

# The Body as a ‘Legitimate Naturalization of Consciousness’<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Husserl’s phenomenology of the body constantly faces issues of demarcation: between phenomenology and ontology, soul and spirit, consciousness and brain, conditionality and causality. It also shows that Husserl was eager to cross the borders of transcendental phenomenology when the phenomena under investigation made it necessary. Considering the details of his description of bodily sensations and bodily behaviour from a Merleau-Pontian perspective allows one also to realise how Husserl (unlike Heidegger) fruitfully explores a phenomenological field located between a science of pure consciousness and the natural sciences. A phenomenological discussion of naturalism thus cannot limit itself to the task of discrimination, it must attempt to integrate what an eidetic analysis has separated: inside and outside, here and there, first-person and third-person perspective, motivation and causality. Husserl’s phenomenology of the body thus shows that dualism is at best a methodological but never an ontological option for the mind-body problem.

## 1. Heidegger’s silence on the body

More than a half century ago, Alphonse De Waelhens, the author of the first monograph on Heidegger in the French language,<sup>2</sup> wrote: ‘In *Being and Time* one does not find thirty lines concerning the problem of perception; one does not find ten concerning that of the body’.<sup>3</sup> De Waelhens credits Sartre with having made the first breakthrough to a phenomenological analysis of one’s own body (*corps propre*), even while arguing that it is incompatible with the dualist ontology of *Being and Nothingness*. According to De Waelhens, Sartre was the

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was published as ‘L’extimité du corps et la question du naturalisme en phénoménologie’, *Les temps modernes* 63 (2008), 174–201. Translated from French by Hanne Jacobs and Trevor Perri.

<sup>2</sup> A. De Waelhens, *La philosophie de Martin Heidegger* (Louvain: Éditions de l’Institut supérieur de philosophie, 1942).

<sup>3</sup> Alphonse De Waelhens, ‘A Philosophy of the Ambiguous’, in M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, trans. Alden L. Fischer (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2006), xix.

first to introduce the crucial distinctions between my body for me and my body for others, between the body-as-instrument (*corps-utile*) in the service of an existential project and the body-as-given-in-bare-fact (*corps-facticité*) inherent in the world. Further, according to De Waelhens, Sartre was the first to attend to the 'brute facticity' of the body, to the weight of the immanent bodily sensations that are foreign to the transcendence of my being in the world and imposed on me in the experience of 'nausea'. However, according to De Waelhens, only Merleau-Ponty provides these analyses with the appropriate ontological-phenomenological framework. De Waelhens claims that by breaking with the Sartrean Cartesianism of a pure and transparent consciousness surveying the world and by making the bodily consciousness of sensible perception the model of all natural life, Merleau-Ponty was the first phenomenologist to take full measure of the mystery of things and the resistance that they offer to a body that is both actively engaged in the world and a thing among things.

Three years after the publication of De Waelhens's preface to the second edition of *The Structure of Behavior* (1949), written in total ignorance of Husserl's contribution to the phenomenology of the body, Husserl's posthumous work known as *Ideas II* was published.<sup>4</sup> Unlike De Waelhens (who studied and taught in Leuven), Merleau-Ponty made the effort to visit the Husserl-Archives in Leuven as early as 1939 in order to study the unpublished texts.<sup>5</sup> Merleau-Ponty was thus familiar with the Second Section of *Ideas II*, which is essentially dedicated to the study of the lived-body, before he wrote *The Structure of Behavior* and he remembered this early reading in the elaboration of all of his subsequent work.

For Heidegger the case is different. It is of the greatest interest for us to clarify the surprising absence of a genuine phenomenology of the body in the onto-phenomenology of human life presented in *Being and Time* since Heidegger actually had access to the manuscript of *Ideas II* before he wrote his first major work. Two footnotes in

<sup>4</sup> E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch*, Husserliana IV (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952); translated by Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer as *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Second Book* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989). Henceforth, referred to as *Ideas II* followed by the pagination of the German edition.

<sup>5</sup> H.L. Van Breda, 'Maurice Merleau-Ponty et les Archives-Husserl à Louvain', *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 4 (1962), 413.

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*Being and Time*<sup>6</sup> and the long critical discussion that he dedicated to *Ideas II* in his course from the summer semester of 1925 testify to this fact.<sup>7</sup> In addition, there are traces of Heidegger’s reading of *Ideas II* in the vocabulary of *Being and Time*. However, if *Being and Time* owes anything to *Ideas II*, it is only to the Third Section entitled: ‘The Constitution of the Spiritual World’.<sup>8</sup> There is no evidence that Heidegger was also acquainted with the Second Section dedicated to ‘The Constitution of Animal Nature’. It is only in the *Zollikon Seminars* from the 1960s that we find sometimes literal borrowing of terms (although they are never indicated as such) from the Second Section of *Ideas II* and Husserl’s analysis of bodily sensations and bodily spatiality.<sup>9</sup> This raises the double question of why the early Heidegger did not pay attention to the Second Section of *Ideas II* and if Husserl’s phenomenological analysis of the lived-body is compatible with Heidegger’s project of fundamental ontology. In other words, is it due to prejudice or on the basis of their insufficiency that Heidegger neglected Husserl’s analyses of a sensible self-affection of the flesh, of the lived-body as ‘organ of perception’ and as ‘organ of the will’, of a ‘spreading out’ of a specifically bodily spatiality, of the ‘conditional’ dependency of bodily consciousness on material and worldly ‘circumstances’, of the mode of being of the ‘reality’ of one’s own body and of its mode of

<sup>6</sup> M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, ed. F.-W. von Herrmann, Gesamtausgabe 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann GmbH, 1977) and (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), §7, 52/38 and §10, 63/47; translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson as *Being and Time* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1962). References made to the pagination of the *Gesamtausgabe* then the pagination of the Niemeyer edition.

<sup>7</sup> M. Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, ed. P. Jaeger, Gesamtausgabe 20 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1979), 168; translated by T. Kisiel as *History of the Concept of Time* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 121. Henceforth referred to as GA 20 followed by the German then English pagination. In the post-humous edition of this course, all of Heidegger’s references are still to the pagination of the unpublished manuscript of *Ideas II* rather than to Husserliana IV.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Die Konstitution der geistigen Welt’ is cited by Heidegger as: ‘Die personalistische Einstellung im Gegensatz zur naturalistischen’ (GA 20, 168/121).

<sup>9</sup> M. Heidegger, *Zollikoner Seminare. Protokolle—Gespräche—Briefe*, ed. Medard Boss (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann GmbH, 1987); translated by F. Mayr and R. Askay as *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols—Conversations—Letters* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001). References made to the pagination of the German edition.

manifestation, and of the ‘expressive’ body of the other and of my body for the other?

It is only after having given an account, in our own language, of the richness of Husserl’s analyses of the flesh, of the ambiguity of its place of phenomenalization between the intimacy of bodily sensations and the transcendence of its insertion in the world (thus of its possible objectification or naturalization), that we can decide on the compatibility of Husserl’s account with Heidegger’s fundamental ontology. However, we can already formulate a hypothesis as to why Heidegger neglects the Second Section of *Ideas II*. The reason might be a simple prejudice that is rooted in a confusion of what Husserl calls a ‘legitimate naturalization’<sup>10</sup> of bodily consciousness (and the phenomenological naturalism that follows from it) for a physicalist materialism.

## **2. Husserl on bodily sensations, the experience of the body in touch and vision, the body’s depending on material circumstances and the brain, my body and the body of the other**

It is necessary to acknowledge that Husserl’s entire analysis of the lived-body (*Leib*), as innovative as it is, still fits within the traditional metaphysical framework of the unity of ‘body’ and ‘soul’. Husserl explicitly claims to follow the Platonic and Aristotelian conception of the different levels of the soul and the function of the soul as the regulating principle of corporeal movement.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, far from being the result of a unification of two distinct heterogeneous substances, for Husserl, the unity of body and soul (*Seele*) is a *sui generis* reality in which the two levels are not only inseparable, but, for me at least (if not for others), also indistinguishable. For Husserl, there is no *Leib* without a *Seele* and no *Seele* without *Leib*.<sup>12</sup> When one subtracts the *Seele* from the *Leib*, one reduces the latter to a mere material thing (*Körper*) and when one abstracts from the *Leib*, the *Seele* is transformed into a pure ‘spirit’ (*Geist*). The unity of human beings is thus not the combination of a *Körper* with a *Geist* and the decomposition of the primitive unity of *Seele* and *Leib* is always accompanied by the risk of dehumanization. However, the unity of *Leib* and *Seele* ‘is said in many ways’ depending on how one apprehends it. That is, this unity can be considered with

<sup>10</sup> *Ideas II*, §46, 168: ‘the legitimate naturalization of consciousness’.

<sup>11</sup> *Ideas II*, §32, 134.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Ideas II*, §21, 94 on the body of a ‘ghost’.

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regard to oneself or with regard to others; when considered with regard to oneself, it can be apprehended in its operative form or as an explicit content of consciousness. We will return to these differences when distinguishing the *Leib* as 'organ of perception' from the *Leib* as perceived '*Leibkörper*' (lived physical body), the *Leib* as intimate flesh feeling itself in a sensible self-affection from the *Leib* as the body appearing in a space – whether the space close to the touch of my hands or the space of a distance that allows my embodied consciousness to move 'there' and to apprehend its 'here' from there or even 'from anywhere'.

Although *Leib* and *Seele* are in constant solidarity, for Husserl, they are not for that matter identical or even equivalent. In every activity that results from a subjective initiative, the *Leib* serves the intentions of the soul.<sup>13</sup> Even if there is no sensible perception of things without the contribution of the *Leib*, it is, nevertheless, less the *Leib* that perceives than the *Seele*. For Husserl, the *Leib* is the organ of a perception that has its source in the soul.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, in any voluntary movement, the *Leib* submits to the power (the 'I can') of the soul and only accomplishes its will: it is 'organ of the will'.<sup>15</sup> One can thus say that, for Husserl, it is essentially the soul that, as active principle, opens the lived-body to the world. But it is not necessary to conclude that, deprived of the direction of the soul and somehow left to itself, the *Leib* would fall into an inanimate, inert, and quasi-material torpor. This is not possible because, insofar as it remains in solidarity with a soul (even when asleep or reduced to a passive state of shock), the *Leib* cannot devolve into a simple *Körper*; even when left to itself, the *Leib* maintains its life, sensibility, and, thus, its bodily consciousness. Far from simply being the mortal remains of an exiled soul, one's own body, when deprived of the solicitations and constraints of the world, can awaken to itself and attract the attention of the soul to its own bodily life. Moreover, there are good reasons for thinking that a *Leib* that is insensible to its own life and that is thus deprived of all affective relation with itself would also be a poor organ of perception. This is something that the early Heidegger, fascinated by transcendence, was not able to understand and that made him insensitive to the intimate

<sup>13</sup> *Ideas II*, §21, 94: 'components [...] most intimately interwoven and in a certain way mutually penetrating [...] On the other hand, it is easy to see that the psychic has a priority.'

<sup>14</sup> *Ideas II*, §18a, 56.

<sup>15</sup> *Ideas II*, §38, 151.

phenomenon of a purely bodily affectivity. Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, and Henry were thus right (in this regard) to follow Husserl.

For Husserl, without the regulating power and ‘apprehensions’ (*Auffassungen*) of the soul, a bodily consciousness is, however, deprived of all intentional representation of an object. On its own, the *Leib* feels, it does not perceive. But it does not only feel itself, it also feels the things that it touches. It feels the things and it feels itself and these two forms of feeling are so intertwined that it passes without transition from one to the other. Never lacking distinctions, Husserl describes at least five different kinds of bodily ‘sensations’: (1) ‘representative’ (*darstellend*) or ‘hyletic’ sensations – for example, the sensation of red that is related to the perceived color of an object by means of an intentional apprehension; (2) the ‘affective’ sensations that, together with the representative sensations, take part in an intentional apprehension relating to the (ethical, aesthetic, or practical) value of an intentional object (appreciating the beauty of an object); (3) the ‘kinesthetic’ sensations or sensations of movements of one’s own body that in turn also lend themselves to an intentional apprehension which, however, is limited to the perception of my body and to the way that its movements (voluntary or involuntary) change (‘motivate’) the appearance of things; (4) the ‘*Empfindnisse*’<sup>16</sup> or sensations issuing from the contact between different parts of one *Leib* or between the *Leib* and things. Even if the *Empfindnisse* lend themselves (secondarily) to an intentional apprehension that informs us of the smooth or rough texture of a surface (of one’s own body or a thing), coldness and heat, the taste of food, etc., they are originally a way for the flesh to experience from within its contact with itself or with the things that it touches. (5) The sensations of ‘tendency’ or ‘drive’ that are related to the states of tension or relaxation of one’s own body and that are translated by feelings of pleasure or displeasure. These new sensations make of the body a flesh of pleasure or, more generally, the flesh of a libidinal sensibility that is at the same time both active and passive. Like the kinesthetic sensations, these sensations of pleasure are primarily related to an action, but, contrary to the former, they hardly lend themselves to an intentional apprehension.

This brief enumeration of different types of sensation has progressively led us from the *Leib*, understood as the organ of intentional perception that has its source in the soul, to the most intimate form of a bodily sensibility – that is, to the heart of what the *Leib* feels by itself

<sup>16</sup> The German term ‘*Empfindnisse*’, rather than the English translation ‘sensings’, is used throughout the text.

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and even what it feels when it only feels itself. Let us dwell for a moment on these sensations of a contact or bodily touch that are so unique that Husserl distinguishes them from all other *Empfindungen* by reserving for them the name '*Empfindnisse*'! In their most original state, these *Empfindnisse* are nothing more than the bodily sensation (more or less strong) of being 'touched' (*berührt*). Before we know if it is an accidental touch (*Berühren*) or an intentional touch (*Betasten*), a caress or a grab, before even knowing what it is that touches me this way, I already feel, more or less confusedly, *where* I am touched. The bodily sensibility highlighted by the *Empfindnisse* doesn't only discern the intensity of a pressure, but also the place where it is exercised.<sup>17</sup> But the space of the place where my body feels itself touched is not the space of the extension (*Ausdehnung*) of material things, of which my flesh, of course, hasn't the slightest idea. On the contrary, it is the intimate space of a feeling of a spreading out (*Ausbreitung*) of bodily sensibility<sup>18</sup> that disperses over the surface of my body and sometimes reaches into the deepest layers of the *Leib*.<sup>19</sup> However, it is necessary to concede that for me to feel touched in a more or less precise location on my body, the latter must have already constructed a system of places, a surface, or, most generally, a body schema (*schéma corporel*).

Yet, there is a case in which the localization of the sensation of being touched and the constitution of the place and of the space of this touching go hand in hand – namely, when it is by my own hand that my body is touched. Passing my hand over the surface of my body, I explore my body in giving it a surface characterized by a certain *Ausbreitung*. For when I pass my hand over my forehead, at each point of contact with my forehead and my fingers there is a crossing of sensations some of which belong to my hand and others to my forehead: the sensations of the hand that explores the external surface of my body by touching it and the sensations that consist in the internal *Empfindnis* that my forehead feels at being touched.

<sup>17</sup> *Ideas II*, §36, 145.

<sup>18</sup> *Ideas II*, §37, 149: 'The localization of *Empfindnisse* is in fact something in principle different from the extension of all material determinations of a thing. The *Empfindnisse* do indeed spread out (*breiten sich aus*) in space, cover, in their way, spatial surfaces [...] But this spreading out (*Ausbreitung*) and spreading into (*Hinbreitung*) are precisely something that differs essentially from extension in the sense of all the determinations that characterize the *res extensa*.'

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Ideas II*, §45, 165: 'sensation of the heart (*Herzgefühl*)'.



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How should we distinguish between these two series of sensations that belong to different parts of my body and are yet so closely intertwined? For Husserl, this is, in principle, always possible because the sensibility of the active touch and of the passive being-touched is not quite the same. Concerning active touch, it appears that the sensations are split into sensations that relate to the qualities of what I touch and sensations that relate to the hand (or another part of my own body) that touches.<sup>20</sup> There is no equivalent of this in the passive being-touched – that is, in the simple sensation that a part or surface of my body feels when it is touched by another body. Initially, the *Empfindnis* of being touched on a more or less precise location on my flesh does not inform me about the properties of what touches me.

Things change radically, however, when the touching and the touched both belong to different parts or surfaces of my flesh. Husserl gives the example of one hand touching the other hand (but my hand scratching my head, my two feet rubbing against one another, or my lips pressing against one another would do just as well). In all these cases, it is one and the same flesh (and only mine!) that is and that simultaneously feels itself touching and touched. That is to say that the *Empfindnis* that my left hand has of being touched is automatically related to the sensations of the right hand that touches. In this case, one cannot say that one hand does not know what the other is doing. It is in the intersection of different sensations belonging to my two hands that a fragment (at least) of the *continuity* and coherence of my flesh or my body schema is constituted. But the intersection of the sensations belonging to each hand also allows one to experience within the same flesh the *difference* between one's organs or parts. What my flesh feels at the point where my two hands touch is thus always related, according to Husserl, to both hands. In the hand that touches and in the hand that is touched, my body simultaneously explores itself from the outside and feels itself from the inside. This also means that the *Ausbreitung* of the spatiality deployed by the self-touching of the

<sup>20</sup> *Ideas II*, §36, 146. To show that the late Heidegger must have read the Second Section of *Ideas II*, one can cite the following passage from the *Zollikon Seminars*: 'When I grasp the glass, then I feel the glass and my hand. That is the so-called double sensation (*Doppelempfindung*), namely, the sensation of what is touched and the sensation of my hand. In the act of seeing, I do not sense my eye in this manner' (Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, 108).



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flesh concerns a surface that is sensible on both sides – this is what we commonly call skin.

An early and particularly attentive reader of these analyses in *Ideas II*, Merleau-Ponty points out that in this play of touching-touched, the roles are not assigned once and for all. Since we are dealing with parts of the same flesh, the hand that is touched can very easily and almost immediately touch. When my right hand touches my left hand, the contact between my two hands can, at any moment, be reversed and changed into the bodily consciousness of my left hand touching my right hand. Contrary to appearances, this always-possible shift does not speak in favor of a purely immanent self-affectation of my flesh. The difference, not only between the left hand and right hand but also between the hand that touches and the hand that is touched as well as the difference between what a hand feels from the inside and what a hand feels from the outside, is never abolished. It is like in those simple mechanisms of two interdependent levers where the lowering of one lever immediately raises the other, which, in turn, puts the other in place when it is pressed. The reversal in the touching-touched is thus not a mere turning around, but, as Merleau-Ponty does not tire of repeating, the 'reversibility'<sup>21</sup> of a role-change in a play with two actors. In other words, it suffices that my left hand, touched by my right hand, touches by exploring the right hand to make my right hand lose its touch and become exclusively touched (while remaining, with its *Empfindnisse*, sensitive to the touch it undergoes). This suggests that the event of this non-coincidence of the two hands and, more generally, of the touching and the touched – that is, of this distance in proximity, of this separation of the inseparable, of this in-between – is the most original experience of a bodily spatiality.

If so, then it would be necessary to renounce Husserl's attempt to understand the *Ausbreitung* of bodily spatiality solely in terms of the localization of the *Empfindnisse* of the hand touched without, however, going to the opposite extreme, often attributed to Heidegger, of claiming that the experience of spatiality-in-general necessarily precedes a recognition of particular places and their occupants. The relation between spatiality and places would thus be like the relationship between the touching and the touched. In both cases, it would be a difference in the indivisible, an opening to the other within the same, an intimate exteriority or 'extimacy'.

<sup>21</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, *Le visible et l'invisible* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 189 et passim; translated by A. Lingis as *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 146.

Doesn't the place of the intimate *Empfindnis* of being touched presuppose, in fact, the exteriority of the surface of the *Leib*? And could the places where the contact with the touching occurs take on a bodily and sensual meaning if they did not give rise to *Empfindnisse*? But don't all places also necessarily maintain a relation to other places, and doesn't all space extend between different places? If so, is it then still conceivable to define the experience of the sensitive areas of the body in terms of the relation that a flesh maintains with itself in its solitary self-touching?

Faced with these questions, a number of things must be addressed in order to understand Husserl's position correctly. First, it is necessary to appreciate the gesture with which Husserl promotes the extimacy of touch to the status of the primordial experience of the flesh. When it comes to the constitution of the *Leib*, vision comes after touch and a subject deprived of touch would thus not be able to experience itself as a bodily subject.<sup>22</sup> Second, Husserl never says that the consciousness of one's flesh in solitary self-touching genetically precedes the experience of a foreign flesh or that it would suffice to understand its significance. On the contrary, he indicated, although only in passing, what, for example, the child's discovery of the expressive quality of her own voice owes to an early sensitivity to the voice of others (the mother).<sup>23</sup> Further, he insists that the naturalization of my body – that is, understanding it as a natural thing – necessarily presupposes an internalization of the gaze that only others can originally direct at me.<sup>24</sup> It is thus for methodological, not existentiell or existential, reasons that Husserl chose a path that goes from the most intimate (even if already extimate) to the more objective in the way that I live my body. His description of the 'solipsistic' experience that I have of my body aims to explore both its appropriateness and its limits at the same time.<sup>25</sup> In proceeding in this way, Husserl never goes so far as to attribute to me, by myself, all the power of a bodily constitution, whether of my own body or the body of others.<sup>26</sup> For Husserl, one can no more deduce the

<sup>22</sup> *Ideas II*, §37, 150: 'A subject whose only sense was the sense of vision could not at all have an appearing lived-body.'

<sup>23</sup> *Ideas II*, §21, 95, note.

<sup>24</sup> *Ideas II*, §46, 169.

<sup>25</sup> *Ideas II*, §42, 161.

<sup>26</sup> *Ideas II*, §41b, 159: 'The same lived-body which serves me as a means for all my perception obstructs me in the perception of it itself and is a remarkably imperfectly constituted thing (*ein merkwürdig unvollkommen konstituiertes Ding*).'

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entire meaning of the body of others from the experience that I have of my own body than reduce the intimate experience that I have of my flesh to an identification with the way that I appear to others. To play these two approaches against one another makes no sense since they are both incomplete.

Husserl's methodological solipsism agrees perfectly with the analyses of *Being and Time*. It is the same for the following step in the solipsist constitution of my flesh in which Husserl interrogates the way my sensible flesh is part of a mundane environment whose laws it, to a certain extent, is subjected to. This is thus the Husserlian version of a bodily being-in-the-world. What is most remarkable about these relations of dependency that bind the sensible reality of the flesh to a different type of reality is that they concern 'circumstances' arising from both the state of its environment and the flesh itself insofar as it is taken up in the mode of functioning of material bodies. All bodily consciousness is, in fact, dependent on both worldly conditions that are more or less favorable to its development (light, position, intensity of affections, etc.)<sup>27</sup> and the state of vigilance or sensibility of the flesh and the proper functioning of the brain. The investigation of these relations of dependency amounts, for Husserl, to the outline of a phenomenological ontology of the carnal (not material) 'reality' of my body. Even if Husserl hardly paid attention to it, nothing prevents us from understanding the non-coincidence of the flesh with itself not only as the condition of openness to the world, but also as the gap that puts bodily consciousness at the mercy of worldly and material conditions. It is because the *Leib* that feels itself touched simultaneously appears from the outside as a *Leibkörper* that the latter can also be a *Körper* that is subject to physical and neurophysiological laws. Consequently, we can add to the above non-coincidences that like my hand that feels itself being touched is and is not the *Leibkörper* that appears to the hand that touches it, so my *Leibkörper* explored by the touch of my hand is not and is the *Körper* or material object that natural science is concerned with.

Even for a careful reader of *Ideas II*, it is not always easy to disentangle the threads that are intertwined in Husserl's exploration of the 'conditionalities' of the *Leib*.<sup>28</sup> First, one has to expand the exploration of states, qualities, and capacities of the flesh by paying attention to everything that is only revealed in its interaction with its environment, and therefore not in its self-affection. Then, one has to elucidate the exact nature of this functional link that makes bodily

<sup>27</sup> *Ideas II*, §18b.

<sup>28</sup> *Ideas II*, §§18b, 18c, 32.

consciousness dependent on physical stimulation and neurophysiological processes. More specifically, one has to understand how the causality of processes investigated by the natural sciences can affect bodily consciousness while maintaining the onto-phenomenological thesis that these processes cannot *cause* bodily experiences and their contents. Finally, this investigation of the connections of a functional correspondence between ‘states’ of bodily consciousness and the material ‘circumstances’ of the natural world and the brain has to be brought to bear on an ontological determination of what type of ‘reality’ sensible flesh is. This latter investigation incontestably deserves the title of a phenomenological ontology since it characterizes the mode of being of the *Leib* on the basis of the observation of phenomena of correspondence or dependence.

Concerning the first issue, Husserl does not seem prepared to give up his desire to distinguish between forms of conditionality affecting the *Leib* and the *Seele* respectively. Particularly bodily, according to Husserl, are the conditional qualities that relate to the sensibility of the *Leib* vis-à-vis what affects it from the outside. The intimate experience of an *Empfindnis* in relation to the observation of the material occasion of its occurrence reveals what Husserl calls the ‘*Empfindsamkeit*’ of my sensible flesh.<sup>29</sup> This bodily sensitivity has to do with how my *Leib* is exposed to solicitations (while protecting itself from them) that come from physical stimuli. It is conditioned by the state (more or less receptive, normal, or abnormal, etc.) in which my *Leib* finds itself – either temporarily or habitually. Making the *Seele* the active principle of bodily consciousness, Husserl attributes conditionalities to it that either come from its bodily component (‘psychophysical’ (or better: ‘physiopsychical’) conditionalities), previous experiences (‘idiopsychic’ conditionalities), or the social environment (‘intersubjective’ conditionalities).<sup>30</sup> All these relations of dependency weigh on the current functioning of the *soul* – that is, on the acuteness of its perception, on its inclinations towards a certain type of perception rather than another, on how its perception deals with the gaze of others, etc. Again, the weight of this dependency does not only affect the current state of the soul; this dependency weighs in on its habitual mode of being. By always living under the influence of the same circumstances, the dynamic capabilities of the soul end up being realized according to ‘dispositions’ forged during the preceding experiences.<sup>31</sup> While

<sup>29</sup> *Ideas II*, §40, 155.

<sup>30</sup> *Ideas II*, §32, 135.

<sup>31</sup> *Ideas II*, §32, 133.

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distinguished from material realities by its continual change,<sup>32</sup> the soul and the flux of its bodily experiences therefore most often end up flowing into a prepared mold.

It turns out that Husserl's distinction between two series of conditional properties of bodily consciousness is not without advantages – provided, of course, they are not opposed to one another – because the mode of being of the flesh is a mixture of the vulnerability of its *Empfindsamkeit* and its capabilities to cope, that is, its 'dispositions' (or devices) to reply. Thus, living flesh passes imperceptibly from receptivity to activity, from virtuality to actuality. Although in his phenomenological ontology of the 'reality' of the soul, Husserl deems it a 'substance' despite the continual flux of carnal consciousness,<sup>33</sup> the permanence of the being of the soul is only revealed through its 'conditional' implication in worldly circumstances. This functional understanding of its substance ensures that the subsisting mode of being of the soul, far from basking in the pride of its closed self-sufficiency, is instead marked by dependency, finitude, and transcendence. This substantial mode of being of the carnal soul in which its *Empfindsamkeit* and its dispositional abilities are intertwined has the ontological form of a being-able that depends on circumstances or worldly situations and neurophysiological constraints. The subsisting being of the soul taken in the network of its idio-psychic and psychophysical conditionalities is that of a conditional freedom (the 'I can'). Husserl's designation of the mode of being of the soul as a 'substantial reality' is thus not in any way opposed to Heidegger's characterisation of 'Dasein'.

But Husserl's examination of the relations of 'conditionality' that bodily consciousness maintains with the world and material nature also opens relevant phenomenological perspectives that are neglected by Heidegger. For one does not fall into a naturalism that is incompatible with a phenomenological analysis of the flesh simply by conceding that its 'sensorial states' (*Empfindungszustände*) depend on 'the concomitant system of real circumstances under which it senses (*empfindet*)'.<sup>34</sup> These real circumstances, taken in themselves, undoubtedly arise within natural causality. The light that my visual perception depends on, the intensity or pitch of a sound and the way it affects the parts of my inner ear, the way that a chemical ('santonin') affects my brain and makes me see everything in yellow are the

<sup>32</sup> *Ideas II*, §32, 133.

<sup>33</sup> *Ideas II*, §20, 92: 'a stream (*Strom*), with no beginning or end of "lived experiences"'; §32, 133: 'a flux (*Fluss*)'.

<sup>34</sup> *Ideas II*, §40, 155.

subject of scientific observations and theories of which philosophy can question the presuppositions and limits, but not in principle the legitimacy. However, the phenomenologist's aim is to point out that all we can actually observe is a relation of dependency between bodily experiences and the material circumstances that bring them about, a relation that has the form of an 'if-then' (*wenn-so*) or 'because-therefore' (*weil-so*).<sup>35</sup> The phenomenologist will hasten to add that it is impossible in principle for a bodily state of consciousness to be caused by a material action. For, as Husserl states, what is real in the sense of material reality cannot cause a psychic reality, which is an 'irreality'.<sup>36</sup>

Husserl thus seems to want to say that, on the one hand, bodily consciousness depends on material causes and that, on the other hand, since this consciousness is of a different ontological nature than physical nature, it necessarily escapes this causality. Husserl is thus forced to concede that 'reality and irreality [...] mutually exclude one another and on the other hand [...] essentially require one another'.<sup>37</sup> New distinctions are therefore needed. The first consists in pointing out that my body as phenomenological or 'aesthesiological' flesh and my body as a *Körper* endowed with 'somatological' properties are numerically identical and ontologically different: 'To every psychophysical conditionality there necessarily appertains *somatological causality*, which immediately always concerns the relations of the irreal, of an event in the subjective sphere, with something real, the lived-body (*Leib*): then mediately the relations with an external real thing which is in a real, hence causal, connection with the lived-body'.<sup>38</sup> The identity of my body thus lends itself to a reversal of perspective and this possibility belongs to it essentially. It belongs to the nature of my lived-body to manifest itself as a 'turning point' (*Umschlagspunkt*).<sup>39</sup> We encounter there, in addition to the sensibility and spatiality of the touching-touched, a new and even more extreme form of reciprocity, that is to say, a difference in identity.

But since Husserl is not satisfied with the thesis of a numerical identity and an ontological difference between the aesthesiological flesh and the somatological body, how should we understand their interaction? For Husserl, it is clear that the neurological changes of

<sup>35</sup> *Ideas II*, §18a, 57.

<sup>36</sup> *Ideas II*, §18b, 64.

<sup>37</sup> *Ideas II*, §18b, 64.

<sup>38</sup> *Ideas II*, §18b, 65.

<sup>39</sup> *Ideas II*, §42, 161.

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my *Körper* (or physical stimuli) cannot cause the sensations of my flesh. Should we say then that there is a strict parallelism between the phenomena of the aesthesiological flesh and the somatological body? Husserl discusses the hypothesis of 'psychophysical parallelism' at length in the difficult §63 of the Third Section of *Ideas II*.<sup>40</sup> It appears from this discussion that, for reasons of principle, the 'reciprocity' (*Wechselwirkung*) between bodily consciousness and the brain (as 'central organ' of the neurophysiological body) does not lend itself to a parallelist interpretation. This refusal in principle is based, for Husserl, on a double series of arguments. The first arguments are ontological and methodological and oppose the 'irreality' of bodily consciousness to the 'material reality' of neurophysiological processes just as the absolute validity of the laws of eidetic phenomenology are opposed to the merely hypothetical validity of the laws of natural science. The second, more phenomenological, series of arguments attempt to highlight phenomena of consciousness, such as the structure of internal time-consciousness or the marginal consciousness of the horizon of virtual givens, for which one cannot easily find a neurological equivalent or explanation.

One searches in vain in Husserl for more precise indications regarding the functioning of the brain and its limited contribution to the experiences of consciousness. Instead of closely examining, like his contemporary Bergson, what in a perceptual behavior of the body is due to consciousness and what is due to the brain, that is, what is due to a psychic dynamism and what is due to a material causality,<sup>41</sup> Husserl is satisfied to compensate for the claimed impossibility of a causal action of matter on bodily consciousness with his conception of psychophysical conditionality. Should we blame him for this or shouldn't we rather welcome the clarity with which he kept his considerations within the strict limits of phenomenology and entrusted the rest to the care of the empirical sciences? Husserl

<sup>40</sup> Husserl's effort does not seem to interest Heidegger who is content to highlight its inadequacy in his well-known style. He writes in his course from the summer semester of 1925: 'Husserl here merely returns again to his primal separation of being under another name. Everything remains ontologically the same [...] in the question of the interplay of the personalistic and the naturalistic attitude, then in the question of the relationship of soul and body, spiritual and physical nature. Also raised here is the old problem of psychophysical parallelism, much discussed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century' (GA 20, 170/123).

<sup>41</sup> Henri Bergson, *Matière et mémoire* (Paris: PUF, 1939); translated by N.M Paul and W.S. Palmer as *Matter and Memory* (New York: Zone Books, 1991).



concedes in fact that: 'On such grounds, it seems to me, one can *radically refute parallelism* [...] In point of fact, with the rejection of parallelism nothing at all is decided in favor of interaction (*Wechselwirkung*) [between consciousness and the brain] [...] Obviously, how far all this extends can only be decided empirically and if possible by means of experimental psychology.'<sup>42</sup> Because 'the lobes of my brain (*Gehirnwindungen*) do not appear to me [...] And even as regards the other's brain, I cannot 'intuit (*ihm ansehen*)' [...] the psychic processes which pertain to it',<sup>43</sup> the phenomenologist must be content to recall the principle according to which: 'only that which the essential nexuses (*Wesenszusammenhänge*) [of eidetic phenomenology] leave *open* can be empirically conditioned'.<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that with the examination of the different forms of conditionality that attach my flesh to the fabric of the world and expose it to the solicitations of material causality the solipsist investigation of its mode of being has reached its limits. This investigation took us from the intimacy of the *Empfindnis* of being-touched to the appearance of the flesh as a *Leibkörper*. What can no longer be felt but can actually be observed are relations of dependency that make my flesh a part of material nature. At the conclusion of this phenomenological-ontological investigation conducted in the sphere of solipsistic experience, my body turns out to be 'a thing of a particular type',<sup>45</sup> a 'subjective object'.<sup>46</sup>

This thing that my body has become is still essentially subjective and it is different from all other surrounding things because it relates all these other things to itself. For me, my body-thing can never fully blend into the network of other things because it is through it that these things exist for me. My body remains subjective even when I abstract from its function as 'organ of the will' (and thus also of freedom) and as an 'organ of perception' because it is what comports itself as a center or 'zero point of orientation': 'The lived-body then has [...] the unique distinction of bearing in itself the

<sup>42</sup> *Ideas II*, §63, 294.

<sup>43</sup> *Ideas II*, §45, 164.

<sup>44</sup> *Ideas II*, §63, 293.

<sup>45</sup> *Ideas II*, §41, 158.

<sup>46</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Drittes Buch*, ed. Marly Biemel, Husserliana V (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1971), 124; translated by Ted Klein and William Pohl as *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Third Book* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1980).

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*zero point* of all these orientations. One of its spatial points [...] is always characterized in the mode of the ultimate central here [...] It is thus that all things of the surrounding world possess an orientation to the lived-body [...] The 'far' is far from me, from my lived-body; 'to the right' refers back to the right side of my lived-body, e.g. to my right hand'.<sup>47</sup> Wherever it goes and whatever it does, my body-thing is always here (*Hier*) and never there (*Dort*). What ultimately resists all my attempts to make (by myself) my body into a simple thing is thus its central point of view – that is, the place it assigns to itself within a spatiality that originates from it and that thus never falls together with the extension of objective space. The spreading out (*Ausbreitung*) not only of *Empfindnisse* on the surface of my flesh but of my body-thing beyond its limits and beyond its present place thus never frees itself from the anchor point, from this absolutely minimal consciousness, from this 'metaphysical point' of individuation (Leibniz), from this almost insignificant absolute that constitutes its 'here'. 'Here' is the mark that makes this thing my body. 'Here' is the name of the most primitive and most bodily subjectivity.

Everything changes when we give up this *methodological* artifice that has thus far led us to abstract from the existence of any other flesh than our own. In the discovery of another flesh, the new experience of another 'here' that is 'there' imposes itself on my flesh. But how can I transport myself to that distant place, to this place at the same time different from my place and implied in it? This reciprocity between places that are originally correlated and yet foreign to one another is not unlike the structure of those other forms of reciprocity between the same and the other that we have already encountered. We discovered that any relation of reciprocity or mutual implication necessarily lends itself to a reading in a double sense. This also holds for the relation that my flesh, from its place, establishes with the place of a foreign flesh. One only has to read §§43–47 of *Ideas II* carefully enough to be convinced that my constitution of another flesh is inseparable, for Husserl, from my experience of the modification and expansion that this foreign flesh introduces in my own flesh. In the relation between different flesh, any 'constitution' is thus necessarily a co-constitution. A phenomenology of bodily inter-subjectivity does not have to choose between what constitutes what or between the perspective of a 'here' or 'there'. Because my 'here' is simultaneously open to the 'there' of another flesh and is a 'there' for the 'here' of the foreign flesh.

<sup>47</sup> *Ideas II*, §41a, 158.

This reciprocity between the two lived bodies and their places does not prevent, however, as Husserl repeats, that the place of my flesh remains 'here' and that without this 'here' it would no longer be my flesh but a simple material object. When Heidegger writes: 'Dasein understands its "here" in terms of the "there" of the surrounding world',<sup>48</sup> he thus reiterates Husserl's position since he does not say that Dasein is there or that its 'here' is nothing but a 'here' for an 'over there'. Heidegger simply affirms that its affairs lead Dasein spontaneously to a there and that in the everyday understanding that Dasein has of itself, it relates to itself naturally from the over there of the things with which it is occupied and of the people with whom it is preoccupied. It is true that Husserl has perhaps not paid sufficient attention to the fact that the ordinary here of my flesh is usually only revealed after a return to oneself, but despite this the reunion with its authentic (*eigentlich*) self cannot constitute the full sense of the here of my flesh. In truth, this here of my flesh is the mark of a self that precedes the whole enterprise of transcendental constitution.

According to Husserl, we cannot be transported into the place of another flesh without being reminded of the relation of reciprocity that already governs the interaction of my *Seele* with my *Leib*. It is, in fact, this intimate experience of a difference within my bodily consciousness that gives me, by analogy, access to a similar but inaccessible double bodily ipseity of the other. If I did not already have, by touch or by sight, an external perception of my *Leib* (which I also use as an organ of perception and which is the location of my most intimate sensing), I could never leave, by my own strength, the auto-affectation of my flesh and open myself to the sensing of a foreign flesh. The analogy between my flesh and the flesh of others, however, is based on a perception that makes me as attentive to the difference as to the similarity between the way my *Leib* and certain other *Leiber* appear to me. The difference is palpable: my lived body is here and its sensible and intentional life is given to me as 'originally' (*urpräsent*) as is its external appearance. In the touching-touched, its private life and its surface are both simultaneously given, they are originally 'co-present' (*kompräsent*) for me. This is not so in the appearance of the body of another. What is originally given to me in this case is only her external appearance. More needs to be given, however, if I am to be able to distinguish between the perception of

<sup>48</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §23, 144/107, English translation modified.

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a material, worldly thing and the perception of a foreign *Leib*. If the analogy between me and the other relates to the fact that we both experience our bodies as a double presence or as an originary co-presence and if this analogy must be based on a phenomenological given (instead of proceeding by simple 'reasoning' (*Schluss*)), then it is necessary that the soul that animates the body of others manifests itself to me in some way – even if only as an inaccessible given, a donation in withdrawal.

Husserl understands this bodily revelation of others that has the form of a Heideggerian unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*) in terms of the phenomenon of 'expression' (*Ausdruck*).<sup>49</sup> According to this analysis, the bodily behaviour of others testifies to an inner life that I can never penetrate and that I can never make originally present to myself. However, I can apprehend or 'appresent' (*appäsentieren*) it: 'the other's touching hand, which I see, appresents to me his solipsistic view of this hand and then also everything that must belong to it in presentified co-presence (*in vergegenwärtigter Kompräsenz*)'.<sup>50</sup> The analogy between me and the other that concerns two occurrences of an originary co-presence is accompanied, once again, by a reversal: while for my bodily consciousness of myself, the *Empfindnis* of my flesh is more primitive than its appearance as a *Leibkörper*, the appearance of the expressive body of others comes first and constitutes, for me at least, an essential condition for the appresentation of their *Empfindnisse*.

If we look closer, we discern at the heart of this meeting between distinct and most often separate fleshs yet a second reversal. For the expressive body of another is not just the way that the other is first given to me, but it is also, by right and simply, the first expressive body that is given to me. The way of analogy that led me from the co-presence of my flesh to the co-presence of a foreign flesh returns to me by giving to my flesh an expressivity similar to what I have discovered in the presence of the flesh of others. My familiarity with the expressive power of my own *Leib* originates, in fact, in the encounter with others and with what Husserl does not hesitate to call the 'grammar' of bodily expressions.<sup>51</sup> The whole system of exchanges of verbal expressions should thus be understood, according to Husserl,<sup>52</sup> as an extension of the expressive power of the body, that

<sup>49</sup> *Ideas II*, §45, 166 and §56g, 235.

<sup>50</sup> *Ideas II*, §45, 166.

<sup>51</sup> *Ideas II*, §45, 166.

<sup>52</sup> *Ideas II*, §45, 166.

is to say, this ‘facial expression’ (*Mienenspiel*) of which one could also highlight the originally mimetic character.

Anticipating the conception of a ‘mirror stage’, as developed by Henri Wallon or Jacques Lacan, Husserl also makes us aware of the fact that the image our mirror reflects and with which we must identify ourselves – whether we like it or not – reproduces the appearance that our lived body has for others.<sup>53</sup> But the mirror or a (bad) photographic portrait also teaches us the painful lesson of the devastating effect that the gaze of another who ignores the expressiveness of our body can have on us. This cold gaze that strips our flesh of its soul and whose objective is focused on turning it into a simple thing is also the gaze of natural science. For Husserl, only others or the use of scientific instruments can bring about such a ‘naturalization’ of our body into a natural thing – that is to say, an abstraction from the intimate consciousness that we have of our living flesh.<sup>54</sup> The gaze of the other is thus capable of the best and worst: It can awaken our body to the consciousness of its expressive power (and allow it, for example, to dance) and it can ruin the life of its soul by treating it as an object to be manipulated at will. By ourselves, we are not capable of the best or the worst. For, by ourselves, we can neither make ourselves familiar with the expressive language of our body nor treat it as a simple thing; any external perception that we can have (by touch or sight) of our *Leibkörper* is always accompanied by the internal trembling of our *Empfindnisse*. We can at most, out of spite or pride, dissociate ourselves from our bodies and emphasize that we are not *only* our bodies.<sup>55</sup>

### 3. What Heidegger could have learned from Husserl’s ontology of the body

Returning to our initial questions, we finally have to decide on the compatibility of Husserl’s phenomenology of the flesh with Heidegger’s fundamental ontology and to highlight the consequences that an overly selective reading of *Ideas II* had for the early Heidegger’s development of the existential analytic in *Being and Time*. To do this,

<sup>53</sup> *Ideas II*, §37, 148, note: ‘Obviously, it cannot be said that I see my eye in the mirror since I do not perceive my eye, that which sees qua seeing. I see something, of which I judge indirectly by “empathy”, that it is identical with my eye as a thing [...] in the same way that I see the eye of an other.’

<sup>54</sup> *Ideas II*, §47.

<sup>55</sup> *Ideas II*, §54.

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we need only gather the scattered remarks made while interpreting the Second Section of *Ideas II*. If the investigation of the intimacy of the bodily *Empfindnisse* is foreign to Heidegger's analysis of the being of Dasein in terms of its transcendence, it might have nevertheless been able to complement it. It was previously mentioned how in his *Zollikon Seminars* from the 1960s Heidegger became concerned with the role that the *Empfindnisse* play in the movement of my hand when it reaches out to things. Concerning the 'spreading out' of *Empfindnisse* through my own body and concerning their insertion in a spatiality that is both bodily and yet already worldly, we have been more cautious. While questioning the Husserlian conception of the 'localization' of *Empfindnisse*, we have also refused to subscribe to the Heideggerian thesis according to which every experience of a (bodily) place already presupposes the unfolding of the horizon of a spatiality and the understanding of its ontological significance. Let us add that, compared to the richness of Husserl's descriptions of a self-affection of the flesh, the understanding of it exclusively in terms of spatiality – that is, of a 'spatialization' (*Verräumlichung*) of Dasein – seems too weak and one-sided.<sup>56</sup> Just as we did not think that it was necessary to choose between the primacy of space and the primacy of place, we have also refused to make of spatiality the a priori of all understanding of the mode of being of the lived-body.

Perhaps we are guilty in our interpretation of Husserl's phenomenology of bodily consciousness of over-privileging the intimacy of the *Empfindnisse* at the expense of the other bodily ('hyletic') sensations that more readily lend themselves to an 'apprehension' (*Auffassung*) serving the interests of an intentional perception of things and perhaps we have neglected the Husserlian analysis of kinesthetic sensations and drives. We have made sure, however, by using the (Lacanian) term 'extimacy' and the (Merleau-Pontian) conception of a 'reciprocity' or 'reversibility' of the flesh, to emphasize that, even in its most secret intimacy, the *Leib* is never closed in on itself. We have also emphasized everything that the experience I have of my flesh owes to others and shown how this body for me is equally given to me as a (expressive) body for-others.

However, Husserl's phenomenology of the lived-body still fits in the framework of a philosophy of consciousness even if this consciousness would be completely bodily and devoid of all intentional directedness. We know how much Heidegger and his successors have struggled with the Husserlian conception of consciousness and its metaphysical presuppositions. While never having felt it

<sup>56</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §23.

necessary to follow them on this point,<sup>57</sup> during our re-reading of *Ideas II* it has turned out that without this sensible, extimate consciousness with which we feel the trembling and the instinctual life of our flesh, the singularity of the here of its insertion in the world, and the gaze of others that always threatens to dispossess us, our body risks losing its soul and devolving into a simple thing. Nothing is more foreign to this bodily consciousness than the cold objectifying gaze, transparent to itself and surveying the world with a view to its theoretical mastery, for which Husserl has been given so much grief. To make of Husserl a champion of Cartesianism or scientific objectivism is a mistake and demonstrates an ignorance of his phenomenology of the flesh. Bodily consciousness, in the facticity of its '*Empfindsamkeit*' and in the dynamism of its 'dispositions' and 'powers', in its inherence in itself and in its adherence to the world, feels itself in a way that does not allow for re-appropriation or recuperation in the form of an objectifying reflection.

Regarding the exploration of the various forms of 'conditionality' of the lived experiences of the flesh, they belong, for Husserl, to the project of a naturalization of consciousness, which has an authentically phenomenological character that Heidegger was therefore wrong to be suspicious of. The relationship that the lived-body has with the 'circumstances' (including material ones) of the world is already experienced by it before lending itself to a phenomenological description. These phenomena, therefore, could have found a place in Heidegger's analysis of the facticity of the being-in-the-world of Dasein. 'Conditionality' does not mean 'causality', even if the phenomenologist cannot legitimately be disinterested in their relationship and interaction. Husserlian conditionality also corresponds, quite accurately, to what Merleau-Ponty calls 'the milieu' of an incarnate consciousness. In Husserl, the investigation of conditionalities is part of an ontological project aimed at understanding the mode of being of the flesh through the phenomenologically given relations that it maintains with both 'the history' of its own experiences and with the worldly and material circumstances of their emergence. This phenomenological ontology of 'the reality' of the flesh, which ignores nothing of the 'flux' of bodily experiences or of the 'being-able' of an incarnate existence, culminates in a conception of the 'substance' of 'the soul'. These terms that Husserl borrowed from metaphysics, however, should not frighten us since they concern the functional understanding of a heteronomous substance living in

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Rudolf Bernet, *Conscience et existence. Perspectives phénoménologiques* (Paris: PUF, 2004).



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harmony with the world. In weighing the advantages and disadvantages of an analysis of the flesh under the double form of a 'body' and a 'soul', we have also experienced no difficulty in showing that this metaphysical distinction never threatens, in Husserl, the recognition of the profound unity of a bodily life.

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