not just as "null point" but also as a thick ensemble of organs. This is the notion he uses to preserve its essential unity with its material existence. This, however, is as far as Husserl goes in the direction of treating the body as flesh.

4 The Flesh of Things

When Husserl reminds us, as he just did, that the relationship between body and things is not identical to that between physical things, the question of what is meant by a thing is reopened. Throughout this essay we have assumed that the characterization of things by modern science best describes the things we experience. But Husserl, even in these texts written some 20 years before *The Crisis*, is cautious. Objectivity does require that a given be determined or determinable "by each researcher in absolutely identical fashion."⁴⁸ In this sense the descriptions we have undertaken and the contrast between lived-body and physical body are all objective. But Husserl recognizes that the physical body should figure as an item in "the natural world" before its further elaboration by one of the natural sciences. He even speaks of its description as "a universal morphology of the natural world as the shared, common world of a people, of a society."⁴⁹ The analysis of the body as lived-body, more than any other study Husserl undertook before the 1920s, opened up the analysis of physical objects as well, and we discover that they are, first and foremost, lived objects before they become objects of the physical sciences proper. The natural sciences, in fact, begin with such a world but then "construe" or reconstruct it in a particular way.

The physical thing of the natural sciences has only a formal essence; it only has its formula [or its rule]; in fact, its essence is simply that it is an intentional unity of an infinite manifold of appearances "to all men" regulated by this formula [or rule].⁵⁰

When one adds mathematics as the basic language of such formulas or rules, then we have the Cartesian characterization of the thing as extended. Since Descartes, the gaze of science has always seen such things and has found only what Foucault sometimes calls "a world of constant visibility."

This modern scientific characterization of extension and things, supported by an interest that has neutralized practical and ethical concerns, should not be confused with the underlying basis from which, through a series of methodically controlled abstractions, it is derived, with the ringing surfaces of the cobblestones on which I walk, with the rough board I am planing, with the supple face I embrace and hold in my hands. Surfaces that support, boards that are planed, faces that are embraced: they have an "aesthetic" extension and then a flesh, one that our perceptions enfold, that is not yet the result of a categorial synthesis, of an act of cognition or, better, interpretation. It is this sense of extension that is in play for physical bodies, and it is in this sense of the physical body that the lived body, in tactual experience, begins to discover itself as flesh.

Notes

A special word of thanks to Forest Williams for critical comments on an earlier draft of this essay, to Tom Brockelman and Gina Zavota for their assistance in editing, and to Virginia Massaro and Letitia Dunn for their assistance in typing.

- 1 The quote from Petit is found in Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), p. 88, and the Husserl quote is from Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, Book II: *Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*, ed. by Marly Biemel, *Husserliana*, vol. 4 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), p. 150; cf. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, Book 2: *Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. by Richard Rojcewicz and Andre Schuwer, *Collected Works*, vol. 3 (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), p. 158.
- 2 We are immediately faced with the problem of faithfully rendering Husserl's different terms for body into English. When the context requires something more specific than the general term "body" I will render Husserl's notion of *Körper* as "physical body," *Leib* as "lived-body," *Leiblichkeit* as "corporeality," and his peculiar *Leibkörper* somewhat awkwardly as "lived physical body." I use the last term in order to preserve the inner tension in the German. Rojcewicz and Schuwer translate these terms, respectively, as "body," "Body," "Corporeality" and "Corporeal body."
- 3 Edmund Husserl, *Ding und Raum: Vorlesungen 1907*, ed. by U. Claesges, *Husserliana*, vol. 16 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974). In this work the role of the kinaesthetic syntheses in perception is highlighted much more than the body per se.
- 4 They are found in both the first and second parts of this work.
- 5 The manuscripts are housed in the Husserl Archives in Louvain, Belgium.
- 6 Three notable exceptions to this general rule are Alphonso Lingis, "Intentionality and Corporeity," *Analectica Husserliana*, vol. 1 (1971), 75–90; Shaun Gallagher, "Hyletic Experience and the Lived Body," *Husserl Studies*, vol. 3 (1986), 131–66;

and an article by Ricoeur that reviews *Ideen II* as a whole. See Paul Ricoeur, "Husserl's Ideas II: Analysis and Problems," in *Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology*, trans. by Edward Ballard and Lester Embree (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1967), pp. 35–81. There is also a very helpful analysis in German in Ulrich Claesges, *Edmund Husserls Theorie der Raumkonstitution, Phaenomenologica*, vol. 19 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), pp. 90–144. The best analysis in German on this concept, Elmar Holenstein's "Nullpunkt der Orientierung," has been translated into English for the first time and follows this essay.

- 7 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945); *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1962).
- 8 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 25; Eng. trans., p. 27. While references to the excellent English translation in addition to the German original will be given, the translations are my own.
- 9 *Ideen II*, pp. 28–9; Eng. trans., p. 31.
- 10 Rene Descartes, "Discourse on Method," *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Murdoch, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 142–3.
- 11 Descartes, "Discourse," p. 151.
- 12 In his Second Meditation, Descartes employs a strict, objective characterization of the body which has the effect of reducing it to a corpse, i.e., a physical thing without the power of its own movements. Thus he says: "The first thought to come to mind was that I had a face, hands, arms and the whole mechanical structure of limbs which can be seen in a corpse, and which I call the body." To this first thought a second is added: "The next thought was that I was nourished, that I moved about, and that I engaged in sense-perception and thinking; and these actions I attributed to the soul." While his extensive study of human physiology, complete only some six or seven years before he wrote the "Meditations," will contest this received understanding of the functions of the soul, the description of the body remains. Thus the "Meditations" immediately adds this clarification: "by a body I understand whatever has a determinable shape and a definable location and can occupy a space in such a way as to exclude any other body; it can be perceived by touch, sight, hearing, taste or smell, and can be moved in various ways, not by itself but by whatever else comes into contact with it. For, according to my judgement, the power of self-movement, like the power of sensation or of thought, was quite foreign to the nature of a body." Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy," *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Murdoch, vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 17. For his work on human physiology see his "Treatise on Man," *ibid.*, I, 99–108 or the full texts in *Treatise of Man*, trans. by Thomas Stelle Hall (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972).
- 13 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 25; Eng. trans., p. 27.
- 14 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 26; Eng. trans., p. 28.
- 15 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 26; Eng. trans., p. 28. Italics removed.
- 16 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 26; Eng. trans., p. 28. But cf. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, Band 3: *Die Phänomenologie und die Fundamente*

der Wissenschaften, ed. by M. Biemel, *Husserliana*, vol. 5 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), p. 2; *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, Book 3: *Phenomenology and the Foundations of the Sciences*, trans. by Ted Klein and William Pohl, *Collected Works*, vol. 1 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980), p. 2.

- 17 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 26; Eng. trans., p. 28.
- 18 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 32–3; Eng. trans., pp. 35–6.
- 19 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 33; Eng. trans., p. 36.
- 20 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 33; Eng. trans., p. 36.
- 21 Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie*, ed. by Walter Biemel, *Husserliana*, vol. 6 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954), pp. 15–17, 57–9, 379–80; *The Crisis of European Science and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. by David Carr (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970), pp. 17–18, 56–8, 371–2. Cf. *Ideen III*, 93–105; Eng. trans., pp. 80–90.
- 22 Speaking of a phenomenological analysis of materiality from within the natural attitude needs some further clarification. The analysis upon which we are drawing is found mainly in sections 14 to 18. Notice that it is only in section 34 of *Ideen II* that Husserl speaks of going beyond the natural attitude, although he does not actually do it for some pages after that. The confusion can be solved by seeing that there are at least two different oppositions defining the natural attitude:
 - 1 In *Ideen I* the contrast between the natural and phenomenological attitudes is found at the level of *philosophical* method, and Husserl's sustained argument is that the first needs to be rejected in favor of the second. Thus the phenomenological reduction always involves a rejection of the natural attitude.
 - 2 In *Ideen II*, however, the contrast is between the natural and the "personalistic" attitudes (pp. 139–43; Eng. trans., pp. 147–50) and they are understood as *regional* methods (the method of either the ontology or the science appropriate to a given domain) within a larger phenomenological analysis.

Armed with this distinction, our analysis of materiality in this section operates from within the natural attitude as a regional method but not as a philosophical method. We must speak of a natural attitude within the scope of a phenomenological analysis, i.e., of a method of describing materiality *phenomenologically*.

- 23 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 39; Eng. trans., pp. 42–3.
- 24 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 40; Eng. trans., p. 43.
- 25 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 41; Eng. trans., p. 44.
- 26 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 46; Eng. trans., p. 50.
- 27 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 58; Eng. trans., p. 63.
- 28 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 66; Eng. trans., p. 71.
- 29 To put it more accurately, the second book of *Ideen* introduces the essential breakthrough in spite of periodic lapses back into classical formulations. Even after suggesting that the Cartesian analyses are the result of an interpretation based on a deeper-lying system of perceptual experience, section 33, for example,

interprets my sensations, perception, and recollections as moments of my subjective stream of experience, as states of my soul, in unity with physical events or states in the body. The body, in turn, is seen as "a bearer of the relationships of psycho-physical dependency." Thus Husserl concludes: "The unity of the soul is a real unity in that it, as unity of the soulish life, is coupled with the body as unity of the bodily stream of being, which, for its part, is a member of nature" (p. 139). Descartes nods.

- 30 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 146; Eng. trans., p. 153. I am following the Rojcewicz and Schuwer translation of *Empfindnisse* as "sensings." It might also be rendered "sensorial event."
- 31 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 144–5; Eng. trans., pp. 152–3.
- 32 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. by Hazel Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), pp. 329–30.
- 33 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 145; Eng. trans., p. 153.
- 34 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 151; Eng. trans., p. 158.
- 35 See Jean Piaget, *The Mechanisms of Perception*, trans. by G. N. Seagrim (New York: Basic Books, 1969), pp. 353–4 for the application of this idea to perception.
- 36 Cf. Husserl, *Ideen II*, 143; Eng. trans., p. 150.
- 37 I will put to the side the question of how Merleau-Ponty's analysis in *Phenomenology of Perception* is related to his *Le Visible et l'invisible* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964); *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964).
- 38 I find both of these ideas in section 40 of *Ideen II*, one of the most difficult texts penned by Husserl.
- 39 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 153; Eng. trans., p. 161.
- 40 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 154; Eng. trans., p. 161. For an analysis of the concept of dependent moments see the Third Investigation, sections 3 and 4 in Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, vol. II, Part I: *Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis*, 2nd revd edn (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1913); *Logical Investigations*, trans. by J. N. Findlay, vol. I (New York: Humanities Press, 1970).
- 41 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 154; Eng. trans., pp. 161–2.
- 42 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 154; Eng. trans., p. 162.
- 43 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 150; Eng. trans., p. 158.
- 44 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 155–6; Eng. trans., p. 163.
- 45 Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität*, Dritter Teil: 1929–1935, ed. by Iso Kern, *Husserliana*, vol. 15 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), p. 643.
- 46 *Intersubjektivität*, III, 643.
- 47 *Intersubjektivität*, III, 643.
- 48 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 389; Eng. trans., p. 398.
- 49 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 376; Eng. trans., p. 385. Notice that this appendix is from the third part of *Ideen II* and thus probably was written between 1920 and 1925.
- 50 Husserl, *Ideen II*, 376–7; Eng. trans., p. 286. Italics removed.

3

THE ZERO-POINT OF ORIENTATION: THE PLACEMENT OF THE I IN PERCEIVED SPACE

Elmar Holenstein

1 The Traditional Phenomenological Thesis

In Husserl's descriptions of perceived space, the perceiver's own lived-body [*Leib*] is proclaimed as the zero-point of orientation. Accordingly, everything, be it spatially perceived or even imagined and fantasized, is given in such a way that it is oriented towards one's lived-body. The various spatial determinations, directions, qualities, and valences – near and far, over and under, right and left, and so forth – have their pole of reference in this lived-body (1952: 56, 109ff., 158ff.; 1966: 297ff., etc.).

Husserl never called this thesis (that the lived-body is the zero-point of orientation) into question – for either methodical or thematic reasons. To him, it appears immediately self-evident from "the thing itself," from the perceived situation. Opposing observations are not registered. Likewise, he neglects to reflect upon the possible theoretical or dogmatic background of this thesis, although the application of this thesis beyond the region of bare perception would have to produce suspicion. Finally, Husserl also does not worry about intersubjective confirmation, i.e., in this case, interdisciplinary confirmation.

Husserl's thesis was, with one exception,¹ taken over by the entire phenomenological movement: by its philosophical representatives, Heidegger (1927), Sartre (1943), Merleau-Ponty (1945), as by its psychological followers, Binswanger (1932) and Graumann (1960). At the same time, though – even during Husserl's lifetime – the absolute claims of this thesis would be descriptively as

New translation by Lanei Rodemeyer and Sebastian Luft of Elmar Holenstein, "Der Nullpunkt der Orientierung," *Menschliches Selbstverständnis* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), pp. 14–58.

5

THE ONTOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF EMBODIMENT: HEIDEGGER'S THINKING OF BEING

David Michael Levin

The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation.

T. S. Eliot, *The Dry Salvages*

Dimensionality consists in a reaching out that opens up, in which futural approaching brings about what has been, what has been brings about futural approaching, and the reciprocal relation of both brings about the opening up of openness.

Heidegger, *On Time and Being*¹

I

Metaphysics begins with the question of being. This question calls our experience into question. Since we are embodied beings, we must ask ourselves: How is the experience that the question of being calls forth embodied? Could it be embodied differently? And how might it be embodied differently?

The reading of Heidegger that will be proposed here is intended to make a small contribution to the emerging body of understanding that is inscribed, yet left in the dark, in Heidegger's work of thought: a body of understanding "emerging" both in the sense that it is being brought forth hermeneutically from out of its implicitness, its hiddenness in the weave of the philosopher's text, and in the sense that the attempt to articulate its presence in the text enables us to develop, as a way of being in the world, the potential granted us by grace of our embodiment. The potential in question, the potential at stake, is the gift of a body of ontological understanding: a body that manifests our ontological understanding – a body that is responsive to the demand for open-

ness constitutive of the question of being; a body that is therefore, in effect, an organ of being, deeply engaged by the claim on its capacity for openness to the otherness of all that is other.

Metaphysical thinking is an "I think" that takes place in the theoretical "mind." But our comportment belies this, showing that we implicitly acknowledge a thinking which takes place in the life of our feet and hands and eyes. Our thinking will not find its way without first "losing itself" as a metaphysical "thinking" and going very deeply *into* the body. The body of understanding, standing and walking with the support of the earth, gesturing with a sense of the gravity of the earth and the receptive openness of a space cleared for it, is already a move beyond metaphysics, since traditional metaphysics can conceptualize only an objective body, not the body which we are and live. And as we question the body of mood, we move closer to that field in which our motility takes place: a field of many dimensions, upon which the capacity we call "motility" is dependent. What we need is a thinking that actually deepens our contact with the choreography of this motility-field, a thinking that can actually take us into the depths of our topological attunement, in our motility, in our gesturing, to the grace of the field through whose clearing we move and pass. We need to attend to the ways we "use" our hands and experience their "activity." We need to sense in a bodily way the "tone" of our gestures, and become more aware of how that "tone" is related to our technological modes of production. A more developed awareness of our gestures would contribute to an *ontological* critique of technology. New historical initiatives have *already* been placed in our hands, for our touching, handling, pointing, and writing *already* hold beings open to the *field* of their being. But until this endowment is understood, we must also qualify the "already" with a deferral, adding "and yet, not yet." Ontologically understood, our gestures appropriate the topological configuration of corporeal capacities as a local disclosedness inseparable from its situational field and functioning as an immediately meaningful disclosure. A body of ontological understanding may begin to emerge when our gestures relate to the various beings of our world in a way that maintains their contact, and our own, with the clearing of space that would let them, and us, first meet in the "enchantment" of presence. It is a question of rooting our gestures in the tact and contact of their proper field: a field that has already made a clearing for their movement and already given them an initial *sense* of meaning. The emotional depth of the field's reserve of ontological "enchantment" might thus be made sensible for our emerging body of felt understanding, setting in motion the grace of our gestures.

According to the conventional wisdom that has been circulating for many years among scholars of Heidegger's thought, there is virtually nothing on the body to be found in Heidegger's writings. To a certain extent – that is to say, when read in a certain light and from a certain angle – these writings

unquestionably confirm such a judgment. For whenever the course of Heidegger's thinking compels him to broach the problematic of embodiment as such – especially, for example, when the question of human nature arises, or when the related question of our kinship and “elective affinity” with the nature of animals calls for thought, Heidegger finds himself entering a realm where he has no compass and loses his way. If he allows himself to give thought to these matters, he soon leaves them behind, without achieving any breakthrough or resolution. Often, he touches on them, only to interrupt himself and break off precipitously. Thus, for example, in *Being and Time*, he says: “This ‘bodily nature’ hides a whole problematic of its own, though we shall not treat it here.”² But this declaration is extremely perplexing, (1) because it interrupts a discussion of Dasein's way of inhabiting space that he immediately continues and (2) because one might have thought that a phenomenological account of how Dasein ekstasically spatializes – how the world it inhabits gets to be organized, relative to the position and orientation of the body, in terms of “up” and “down,” “height” and “depth,” “right” and “left,” “in front” and “in back,” “near” and “far” – would be considered a crucial part of the “problematic.” Could it be that, in spite of his efforts to decenter the subject through a phenomenological account of Dasein's ecstatic temporality, Heidegger could not liberate the human body from the traditional interpretation, which since ancient times has inscribed it in a metaphysics of substances?

Thirty-seven years later Heidegger will once again confront and then turn away from the body, taking refuge in the acknowledgment of a problem he is not able to think through ontologically. Echoing the words he wrote in *Being and Time*, he remarks, in a reply to Eugen Fink during their 1966–7 seminar on Heraclitus, that “The body phenomenon is the most difficult problem.”³ What is it about the body that makes it such a difficult problem? The beginning of an answer – but only a beginning – can perhaps be drawn from an observation that Heidegger makes in his work on Nietzsche:

Most of what we know from the natural sciences about the body and the way it embodies are specifications based on the established misinterpretation of the body as a mere natural body.⁴

Taking up, in this text, the metaphysical doctrine that splits off the body from the “mind,” or “soul,” Heidegger contends that “Bodily being does not mean that the soul is burdened by a hulk we call the body.... We do not ‘have’ a body; rather, we ‘are’ bodily.”⁵ For Heidegger, these reflections draw him into thoughtful contact with bodily feeling, with sense and sensibility: “Every feeling,” he says, “is an embodiment attuned in this or that way, a mood that embodies in this or that way.”⁶

But in spite of the existence of textual passages where Heidegger seems to express his unwillingness, or inability, to engage in a sustained meditation on the body, an unprejudiced reading of Heidegger's writings would be obliged to conclude that the conventional wisdom of the scholars is actually far from the truth. The conventional wisdom is based on a false impression: a false impression into the confusion of which Heidegger himself – strange to say – might even himself have fallen. The false impression, the confusion, comes, I think, from a peculiarly restricted conception of the body – or, say, of that which constitutes a discourse on the body. We will be struck by a quite different impression, however, if we count, as a discourse of thought on the body, all of Heidegger's reflections on perception; his etymologically generated meditations on the relationship between the human and the earth; his reflections on philosophical interpretations of “human nature” and the definition “rational animal.” On my reading, Heidegger's discourse on the body includes, for example, what he has to say about the *Befindlichkeit* of feeling and mood; the platonic separation of the sensuous and the supersensuous; hearing the call of conscience; the habitual patterns of listening (*Hören*) into which we fall and the arduous task of learning how to attune our ears in the spirit of hearkening (*Horchen*); the errancy in phenomenism (e.g., its failure to understand the difference between hearing a sequence of detached sounds and hearing the sounds as those of a worldly thing); the ego-logical pathologies that dominate our “normal,” everyday sight and the difficulties that separate us from the “moment of vision” (*Augenblick*); the way we normally, typically, and habitually relate to the lighting that makes vision possible; and, finally, the activities of the human hand (including the labor of the hands, their technological skills, and the hand's cultural significance in writing, gesturing, and calligraphy), the role of the hands in reducing the presencing of being to an ontology limited to being-ready-to-hand and being-present-at-hand, and the essential difference between the human hand and the paws, claws, and talons of other animal species – matters that he touches on or discusses in some depth in his 1927 *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, the 1929 book *Being and Time*, his 1942–3 lecture course on Parmenides, his 1946 study “The Anaximander Fragment,” his lectures on technology during the period from 1949 to 1955, and his 1951–2 course of lectures, *What Is Called Thinking?*⁷

In view of these extensive discussions, it is surely possible to think beyond the traditional wisdom – that Heidegger gave virtually no thought to the body. If, however, we remain within the old conception of the body, we will be compelled to marginalize or exclude the phenomenology of perception, the phenomenology of lived space, and the phenomenology of practical activities involving the body – activities of the hands such as touching, handling, grasping, holding, handing down, praying, greeting, and writing, even though the ontology (the forms of being) that predominates in our epoch and that Heidegger subjects to a critique – the forms of being, namely, whereby being presences as

being-present-at-hand and being-present-to-hand – *cannot be made intelligible* without a recognition of the body, and not, indeed, without a recognition of what I am calling, and calling forth, here, with these very words, the *ontological* body. For us, then, the body must be a material, objective, physical, worldly substance, a living, animal nature that *somehow* is also human, ensouled, spiritual. And the so-called “problematic of the body” must then refer to the question of the *relationship* between our animal nature and our human nature, our animal being (as a physical body) and our human being (as a spiritual being endowed with reason and speech). But if this be the only question the discussion of which counts as “the problematic of the body,” then it is indeed the case that, as conventional wisdom insists, Heidegger has very little to say about the body – and certainly never reached an elucidatory understanding with which he and his heirs could be satisfied.

In the Heraclitus Seminar with Eugen Fink, Heidegger’s final words on this problematic are: “The bodily [element] in the human is not something animalistic. The manner of understanding that accompanies it is something that metaphysics up till now has not touched on.”⁸ This is at one and the same time a sweeping repudiation of metaphysics and a frank admission that he is not able to think *beyond* the metaphysical interpretation of the body. And yet, I think he went in fact much farther than he believed – but his continuing entanglement in metaphysics made it impossible for him to see and measure the extent of this achievement. It has been equally difficult, if not more so, for the scholars who have attempted to follow nimbly in his footsteps to move beyond the culturally hegemonic metaphysical interpretation. Hence their inability to find in Heidegger’s work a sustained meditation on embodiment.

Many scholars read as “metaphorical” all of Heidegger’s references to perception (to listening and seeing, for example); references to “dwelling on the earth” and “obedience to the earth”;⁹ references to being “gathered on the ground of existence”;¹⁰ references to the activities, gestures, and skills (*technai*) of the hands; references to the possibility of “poetic dwelling,” “provided our hands, which express in a whole, complicated way how we are, how we are living, in a situation, do not abruptly grasp but are guided by gestures [*Gebärde*] befitting the measure”;¹¹ references to “lending a hand” to the coming to presence of being;¹² references to “the full breadth of the space proper to [the human] essence”;¹³ references to the character of our relationship to the earth and the sky; references to our “standing upright,” “walking,” “falling down”; references to “steps” on the path (*Weg*) and “going astray.” But Heidegger again and again tells us that his work comes out of the *experience* of thought, *aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*. Would it not be a tragic error, then, to read Heidegger’s words as “mere” metaphors – metaphors in the sense of rhetorical embellishments, “figurative” designs to heighten the poetic beauty of the text? If this is what “metaphorical” is taken to mean, then Heidegger’s words must be understood,

on the contrary, as purporting “literal” truth. It would be better, however, to follow the etymological hints that are preserved in the word *metaphor* (Greek: *metapherein*) and think of metaphors as words that *carry forward* our experience. I take Heidegger’s references – references such as those I have just named – to be metaphorical ways of thinking about our embodied experience, our experience as beings embodied. They are ways of articulating the body of our experience: ways that enable this experience to realize some of its *Seinskönnen*, the “dispositions” of its potentiality-for-being.

As I have already suggested, a major problem confronting a reading of Heidegger that takes him to be writing about the body of experience – the very same problem that both Heidegger and the scholars following in his footsteps never adequately thematized, and therefore never worked intensively on – is that “body” is thought in such a way that discussions about seeing and hearing, posture and gesture, bearing and handling, standing and falling are not regarded as discussions about the body. This, I submit, is a serious mistake. It means, among other things, that what Heidegger says about “thinking” is not connected with these “dispositions” of our being, not connected with our experience as embodied beings. And this means that the implications of his radical thinking about “thinking” cannot be taken to heart, cannot be “translated” into a process of experience that will carry this experience forward. But without this “translation,” what Heidegger means by “thinking” – and what he would like to accomplish thereby – remains hostage to the very metaphysics beyond which it is attempting to carry us. Without this “translation,” “thinking” remains imprisoned in the metaphysical dualisms of philosophy and life, mind and body, thought and action, theory and praxis, thinking and experiencing, reason and feeling, the intelligible and the sensuous. Whereas the entire thrust of Heidegger’s work of thought is to deconstruct these dualisms, these reifications. In an attempt, in his later years, to break the spell cast by metaphysics, Heidegger spoke of thinking as “building” (*bauen*) and “dwelling” (*wohnen*). In the first lecture of the course published under the title *What Is Called Thinking?* Heidegger says: “We are trying to learn thinking. Perhaps thinking . . . is something like building a cabinet [*wie das Bauen an einem Schrein*]. At any rate, it is a craft, a handicraft” [*ein Hand-werk*].¹⁴ “All the work of the hand,” he adds, “is rooted in thinking.”¹⁵ And in the second of these lectures, after reminding us that, “We have called thinking the most excellent handicraft [*das ausgezeichnete Handwerk*],” he declares: “Thinking guides and sustains every gesture of the hand [*Das Denken leitet und trägt jede Gebärde der Hand*].”¹⁶ Not to take what Heidegger says here as actually referring to our hands, our gestures, is not to take Heidegger’s words seriously; it is to rob them of all meaning and all effect. They lose their radicality, their transformative power, their power to speak – though I hesitate to say this, even with fear and trembling – for the sake of redemption.

There is an alternative. It is useful to break out of our culture's substance metaphysics by thinking of the body, the body that, as Heidegger says, "I am," as an organically intricate system of dispositions and capacities. (The relevant word in Heidegger's texts would be *Vermögen*.) Now, to be sure, to think of the body in this way still involves thinking in terms of actuality and potentiality; but these terms can be released from their determination according to an Aristotelian teleology. And when they are thus released, they function quite differently: both in regard to their existence and in regard to their realization, our potentialities-for-being as embodied beings are radically contingent. But the point on which I want now to concentrate is that it is inherent in the very logic of such dispositions and capacities that they can be developed – that they can be taken up and nurtured, unfolded, carried forward, metaphored, through *Bildungsprozesse*, processes of learning. (In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*,¹⁷ Heidegger emphasizes that "what philosophy deals with only discloses itself at all within and from out of a transformation of human Dasein" and repeatedly indicates that the task of thinking is "to liberate the humanity in man.")

Even though Heidegger was a deeply concerned teacher, a teacher who gave thought to ways of teaching and learning and himself continued to learn and grow throughout his lifetime, he did not give thought in any sufficiently explicit way to the learning processes that our dispositions and capacities as embodied beings could undergo and be guided to undergo. What we are concerned with here, calling it "the body," is a system of ongoing processes. Thus it is more appropriate to think, not in terms of "the body," but much more dynamically, and less objectivately, in terms of "embodiment." This latter word carries us past the inveterate tendency to reify what we are trying to think and understand and engage. If I were tempted to express this point in Derridean terms, I might say that, for phenomenology, there is no body: no such thing.

In order to think our embodiment in the context of Heidegger's discourse of being and carry forward Heidegger's own thinking in the spirit of this discourse and with the resources it hands down, we need to begin thinking embodiment ontologically – thinking it, that is, in terms of its ontological dimensionality, its relationship to being. What does this involve?

Briefly stated, the ontological dimension of our embodiment is its (our) openness-to-being, its (our) ekstatic exposedness, its (our) receptive responsiveness and responsive receptivity to the presencing of being. As Heidegger points out, philosophical thinking began with an experience of enchantment and wonder. This experience brought forth perplexities and questions. The history of metaphysics is a history, a narrative of the question(ing) of being. Why are there beings? Why is there not nothing? What do we mean when we speak of the being of these beings? And what is being, being as such? But metaphysics broached these questions, only immediately to foreclose the process of ques-

tioning. Instead of allowing themselves to be claimed by the dimensions of the question; instead of letting the dimensions of the question open up a corresponding dimension of thoughtful experience, the metaphysical philosophers immediately reduced the problematic to a less threatening dimensionality. Heidegger accordingly implies that they betrayed their initial experience – the wonder and enchantment that drew them out of themselves and opened their eyes and ears to the very being of world. And they betrayed their initial question(ing), turning it into a question about the most original or highest or greatest or most universal being. In Heidegger's terminology, they turned an *ontological* question into an *ontical* question. We need instead, according to Heidegger, to let the question(ing) of being open up our experience. We need to let it draw us out of our ego-logically limited selves into the dimensionality toward which it projects us. We need to let it expose us to the unsettling, the uncanny claims that it makes on our capacity for responsiveness, our capacity to receive the "gift," the contingent, inexplicable, groundless "event" of being: the sheer "facticity" of being, the "fact" that there is anything at all, that there is what there is.

But the ontology of *Being and Time* is not intelligible, not possible, except for embodied beings, beings endowed with eyes, ears, arms and hands, throat and lips. The modes of being in and as which being presences itself only express themselves through, and *a fortiori* depend on, these organs of our embodiment. In relation to our embodiment, the question(ing) of being becomes a questioning of the *hermeneutical character* of our various dispositions and capacities: a questioning of their disclosive responsiveness to the presencing of being. As a "gift," an "event" or "fact" without reason, absolutely groundless, this presencing makes a claim on us: it calls for a disclosive response. The "question of being" thus becomes a questioning of our character: the hermeneutical character of our response. For example: A questioning of our capacity, as beings gifted with eyes for sight, to see in an open and opening way the presencing of being in and as visible beings.¹⁸ A questioning of our capacity, as beings gifted with ears for hearing, to hearken in an open and opening way to the presencing of being in and as sonorous beings.¹⁹ And a questioning of our capacity, as beings gifted with arms and hands, to engage our embodiment in gestures that are appropriately responsive to the presencing of being and serve to bring it forth, manifesting its hermeneutical dimensionality in the practical world.²⁰ The presencing of being (the ontological) makes difficult and unsettling claims on us that call for realization in the ontical world. From the very beginning, the presencing of being stakes out for us our ontological responsibility. As embodied beings, as beings endowed with a particular embodiment and the potentiality-for-being inherent in its (our) dispositions and capacities, we are rendered *beholden* (my translation of Heidegger's term, *schuldig*, usually translated, in my judgment wrongly, as "guilty") and are therefore responsible, simply because we

exist, because we are, for the extent of our exposedness, and the quality and character of our responsiveness, to the presencing of being.²¹

This broaches the question of learning, the question of our willingness to strive for the realization of our ontological potentiality-for-being as embodied beings. It is to this question that we now return.

In the analytic of *Being and Time*, Heidegger still thinks in many ways like the philosophers of old: *Dasein*, accordingly, is treated as if it were a timeless transcendental structure, albeit a structure that situates the human being in a temporal and historical world that it has itself made temporal and historical. In spite of his affirmation of *Dasein*'s "potentiality-for-being," in spite of his insistence on the importance of mortality, of being-toward-death (*Sein-zum-Tode*), there is no recognition, no discussion, of the seasons of a lifetime – the passage from birth to death by way of infancy, childhood, youth, adulthood, and old age – and the learning, the growth, that these different seasons call for. In brief, there is no attempt to draft a phenomenological portrait or narrative of *Dasein*'s self-realization, self-development, and self-fulfillment: no attempt to articulate in ontological terms the learning processes implied by his vision of the "ontological destination" (later called the *Geschick*) to which he thinks we mortals are called.

And yet, it is possible to draw on the analytic in Heidegger's *Being and Time* to formulate, at least schematically, the profile of a developmental process, a learning process essentially involving our embodiment, our sensibility, our perceptivity, our experience as bodily beings in the world. To accomplish this, however, we must proceed on the course of a path that Heidegger himself seems not to have sought out or noticed. Nevertheless, it is on this path, I think, that we may carry forward his thinking in a greatly needed direction.

In "What is Metaphysics?" Heidegger relates the question of being to our ownmost, or most essential, way of being, saying that it depends on our capacity for revealing beings as a whole and being as such:

being attuned, in which we "are" one way or another and which determines us through and through, lets us find ourselves among beings as a whole. The founding mode of attunement [*Befindlichkeit der Stimmung*] not only reveals beings as a whole in various ways, but this revealing – far from being merely incidental – is also the basic occurrence of our *Da-sein*.²²

Our interpretation, here, will make new use of Heidegger's concepts, putting them to work in a phenomenology of embodiment. In particular: (1) *Befindlichkeit*, which is usually translated as "state-of-mind,"²³ but which I want to translate as our bodily felt sense of being in a situation in the world; (2) *Dasein*'s pre-ontological understanding (or ontological pre-understanding) of being, which is usually thought of in intellectual terms, with no recognition of our

embodiment; and (3) *Stimmung*, usually translated as "moodedness" and "attunement," but usually given an interpretation that is far removed from a phenomenology of embodiment and sensibility.²⁴ I want to argue (although I cannot lay out in full, here, the argumentation that needs to be made) for interpretations of these *Daseinsanalytik* concepts that contextualize them in a hermeneutical phenomenology of embodiment, a "narrative" of developmental learning-processes through which the hermeneutical dispositions and capacities inherent in this embodiment (I am referring, here, to our ontologically inscribed potentiality, as embodied beings, for responding hermeneutically to the interplay of concealment and unconcealment as which the being of beings presences) are brought out, articulated, and made more explicit than they are in Heidegger's own texts. (Heidegger speaks of the importance he attaches to the philosophical task of "awakening" our fundamental attunement to and by the presencing of beings as a whole and being as such.²⁵ But he does not explicitly recognize it is by grace of our embodiment that *Dasein* is disposed in accordance with this fundamental attunement.) In this way, we shall begin to discern and recognize, emerging from the weave of Heidegger's texts, an emerging body of ontological understanding.

In spite of the double meaning persistently carried by the word "sense" ("Sinn" in German), whereby it can refer, not only to conceptual meaning, not only to the cognitive, but also to bodily felt meaning and the realm of the sensuous, Heidegger restricted the reference of this word in *Being and Time* to the realm of the cognitive, the realm of the "understanding," likewise thought in a strictly cognitive sense. He does not allow his thinking to be guided by the doubleness of the word *Sinn*.²⁶ Were he to have followed the hints, the *Winke* suggested by this doubleness, perhaps he would have come to recognize two kinds, or rather levels, of meaningfulness, one that is engaged by our actions and interactions as embodied beings and one that is engaged through the intentionality of discourse, through *Rede*; and he would not have unwittingly perpetuated a tradition of intellectualism according to which meaning is denied to the realm of the sensuous, the realm of perception, sensibility, and gesture. Nor would he have treated language as if it were disembodied, split off from the sense-making constitutive of our bodily being-in-the-world. And perhaps he would not have been tempted to think of hermeneutics in the traditional way, restricting it to discourse, the realm of the cognitive, the intellectual, the ideal. *Befindlichkeit* is our always already hermeneutical embodiment.

I propose to think of hermeneutics as a process of disclosing, of unconcealment, that can take place not only in the reading or interpreting of texts, but rather in all our engagements with meaning – in perception and feeling, for example, as well as in our practical interactions, as embodied beings, with the world around us. I also propose to think our pre-ontological understanding (or ontological pre-understanding) of being in connection with our *Befindlichkeit*,

and as a primordial level of hermeneutical intentionality and understanding that we are enjoined to experience simply by grace of the fact that we are “thrown” (like dice) into existence and “find ourselves” as embodied beings in the world. This level of understanding is initially pre-predicative, a deep, bodily felt sense of being in the world, an experience that may be faithfully described, perhaps, in terms of a deep sense of inherence, belonging, rootedness, and grounding, and that normally and for the most part *remains* deeply, darkly implicit, pre-reflective, unthematized, unquestioned. As a level of intentionality, this *Befindlichkeit* is primordially passive – more passive than passive, as Levinas would say. It is a bodily felt responsiveness that is called forth, solicited, in an immemorial time of origin *prior* to all reflective awareness, all forms of intentionality that express the ego-logical will. It is an attunement (*Stimmung*), an enjoinder (*Fuge*, *Fügung*) that reflection experiences as always already in effect, the *arkhé* of an immemorial “dispensation” (*Geschick*) ruling over our embodiment and laying down the existential coordinates of our ontological disposition as beings bodily related to, and called into question by, the presencing (unconcealment) of being. Thus, for example, the primordial level of our capacity for hearing is retrievable phenomenologically as the bodily felt sense of an auditory belongingness (*Zugehörigkeit*), a primordial claim on our ability to be responsive – and a first solicitation of our “responsibility” for the hermeneutical, ontologically disclosive character of our responsiveness as beings gifted with the capacity for listening and hearing. Infants enjoy without thought the existential condition bestowed by this primordial intentionality: it is, for them, what we might call the grace of a “pre-ontological understanding” (or “ontological pre-understanding”) of being.²⁷

But, of course, infants grow up. This developmental process is both a natural process, happening in accordance with the preprogramming dictated by nature, and also a cultural process, happening in response to the forces of socialization to which the child is exposed. Thus, unlike the natural process, the cultural is not predetermined in advance: the child’s individuation all depends on the (hermeneutical) character of the socialization. Above all, it depends on whether this process *imposes* socially constructed, culturally hegemonic interpretations on the child’s experience, in which case the violence of this violation will be repeated in the character of the adult, or whether, instead, it works with phenomenological respect for the child’s own experience as it is lived, approaching the child’s experience in a caring, preserving way to draw out, or elicit hermeneutically, the most excellent ontological potentialities-for-being.

However, regardless of the character of the socialization, the child’s maturation involves a process of closure, a certain *Seinsvergessenheit*, a forgetting of the preontological understanding it once enjoyed. The natural and the cultural processes of development conspire to construct a system of ego-logical defenses. When the being of the child is reduced to the condition of subject and the being

of the beings that the child encounters is reduced to the condition of object, these ego-logical defenses are firmly in place. This is the “fallen” condition of mortals, immersed in the everyday world, preoccupied with self-preservation, dreams and aspirations, worldly projects, obligations, responsibilities. It is the condition of ontical, average everydayness, unmindful of the ontological dimensionality – the presencing, the “taking place” and “clearing” of being – in which, and only by grace of which, we are able to live. Long before we are old enough to realize it, we have always already closed what Blake called the “doors of perception,” shutting off the frightening solicitations, the unfathomable claims on our capacity for disclosive, unconcealing responsiveness, that come from the presencing of being.

This ontic condition of normality can somewhat, however, be altered. The ego-logical process of ontological forgetfulness can to some extent be reversed, even when this would go against the grain – against the *Gestell* – of our present epoch. Realizing that we are in a “fallen” condition, we can, as thoughtful, reflective adults, resolve to undertake and undergo a certain process of recollection: a recollection of being, an ingathering into memory of the immemorial presencing of being. Given our ontology, the ways that being has presenced, it should be clear that, and why, this recollection (*Erinnerung* as *Wiederholung*) can only take place in and through our embodiment.²⁸ As an infinite *task* for our embodiment. What this recollection attempts to retrieve and take up for ongoing realization and development is precisely that originary pre-ontological understanding of being with which we were “entrusted” at the very beginning of our lives, and traces of which the dispositions of our embodiment continue to carry in spite of our ego-logical forgetfulness. Through this recollection, the defenses that the ontically delimited ego has constructed can be to some extent breached, so that we are exposed to the solicitations of the presencing of being and opened up to the dimensionality of this presencing. As beings endowed with “ontological bodies,” we mortals can build and dwell in the clearing opened up by the presencing of being, letting ourselves undergo the opening-up and carrying-forward of our experience that this presencing can solicit.

One of the German words for perception is *Wahrnehmung*, a word composed of the German words for “true” (*wahr*) and “taking” (*nehmen*). (The other word for perception, often used by Heidegger, is *das Vernehmen*.) The word *wahr* figures in a family of words: not only in the noun, *Wahrheit*, meaning truth, but also in *Wahrnis* (safekeeping), *wahren* (to watch over and keep safe), *währen* (to endure), *bewahren* (to preserve), and *gewähren* (to vouchsafe, to warrant). Listening deeply to these etymological connections, Heidegger takes the task of philosophy, which in Greek means “the love of wisdom,” to be a question of caring for the truth. But what is truth? Challenging the tradition, which can think of truth only one-dimensionally, only ontically, as an adequation, or correspondence, between a state of the “mind” and a state of “reality” (or say

between a proposition and a state of affairs), and which therefore locates the truth in an assertion made in language, Heidegger argues that what the tradition calls "truth," what it sees and hears of truth, is the phenomenon of "correctness," and that there is a dimension of truth to which the tradition has been totally deaf and blind. Drawing on the discourse of the earliest Greek philosophers, he calls this dimension *aletheia*, unconcealment, and maintains that "correctness," truth understood as "correctness," depends on and presupposes this dimension: the determination of "correctness" is not possible without unconcealment. This more primordial moment, event, or phenomenon is the opening up, the clearing, and the laying-down of a context, a field of meaningfulness; and it is within this contextual field opened up for our questioning that the determination of correctness can take place. Without the recognition of this open and opening dimension, the "truth" becomes nothing but an idol, a reified, fetishized abstraction detached from the process of questioning; and it can seem to become an eternal truth, an eternal possession of knowledge.

Heidegger's radical formulation of the phenomenological method in his Introduction to *Being and Time* represents an attempt to think what "caring for the truth" should mean as an attitude, a mode of comportment toward the presencing of being. Nothing could be more radical than the aletheic formulation that he settled on there: to let the phenomenon show itself from out of itself. (Though it is indebted to Edmund Husserl's formulation of the method in *Ideas I*, it is far more radical in its recognition of the giving and the receiving.) As Heidegger's 1994–5 dialogue on *Gelassenheit* (his *Feldweg-Gespräch über das Denken*) demonstrates, the implications of this method for his phenomenology of perception could not be more far-reaching, more radical. Thought by way of a recollection of the aletheic dimension of truth, perception gets to be rooted in the groundless interplay of concealment and unconcealment. Freed from the control of the ontical ego, from its totalizing enclosure within the structure of subject and object, perception is no longer merely a taking, seizing and possessing, no longer an act of muted violence; rather, it can become a way of *caring* for the truth, a way of watching over it, keeping it safe, preserving it.²⁹ As Heidegger makes clear in *Being and Time*, but also, for example, in *Plato's Doctrine of Truth*, his essay "On the Essence of Truth," and the *Parmenides* lectures, "preserving" the truth does not mean protecting it from questioning, from contestation; on the contrary, for Heidegger, the whole point of recollecting the ontological, aletheic dimension of truth is to make sure that what we *take* to be true, true in the sense of "correct," will always be kept exposed to new contestations from the always open context. The only way to respect and care for the truth, the only way to watch over it and preserve it, is to keep all claims to truth exposed to the interplay of concealment and unconcealment, and thus to the possibility that they will be judged as illusion or error. Conventional wisdom has made it virtually impossible for scholars to recognize, in what

Heidegger has to say about perception, about seeing and hearing, the gestures of the hands and the postures of the body, the profoundly transformative intervention of his radical critique of the correspondence theory of truth and his recollection of its aletheic dimensionality.

What I am calling the ontological dimension of our embodiment is thus our bodily felt experience of an ongoing breaching, opening and carrying-forward manifesting through appropriately disclosive hermeneutical gestures, movements, and organs of perception in relation to the ongoing (abyssal) questioning and measuring of our existence by the presencing of being. What we need to learn in order to live ecstatically as mortals from out of an experience with thinking – what we need to learn in order to live as mortals in accordance with the "measure" of the ontological, is an embodiment – a way of standing, walking, gesturing, seeing and hearing – that, by virtue of its (our) skillful (*geschicklich*), hermeneutically disclosive comportment, is appropriate to the immeasurable interplay of presence and absence, as which the being of beings presences. What we need to learn is how to dwell: how to stand on the earth and under the sky. Learning this, a task for our embodiment, we may perhaps begin to "redeem" the gift of a pre-ontological understanding through an emerging body of ontological understanding.

By grace of the bodily attunement (*Stimmung*) inherent in the pre-ontological understanding of being that is distinctive of our human way of being (our *Befindlichkeit* as human beings), we are woven into a field or clearing (Merleau-Ponty would speak, here, of "la chair," an elemental flesh) that we share with all other beings. Thus, it is through our bodies that a sense of moral responsibility first takes hold of us. To the extent that our gestures, our seeing, our listening, and our speaking are rooted in the ontological dimension of our embodiment, drawing their inspiration from this dimension and flowing from the measure of grace and tact that this dimension accords to them, they may enjoy a certain freedom from the dominant ontology, the prevailing ways that being presences. And they would therefore be more capable of practising care and compassion, because in the ontological dimension of embodiment, our being is not bound to the ego-logically constructed structure of subject and object, but is intertwined with other beings through the being of the field.

The ontological is entirely a question of dimensionality. In an embodiment that recollects and retrieves the gift of nature, a pre-ontological understanding of being, bringing this attunement into the thoughtful care of everyday living, the pre-ontological understanding is raised up by thought and redeemed in a genuinely ontological understanding. Were our gestures thereby rooted in the ontological dimension of our embodiment, flowing from it, they would become the elegant organs of being – gestures of an embodiment always in question with regard to its openness to the otherness of all that is other. It is this question of

openness – openness to alterity – that constitutes the ontological dimension of our embodiment.

II

Hermeneutics as gesture: a reading of Heidegger's "Logos (Herakleitos B50)" study

ouk emou alla tou Logou akousantas. homologein sophon estin Hen Panta.
[When you have listened not to me but to the Logos, it is wise correspondingly to say: One is All.] Heraclitus

Legein and *logos* are the words of Herakleitos: mere fragments of his thought.³⁰ They are words that refer, let us say, to articulation – gestures of articulation. *Logos*, a noun, may be translated as “meaning,” “word,” “speech,” “discourse,” “account,” and “reason.” *Legein*, the corresponding verb, may be translated as “to speak,” “to give an account,” and “to explain.” But according to Heidegger, these ancient Greek words will be most fruitfully opened up at this time in history when they are understood, hermeneutically and more “primordially,” to mean a *gathering* and *laying-down*. This is an “ontological” understanding of the articulatory gesture, because it retrieves, and opens up, a certain “primordial” experience of being.

Heidegger’s thinking, in this essay on Heraclitus, has a two fold focus: first and foremost, an understanding of the *Legein* of the *Logos*, that toward which Herakleitos directs our listening; and secondarily, the *legein* of our own mortal *logos*. According to Heidegger, *homologein* describes the essential character of our own articulatory gestures, but only insofar as they are, or could become, more ontologically “appropriate,” more responsive, to the claim primordially laid down for them by the *Legein* of the *Logos*. But Heidegger is mainly concerned to bring out the more “formal” ontological character of the mortal *homologein*. He does not take the time to specify it as an ontological question (a *Seinsfrage*) referring us directly, i.e., phenomenologically, to *our own experience* as gesturing beings, beings born with the potential for a unique grace in motility. What he has not thought through defines our present task. For we do need to ask ourselves: What is mortal *legein*, what is its “character,” understood as articulatory gesture, when thinking places it, by virtue of the relationship called *homologein* in the ontological dimension of the *Legein* of the primordial *Logos*?

In Heidegger’s essay, the “Question of Being” calls our gesturing, and our motility in general, into question. It motivates a shift in our attention, our awareness; it questions our motivation. It could also touch us in our innermost being, and move us to take the measure of our gestural being, recollecting the

dimensionality of the ontological difference (i.e., the difference between being and beings) as the difference between our gesturing in its ontical everydayness and a gesturing opened by its awareness to the field of the being of beings as a whole. As we shall see, this question (*Seinsfrage*) summons us to consider the character of the ontologically hermeneutical gesture. It will be a question of “measuring” the character of our gestures, the ontic *legein* of our worldly gestures, against the dimensionality of the ontological *Legein*, against the openness that articulates being as such. What, then, is ontological hermeneutics, i.e., what is the hermeneutics of unconcealment, the hermeneutics through which the presencing of being shows itself as the interplay of concealment and unconcealment, when it takes the embodied form of a human gesture?

III

Thinking with our hands

According to our tradition of metaphysics, the human body is not capable of thinking. Thinking takes place only in the “mind.” And this “mind” is contingently located in the region of the head – which, for that reason, is often not counted as part of the human “body.” If we want ever to break out of this tradition, we must first of all acknowledge that we can think (for example) with our hands. Until we acknowledge this, it will not be possible for us to retrieve (*wiederholen*) for the future a different way for being to presence, although such a way must be already latent as an historical possibility in the primordial experience of the presencing of being that our technological sensibility tends to conceal behind *Zuhandensein* and *Vorhandensein*, i.e., behind the only two modes in (as) which the being of beings has presenced in the history of our Western world, namely, being-ready-to-hand and being-present-at-hand.³¹ Yet this retrieval may be crucial for our capacity to realize (or rather, make ourselves ready for) new historical possibilities. What accordingly differentiates Heidegger’s sense of “thinking” from the more familiar sense still dominant in our tradition is the fact that “thinking” in his sense – most certainly not a Cartesian “*res cogitans*” – allows us to understand *this* kind of experience. Our unwillingness to acknowledge a wonderful intelligence inwrought in the hands themselves makes us, in our daily living, profoundly *indifferent* to the “ontological difference,” and to the ontological “potential-for-being” of which we are capable by grace and virtue of the gift of our hands.

Etymology tells us that “to gesture” means “to bear,” “to bring forth,” “to give birth,” and “to make appear.” The gesturing of our hands is a *techné*, a skill, an articulatory capacity; it can also be *poiesis*, poetizing, bringing what we touch and handle into the beauty of the unconcealment of truth (*Schein*, the play of

appearances). But to speak of capacity, of skill, is to acknowledge the possibility of *development* and to assume some *responsibility* for this process. And if the capacity in question is a gift (an *Es gibt*, our embodied *Geschick*), then the bearing of this responsibility, transforming every gesture into a movement of rejoicing and thanksgiving, would be an appropriate (*schicklich*) response, an appropriate (*schicklich*) reception.³² But what, then, do our gestures normally, typically and habitually bring forth? To what do they give birth? What kinds of beings do they make appear in the world of their normally, typically and habitually restless activity? What is the *character* of their everyday *lesein*? The way our hands *are* does not touch, does not reach to, the way they *could* be: the way they *would* be, were we to realize their ingrained “destiny” of character (*vom Geschick her*) and develop and maintain their inherent gifts of skill.³³ Our skillful (*geschickt*) hands are a most precious gift.³⁴ We need to reciprocate this gift by giving them, in return, the gift of our thought, our awareness. (The etymology of our word, “awareness,” connects it with the German words for truth, entrustment, preserve, protect, and vouchsafe.)

In a lecture published in *What is Called Thinking?* Heidegger recognizes this deeply repressed, unrecognized need to reciprocate and accordingly undertakes a sustained meditation on the hands and their craft. “All the work of the hand,” he says, “is rooted in thinking.”³⁵ Is there a way of understanding this rootedness so that we may also say that there is a thinking of being, a maintenance of thought, which is rooted in the work of the hands? There is a letter in which Heidegger himself seems to prepare for this very question, for he counsels the student to “Stay on the path, in genuine need, and learn the *craft* of thinking.”³⁶ There is also a passage in “The Turning,” where Heidegger calls on thinking “to lend a hand [*an die Hand gehen*] to the coming-to-presence of being.”³⁷ Heidegger’s words, always carefully chosen, suggest that it is possible for the gesturing of the hands to become in a hermeneutically disclosive way what in a concealed way (a sense forgotten since time immemorial) it already essentially is, namely, a way of giving thought to being; and his words suggest that when our hands are *moved* by an awareness of their ontological span, they begin to realize their inwrought potential, opening themselves as much as conditions permit to the open dimensionality of the presencing of being, and preparing thereby for other, different ways for being to presence, ways other than as practical readiness-to-hand and theoretical presence-to-hand.

Now, this guardian awareness, this maintaining of the element of being, is *not* a pure, disembodied thought. Therefore, it will not be “directly” concerned with being “as such.” In the case of our hands, for example, it will be concerned, rather, with various touchable, manipulable things, things which are tangibly in being: things like the wood which the cabinet-maker works. For there is a *tactful* way of handling and manipulating things which is mindful of their dimensionality, the span of their presence, and which holds, keeps, and

maintains beings *in the immeasurable dimension of their being*, i.e., in the tangibly open dimension of the ontological difference. The hands give to (the presencing of) being our gift of thought *whenever* they handle things with appropriate skill, with care for their being. Whenever this kind of skill is at work, and wherever this kind of sensibility, this kind of reverence, is still handed down as the gift of an ancient tradition, there I think we will find a *living* response to the nihilism of our technological epoch.³⁸

Since the child’s first concepts (*Begriffe*) are schemata of comprehension formed in the very process of reaching-out-for, grasping (*greifen*) and manipulating, it is only to be expected that our experience of tangible beings, and hence, more abstractly and reflectively, our experience of being itself, will tend to be determined in ways that *correspond* to the initial character of the inquiring, learning gesture. The circumstances of early life, and the gestures they elicit, set the predominant tone (*Stimmung*) and character of the child’s first concept-formations. If we are concerned about pathologies in the character of comprehension, we should look to afflictions in the character of our conceptual prehensions. Since the “origin” of technology refers us back to the *techné* of our hands, a more developed awareness of the ontological character of our gestures – of their relation to the presencing tangibility of being – would contribute to the critique of technology; and it would also help us to retrieve otherwise concealed opportunities for an historical response to the technology-driven dangers that now threaten us.

It is with this consideration in mind, I believe, that Heidegger takes up the question of “proper use.”³⁹ His analysis of use brings out the “essential nature” of our hands and helps us to define the gestures of which we, as thinking mortals, are most worthy. It is a question of defining and measuring the “appropriate” fulfillment of our hands and gestures in relation to the dimensionality of the presencing of being, and therefore in relation to the *claims* on us that derive from the openness and difference of this dimension. According to Heidegger, then, we are appropriately *caring* when we relate “to the thing in hand according to its nature,” thus “letting that nature become manifest by the handling”⁴⁰ and letting ourselves – our hands, our gestures – be appropriated (*er-eignet*) by the presencing of the thing. This, of course, would be the embodiment of *Gelassenheit*. The grasp characteristic of technology (*das Ge-stell*) cannot reach into the essential nature of things, for its operations reify: they are tactless transgressions. The tender, caring touch, which *feels* what it touches with a reverence that is also active “aesthetic” appreciation, gets in touch with a thing’s essential nature more deeply and closely than the hand which wilfully grasps and clings, moved by desire (i.e., by attraction and aversion), or than the hand which is indifferent to the beauty of the thing in the disclosure of its truth, its ontological dimension of difference.

The rooting of gesture in thinking requires attention to the perceptive body of feeling. For bodily feeling, being the mode of our *original* understanding, i.e., our global pre-comprehension of things in a primordial "mood" (*Stimmung*) of openness, is our most tactful way into the opening depths of things. Touching with *Gelassenheit*, handling with care and tact, we leave things whole and intact.⁴¹ And we let them yield the richness of their more intangible nature, their deeper and otherwise inaccessible nature.

What is our capacity to be touched, and moved, by that which we are given for our touching? What is the *character* of our touch? By what are we touched, by what moved? Touching *presupposes* our capacity to be touched,⁴² and this reciprocity calls into question our inveterate tendency to polarize the tactile field into a subject and its object and lose touch with beings as a whole.

IV

The implicit legein of our motility

I want to argue that Heidegger's interpretation of *legein* as a gathering and laying-down is confirmed by our motility – that if we cultivate a phenomenologically vigilant awareness in our experience of motility itself, we will eventually encounter the implicit ontological *Legein* which has always and already defined the *deeper ontological character* of our ontical gestures and movements, normally, typically, and habitually confined to the ontologically forgetful dimensions of everyday ontic life. Merleau-Ponty will be extremely helpful in establishing the phenomenological evidence for this demonstration.

According to Merleau-Ponty, the human being enjoys "a global bodily knowledge which systematically embraces all its parts."⁴³ This body-knowledge is a "gathering." Furthermore, we are obliged to acknowledge that this innate "gesture" of physiognomic integration, a spontaneous functioning of the body which is concealed in the ontical understandings of both common sense and science, even touches and embraces the motility-field as a whole (PP, 317). It is, in fact, a "gathering" of the field. In his critique of empiricism, Merleau-Ponty observes that the gesturing of my hand "is not [intelligible as] a collection of points" (PP, 98). What this means is that a series of points along a linear trajectory cannot accurately graph the topology of even my simplest gesture. The truth of the matter is that, as he says, "Each instant of the movement embraces its whole span" (PP, 140). It is the concept of gathering, and not the concept of points, which graphs the human gesture. As he reflects on the observations which record the fate of Schneider, a patient suffering from serious motor disorder as a result of lesions damaging the brain, Merleau-Ponty begins

to see what Schneider's gestures lack and what "normal" gestures enjoy, namely, a certain style of movement, a certain deeply implicit "melody" (PP, 105). And he calls this "melody" an "intentional arc": "It is this intentional arc which brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensibility and motility" (PP, 136).

Now the point I wish to make is that this "melody," this "intentional arc" which Merleau-Ponty's eye of phenomenological reflection has unquestionably seen in the nature of human motility, is to be hermeneutically disclosed in its deeper *aletheic* truth as a gathering and laying-down. Concealed within every gesture and movement we make, there is an implicit ontical *legein* which is always and already engaged in (1) laying down an encompassing field of motility, (2) gathering up the compass of the field into a practical gestural trajectory, and (3) gathering the gesture itself into a unified, intelligible whole. This *legein* of the gesture (of the gesture as a *logos*) is not normally experienced with much awareness. For this reason, Merleau-Ponty wants to characterize the deeper experiencing of the melody as taking place, during the gesture, in a prepersonal or anonymous level of awareness.

Nevertheless, Heidegger's Question of Being pressures us to go still more deeply into the truth of our motility. For the Question of Being reminds us that we need to bring to light the *ontological relationship* between the character of the mortal *legein* and the primordial *Legein* of the *Logos*. It reminds us that we need to understand the *relationship* between the gathering and laying-down that is characteristic of the gestures of mortals and the gathering and laying-down of the *Logos* (being) itself. And it reminds us of the relationship *in order to challenge us* to continue deepening the reach and range of our experience of gestural motility as a guardian awareness of being.

V

Gestural motility and the primordial legein

Going still more deeply into the felt experience of gesturing and moving, we find ourselves "returning" to a still more "primordial stratum" of corporeal intentionalities that are always already functioning even without our reflective, thematizing recognition. Going beyond Merleau-Ponty, but still using his method of radical reflection, we eventually encounter a dimension of our motility-experience in which it is possible for us to realize the thorough-going, ongoing "interaction" – one might even say the "interpenetration" or "interweaving" – of the immeasurable *Legein* of the primordial *Logos* and the finitely measured *legein* of our mortal motility. Putting this in other words, I will argue that there is a dimension of our motility-being where, if we are

sufficiently open to experiencing it, we can reach and retrieve an implicit awareness (our “pre-ontological understanding”) of the primordial *Legein* as it touches our flesh, takes hold of our embodiment, outlines for us its measure, and lays claim to our gestural motivation. Merleau-Ponty writes that, “We must return to the *cogito* in search of a more fundamental *Logos* than that of objective thought” (PP, 365). We can, and I believe should, make the attempt to trace “objective being” to its rootedness, its inherence, in a “pre-objective” being: a “pre-logical” dimension of our experienced embodiment that I would call, using Heidegger’s terminology, the *Befindlichkeit* of the “pre-ontological understanding of being” which attunes and destines our gestural being, and that is to be found and retrieved by a reflection which parts company with the subjectivity of the *ego-cogito* and its co-emergent object in order to recollect, “beneath the subject,” a more primordial, anonymous structuration, a more original dynamism, a “prepersonal tradition” (PP, 254, 353, 336). This radicalized reflection is necessary because both common sense and its reflection in the objective sciences tend to lose touch with the more open experience that always underlies them. Thus, says Merleau-Ponty, when I “think,” I *reduce* the field of my being, whereas, “when I perceive, I belong, through my point of view, to the world as a whole” (PP, 329). Recollecting this belongingness, this “gathering” inherence in the world as a whole, we regain for our gestures a lost dimension of significance.

Continuing our radical reflection, we discover that there is “a communication with the world more ancient than thought” (PP, 254), a *legein* that has always and already “marked out” for us, as a general “project,” the place and the field of our motility. The *Legein* of the *Logos* enters into a primordial communication with us through the *legein* of our prepersonally organized motility; its primordial gathering of our temporally dispersed “consciousnesses” always underlies our personal life, that not only overlays this primordial contact, but also tends to conceal and restrict it (PP, 347). But all the “gatherings” of which we are capable essentially depend on the still more primordial layout and gathering of the *Logos* itself. Presencing in our world as the *clearing* by grace of which we may enjoy a space of freedom in which to move, the *Logos* serves, as Merleau-Ponty says of “space,” “to embrace every being that one can imagine” (PP, 288). The *Legein* of the *Logos* is a “setting,” granting our motility a basic (con)text and a “grammar.”⁴⁴ It “lays down” an organized field of coordinates and trajectories; it orients our movements to the possibilities of our world; it anchors and aligns the body; finally, it offers itself as a “corporeal schema” to orchestrate and choreograph the *sense* of our motility (PP, 100). The *Legein* of the *Logos* is the “origin” of our world-space, in that it is that ekstatic topology, that elemental “inscription” of a “primordial field” (PP, 242), that “universal setting” (PP, 326), by grace of which alone it first becomes possible for us to find our bearings and move about in the space of our world (PP, 251). This, in sum,

is how the gathering and laying-down of the primordial *Logos* presences – and works – within the motility-field of our experience.

VI

The homologuein

The gift (the “Es gibt”) of the *Logos* is the laying out (or “layout”) of a clearing and the gathering of a continuous field. And the receiving of this gift takes place in the anonymous, prepersonal, pre-ontological dimension where our motility first makes contact with the topology of the *Logos*. But the giving of this gift *lays claim* to our motility – a claim we may well feel a need to redeem by recognition and guardian awareness. We can, as it were, redeem our beholdenness (*Schuldigkeit*) insofar as we disclosively re-collect the original *Legein*, now overlaid by the paths of our forgetfulness, gathering up into the time of our own remembering that by the grace of which our motility was first enabled to become, itself, a laying-down of coordinates and a coherent gathering of motivating energy. Through the grace in the re-remembering, a turbulent and fragmented body is gathered up into its felt wholeness.

The primordial laying-down-and-gathering-of-a-field, i.e., the effective presencing of the *Logos* in our world, sets mortal beings in motion. But our thinking, deeply moved by the Question of Being, sets in motion a process of recollection (*anamnesis*) which *opens* us to the claim on our motility that has already been implicitly acknowledged by our guardian ontological awareness – by the *Befindlichkeit* of our pre-ontological understanding of being. The claim of the *Logos* calls for our articulation, for a *response* from our own mortal *legein*. With the concept of the *homologuein*, our re-remembering begins to respond to this claim, and it gathers our still undeveloped pre-ontological capacities for motility into the melodic wholeness of their most appropriate ontological fulfillment. Our everyday forms of motility – the characteristically ontic forms of human motility – take place, in truth, in a field or clearing of being with whose immeasurable dimensionality we naturally tend to lose touch, despite the reminders kept alive in our cultural myths. The being of this field, in which we may always recognize the workings of the primordial *Logos*, articulates through our bodily nature the very possibilities for movement that ground, and clear an open space for, all actual “passages” of human motility. The being of this field essentially outlines, and sets in motion, the schema of corporeal opportunities for deepening our natural capacity to “bring forth.” Since reflection re-collects, in the *depth* of our motility, the primordial articulations of the *Logos*, the *deepening* of our capacity points to our skillfulness in bringing forth

this primordial articulation – making it luminously manifest in the “elegance” of our gestures and movements. (“Elegance” refers here, by way of etymology, to the *perfection* of our *legein*.)

In regard to human motility, a natural capacity awaiting its most appropriate alignment and fulfillment, the Question of Being calls attention to the primordial claim on our grounding, our alignment, and our gestural grace; it calls attention to a claim that the clearing and grounding *Logos* has *already*, i.e., pre-ontologically, set in motion. The Question *gathers* our customary motility into a thoughtful recollection of (our relation, as beings who gesture, to) the openness of being, which is always already presencing *for us* as the *clearing* we need to move in and the *ground* we need to stand on – the ground we need, in fact, to stand being ourselves. When our ontical motility responds to this ontological claim, thoughtfully celebrating the inherence of the gift (the “Es gibt”) in the very movements themselves, the *homologein* is a wondrous manifestation of being.

The *homologein*, binding mortal *legein* to the *Legein* of the *Logos*, is a relationship which takes place through the guardian awareness that lives in the very flesh of our motility. It is an ontic *mimesis* of the *Legein* of the *Logos*, taking place in and as the *legein* of our own gestures. It is an isomorphism between *our* gestures and the “gestures” of being, to the extent that our gestures, by virtue of recollection, become a *legein* (a gathering and laying down) that hermeneutically repeats and unconceals the topology of being, showing it as the primordial *Legein* upon which our gestures depend for the opening up of a meaningful world. As the *Legein* of the *Logos* is a setting-down and gathering that sets in motion the *ek-stasis* of our motility, the *homologein* that shines forth in mortal *legein* is a *corresponding* gesture, an articulation (*Wiederholung*) that “repeats” the primordial gesture in an appropriate way, i.e., with hermeneutical elegance. Our *homologein* consists, to begin with, in a motility moved by our understanding that our motility is isomorphically “the same” as the motility of the *Logos*, in the sense that *it itself* “clears a space,” that *it itself* sets down, that *it itself* can gather and open. But we need to understand that the *homologein* will nevertheless *never* be fully appropriate, never authentically “finished,” until the primordial *Legein* is, as such, articulately bodied forth in a human motility whose very gestures and movements, being “the same,” “pay homage” to their unfathomable source. Our very motility, our own clearing of space, our own laying-out and setting-down, and our own ways of opening and gathering, are called upon to become the route of this radical recollection: a “truthing” (an *aletheia*), a disclosive event (*Ereignis*) within, and also of, the primordial articulation of the *Logos*. The *homologein* takes place *only* when the hermeneutical “character” of our motility, as a form of mortal *legein*, brings the primordial *Legein* into presence as the primordial, and brings it forth in the *truth* of its own primordiality, i.e., as that event of gathering and setting-out by grace of which our own mortal *legein*, in

gestures and movements, first becomes feasible. Thus we may say that the *Logos* “needs” our motility to disclose its presencing in the very *giving* of that (clearing, grounding and gathering lay-out) by grace of which our own ontical *legein* is first set in motion, and on which our motility essentially depends. But there is no point in saying this unless it is understood, first, that we mortals are the ones in need, needing to commemorate the ontological clearing, the laying down, and the gathering of the *Logos*, without which our own ontical clearing and gathering would not at all be feasible. Second, it must also be understood that our own motility enjoys ontological fulfillment only insofar as it can appropriately “repeat” (*weiderholen*) the original *Legein* in the celebration of a hermeneutical disclosure.

VII

The skillful character of the hermeneutical gesture

If we now gather together the results of our foregoing analysis, it will be noted that we have described human gesture, human motility, at five distinct levels of being. (1) The ontic level of naive and unreflective everyday experience (the level of the “natural attitude,” the level of conformable behavior belonging to “everyone-and-anyone”), where gestures of clearing, gathering, and laying-down are always already taking place, but without any awareness and understanding. (2) The deeper level of “objective thought,” where motility, ontically understood (and ontologically concealed) in terms of Euclidean geometry, Newtonian physics, classical neurophysiology, mechanistic psychology, and traditional metaphysics, is mapped in linear time along a linear series of points simply added together in space. (3) and (4) The two deeper levels of radical reflection, where motility is encountered, first of all, in the experience of the “intentional arc,” a melodic gathering and laying down, and then, second, in the more primitive, pre-ontological experience of an anonymous, prepersonal, non-egological clearing, laying-down and gathering which is not of my own doing, and on which, in fact, my own motility necessarily depends for its feasibility. And finally (5) the level of ontological thinking, where the ontical motility of mortals is disclosively articulated as (i) having been already pre-ontologically determined (*bestimmt*) by the *Legein* of the primordial *Logos*, and (ii) as continuing to call for a fulfillment which can only take place through the ongoing cultivation, or deepening, of an individual hermeneutic “appreciation” of being within the field of motility.

The first two understandings are levels which assume, and work entirely within, the traditional theory of truth as correspondence – a correspondence between an articulatory gesture and the reality it signifies, whereas the second

two levels involve understandings which begin to recognize that the *traditional* theory of truth is essentially *derivative* from a more primordial *experience* of truth as unconcealment, hermeneutical disclosure. It is only in the even more radical ontological understanding of the fifth level, however, that the gesture is finally *appropriately understood* in the context of a hermeneutical theory and it is accordingly disclosed as an organ for the taking-place of a hermeneutical event of being (*Ereignis*). Thus, when the fifth and deepest level of awareness is bodied forth, the articulation of the ontological difference appears in all its beauty as the space-clearing "gesture" of the *Logos* and its primordial gathering of all beings. Thus what I have called, above, the cultivation of an "appreciation" of being means that we *develop* our capacity to gesture and move – or, more specifically, that we develop our *natural* gestures, which are *already* clearing an open space, laying-down, and gathering – in such a way that, by the character of these gestures *as such*, we gather into our collective memory, recollect, and bring to living presence, the primordial clearing, laying-down, and gathering of being itself, giving thanks, in the very joy of this embodied recollection, to the primordial "gesture": thanks for the field it has laid down, and thanks for the motility its gathering has made possible and set in motion. Thanks by virtue of gestures that bring thoughtful disclosive *caring* into all our worldly interactions. (See Heidegger's very important discussion of "Care" in *Being and Time*, §§ 41–2, pp. 235–44.) Such caring depends on the extent of our openness to the otherness of that which is other. The extent of our openness to alterity is thus the measure of what I have called the ontological dimension of our embodiment.

Notes

- 1 Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 14–15; *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), p. 15.
- 2 Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), Pt I, ch. 3, §23, p. 143.
- 3 Eugen Fink and Martin Heidegger, *Heraclitus Seminar 1966–1967* (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1979), p. 146. For further discussion, see the first volume of my trilogy, *The Body's Recollection of Being* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), esp. pp. 38–89.
- 4 Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1, *The Will to Power as Art* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 209.
- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 98–9.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- 7 Also see Heidegger's discussion of the vision of the "seer" in "The Anaximander Fragment," *Early Greek Thinking*, pp. 33–8; his extremely important discussion of light, lighting, and the relation of the gaze to brightness, concealment, and

- unconcealment, our entrustment with presencing, and our responsibility for taking care of the lighting, in "Aletheia (Heraclitus, Fragment B16)," *Early Greek Thinking*, pp. 118–23; and his discussion, in "Moira (Parmenides VIII, 34–41)," pp. 96–100, of the forgetfulness of ordinary perception in relation to the light of what presences in the field of presencing.
- 8 Heidegger and Fink, *Heraclitus Seminar*, p. 146.
 - 9 Heidegger, "Hölderlin und das Wesen der Dichtung," *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1971), p. 36: "Seine Zugehörigkeit zur Erde."
 - 10 *Ibid.*, p. 45: "gesammelt auf den Grund seines Daseins."
 - 11 Heidegger, "Poetically Man Dwells . . ." in A. Hofstadter (ed.), *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 223. For the German, see "Dichterisch Wohnt der Mensch . . .," *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Gunther Neske, 1954), p. 198.
 - 12 Heidegger, "The Turning" in *The Question of Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 40. For the German, see "Die Kehre" in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, p. 40: "Was sollen wir tun, dies bedenken: *Wie müssen wir denken?* Denn das Denken ist das eigentliche Handeln, wenn Handeln heißt, dem Wesen des Seins an die Hand gehen." For Heidegger, it is thinking that is the "genuine" activity. He also believes, as this quotation shows, that our *hands* can serve the presencing of being, perhaps learning to bring it forth in an historically different way.
 - 13 Heidegger, "The Turning," p. 39.
 - 14 Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 16. For the German, see *Was Heisst Denken?* (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1954), pp. 50–1.
 - 15 *Ibid.*, p. 16. In the German text, p. 51.
 - 16 *Ibid.*, p. 23. In the German text, p. 53.
 - 17 See Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), §70 and §§38–9, pp. 292, 162, 172.
 - 18 For a more elaborate treatment, see the second volume of my trilogy, *The Opening of Vision: Nihilism and the Postmodern Situation* (London: Routledge, 1988). See also my chapter on "Decline and Fall: Ocularcentrism in Heidegger's Reading of the History of Metaphysics" in David Michael Levin (ed.), *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 186–217 and "The Field of Vision: Intersections of the Visible and the Invisible in Heidegger's *Feldweg-Gespräch über das Denken* and Merleau-Ponty's *Working Notes*," forthcoming in Hugh Silverman and Wilhelm Wurzer (eds), *Visibility and Expressivity* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press).
 - 19 For a more elaborate treatment, see the third volume of my trilogy, *The Listening Self: Personal Growth, Social Change, and the Closure of Metaphysics* (New York: Routledge, 1989).
 - 20 For more on hands, handling, practical activity, the work of the hands, hand-writing, typewriting, and the hands' relation to signs and hermeneutical disclosure,

- see Heidegger's *Parmenides* (Bloomington Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 80–7. On “the proper use of the hands,” see “The Anaximander Fragment,” *Early Greek Thinking*, pp. 51–2, *What is Called Thinking?*, pp. 186–7, 191, 195–6.
- 21 This holds true even of our breath, in that breathing can occur either with or without an ontological awareness and rhythm, and we are correspondingly responsible for the extent to which it is permeated by such awareness, such a sense of measure. See my study, “Logos and Psyche: A Hermeneutics of Breathing,” *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. XIV, 1984, pp. 121–47.
- 22 Heidegger, “What is Metaphysics?” in David Farrell Krell (ed.), *Basic Writings*, 2nd edn (New York: Harper & Row, 1993), p. 100; *Was Ist Metaphysik?* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1955), p. 31.
- 23 For Heidegger's discussion of “*Beindlichkeit*” see *Being and Time*, §29, pp. 172–7.
- 24 In particular, it is a question of a “fundamental attunement” (*Grundstimmung*). For a good discussion of this fundamental attunement, see *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, §2 (p. 7), §§ 16–18 (pp. 59–71), §74 (p. 350).
- 25 On “awakening,” see Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, §§16–18 (pp. 59–71), §21 (p. 82), and §37 (p. 161).
- 26 I am indebted to Donn Welton for an e-mail communication (May 17, 1996) which reminded me to discuss Heidegger's neglect of the doubleness of the word *Sinn*.
- 27 See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 168: “Metaphysics – the coming to light of something beyond nature – is not localized at the level of knowledge: it begins with the opening out upon another.” He also says (*ibid.*, p. 206) that it is a question of learning, or relearning, “to feel our body,” to make contact with “that other knowledge” that is “underneath the objective and detached knowledge of the body.” This “other knowledge,” bodily felt, prepersonal, is “an opening upon a field of beings” in the world” (*ibid.*, p. 216).
- 28 For further discussion of this process of recollection as a task for our embodiment, see the first volume of my trilogy, *The Body's Recollection of Being* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985).
- 29 For Heidegger's discussion of “care” see “*Dasein's Being as Care*,” *Being and Time*, §§ 41 and 42, pp. 235–44.
- 30 Heidegger, “Logos (Heraclitus B50),” *Early Greek Thinking*, pp. 59–78.
- 31 See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Division I, ch. 3, pp. 98–9, 101–4.
- 32 See Heidegger, “Logos (Heraclitus B50),” pp. 68, 74.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 74.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 68.
- 35 Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* Part I, Lecture I, p. 16.
- 36 See Heidegger's letter to Mr Buchner, a “young student,” dated June 18, 1950, in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translated by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 186.
- 37 Heidegger, “The Turning,” p. 40. For the German, see *Die Technik und die Kehre* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1962), p. 40. Also see “Poetically Man Dwells. . .,” p. 223.

- 38 See my book, *The Body's Recollection of Being*. Also see Heidegger, *Parmenides* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 80–7.
- 39 See Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, pp. 14–15 and 186–96; *Parmenides*, pp. 80–7; and “The Anaximander Fragment,” *Early Greek Thinking*, pp. 51–2.
- 40 Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, p. 195. Also see *Being and Time*, Div. I, ch. 5, §36, p. 215, where Heidegger translates Aristotle's observation that “All men by nature desire to know” and gives it an explicitly *embodied* meaning, taking the Greek word for “know” in its root sense, “to see.” Heidegger's translation is therefore: “The care for seeing is essential to man's being.”
- 41 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Div. I, ch. 6, §41, pp. 235–44.
- 42 *Ibid.*, Div. I, ch. 3, pp. 30–1.
- 43 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* [hereafter PP], translated by Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 314.
- 44 See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Div. I, ch. 3, p. 143 on the up – down, right – left, front – back axes that represent the spatialization of our embodiment.

7

SATURATED INTENTIONALITY

Anthony J. Steinbock¹

The first breakthrough of this universal a priori of correlation between the experienced object and manners of givenness (which occurred during my Logical Investigations around 1898) affected me so deeply that my whole subsequent life- work has been dominated by the task of systematically elaborating on this a priori of correlation.

Edmund Husserl²

To our mind Husserl's originality goes beyond the notion of intentionality; it is found in the elaboration of this notion and in the discovery, beneath the intentionality of representations, of a deeper intentionality that others have called existence.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty³

Introduction

Phenomenologically, intentionality is saturated; intentionality is characterized not by lack, but surplus, not by absence, but too much presence. Saturation is not the mere present, nor is it the non-present, but a type of *presence*, generative presence. Saturated presence is not co-original with experienced absence, for absence points irreversibly to saturated presence.

Such statements certainly go against the grain of much work today that wants either to challenge a "metaphysics of presence," to emphasize negativity, or to maintain that phenomenology – perhaps in spite of itself – was really about the task of harkening to absence. I suggest that the understanding of absence, lack, and negativity pursued and developed in so-called "postmodern" discourses can be misleading, not because they criticize a kind of punctual present, etc., but because they miss "the thing itself" as saturated presence.

If consciousness is desiring consciousness, it is not because it is missing something merely, but because it is satiated and wants more on the basis of plenitude. If we are inclined to take in more of an object, it is not merely

because we want to see more, but because it affectively sketches the course of its givenness, because it has already been given fully. If we turn away from something in repulsion or disgust, it is not because we lack interest, but more primordially, because we have already "had *too much*" of it. If we are disappointed, it is not because something did not arise, but more deeply because something else took its place too fully, or because what appears "falls short" of its optimal givenness. If "Others" are accessible only in the mode of inaccessibility – to employ a phenomenological and Levinasian formulation – it is not because they are irretrievably absent, removed from the perceptual present; it is their *personal presence* that makes them inaccessible. When we do experience absence or lack, it is not because the latter are ontologically or phenomenologically primary; rather, lack implicitly refers to a *uniquely* saturated, "specific" presence. In short, if we prefer, value, hesitate, love, lack, are disappointed, denounce, reject, judge, etc., it is because our comportment to the world and to others is saturated.

The task of this essay is to elaborate what I am calling here "saturated intentionality." On the one hand, my analysis will have the advantage of saying nothing new, since saturated intentionality was already implied in the phenomenological descriptions by Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. On the other hand, intentionality has often been misunderstood, and it is to this extent that the notion of saturated intentionality will appear unique or distinctive.

Let me add that intentionality is not a thing, but a relation. More actively stated, it is a process of relating that lends itself to an internal discrimination in terms of correlates. Nevertheless, describing intentionality in terms of "subjective" and "objective" correlates can be misleading if they are taken as independent entities. To keep the focus on saturation as a whole, I speak instead of intertwining subjective and objective "vectors." I discuss the "subjective" vector of saturation by examining the way in which saturation is expressed in the process of "intending." When I discuss this vector of saturated intentionality, I will only be emphasizing a particular nuance of saturation, and I will not – and indeed cannot – isolate it from the objective vector of saturation. Thus, in my second section I examine the forces that exceed subjective intending and dynamically elicit the becoming of sense. For intentionality is saturated because both subjective and objective vectors are "active" forces, as it were, "over-determining" the intentional relation. Finally, I suggest implications of saturation that draw one in the direction beyond saturation.

1 The Subjective Vector of Saturation

In this section I take up the subjective vector of saturation in three modalities: conscious intending, operative intending, and what I call global intentionality.

In the first instance I point to saturation by presenting some basic formulations of intentionality on the level of consciousness. Here saturation is grasped through sense-giving, and in particular, through the interplay of simple and categorial perception. Operative intending will take up saturation more specifically on the level of embodied intentionality and the habitual body. Finally, we will see a transition from the subjective to the objective vector of saturation by examining briefly the phenomenological role of the earth as earth-ground which itself saturates the lived-body.

Conscious intending

One of Husserl's primary contributions to the early phenomenological concept of intentionality can be seen in the Fifth Logical Investigation where he regards the intentional object not merely as a mundane thing, an ontological "What," but in terms of its *modes* or *ways* of givenness, or as he writes, its "How." The question relevant to phenomenology (as constitutive philosophy) is not *what* objects are, real or possible, asserted or doubted (i.e., taken for granted), but *how* objects, as appearing, appear to consciousness.⁴ I will explain the significance of Husserl's distinctions within a phenomenology of conscious intending by drawing initially on the perceptual sphere.

1 *Sense-giving as mystery and the surplus of sense* In perception I am conscious, say, of the boulder. To perceive the boulder means that I posit or presuppose its being in some way. It has sense for me (as being a boulder to climb on, to sit upon, etc.) because I "mean" it, "posit" it, or "take" it in such a way. This thetic or doxic quality of the intending act determines the way in which the act is in relation to the object. So, for example, I believe the presence of the object in perceiving it, doubting it, wishing for it, judging it, etc.

This manner of formulating the subjective contribution to the intentional structure can be summarized in a word: sense-giving [*Sinngebung*]. Consciousness is a process of giving-sense or meaning. This process of sense-giving is one of the first clues to saturation. In one respect, there is "no reason" for the world to take on the sense it has. The fact that it has this sense rather than that, the fact that a boulder has the sense *as* boulder is a mystery. This sense-giving as mystery means simply that out of the fullness of the intentional act there is sense, or again, that we presuppose or posit in advance [*voraus-setzen*] objects such that they have sense prior to justifying this sense; the justification is intrinsic to the self-giving.⁵ The reduction to the dimensions of constituting sense serves, then, to disclose mystery *qua* mystery, i.e., that there is sense at all by pointing to "fundamental strangeness" and the "miracle of appearing." Some names Merleau-Ponty gives to this emergence of sense include "transcendence" and

"ontological contingency."⁶ This movement lies at the heart of his oft-cited phrase that we are "condemned to sense."

The expression "modes of givenness" is fundamentally ambiguous and has at least two meanings. First, it can depict the process of subjective sense-giving. Second, it can refer to the way in which the objective vector gives itself. Let me interpret saturated intentionality further by examining two sense-giving and sense-fulfilling levels: simple and categorial perception.

2 *Simple and categorial saturation* Simple perceptions are those of a single "act level" and are not founded on other acts. Accordingly, simple objects are brought to givenness in a simple manner [*in schlichter Weise*], which is to say, the object comes to self-givenness directly just as it is meant without recourse to more basic acts; objects of simple perception do not presuppose acts that have already constituted objects.

With regard to simple perception, categorial perception stands in a relation of surplus [*Überschuß*].⁷ In this case, the simple is saturated by the categorial. For example, I touch the gritty sandstone: This "gritty sandstone" is given in simple perception. But I cannot touch "simply" "that-the-sandstone-is-gritty."⁸ While I cannot perceive categorial forms in simple perception, categorial objects in general are given in their ideality in a correlative intuition proper to these types of objects, namely, in the categorial perception of affair-complexes, or essences and idealities.⁹ With this distinction between simple and categorial levels, we can be more specific about saturation on both these levels.

(i) In simple perception, the unity of the object is not an accumulation of partial intentions. I intend the whole object by co-intending its "internal horizons" belonging to the object itself, and "external horizons" as in a field of things.¹⁰ Since every perspective points to an unending series of different perspectives, since the latter are implicit in the prominent perspective, I intend or "mean" more than what is given, even in intuitive, anticipatory intentions.¹¹ In simple perception the same object is given *fully*, but *not exhaustively*, since its fullness generates other modes of full presentation.

Fulfillment, accordingly, is not an instantaneous accomplishment, but a generative movement of being given more fully. As intending beings, we mean or intend more through this fullness, not primordially through emptiness or absence. The experienced lack is indicative of a specific presence, even if we are not able to identify cognitively what that presence is. We would not miss someone, for example, if his or her presence had not already imbued the surroundings, saturated the conversations, colored the music we listen to, etc. Likewise, we can already miss someone who is going to leave even though he or she is present now, because a delineated futural presence and the possibilities it holds saturates the full intentional reality. It is not absence that generates this felt

experience, for we miss something, someone, some specific presence that shows up in our experience as lacking, missing. Intentionality is saturated on the simple level because what is given is always given fully and because I always intend more than what is given fully.

(ii) Even though the simple act is said to found the categorial one, there is another sense in which the simple perception is founded in a categorial perception: Simple perception is saturated by the categorial. The reason I can see a boulder as boulder (which is to say implicitly the being of the boulder) is due to the fact that I perceive the boulder as it is meant in its ideality through categorial perception; that is, in and through the simple presence of this boulder, I grasp the boulder concretely. Accordingly, the categorial is said to be founded in the simple because it is only through the simple concrete reality that the categorial can be given. But a peculiar inversion of the order of foundation is in play that embellishes further the relation of saturation. In order to see this particular boulder, I must also see it as an instance of the boulder such that the categorial essence "boulder" guides the simple perception of this boulder as this boulder.¹² Here the simple is saturated by and in this sense founded in the categorial. Accordingly, I am not just drawn to the back side of the boulder because I suspect that something is missing. Rather, it is already sketched out for simple perception through the categorial full givenness that guides my perceiving.

Finally, not only is there a surplus of the categorial over the simple, but we find a surplus of the simple over the categorial. This happens when the simple perception not only ruptures or breaks with the categorial object, i.e., when it does not follow the anticipated essence as an aberration or abnormality; rather it occurs when the latter, the abnormal [*anomale*] perception actually institutes a new normality, a new telos, which is to say, a new categorial object. This relation enables us to say that the categorial is also saturated by the simple.¹³

Perception is always ahead of itself and the experience of the boulder is saturated from the start because more is given than what I can simply intend. What I simply perceive is guided by what I categorially perceive. Without this relation of saturation between simple and categorial perception, perception would be flat.

Far from these relations of saturation obviating the phenomena of surprise or disappointment, the latter are expressive of saturated presence. Surprise, like the experience of strangeness or relief in something not having taken place, is founded in a unique presence that ruptures or exceeds anticipation. Similarly, disappointment arises when some other presence falls short or disrupts a pattern of expectation. In both cases the initial presence anticipated remains efficacious as a possibility.

Operative intending

The surplus of sense-giving explicated on the level of consciousness is not as full as it could be. An exposition of saturated intentionality from the perspective of the subjective vector requires a movement to the embodied dimension of experience, to the level of kinaesthetic motivations or bodily movement.

Operative intentionality [*fungierende Intentionalität*] designates prereflective experience that is functional without having to be thematic or engaged in an explicit epistemic acquisition. It constitutes the prepredicative unity of objects, of the world, and of our life.¹⁴ This dimension of experience is described by Husserl under the aegis of "aesthetic experience," and more particularly with the expressions "passive synthesis" and "instinct" or "drive-intentionality" [*Triebintentionalität*]. For Merleau-Ponty operative intentionality includes the intentionality of movement, erotic intentionality, the habitual body, etc. Phenomenological analyses of these modes of intentionality take place on the level of the lived-body [*Leib, le corps propre*].

Lived-body intentionality functions on the order of an "I can" [*Ich kann, je peux*] and not as an "I think." For bodily space may be given to me in an intention to grasp without being given in an intention to know.¹⁵ The "I can" is the embodied ability to instigate a flow of appearances, to pursue richer fulfillment and to move towards an anticipated situation that is given (teleologically) from the start.¹⁶ It becomes even more clear on the level of operative intentionality that fulfillment is not a sudden acquisition, accomplished without further ado. Rather, the full givenness of the object draws us to fulfill more: "and in this [system of indicating implications, the object] beckons to us, as it were: 'there is still more to see here; turn me so you can see all my sides, let your gaze run through me, draw closer to me, open me up, divide me; keep on looking over me anew, turning me to see all sides.'"¹⁷

As I come across a boulder in my path, a field of possibilities open up that sketch it either as obstacle or as opportunity to climb. When I put my foot on the lower ridge and push up, pockets, ridges, rifts present themselves as points of stability to ascend or as too small to grip. My stepping up motivates new appearances that are highlighted, drawing out new gestures on my part. In each movement, this rock is constituted, confirmed, or rejected as either passable or obstacle. In Merleau-Ponty's words, the "I can" or "intentional arc" is the "general power of putting ourselves in a situation."¹⁸

The phenomenological reduction to the "I can" discloses the lived-body as a privileged, absolute, thick presence. Merleau-Ponty writes: "The permanence and absence of external objects are only variations within a field of primordial presence, a perceptual domain over which my body has power." If this presence is permanent, it is an absolute permanence that serves as ground for the relative

permanence and absence of objects.¹⁹ A dancer on stage makes her presence be felt absolutely. She creates space by modulating the near and the far with her body, she molds with an arabesque a dissimulating pattern of lines, and weaves an inextricable matrix of movements in one sweep of the arm, articulating in the ease of a gracious smile what could only be accomplished by a mute strain of seemingly incongruous gestures. All this is brought to bear in an over-full presence that seems to occupy the entire stage. Put differently, the absolute presence of the body saturates its situation; it not only orients itself, but in doing so orients objects in the world, giving them significance in relation to the body.

The lived-body as an absolute presence functions in certain respects as a "zero point of orientation."²⁰ Spatial and temporal determinations like up and down, before and after, left and right, under and over – directionality in general – have sense by virtue of the lived-body. To take fairly simple examples, when a vertical line is projected on the wall of a dark room, tilting my head will institute a tilting of the "objective" vertical line as well; the transformation of a hastily drawn curved line will be given perceptually as a complete circle simply by the expectation of the sense circle; something becomes a tool only with the intention or possibility of it being grasped as such.²¹ If we consider more complex structures like the World Trade Center in Manhattan, we notice a similar efficacy on the part of the lived-body: despite its size and prominence on the horizon, the World Trade Center stands to the left or right of *my body*, it lies "before" me or it lies in front of me; in fact, it can only be said to be "overwhelming" in relation to my stature. These examples support Merleau-Ponty's claim that "it is *as my body*, always present for me, and yet engaged in the midst of [objects] by so many objective relationships, that their [the objects'] coexistence with it is maintained and shares with them all the pulse of its duration."²²

The expression "zero-point" of orientation for this absolute presence can be misleading, however, because the body is spatially and temporally filled out, beyond itself, and not like a mathematical point. The so-called zero-point is too full to be punctual. Through experiences that are retained and unfolded concordantly, actions and functions are sedimented such that the past becomes efficacious for the present. The lived-bodily "I can" is a *habitus*; the body is a habitual body.²³

Moving down the street, I exhibit a style of walking, a gait that is recognizable to others as "my style," "my gait." Each step recuperates the sedimented past; my intention towards the future (e.g., making it to the ice cream stand) reawakens the past ability to move along with its gestures and enables the present gesture to have precisely this sense. I carve out a world through this habitual body, and this world remains familiar as long as I have in my legs and in my hands the main distance and directions involved.²⁴ Furthermore, I can retain this bodily style even if I am not conscious of it. Writing a letter I display the same poor penmanship that I have when writing on the blackboard, even

though entirely different muscles are in play. We can speak of a bodily style not because there is a mere accumulation of acts, but because each movement shares or expresses the same significance.

Moreover, the lived-body is not parcelled out in independent realms of sense-experience. As a saturated body, the lived-body functions as a synaesthetic whole, as an intertwining of the senses such that each sense is overdetermined by the others: "One sees the elasticity of steel, the ductility of red-hot steel, the hardness of a blade in a wood plane, the softness of the shavings. . . . In the same way, I hear the hardness and unevenness of cobble stones in the clattering of a car, and we rightly speak of a 'soft,' 'dull' or 'sharp' [*sec*] sound."²⁵

Rather than a zero-point, the lived-body is an anchorage in a world as a momentum towards an open situation.²⁶ This momentum peculiar to the lived-body as a habitual body is expressive of the more fundamental momentum of existence which is transformative power.²⁷ Existence as transformative or expressive in its surplus gives itself, for example, as the lived-body, enabling it to have this momentum of transformation.

The dispositional tendencies of the habitual "I can" enable the body itself to become typified. A saturated body will exhibit a type that is optimal for it under certain circumstances making the saturated body a body type.²⁸ Thus, for example, a classical dancer will develop powerful thigh muscles and quite literally restructure his stance; he will turn out (i.e., walk like a duck) such that one could say, "oh, he is a dancer." Since it is already too much for itself, the lived-body carves out a setting that is optimal for it; it prefers the skip in the step over the shuffle, it favors the curved lip rather than the frown. The habitual comportment for this body and the patterned movement that propels the body in this direction as if with ease, in turn, hones the "I can" so that it is not a mere neutral power. Because its very freedom to move its "I can" has become predisposed to certain movements, it "cannot" help itself moving in this way rather than that. The lived-body has generated its own density, its duration that coaxes the world to be grasped in this way rather than that. So, for instance, it is entirely conceivable that the reason one cannot move well as a modern dancer results from being able to move too well as a classical dancer. Put more generally, the phenomenon of saturation suggests that we live less by restriction, and more profoundly by fullness.

The saturated comportment of the lived-habitual body means that I typify the world and its objects, and that I integrate new projects into a unique bodily pattern. In the same way that "I can" perceive this four-legged animal across the street as a dog, even though I have never seen this one before, "I can" climb a rock I have never climbed before.²⁹ It is not a matter of learning objective spatial positions or of letting go involuntary rote movement; rather, I incorporate in my movement the relevant directions and dimensions. The rock is a possibility of achieving certain motor or aesthetic values, and the new ridges,

cracks, ledges, etc., are the opportunities for fulfilling these values. Writing of an organist, Merleau-Ponty observes: "In reality his gestures during rehearsal are gestures of consecration: they draw affective vectors, they discover emotional sources, they create an expressive space like the gestures of the augur delimit the *templum*."³⁰

The momentum of existence brought to expression in the habitual body enables habit not to be static, but open to new situations: "Habit expresses the power we have of dilating our being in the world, or of changing our existence by annexing new instruments."³¹ Habit is the power to respond to new situations of a general form; it is normalizing in the sense not only of adapting to, but of creating new norms.

To show the saturation of the subjective vector of intentionality, we have gone from conscious intending to operative intending in the form of the lived-body as an "I can," an absolute presence, a zero-point of orientation, and the habitual body as a body type. But the subjective vector of saturation is not exhausted by conscious intending or by the operative lived-body in all these facets. For the lived-body is not only saturated through its past and future directionality, but by the fact that it is an earth-body.

Global intentionality

It goes to Husserl's credit to have extended the aesthetic or perceptual domain of experience beyond the individual lived-body to the aesthetic dimension of the earth.³² Not only is the lived-body an absolute presence, but in relation to the lived-body there is still a ground of orientation that is "more" absolute. The lived-body is not self-grounding, but grounded in the earth as earth-ground [*Erdboden*].³³ Let me highlight the salient points that contribute to the phenomenological concept of saturation.

A consideration of the earth is significant because it both fulfills the subjective vector, and because it flows over to the objective vector of saturation. The earth, according to Husserl, is not merely an intentional object for consciousness but the unique ground [*Urboden*] that itself constitutes the lived-body as constituting. The constitution of intentional sense is literally global; the subjective vector is sense-giving by virtue of what is more than itself, namely, the earth-ground.

Just as the lived-body is so close to us that we tend to forget it as a constituting force, so too is the earth-ground forgotten, even though its presence is pervasive in the constitution of sense. This earth-ground forgetfulness reached new proportions in the Modern world-view instigated by the Copernican Revolution. Only in an abstract theoretical view of the earth is the latter just another stellar body relative to all other bodies, and a mere object for a subject. Reminiscent of the way in which the lived-body is not one object

among others, phenomenologically, that is, where the genesis of sense is concerned, the earth is not merely one planet among others.³⁴ Rather, all bodies, planetary, lived, and physical are phenomenologically relative to the earth-body.

As experienced, we live the earth both as a primordial ground of orientation and of movement. The earth as an absolute presence is a primordial presence for directional sense givenness, "grounding" the lived-body as an absolute presence and as a source of directional sense. I have an upright posture, I am right side up or upside down, I experience weightiness or lightness in relation to the earth as ground. Similarly, the lived-body is not the sole basis for movement, for I experience my movement or rest and the motion or stillness of other things by being grounded in the earth.³⁵ Even the sense of possible worlds, like geometrical idealities, are variations of the earth and hence are grounded in the earth-ground.

The earth saturates the lived-body. Where the constitution of sense is concerned, it is never possible to leave the earth, just as it is not possible for us to leave our lived-body. What Merleau-Ponty writes of anonymous sensible "flesh," we can say of the earth, namely, that it stops up [*il bouche*] our view, it extends beyond the visible present in depth; it occupies us only because we who see it do not see it from the depths of nothingness, but from the midst of itself.³⁶ As an absolute presence, as the ground of rest and motion, it is too much with us, so much so that we would carry the earth with us in our earthly constitution even if we were to voyage for generations on another "flying ark."³⁷ The earth, contends Husserl, remains phenomenologically our "primordial homeland" [*Urheimat*].³⁸

The subjective vector of saturated intentionality is expressed in the mystery of sense-giving, the overabundance of sense in the giving, the full and inexhaustible presence of what is given on simple and categorial levels, the surplus of sense by the categorial in the simple, in the lived-body as an absolute presence, as the temporally overdetermined habitual body, and the aesthetic dimension of the earth-ground. Insofar as the earth is a presence more primordial than the lived-body, it can be regarded as an enrichment of the subjective vector of saturated intentionality. But insofar as it transcends subjective constitution and is constitutive of the subject, it goes beyond itself in the direction of the objective vector of saturation.

Intentionality would not be saturated if it were limited only to the subjective vector, for there would only be a surplus by the subjective vector, and not a saturation of the subjective vector. The subjective vector is so full that it is unable to contain itself; in saturating presence, it becomes saturated. Implied all the while in the subjective vector of saturation is the vector of force I have called the objective vector of saturated intentionality. I will now turn to the objective vector of saturation.

2 The Objective Vector of Saturation

"What then will intentionality be," asks Merleau-Ponty, "if it is no longer the mind's grasping of a sensible matter as exemplary of an essence, [or] the recognition in things of what we have put there?"³⁹ The response to Merleau-Ponty's inquiry lies in saturated intentionality from the perspective of the objective vector.

An initial clue to the notion of saturation by the objective vector can be taken from Merleau-Ponty's insight into the thing itself. The thing, he writes, "ignores us, it rests in itself"... "hostile and alien."⁴⁰ A thing is a thing because it holds itself at a distance, and because it gives itself to us by virtue of its very internal organization. "It is insuperable plenitude," Merleau-Ponty continues (or as we would say, "saturation"): "[it is] impossible to describe completely the color of the carpet without saying that it is a carpet, made of wool, and without implying in this color a certain tactile value, a certain weight, a certain resistance to sound."⁴¹ In other words, the meaning of the thing itself is indistinguishable from its total appearance as a synaesthetic whole.⁴²

But what exactly makes up its so-called total appearance? What is responsible for the thing's internal organization that allows it to give itself as it is? How does the meaning guide this appearance in all its facets such that it is precisely this thing? In order to understand phenomenologically the objective vector of saturated intentionality, let me begin with an initial discussion of the objective sense. Through a series of elaborations in this analysis, I will touch on the notion of optimality, and then develop the objective vector of saturation in terms of the affective force of sense. This in turn will culminate in a phenomenological notion of "terrain."

Objective sense

I begin my description of the objective vector of saturated intentionality with the noematic objective sense because it serves as a preliminary way of showing how the objective vector is active, how it saturates subjective intending, and how fullness in the object points to other modes of full presentation such that this movement organizes internally the saturated appearance of the object. In short, it will suggest how the saturated presence of the objective vector provokes the becoming of sense.

Correlative to the thetic character of the intending act (noesis) is the noema. There are two phenomenologically distinct components that are important to note for this analysis. Within what Husserl calls the full noema (the boulder as perceived correlative to perceiving; the boulder as remembered correlative to

remembering, etc.), we can distinguish between (a) the objective sense [*gegenständlicher Sinn*, *Gegenstandssinn*] or the core of sense, and (b) sense as modes of givenness.⁴³ In a static register (that is, without attention to temporal development) the objective sense is characterized as a point of unity, as that which remains identical throughout the variations of sense.⁴⁴

For example, I perceive the boulder as tall, as gray, as gritty; I remember the boulder, I perceive it, imagine it, etc. Throughout these modifications and their diverse ways of appearing, the boulder keeps a sense that remains identical; it is the same object appearing now in this way, now in that way.

The objective sense is initially described by Husserl as a core of sense that functions as a rule-governing schema; it guides how the object is to be fulfilled. Prescribing an infinite process of continual appearances that determine the objective more clearly, this schema sketches out or prescribes possible ways in which the object must be fulfilled in order to remain, for example, precisely this boulder.⁴⁵ Thus, the objective vector is essentially active in the formation of sense.

The difficulty with such a static treatment is that it regards the objective sense as a kind of "indigenous abstract form" obtaining in the noema. The notion of objective sense, however, implies much more.

In Husserl's *genetic* analysis, where the "universal dimension of temporality" comes into play, the notion of objective sense begins to fill out. The identical objective sense is specified as temporal, as an identical sense built up over time through repetition; it is duration itself. The different noematic modes of givenness are qualified in terms of modes of orientation in time, as temporal adumbrations or temporal perspectives through which duration itself appears.⁴⁶ Acquiring a temporal density, a weightiness of being, the genetic objective sense functions as a "self," as a *telos*, and no longer an abstract form.⁴⁷

It is at this juncture of a genetic analysis that the function of objective sense dovetails with that of horizon, although Husserl never explicitly states this as such. Within a genetic register, a horizon has an active function as an open system or a framework [*Zusammenhang*] of indicating implications [*Verweisung*]. It is a kind of temporal presence through which the givenness of one aspect that has come into relief can point to another. This pointing is not arbitrary, but follows a pattern or style of unfolding for the present sketched out by a concordant past. Likewise, horizons function concretely as orienting the subjective vector. Given such an understanding of horizon, would we not have to challenge its simple equation with absence? By elucidating more concretely the futural dimension in play, the genetic concept of the objective sense is described as soliciting particular motivational tendencies in the direction of the richer presence to be achieved.

Being itself never self-contained, the objective sense does not command a fixed sequence of appearances. The fact that it is open, inexhaustible, maintains

Husserl, "excludes a perception that would furnish absolute knowledge of the object in which the tension would collapse between the object in the How of determinacy (which is relative and changing, remaining incomplete), and the object itself. For evidently, the possibility of a *plus ultra* is in principle never excluded."⁴⁸ The objective vector is so thick and irreducible to the power and vagaries of subjective intending that Husserl writes even God must perceive objects through perspectival adumbrations.⁴⁹

While the notion of objective sense provides a preliminary understanding of the saturated objective vector, there still remains too much that is implicit. In particular, this concept of the objective sense does not yet specify the relation of the objective vector to the subjective. The objective sense should not be considered neutral, and the modes through which the object gives itself are not equivalent. Rather, the sense that an object has is also elicited by its context, and it can only function as a telos guiding perception insofar as it is normative. In short, the objective sense is contextually and normatively optimal.

Briefly, the optimal is what counts as the best in experience, as the maximum of richness and differentiation in the unitary givenness of the object. What is given optimally counts practically as the "thing itself." The optimal is a kind of ideality that is instituted concretely in experience and simultaneously functions as a norm in relation to which other perspectives are experientially evaluated as better or worse, normal or abnormal for the very experience of the thing.⁵⁰ In a vein quite similar to Husserl, Merleau-Ponty explains:

I have visual objects because I have a visual field, where *richness and distinctness* are in inverse proportion to one another, and because these two demands – which taken separately would go to infinity – once reunited determine a certain *point of maturity* and *maximum* in the perceptual process. In the same manner, I call experience of the thing or of reality... my *full* coexistence with the phenomenon, at the moment when it would be at its *maximum articulation* in all its relations, and when the "givens [*données*] of different senses" are oriented towards this unique pole like my intentions [*visées*] in the microscope oscillate around a *privileged* object [*visée privilégiée*].⁵¹

Such a privileged object serves as the dynamic objective sense and summons me to perceive the object in such a way that it can be fulfilled more completely.⁵² Accordingly, I am not always the instigator of orientation or sense. For example, when I do not comprehend something or when something is not clear, my body, wanting to orient itself, responds: I tilt my head. The fact that I yield to the objective vector does not point up a lack on my part, but testifies to the surplus of the object exerting its pull on me, "beckoning" me to it.⁵³

The optimal is a futural presence (and not merely a present in the future) that guides the present fullness, structuring the course of appearances. It implicitly

regulates or evaluates my intendings to be optimal. The optimal announces itself ahead of the present perception and saturates that perception (and hence subjective intending) from the future. When the optimal is ratified again and again in experience, the optimal acquires a genetic density. This genetic density of the optimal is stylized and stylizing such that it predisposes comportment for the thing itself, for the normal *qua* optimal. This is yet another way in which the objective vector saturates the subjective.

If the objective vector can draw me and resituate me, the subject, if it can solicit my explorations, it is due to the fact that what comes into relief exercises an affective force. It is active, rendering subjective sense-giving as much responsive as it is initiating. I explore this dimension of saturation by discussing the phenomenon of affective force.

Affective force

I suggested at the outset of this section that the sensible order according to Merleau-Ponty is "being at a distance." And while he understands this dynamically to mean transcendence, gestalt, or the figure-ground structure, such formulations of the objective vector tend to be too vague.⁵⁴

The relationship of the thing to us cannot be described merely as at a distance, or as "ignoring" the subject. For this only suggests the thing resisting the subject. Other favored expressions like "reversibility" or "non-coincidence" – while wanting to convey an equi-primordially and insuperable tension – remain on the other hand too anonymous, too neutral. There is saturation because sense is active, imposing, exerting a force on us in order to come into relief, in order to be at a distance. This solicitation from the objective vector is described with pioneering and trenchant insight in Husserl's lectures on "passive synthesis."

Husserl's primary contribution to the theory of relief [*Relief*] or prominence [*Abgehobenheit*] is not that there is always a figure that stands out from a background; rather, it lies in his contention that what comes into relief is always charged with significance, effective in the sense of exerting an affective force [*affektiver Kraft*] on an intending subject, and further, that this affective force of something prominent is linked to the discriminating experience of optima.

Husserl asserts, for example, that a unity of sense is only constituted as such by being affective! He writes: "Affective unities must be constituted *in order for a world of objects to be constituted* in subjectivity at all."⁵⁵ Affective unities are constituted by simultaneously affecting us. In short, the type of constitution Husserl is concerned with here is not the constitution by an ego, but a primordial constitution which is called (misleadingly) "passive" and (more favorably) "aesthetic" in relation to the activity of the ego.

Moreover, what we learn from genetic phenomenology and throughout these lectures is that primordial constitution [*Ur-konstitution*] must presuppose a past

temporal dimension in order for sense to be constituted in the present. As Jean-Luc Marion writes in a different context, as opposed to the metaphysical concept of time, the present does not order the analysis of temporality, but results from it.⁵⁶ What I have been calling "saturated presence" or saturation would suggest something quite different than a metaphysics of presence.

Within the field of primordial constitution, we can say that sense is not simply the result of the intentional directedness on the part of the subject, but coevally the affective force on the part of the object or object phase that solicits the subject. It is a proposal, a proposition, or as Whitehead would also say, a lure. There are no sense-unities, to say nothing of objects, that are merely indifferent or simply for themselves. They are at the same time for the subject, affecting the subject, as propulsive or repulsive. Where the affective force is strongest, it provides "favorable conditions" and summons privileged comportment in relation to which it can become prominent and optimal.⁵⁷

Since there is no neutral constitution, and in fact, no constitution of objectivities at all without affection, the elemental living present as primordially constituted is essentially an "affective unity." The fact that something comes into relief or prominence is not separate from the affective force that it exerts on the subject in order to incorporate it into its perceptual process. If something is there for me at all, it is because it is charged with significance. Hence, claims Husserl, "the perspective is an affective perspective," and a relief is always already an "affective relief."⁵⁸

If there are horizons, if there are hidden dimensions, latency, opacity, they are not due to a lack. Rather, the affective reliefs that solicit our perception become prominent by "actively hiding the others, by denouncing them in the act of masking them."⁵⁹ Merleau-Ponty writes: "I cannot conceive the world as a sum of things, nor time as a sum of punctual 'nows' [*'maintenant' ponctuels*], since each thing can offer itself with its *full determinations* only if other things withdraw into the vagueness of the distance; each present can offer itself in its reality only by excluding the *simultaneous presence* [*la présence simultanée*] of preceding and successive presents [*présents*]."⁶⁰ Objectivities are too much, vying for ratification, exerting varying gradations of force; in order to appear some must become invisible, as the depth of the visible, allowing each thing to be elsewhere and otherwise.⁶¹

There is a conflict or rivalry [*Widerstreit*] between affective prominences for their emergence as normative optima, some of which will be qualified as "better" or "worse" in and through the experience itself. Affective phenomena move us, decenter the subject, as it were. I take my bearings from them and they can locate me. A bright star at night can orient me; a large building in a new town can serve as my point of orientation. I can also be oriented by the presence of another person. For example, I can stand before a judge or before a moral authority such as a rabbi without them first standing before me.⁶² Since

the affective force of the objective vector precedes the constitution by the ego, and since it is not dominated by its contexts, but in privileged instances can determine them, saturating the contexts, the phenomenological notion of affective force evokes new possibilities for phenomenology.

The concept of affective relief or affective perspective suggests that if something is prominent in our field of comportment, it is prominent because it says something to us in a way that makes a difference, and does not achieve prominence in an indiscriminate manner. That is, while there may be many affective forces soliciting our response and affirmation we can never turn to them all at once or indifferently. So, contends Husserl: "Our interest is thereby not indifferently parcelled out to all the characteristics that become prominent; rather, our gaze is directed towards especially impressive properties, through which the object of precisely this type or of this individual object distinguishes itself from other objects of an equal or similar type."⁶³ The compresence of affective forces for the constitution of sense implies that we cannot be neutral in the face of saturated phenomena. As a result, something becomes precisely optimal and normative by taking it up as such.

Saturated phenomena are compelling as particularly relevant or advantageous for an optimal mode of comportment. Thus if we can say that the object "gives itself," self-giving [*Selbstgebung*] must include a *demand* on the part of the self-giving in order to become precisely this sense. As affective, as soliciting comportment, optima are privileged by the style of the life being lived and the mode of disclosure of the norm itself, exerting more or less force. They are binding for experience to this extent.

More precisely, the way optima are binding for experience is related to the function of a "terrain." While I do not have space to develop the phenomenological notion of terrain here, let me sketch some of its main features.⁶⁴

A terrain is not a neutral environing-world that we subjectively create or to which we must adapt unilaterally. Rather, a terrain is a typically familiar milieu that is affectively oriented and orientating; it is affective in experience and constituted as privileged in and through optimal modes of comportment and correlatively, optimal meanings and physiognomies. In other words, since a terrain is constituted through the affective stylization of interaction between the subjective and objective vectors, the environing-world becomes a habitat of types or temporally dense optima. Hence, a terrain is an affectively optimal, orientated environing-world.

As a specific context for a certain action, group or species, as constantly there throughout various divergences and discordances, a terrain becomes the milieu we especially count on. By repeating what is optimal, a structure of normal comportment emerges that becomes typically familiar of the experience. It is precisely in this sense that one is justified in speaking of the terrain as "familiar" [*vertraut*] or as what one is accustomed to [*gewöhnt*]. The everyday [*das Alltä-*

glische] is what is familiar to us through types, and upon which we rely for the efficacy of action; it is usual, pregiven with more or less specific familiarity, and not average. In the first instance, it is optimal or typical. Only insofar as the average is typically constant and hence familiar can one claim that the everyday is average.

Our familiarity with our terrain is the prereflective and pregiven familiarity of types that is constituted intercorporeally, intersubjectively. Since the terrain is pregiven in experience as familiar through its typical affective force, a terrain is always a privileged terrain, and not simply one among others. The familiar terrain is privileged not merely because we prefer it for some reason or by chance; rather, we actually carry with us the structure of our terrain in the structure of our lived-bodies, in our typical comportment and in our practices; it saturates us.

3 Conclusion: From Saturation to Verticality

Intentionality is saturated. This is implicit in the earliest formulations of the phenomenological concept of intentionality; it is what I have attempted to show through a series of elaborations within the subjective and objective vectors. Concerning the subjective vector I have worked through the process of sense-giving, its embellishment in simple givenness, the saturation of the simple by categorial givenness, the elaboration of perception in operative intending expressed as an absolute presence of the lived-body, the saturation of this presence in the habitual body, and in global intentionality in the mode of the earth-ground as encompassing the lived-body.

Saturation in the objective vector was explicated correlatively through the notion of objective sense and its elaboration as the optimal. The optimal was more fully developed in terms of the affective forces that the objective vector exerts on the subjective forces of sense constitution. This notion of affective force received a still richer elaboration through a phenomenological description of terrain.

These vectors I have described here, moreover, are to be understood as phenomenological discriminations within a process I have called saturated intentionality. That is, the "intertwining" of all these dimensions simultaneously within and between the vectors enables intentionality to be clarified as saturated.

I have used the expression "saturation" as a leading clue to this elaboration of intentionality. In addition to the reasons just delineated, I believe this term is appropriate because it suggests a full but inexhaustible presence, surplus, overdetermination, or what Merleau-Ponty might call *sur-* or hyper-presence. Even though experienced absence can function in pointing up a unique presence,

absence neither dissolves into presence, nor is essential for the experience of saturated presence.

Is the expression "saturation," however, self-sufficient? Does it fall short of the phenomenon that has been guiding the analyses of saturation from the start? While saturation does convey a kind of hyper-presence, it might also be conceived misleadingly as too flat, suggesting that some plenitude were reached, or that there is a mere overflowing. What I have meant by saturated presence is not merely the surplus of sense, but in this surplus, an ongoing process of generating sense. As generative, saturated intentionality cannot be a mere "structure" of existence; from the start it is itself generative of sense, generative of existence. Moreover, saturated presence is forcefully affective, enticing, luring, making appeal, demanding response, inviting evaluation, eliciting discriminating experience. Accordingly, saturation requires that we take a position and presupposes that we have taken one through preferring, desiring, selecting, etc., while we are living it. There is no neutrality or indifference.

Saturated presence, then, may be said to be wild or brute, if we mean with Merleau-Ponty that it cannot be controlled or dominated by reflection, that it cannot be exhausted in experience. On the other hand, it should not suggest arbitrariness, randomness or a mere play. Saturated presence means generative presence. For the affective forces of sense etch out a directedness [*sens*] that is taken up one way or another, making a historical difference.

In making a difference, saturated presence is disclosed in the field of experience as an open hierarchy of sense that elicits the historical movement of meaning. Put differently, the experience of verticality is implied in saturated or generative presence. Since this movement of meaning concerns who we generatively are and who we can optimally become, the transformative movement of existence takes on a vertical significance. Guiding the very notion of saturation – in the perceptual dimension, the moral (as practical, personal), the political, the religious, the aesthetic dimensions, etc. – is verticality.⁶⁵ While implicit in and beyond the scope of this essay, a more fully elaborated study of saturation would have to be taken up in the direction of movement and verticality.

Notes

- 1 This is an expanded version of a paper first presented at the 21st annual meeting of the Merleau-Ponty Circle, Rome, Georgia, and published as "Merleau-Ponty, Husserl, and Saturated Intentionality" in *Re-Reading Merleau-Ponty: Essays Across the Continental-Analytic Divide*, edited by Lawrence Hass and Dorothea Olkowski (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996), and was dedicated to Professor Bernhard Waldenfels on the occasion of his 60th birthday. I borrow the expression "satu-

rated" both from Husserl's lectures on passive synthesis and from Jean-Luc Marion's lecture given at the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, October, 1993, New Orleans, dealing with Kant and his (Marion's) interpretation of a "saturated phenomenon."

To maintain consistency of style, all translations from the German and the French are my own.

- 2 *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, ed. Walter Biemel, *Husserliana* vol. 6, p. 169, n. 1. Hereafter cited as *Hua* vol. 6. English translation by David Carr, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy* (Evanston, ILL.: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 166, n. (my emphasis). Hereafter cited as *Crisis*. All translations from the French and German are my own. I will indicate exceptions to this by citing the English translation.
- 3 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 141, n. 4 (my emphasis); hereafter cited as *Phénoménologie*.
- 4 Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen. Vol. II: Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis, Part I* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1968), 400: "In Beziehung auf den als Gegenstand des Aktes verstanden intentionalen Inhalt ist folgendes zu unterscheiden: der Gegenstand, so wie er intendiert ist, und schlechthin der Gegenstand, welcher intendiert ist." Hereafter cited as *Logische Untersuchungen*, II/1. See also Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, II/1, pp. 415ff. This import of this distinction is also emphasized by Husserl during the *Crisis* years. See Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, ed. Walter Biemel, *Husserliana* vol. 6 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), §§46 and 48. Hereafter cited as *Krisis* 1.
- 5 Or as Husserl would say, the justification is intrinsic to the givenness itself. See Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, ed. Walter Biemel, *Husserliana* vol. 3 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950), §§21, 141; hereafter cited as *Ideen* I.
- 6 *Phénoménologie*, pp. 456, 384, 197. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sens et non-sens* (Paris: Nagel, 1966), pp. 165–72. See also Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. xvi: "The world and reason... are mysterious, but this mystery defines them; it would not be a question of dispelling the mystery by some 'solution'; it is this side of all solutions." And see p. xiv.
- 7 *Logische Untersuchungen*, II/2, pp. 129, 135–6.
- 8 Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, II/2, §47.
- 9 Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, II/2, §52.
- 10 Edmund Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil*, ed. Ludwig Landgrebe (Hamburg: Meiner, 1985), pp. 28ff. And Husserl, *Krisis* 1, p. 165.
- 11 Husserl, *Krisis* 1, p. 161.
- 12 See Jean-Luc Marion, *Recherches sur Husserl, Heidegger et la phénoménologie* (Paris: PUF, 1989), pp. 23–6.

- 13 I cannot go into detail here regarding the relation between the normal and the abnormal from a phenomenological perspective. See Anthony J. Steinbock, "Phenomenological Concepts of Normality and Abnormality" in *Man and World*, vol. 28 (1995), pp. 241–60 and for a more detailed analysis, Anthony J. Steinbock, *Home and Beyond: Generative Phenomenology after Husserl* (Evanston, ILL.: Northwestern University Press, 1995), Sections 3 and 4. Hereafter cited as *Home and Beyond*.
- 14 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. xiii.
- 15 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. 121. And "we say that the body has understood and habit is acquired when it is impregnated by a new significance, when it has assimilated a new expressive core" (p. 171).
- 16 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, pp. 110, 128, 169.
- 17 Husserl, *Hua* vol. 11, p. 7: "... ertönt ja der Ruf..." my emphasis.
- 18 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, pp. 158–63.
- 19 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. 108.
- 20 See Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie: Zweites Buch*, ed. Marly Biemel, *Husserliana* vol. 4 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), pp. 158–9; hereafter cited as *Ideen* II. And see Edmund Husserl, "Notizen zur Raumkonstitution," published posthumously in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* vol. 1, no. 1 (1940/41), pp. 27, 34; hereafter cited as "Notizen." See also Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1979), pp. 101ff.
- 21 See Elmar Holenstein, *Menschliches Selbstverständnis* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), pp. 19, 21.
- 22 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, pp. 108–9.
- 23 Husserl, *Ideen* II, pp. 270, 277.
- 24 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. 151.
- 25 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, pp. 264–6.
- 26 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, pp. 166ff., 169.
- 27 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, pp. 128ff., 171, 180, and especially 197: "We will call transcendence this movement by which existence takes up again and transforms a *de facto* situation for its own advantage."
- 28 In Husserl's words, there is "a certain typical constancy in the comportment of lived-corporeality." Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität*, ed. Iso Kern, *Husserliana* vol. 14 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), p. 121, my emphasis.
- 29 See Schutz's lucid clarification of typification in Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers III: Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), esp. pp. 92–116; 124–30.
- 30 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. 170.
- 31 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. 168.
- 32 See Edmund Husserl, "Grundlegende Untersuchungen zum phänomenologischen Ursprung der Räumlichkeit der Natur" in *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940). Hereafter the article will be cited as "Ursprung."

- 33 Because I have already developed the concept of earth as earth-ground in another essay, I will not engage in a detailed analysis of this important and original notion for phenomenology. See my "Reflections on Earth and World: Merleau-Ponty's Transcendental Geology and Transcendental History," in *Merleau-Ponty: Differences, Materiality, Painting*, ed. Véronique Fóti (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1995).
- 34 See Husserl, "Ursprung," pp. 312, 317, 320, 323.
- 35 Husserl, "Ursprung," pp. 324, 313; "Notizen," pp. 27, 32.
- 36 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Le Visible et l'invisible* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), pp. 152–3; hereafter cited as *Le Visible*. English translation by Alphonso Lingis, *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964), pp. 113–14; hereafter this work will be cited as *The Visible*.
- 37 Husserl, "Ursprung," pp. 315, 319, 324.
- 38 A still more fully elaborated dimension of intentional saturation would have to take into account the role of generative "homeworld" in relation to "alienworld." This would depict saturation as *intersubjective*. Such an exposition, however, is beyond the scope of this essay. See my "Homeworld/Alienworld: Towards Husserl's Generative Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity," in *Selected Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy*, vol. 19, ed. Lenore Langsdorf and Stephen H. Watson (New York: SUNY Press, 1994).
- 39 Merleau-Ponty, *Signes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 211.
- 40 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. 372.
- 41 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. 373; my emphasis.
- 42 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. 373; my emphasis.
- 43 Husserl, *Hua* vol. 3, pp. 318–25.
- 44 Husserl, *Hua* vol. 3, p. 323.
- 45 Husserl, *Ideen I*, p. 351.
- 46 In a manuscript entitled "Consciousness – Sense – Noema," published in Edmund Husserl, *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis. Aus Vorlesungs- und Forschungsmanuskripten 1918–1926*, ed. M. Fleischer, *Husserliana* vol. 11 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), pp. 304–35; cf. especially, pp. 323, 328, 330, 332. Hereafter cited as *Analysen*.
- 47 Husserl, *Analysen*, especially Lecture 4.
- 48 Husserl, *Hua* vol. 11, p. 21. "It is thus the idea of the absolute Self of the object and of its absolute and complete determinacy, or as we can also put it, of its absolute individual essence." And as Merleau-Ponty reminds us, "In a philosophy that takes into consideration the operative world, functioning, present and coherent, as it is, the essence is not at all a stumbling block: it has its place there as an operative, functioning, essence." *Le Visible*, p. 158; *The Visible*, p. 118.
- 49 Husserl, *Hua* vol. 3, p. 351.
- 50 Husserl discusses the optimal in a plethora of manuscripts from 1917–21. It is a notion upon which Merleau-Ponty draws for his analysis of the "thing." See Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, Section 3.
- 51 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, pp. 367–8; my emphases.

- 52 See Husserl, *Ideen II*, pp. 55–90; Husserl, *Analysen*, p. 24. And see Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, pp. 348–9, 367–8.
- 53 See Husserl, *Analysen*, p. 7; Husserl, *Ideen II*, 4, p. 98.
- 54 Merleau-Ponty, *Le Visible*, pp. 248, 250, 262.
- 55 Husserl, *Analysen*, p. 162; my emphasis.
- 56 Jean-Luc Marion, *Dieu sans l'être* (Paris: PUF, 1991), p. 242.
- 57 See Husserl, *Analysen*, pp. 163ff.
- 58 See Husserl, *Analysen*, pp. 168 and 172; my emphasis.
- 59 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signes*, p. 29.
- 60 Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. 384; my emphasis.
- 61 Merleau-Ponty, *Signes*, pp. 29–30.
- 62 Elmar Holenstein, *Menschliches Selbstverständnis*, pp. 18, 28.
- 63 Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil*, p. 139; my emphasis.
- 64 I develop the phenomenological notion of terrain in my *Home and Beyond*, Section 3.
- 65 This is what Merleau-Ponty means when he writes provocatively that Being is vertical. See Merleau-Ponty, *Le Visible*, pp. 229, 231–2, 257, 287–8, 296.