

Derrida and Husserl's Phenomenology of Touch: "Inter" as the Uncanny Condition of the Lived Body¹

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Abstract

By closely examining Derrida's reading of Husserl's phenomenology of touch in *Ideas II*, this essay will complicate the view about deconstruction's supposed critique of phenomenology, and will argue, following Derrida, that the relation between the two philosophers is rather more intricate. The first section will focus on the phenomenological experience of the lived body [*Leib*] and its reliance on an axiomatic network of concepts (immediacy, self-evidence, etc.). The primordially and irreducibility of these phenomenological values is attested by a series of other Husserlian motifs such as the *epochē*, the reduction and the delimitation of a sphere of transcendental ownness. The second section will explore the instrumentality of touch and, more specifically, of the immediate and auto-affective act of manual touching in the constitution of the lived body. Derrida's response to *Ideas II* in *On Touching–Jean-Luc Nancy* revolves around Husserl's rigorous distinction of touch from sight. While glossing *On Touching–Jean-Luc Nancy* in the final section, I will identify a certain "inter" *qua* originary spacing toward which Husserl's treatment of touch obliquely gestures, and which Derrida conceptualizes in terms of an essential possibility of visible exteriority. I will explain how this aporetic "inter" undercuts the alleged immediacy and pre-eminence of touch over against sight, and also why it constitutes the condition of both possibility and impossibility for the lived body.

Keywords: *deconstruction, phenomenology, body, touch, sight*

Dan Zahavi, in *Husserl's Phenomenology*, claims that philosophers of the "hermeneutical and the deconstructivistic holds", whose names he conceals, have accused Edmund Husserl of intuitionism. He goes on to contend, somewhat obliquely, that phenomenology has often been regarded as a typical case of the so-called "*metaphysics of presence*".² Leaving aside the question of the validity of that claim with respect to hermeneutics, I will here focus on the intricate relation between phenomenology and the thought of Jacques Derrida, who is undoubtedly the philosopher behind the evasive reference above to "deconstructivism". Zahavi's diagnosis of a tension between phenomenology and deconstruction appears incongruous with Derrida's following statement: "The concepts of originary *différance* and originary "delay" were imposed upon us by a reading of Husserl".³ This confession, which may

¹ I would like to thank Pavlos Kontos for his incisive and constructive remarks on an early version of the essay, especially its parts on Husserl's phenomenology.

² See Dan Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 93.

³ Jacques Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1978), 196-231, 203 n.5.

come as a surprise to some phenomenologists, has to be interpreted very carefully in light of the fact that, far from discrediting Husserlian philosophy, it explicitly affirms its positive contribution to the development of deconstruction. Besides, Derrida's intense involvement with Husserl's thought in his early work, and in some of his later writings, can also be adduced to support the validity of his assertion.⁴

Zahavi's claim is evidently at odds with Derrida's statement, considering that "différance" and "delay" constitute the conceptual tools *par excellence* whereby deconstruction aims to dismantle the "metaphysics of presence" which phenomenology typifies. Is it possible to reconcile the idea of a certain continuity between deconstruction and phenomenology with the tension Zahavi identifies? This essay responds to that challenge and seeks to consolidate the view, introduced by Derrida and endorsed by other contemporary scholars, that the relation between the two philosophers is rather more complex.⁵ My thematic axis will be Derrida's reading, in "Tangent II" in *On Touching–Jean-Luc Nancy*, of Husserl's phenomenology of the body in the second book of *Ideas*, and the discernment of an intra-subjective "inter" that must remain distinct from the first component of the term "intersubjectivity".⁶ Derrida's dense text contains one of his later painstaking analyses of Husserl's philosophy. Because his approach, however, remains controversial in the secondary literature, I will unpack his intricate argument about the constitution of the body while also re-evaluating the fragile relation between the two thinkers.

In the first section, I will demonstrate the pivotal role, for Husserl, of immediacy and self-evidence with respect to the experience of the lived body [*Leib*],⁷ as opposed to the mediation and inauthenticity characterizing one's intersubjective experience of the other. The phenomenological experience of the body proper is grounded in an axiomatic network of concepts (immediacy, authenticity, spontaneity, etc.) whose primordially is

⁴ I recall here that Derrida's higher studies dissertation, written in 1953-54, is entitled *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*, trans. Marian Hobson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), and that his thesis title submitted in 1957 was "The Ideality of the Literary Object", a project intended to elaborate a new theory of literature by utilizing the technique of transcendental phenomenology (see Jacques Derrida, "The Time of a Thesis: Punctuations," trans. Kathleen McLaughlin, in *Philosophy in France Today*, ed. Alan Montefiore [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983], 34-50). His first published work in 1962 was his translation and extensive commentary *Edmund Husserl's "Origin of Geometry": An Introduction*, trans. John P. Leavey, Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989). Derrida's *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), also devoted to phenomenology, was published in 1967, and other writings of the same period either included detailed analyses of or engaged exclusively with Husserl's philosophy. In his later work, Derrida offers readings of Husserl in *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Nass (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 123-40, and *On Touching–Jean-Luc Nancy*, trans. Christine Irizarry (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), especially "Tangent II: "For example, my hand"–"The hand itself"–"For example, the finger"–"For example, "I feel my heart"," 159-82; the latter work is hereafter cited as OT.

⁵ See, for instance, Paola Marrati, *Genesis and Trace: Derrida Reading Husserl and Heidegger*, trans. Simon Sparks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Leonard Lawlor, *Derrida and Husserl: The Basic Problem of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); and Joanna Hodge, *Derrida on Time* (London: Routledge, 2007).

⁶ See Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer, vol. 3 of *Edmund Husserl: Collected Works* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989); hereafter cited as *Ideas II*.

⁷ I will use "lived body" or "body proper" to refer to Husserl's "*Leib*", translated as "Body" in *Ideas II* and as "animate organism" in Edmund Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1993); the latter is hereafter cited as CM.

attested by processes and motifs that Husserl upholds throughout his published works and manuscripts, such as the reduction and the delimitation of a sphere of transcendental certitude. The second section will examine the instrumentality of touch in the constitution of the lived body, and particularly the significance of the immediate and auto-affective act of touching by the hand and fingers, manually and digitally respectively. Derrida's argument, in *On Touching—Jean-Luc Nancy*, depends on Husserl's rigorous distinction of touch from the other senses, especially from sight. In the final section, while glossing Derrida, I will identify a certain "inter" *qua* originary spacing toward which Husserl's analyses of touch gesture. Derrida conceptualizes this aporetic "inter" in terms of an essential possibility of visible exteriority. I will explain how the latter undercuts the alleged immediacy and pre-eminence of touch over against sight, and also why it constitutes the condition of both possibility and impossibility for the lived body. Such an interpretation, far from rejecting or criticizing Husserl's theory, shows that the auto-affective experience of the body proper can arise only on the basis of a more originary hetero-affectation that will always complicate the phenomenological purity of this experience. That uncanny and hetero-affective "inter" does not straightforwardly originate in Husserl's declarations. It results from Derrida's radical reading, a reading that nonetheless respects the richness and openness of the specific Husserlian texts but also of his transcendental philosophy as a whole.

Phenomenological Exigencies: The Lived Body and Transcendental Immediacy

There is little doubt that, if one is to do justice to Husserl's philosophical project, one has to take into account the crucial role of intersubjectivity and the various guises in which this motif appears in his oeuvre. Zahavi convincingly associates intersubjectivity with three distinct ideas: (1) the intentionality of consciousness and the concept of "horizon" ("open intersubjectivity"), (2) normality, and (3) empathy as the ego's experience of the other subject in their bodily appearance.⁸ Empathy is perhaps the most well-known form that intersubjectivity assumes. Husserl's inscrutable analyses of this process in *Cartesian Meditations*, and the pivotal corollary distinction between the body proper [*Leib*] and the physical body [*Körper*] have been the subjects of heated debate and the targets of severe criticism.⁹

As I cannot deal here with the question of whether empathy entails a symmetrical or asymmetrical relation between self and other,¹⁰ I will focus on the foundational status

⁸ See Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology*, 112-20.

⁹ See Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, especially the "Fifth Meditation," §§42-64.

¹⁰ On the one hand, philosophers as different as Emmanuel Levinas, Paul Ricoeur and Klaus Held critique the symmetrical relation between self and other that Husserl allegedly endorses (see Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. A. Lingis [Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991]; Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. K. Blamey [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992]; and Klaus Held, "Das Problem der Intersubjektivität und die Idee einer phänomenologischen Transzendentalphilosophie," in *Perspektiven transzendentalphänomenologischer Forschung*, ed. U. Claesges and K. Held [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972], 3-60). On the other hand, Derrida, already as early as 1964, had responded to such criticism by showing that even the analyses from *Cartesian Meditations* bear witness to Husserl's conviction that the other cannot simply be reduced to an analogon of the self (see Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," in *Writing and Difference*,

of the lived body. The phenomenological description of intersubjectivity as experience of the other embodied subject reveals that I can have an authentic and direct intuition of their objective body thanks to my sense perception, but it is just not possible to have an authentic experience of their body proper, which is always given to me in a mediated way. The condition of empathy is, in the first instance, the other's possession of a physical body distinct from my own body, on which basis appresentation [*Appräsentation*] and the pairing [*Paarung*] of self and other become possible. One's experience of the alter ego is founded on the consciousness of both an affinity and a difference between oneself and the other.

The lack of immediacy and of authenticity entailed by empathy presupposes that I can have an immediate and self-evident experience of my own lived body, even if this body is intimately bound up with my physical body to which, as a thing, I have only indirect access. This primary and immediate experience is the ultimate foundation of the process that constitutes the sense of the other subject, a foundation one attains by means of a special methodological *epochē*. If the transcendental ego, having already performed the phenomenological reduction, is to place within brackets any presupposition and any position-taking regarding the other, it must focus its attention onto the intentionality in which it constitutes its "*peculiar ownness*" within itself (CM, §44, 93). The subject must eliminate from that immanent sphere every element relative to the constitution of another self with a view to gaining access to the absolutely pure ego in its transcendental ownness, an ego distinct from the usual ego or the ordinary person that is part of the phenomenon of the world (CM, §44, 93).

The guarantor and original point of reference of that transcendental level is the experience of the body proper. The latter is "*uniquely singled out*" within my sphere of ownness, the sole object to which

I ascribe *fields of sensation* (belonging to it, however, in different manners – a field of tactual sensations, a field of warmth and coldness, and so forth), the only Object "in" which I "*rule and govern*" *immediately*, governing particularly in each of its "organs". Touching kinesthetically, I perceive "with" my hands; seeing kinesthetically, I perceive also "with" my eyes; [...] Meanwhile the *kinesthesias* pertaining to the organs flow in the mode "I am doing", and are subject to my "I can"; [...] *I experience* (or can experience) *all of Nature, including my own animate organism*, which therefore in the process is reflexively related to itself. That becomes possible because I "can" perceive one hand "by means of" the other, an eye by means of a hand, and so forth. (CM, §44, 97)

The sphere of ownness is inextricable from the experience and concept of the body proper that is its essential element. It constitutes a transcendental world where the ego, by virtue of acting and ruling at will, enjoys a certain immediacy, spontaneity and interiority too. To the extent that worldly exteriority and alterity have been eliminated from that realm, the phenomenologist purports to have delimited a level where the sovereign ego would have unmediated access to its lived body in a state of primordial apodicticity and freedom.¹¹

79-153). I discuss Derrida's defence and radicalization of Husserl in Eftichis Pirovolakis, *Reading Derrida and Ricoeur: Improbable Encounters between Deconstruction and Hermeneutics* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2010), 144-48.

¹¹ This is not to say that Husserl denied or questioned, in a quasi-Cartesian way, the existence of the external world, extended space and others. What he sought to eliminate from the transcendental sphere is exteriority in the sense of constituted objectivity or intersubjectively constituted entities. If there is, however, an element of exteriority within that transcendental realm, which is precisely Derrida's

The axiomatic network of concepts dominating the discussion of the body proper in *Cartesian Meditations* can be detected across a wide range of Husserl's writings. It is also affirmed, as Derrida reminds, in *Ideas II*, in the section exploring the body as the organ of spontaneous and free volition:

[The body proper] is an *organ of the will*, the *one and only Object* which, for the will of my pure Ego, is *moveable immediately and spontaneously* and is a means for producing a mediate spontaneous movement in other things, in, e.g., things struck by my *immediately spontaneously moved hand* [my emphasis], grasped by it, lifted, etc. *Sheer material things are only moveable mechanically and only partake of spontaneous movement in a mediate way*. Only Bodies are immediately spontaneously ("freely") moveable, and they are so, specifically, by means of the free Ego and its will.¹² (*Ideas II*, §38, 159)

Husserl's emphasis on immediacy, spontaneity and freedom can be hardly denied here. The point I would like to stress is that the delimitation of a transcendental sphere of ownness, and, within that sphere, of the pure and immediate experience of the lived body constitute exigencies rather than merely contingent and dispensable elements of Husserl's philosophy.¹³ Even though these phenomenological exigencies are, at least, equiprimordial with intersubjectivity, they are often underplayed by scholars who focus on intersubjectivity and its various guises. Their primordially is attested by a range of motifs or processes by means of which Husserl sought to exclude various types of exteriority from the transcendental realm, such as the intentionality of consciousness, the *epochē*, the reduction, and the "principle of all principles".¹⁴ These motifs are instrumental in safeguarding the immediacy and self-evidence of the transcendental, thereby consolidating the conceptual axiomatics on which the experience of the body proper too depends.

The "principle of all principles", for instance, as presented in *Ideas I*, is crystallized into the demand that the primordial foundation of any apodictic act of constitution and of any validity in general should be the originary unmediated intuition of the sense of the phenomenon within the bounds of the immanent consciousness. This requirement dictates that the exteriority and contingency of spatio-temporal existence be placed in parentheses so that the philosopher can concentrate on the essential structures of consciousness whereby the phenomenon or the thing itself appears in pure apodictic evidence.

No doubt, there is a significant temporal gap between Husserl's *Ideas I* and his later adjustments to the phenomenological method, especially in the 1930s. However,

argument, as will become clear, Husserl would never designate or conceptualize that element in terms of "exteriority proper" or "radical alterity".

¹² See also OT, 160-61.

¹³ Robin Durie, in his interesting essay "At the Same Time: Continuities in Derrida's Readings of Husserl," in *Continental Philosophy Review* 41.1 (2008): 73-88, 82-86, underplays the salience of immediacy. He argues that immediacy "is not necessary for Husserl's account" (82-83) but has misleadingly been introduced by Derrida who allegedly equates this notion with temporal instantaneity (see also: "The principle of immediacy does not seem to be operative for Husserl in the case of double sensations" [86]). In the first two sections, I stress the value of "immediacy" because it does play a crucial role in Husserl and, therefore, in the construction of Derrida's argument. I will specify how one tendency, at least, within Husserl's philosophy valorises that phenomenological concept.

¹⁴ For the "principle of all principles", see Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (London: Routledge, 2012), §24, 43-44; hereafter cited as *Ideas I*.

the principle of principles and its axiomatic implications are evident in the majority of Husserl's writings across the many phases of his thought. For example, at the beginning of the second section of *Ideas II*, Derrida alerts one to the occurrence of a wording and a logic comparable to those of *Ideas I*: "a rigorous phenomenological method", "the perfect intuition of the psychical", "originary presenting intuition", "*eidetic intuition*", and the exclusion of the "empirical thesis" and its "contingent facts" (OT, 164; see *Ideas II*, §19, 96-97). The persistence of the "originary intuition" and the attempt to demarcate a presuppositionless realm of apodicticity bespeak the required immediacy and immanence of every phenomenologically valid experience, including that of the body proper.

The same intention motivates the principle of principles and the ubiquitous reduction aimed at excluding from consciousness all empirical data so that one may reach the foundational ground which alone can legitimate the claim for the apodictic givenness of phenomena. The reduction is not something that preoccupied Husserl only occasionally. It is the pre-eminent phenomenological concept that engrossed him immediately after the *Logical Investigations* and to the very end of his intellectual life.¹⁵ In the epilogue to *Ideas II*, Husserl responds as follows to those underrating the instrumentality of the reduction in securing the purity and immediacy of transcendental experience: "In those circles where the phenomenological reduction is dispensed with as a philosophically irrelevant oddity [...] the whole sense of my work and of my phenomenology is obliterated, and what is left is only an apriori [*sic*] psychology" (*Ideas II*, 422).

As already mentioned with respect to intersubjectivity, the exigent and primordial immediacy of the transcendental sphere is also evident in Husserl's contrast of the experience of oneself with that of others. In *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, he writes:

I may mention again that other subjects, as transcendental, are not given, within the bounds of my ego, in the manner in which my ego itself is given for me, in actually immediate experience, and that, at its first and fundamental level, the systematic structure of a transcendental phenomenology is free to lay claim to other egos solely as parenthesized, as "phenomena", and not yet as transcendental actualities. Thus, at this *fundamental level*, a remarkable transcendental discipline arises as the *intrinsically first transcendental discipline*, one that is actually *transcendental-solipsistic*.¹⁶

The chasm between the givenness of others and the givenness of self, founded precisely on the notion of the lived body, serves to accentuate the self-evident and immediate fashion in which one has or, rather, must have access to one's experience of oneself. In §95 of the same work, Husserl qualifies the necessity of starting each from his/her own subjectivity as an "insuperable" one, and insists: "Before everything else [is] conceivable, *I am*. This "I am" is for me, the subject who says it, and says it in the right sense, the *primitive intentional basis for my world*; [...] the *primal matter-of-fact / to which I must hold fast*, which I, as a philosopher, must not disregard for a single instant".¹⁷

¹⁵ Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. J. N. Findlay, 2 vols (London: Routledge, 1970).

¹⁶ Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), §102, 269-70.

¹⁷ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, §95, 236-37.

Insofar as these statements about the ego's self-giveness and immediate experience of its body proper include, explicitly or tacitly, allusions to intersubjectivity, one can conclude that there is, at least, a mysterious tension between subjectivity and intersubjectivity. However strongly Husserl may affirm in his later writings the importance of intersubjectivity, the latter consists precisely in a category that can be rendered phenomenologically accessible thanks to the intentional acts of a transcendental subject. This ineluctable centring onto the "I", this exigency concerning the ego's immediate self-giveness within its sphere of ownness, is a feature without which phenomenology would not be phenomenology, and which one can identify even in Husserl's later third volume on intersubjectivity.¹⁸ It is a motif that does not emanate from Husserl's actual descriptions. It originates, rather, in the phenomenological demand that posits the subject's unmediated access to its immanently constituted and apodictically valid experience, a foundational part of which is its experience of the lived body.

This is far from denying the salience of intersubjectivity, the life-world and the corollary complication of the pure ego, where certain types of mediation are allowed for. However, one ought simultaneously to account for Husserl's determination of the transcendental realm, where the constitution of the lived body occurs, as the ultimate ground for all phenomena experienced in an immediate and authentic manner. I will focus next on the constitution of the body proper, on that primordial foundation of all phenomenological evidence. While glossing Derrida's reading of Husserl's phenomenology of touch in *Ideas II*, I will examine, more specifically, the process of tactile perception, which is said single-handedly to make possible the emergence of the subjective body.

Touch over against Sight

The immediate experience of the lived body appears to be founded on the sense of touch in contradistinction to the rest of the senses. The dominant position of touch in Husserl's philosophy is evident in the long quote above from *Cartesian Meditations*: touch is either the first or the only example epitomizing the ego's ability to control and manipulate, directly and at will, its organs of sensation. In §37 of *Ideas II* too, entitled "Differences between the Visual and Tactual Realms", Husserl thematizes "the privilege of the localization of the touch sensations", which reveals the instrumentality of that particular sense in the constitution of the body proper. He leaves no doubt as to the primacy of touch in relation to sight:

A subject whose only sense was the sense of vision could not at all have an appearing Body; [...] The Body as such can be constituted originally only in tactuality and in everything that is localized with the sensations of touch: for example, warmth, coldness,

¹⁸ Even when intersubjectivity is said to constitute a transcendental foundation, it always has the ego as its irreducible centre: "Every sense of "we" includes a centring [*Zentrierung*] on me; I have and finally express the we-consciousness of that centring" (Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität*, ed. Iso Kern, vol. 15 of *Gesammelte Werke: Husserliana* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973], 426; my translation). One has to give Zahavi credit for taking seriously, in *Husserl's Phenomenology*, 123-24, the strand of Husserl's thinking that insists on that I-centring and the subject's concomitant autonomy and singularity.

pain, etc. [...] [The Body] becomes a *Body* only by incorporating tactile sensations. (*Ideas II*, §37, 158-59)

Besides arguing in favour of the primacy of touch in relation to the other senses and particularly sight, Husserl also establishes that the pre-eminent tactile experience is the act of manual and digital touching. Here is his argument from the beginning of the section:

We find now a striking difference between the sphere of the visual and that of the tactual. In the tactual realm we have the *external Object*, tactually constituted, and a second Object, the *Body*, likewise tactually constituted, e.g., the touching finger, and, in addition, there are fingers touching fingers. So here we have that double apprehension [*Doppelauffassung*]: the same touch-sensation is apprehended as a feature of the "external" Object and is apprehended as a sensation of the Body as Object. And in the case in which a part of the Body becomes equally an external Object of another part, we have the double sensation [*Doppelempfindungen*] (each part has its own sensations) and the double apprehension as feature of the one or of the other Bodily part as a physical object. But in the case of an *Object constituted purely visually* we have *nothing* comparable. (*Ideas II*, §37, 155)

Within the sphere of ownness and especially within the framework of tactile sensation, the spontaneous manipulation of the hand and fingers plays a pivotal role when it comes to the subject's ability immediately to experience its lived body while also having a full intuition of an external object. Tactile perception by the hand or fingers is not just an example among others but the best example of the reflective, phenomenological experience of the body proper. It is crucial for my defence of Derrida's reading of *Ideas II* to point out Husserl's definition of "double apprehension": the *same* touch-sensation, writes Husserl, is apprehended as a feature of the external object *and* as a sensation of the body. The two italicized words clearly indicate, I think, that there is no either/or structure here, and that "double apprehension" was not meant to refer to two mutually exclusive and consecutive intentional acts, as Durie claims.¹⁹ Husserl actually writes that the "same" tactile sensation, that is, a single sensation is apprehended doubly, *both* as a sensation of the touching hand or finger, *and* as a feature of the object by which the touching hand or finger is touched.

Derrida points to a series of questions that Husserl leaves unanswered: what is exactly the origin of his special treatment of the hand and fingers, and why does he remain silent about other parts of the body between which there is definitely contact, such as the lips, the tongue, the palate and the teeth, the eye-lids, the foot and the toes, etc.?²⁰ The organ of the sense of touch, in the final analysis, is the skin and not just the

¹⁹ Durie's first move, in "At the Same Time," 77-81, is to highlight Husserl's distinction between sensations that give to experience the external object with its qualitative features (hardness, flatness, etc.), and more ordinary sensations that motivate the sensations of the first type but are not constitutive of objective properties. Next, he provides an improbable construal of "double apprehension" as referring to "one set of hyletic data [that] can be intentionally apprehended in *either* of two ways – either as touching, or as touched" (81, my emphasis). It will become clear that Derrida, far from "overlooking" or "forgetting" (80) that other phenomenological distinctions, argues precisely that they become problematic by Husserl's notion of "double apprehension". The latter points to an ordinary sensation of the second type above, which comprises, nonetheless, elements of both the constituting-transcendental realm (touching) and the constituted-objective one (touched). In the next section, I discuss in detail the way in which specific Husserlian distinctions are complicated by the introduction of an exteriority that is not merely spatial.

²⁰ One of the objections these questions incorporate concerns the humanist orientation of Husserl's discourse, an orientation that apparently undercuts his stated intention to study "The Constitution of

hand or fingers. I will leave these questions suspended for now in order to focus on the primacy of manual and digital touching over against sight, which Husserl endeavours to justify in the rest of §37.

In the first instance, he considers the objection that the eye is often said to be "in touch with" the seen object when its glance is cast over it. He responds that "we immediately sense the difference" (*Ideas II*, §37, 155), implying that those are cases of a metaphorical use of "touch" as opposed to its literal and exact use that is applicable to tactile perception alone. No doubt, Husserl's rhetorical gesture appeals to the rigorous literality of philosophical discourse and thought in contrast with ordinary, non-literal language. The latter can freely deploy polysemous and inaccurate figures of speech that contravene the phenomenological demand for conceptual rigour and linguistic exactitude. For Husserl, it is evident to philosophers and to common sense that the eye can be in touch with something only in a metaphorical way.²¹

The differentiation between touch and sight is grounded in the latter's deficiency: the eye is never in immediate contact with the seen object; moreover, the eye cannot be seen directly by the seeing eye, it cannot optically be given to the ego in an unmediated way. The mediation of external space and a mirror is necessary so that I could look, always indirectly, at my eyes. With respect to the prosthesis of a mirror, Husserl claims in a footnote: "I see something, of which I judge indirectly, by way of "empathy", that it is identical with my eye as a thing [...] in the same way that I see the eye of an other" (*Ideas II*, §37, 155 n.1). Empathy and the mediation of external space are, therefore, indispensable if I am to have an indirect perception of my own eyes, which is also the case with the eyes of another over whom I may cast my glance. Analogical appresentation and empathy are obviously deficient and secondary when compared to a full, primary and immediate intuition. The criterion for distinguishing between the two experiences is the direct and immanent self-relation guaranteed by the act of touching by hand, by this spontaneous and unmediated intuitive auto-affectation that is the cornerstone of phenomenological evidence. This self-relation is, for Husserl, in no need of any exterior prosthesis: when I touch with the hand or fingers, I am involved in an act into which no exteriority or alterity intrudes. I touch and simultaneously I am touched. I perceive the touching "from the inside", remarks Derrida (OT, 171), who, as I will show in the next section, deconstructs that Husserlian principle of auto-affective immediacy.

More specifically, the differentiating principle is the experience of localization. According to Husserl, the eye itself cannot be seen directly, and the colour sensations cannot be localized *on* the seeing eye. While touching something, however, the touched object becomes perceivable exactly *on* the touching hand:

We do not have a kind of extended ocularity such that, by moving, one eye could rub past the other and produce the phenomenon of double sensation. Neither can we see the seen thing as gliding over the seeing eye, continually in contact with it, as we can, in the case of a real organ of touch, e.g., the palm of the hand, glide over the object or have the object slip past the hand. I do not see myself, my Body, the way I touch myself. (*Ideas II*, §37, 155)

Animal Nature", as the title of the second section of *Ideas II* indicates. In OT, 164-68, Derrida examines Husserl's underlying teleological and axiological philosophy of life (matter, life, spirit).

²¹ This is far from saying that the ultimate court of appeal for Husserl's assertions would be the non-figurative literality of linguistic experience. Quite the contrary. Derrida maintains that Husserl's discourse implies that the difference between touch and sight originates in pre-discursive experience and the things themselves, and that a rigorous philosophical logos can only hope faithfully to represent this "universalizable intuition of the things themselves" (OT, 170).

Sight's deficiency consists in that it cannot give rise to an apprehension that would be simultaneously complete, intuitive, spontaneous, immediate and synchronous. By contrast, the experience of the touching-touched entails a spatially localized coincidence associated with a temporal coincidence which also guarantees the act's intuitive fullness and immediacy.²² The distinctive features of that "double apprehension" of the touching-touched are absolute coincidence, intuitive completeness, immediacy and, *in fine*, the exclusion of alterity and external spatiality.

As Derrida points out in *On Touching–Jean-Luc Nancy*, one should not be misguided by the well-known hegemony of sight in Western philosophy, from Plato's "ideas" to the Husserlian "eidos" and beyond.²³ In this long history of optical domination, the visual intuition of truth is teleologically oriented, from the very beginning, toward a direct and actual apodicticity, toward a fully realized presence associated with tactile rather than visual experience. Haptic experience alone, whose best example is the act of touching by hand, can guarantee the reduction of all distance, the absolute proximity between subject and object, and, therefore, the latter's apodictic givenness.²⁴ Mediation and space have to be neutralized if one is to have an immediate experience that would ensure absolute coincidence, a direct and complete presence that an optical-intuitive act can only anticipate.

Husserl is fully aware that "localization" and "local coincidence", the attributes supporting the primacy of touch over against sight, presuppose externality. A certain spatiality lurks at the very heart of the psychic sphere where the process constitutive of the lived body is located. He rushes, therefore, to distinguish the exteriority of localized touch sensations from the spatial extension of the material qualities of an object. Even if outer surfaces are involved in the touch sensings whereby the touching parts of the body spread over an object, and even if these bodily parts occupy a certain space, their extension is *fundamentally* different from the extension characteristic of the *res extensa*. The phenomenological topology and its haptic sensations ought to have a peculiar interiority in order to be radically distinct from anything extended, for instance, from the real qualities of the hand as a touched external thing. For Husserl, it would be quite absurd to confuse the *internal exteriority* of touch sensations with the *external exteriority* of real qualities, such as the hand's roughness and colour, which are given through adumbrations.²⁵

²² For a detailed discussion of Ricoeur's and Derrida's close readings of Husserl's theory of temporality, temporal coincidence and the living present, see my *Reading Derrida and Ricoeur*, 13-25 and 43-58. With respect to the intertwining of time and space, see note 34 below. As far as Derrida's views on temporality are concerned, Durie's presentation is ambivalent: on the one hand, he criticizes deconstruction for privileging the notion of "at the same time" and for reducing temporality to punctual instantaneity, which implies Derrida's commitment to the values of presence and identity ("At the Same Time", 74, 76, 81-87); on the other, he admits to Derrida's affirmation of an originary complication of the origin, an initial contamination of the simple, the present, the self-identical (74, 87).

²³ See, for instance, OT, 119-22 and 161-62. It should be noted here that both the Greek "*idea*" and "*eidos*" are associated with the aoristic form "*idein*" ("to have seen").

²⁴ This desire for the elimination of exteriority and mediation is evident in the etymology of the Greek verb *eggizō* ("to touch", originally "to approach" or "to approximate") which is related to the adverb *eggus* meaning "close" or "proximately".

²⁵ "The sensing which spreads over the surface of the hand and extends into it is not a real quality of a thing (speaking always within the frame of intuitions and their givenness) such as, for example, the roughness of the hand, its colour, etc. These real properties of a thing are constituted through a sensuous

The distinction is necessitated by the demand for immediacy and apodictic evidence, which become possible thanks to the exclusion of everything extended, external and foreign. The transcendental realm is the ground of the constituting faculty of consciousness on condition that all contingent elements of the empirical extended world have been excluded. This phenomenological axiom warrants the distinction between the immanent topology of tactile sensations and the exteriority of space and its material objects. Husserl clarifies his argument:

[In contrast with the properties of roughness and colour,] the touch-sensings, however, the sensations which, constantly varying, lie on the surface of the touching finger, are, such as they are lying there spread out over the surface, nothing given through adumbration and schematization. They have nothing at all to do with the sensuous schema. The touch-sensing is not a *state* of the material thing, hand, but is precisely the *hand itself*, which for us is more than a material thing, and the way in which it is mine entails that I, the "subject of the Body", can say that what belongs to the material thing is its, not mine. All sensings pertain to my soul; everything extended [pertains] to the material thing. *On* this surface of the hand I sense the sensations of touch, etc. And it is precisely thereby that this surface manifests itself immediately as my Body. (*Ideas II*, §37, 157)

The immediate and subjective manifestation of the lived body as such depends on touch sensations. These "have nothing at all to do", *de jure*, with the qualities of roughness and colour, although both presuppose, *de facto*, external spatiality, either because of the material object's extension or because of localization when it comes to the sensations of the body proper. Husserl prioritizes the example of the hand and fingers with a view to excluding exterior mediation from the constituting present in which the subject's experience of its own body becomes possible, and, therefore, to securing the absolute coincidence of the touching-touched.

As a consequence of the pre-eminence of manual and digital touching, Derrida remarks, sight is both lacking when compared to touch and dependent on touch as far as localization is concerned (see OT, 171-72). Its lack results from its inability to lay claim to immediacy and coincidence whereas its dependence is related to the fact that any sensations localized on the eye are primarily haptic rather than optical ones: with respect to sight, we are denied "an analogon to the touch sensation, which is actually grasped along with the touching hand" (*Ideas II*, §37, 156).²⁶ It is clear, then, that the primordially of touch as opposed to sight originates, for Husserl, in its unique ability to provide valid phenomenological evidence by virtue of reducing distance, exteriority, difference and contingency. Moreover, touch is constitutive of the sphere of ownness on the basis of the lived body's immediate self-giveness. Within that sphere of self-evidence, I will identify, next, an element of alterity, a certain "inter" which, associated with visible exteriority, will turn out to be more ordinary than the experience of touch. Paradoxically, that "inter" renders the constitution of the body proper and of the transcendental subject both possible and impossible. It is a line of argument that has

schema and manifolds of adumbrations. To speak in a similar way of sensings would be quite absurd" (*Ideas II*, §37, 157).

²⁶ Husserl continues: "If, ultimately, the eye as organ and, along with it, the visual sensations are in fact attributed to the Body, then that happens indirectly by means of the properly localized sensations. Actually, the eye, *too*, is a field of localization but *only for touch sensations* [...] It is an Object of touch for the hand" (*Ideas II*, §37, 156).

serious implications for the ordinary conceptualization of “subjectivity” as either actuality or potentiality.

“Inter”: The Uncanny Spacing between Touch and Sight

Derrida singles out the following features of Husserl’s demonstrative procedures which “act in advance as parasites or contaminants of the alleged description” (OT, 174): the privileged example of the hand and fingers, and the insistent allusions to “the *external Object*”, which was the starting point of the analysis in §37. An aporetic double necessity results from this tension between Husserl’s statements and descriptions: on the one hand, the exteriority entailed by sight is declared to be totally heterogeneous to the tactile sensible impression constituting the body proper, and, on the other, a *certain* exteriority must partake of the very same impression and the experience of the touching-touched. The latter necessity emanates from two unintentional elements in Husserl’s text: first, the presuppositions of the hand’s and fingers’ exemplary status, and of his emphasis on visible exteriority; and second, the logical implications of the expression “double apprehension” [*Doppelauffassung*].²⁷

For Derrida, what has escaped Husserl’s attention is that the primacy of touch and the metonymy of the hand cannot be dissociated from a distinctive feature of that particular body part, namely, its visibility as opposed to the non-visibility of other parts related to the other senses and even touch itself such as the lips, the teeth, etc. The visibility of the hand and fingers paradoxically interferes with the purely immediate and transcendental realm from which Husserl wishes to exclude alterity. This is because, according to Husserl’s own analyses, visibility and sight entail spatiality, exteriority and distance, all of which lead to limited phenomenological evidence. One could object that visibility constitutes a potential, rather than *essential*, feature of the hand and fingers which does not play a major role in the discussion. Derrida shows, however, why visibility and exteriority are not merely possible but absolutely necessary.

To begin with, the *double* apprehension of Husserl’s theory of haptic perception presupposes non-coincidence and, therefore, exteriority. Its very duality depends precisely on the interpolation of a certain difference into an otherwise singular sensation. Something other or foreign is necessary for the phenomenological touch sensation to become *double*. If there were no difference, one could not legitimately speak of a “double apprehension”. There would be just one apprehension, either that of the touching or that of the touched. But Husserl insists that the double apprehension alone conditions the constitution of the body proper and the identification of the ego as the subject and master of its lived body, both grounded in the distinction between a zero point here and a zero point there. It follows that something minimally exterior and

²⁷ In “At the Same Time”, in an attempt to discredit Derrida’s interpretation of *Ideas II*, Durie does not do justice to Derrida’s subtle arguments concerning the implications of specific motifs in Husserl’s text: double apprehension, the exemplariness of manual touching, and the allusions to the external object. Depreciating the fundamental hermeneutical distinction between Husserl’s statements and actual descriptions, he reiterates certain Husserlian theses, thereby not only misconstruing Derrida’s nuanced discourse but also often reducing the richness and complexity of *Ideas II*. Although Durie perceptively suggests that Husserl’s philosophy may finally be read as resisting the belief in immediate givenness (87), he cannot account for two facts: that Husserl himself would never have subscribed to such a portrayal of his project, and that this is precisely the complex argument Derrida has carefully and systematically constructed since his early writings.

other, a "there" that the ego does not properly occupy, a certain non-ego perhaps, has to be inserted in between the touching and the touched as the condition without which it is simply not possible to have, with any certainty, the experience of being the bearer of this zero point here, and to declare "I am I". Here is Derrida's gloss on that required duality and exteriority presupposed by any sense of a rigorously localized "hereness": "If some not-I [...] did not come to insinuate itself between the touching and the touched, I would not be able to posit myself as I, and "say" (as Husserl says), This is not I, this is I, I am I" (OT, 175). Such a logical necessity does not originate in Husserl's express intention but is implicit in his text by virtue of the alterity that double apprehension entails.

The indispensability of that *non-spatial* alterity or exteriority is reinforced by the dominant role that spatial and visible exteriority plays – in view of the examples of the hand and fingers, and the prominence of the external object – perhaps against Husserl's will.²⁸ I will clarify below why the hand's and fingers' visibility conditions but also renders problematic the purely immediate experience of the lived body and, by extension, the very ideality of a sphere of transcendental ownness.

Some phenomenologists may wish to defend Husserl by claiming that the philosopher himself had espoused the idea of an original alterity, of a certain hetero-affectation at the very heart of the transcendental realm and even before the ego's self-constitution. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, for instance, in "The Philosopher and His Shadow", is keen on allowing for the possibility, if not necessity, that the other's body should insinuate itself into my experience of my body proper. Accordingly, he maintains that the other and my experience of their body are ineluctably involved in the "self-relation of my body", in the "reflexive" act of touching my right hand with the left one, and discredits the portrayal of this process as an analogy, a projection or an introjection.²⁹ Insofar as this approach implies a quasi-symmetrical relation between the other's hand and my hand, responds Derrida, Merleau-Ponty assimilates the touching of my own hands to the handshake. Husserl would never endorse this approach, as he arguably resisted any bridging of the chasm between my body proper and the other's body.³⁰

²⁸ For Derrida, exteriority does not pertain merely to an "external object", nor is it simply spatial (see Durie, "At the Same Time," 77-80 and 84-86), but is determined as a quasi-transcendental and essential category too.

²⁹ See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Philosopher and His Shadow," in *Signs*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 159-81, 166-68.

³⁰ For Derrida's reading of Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of *Ideas II* in "The Philosopher and His Shadow", see OT, 185-98. My remarks here do not pretend to exhaust either the intricate relation between Husserl, Derrida and Merleau-Ponty, or the latter's views on sight and touching. Derrida explores these issues in greater detail in OT, 198-215, where he discusses other significant writings of Merleau-Ponty's on the body and the senses, most notably *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. A. Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968). For two interesting attempts to account for the encounter between Derrida and Merleau-Ponty with respect to touch and embodiment, see Christopher Watkin, *Phenomenology or Deconstruction? The Question of Ontology in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Paul Ricoeur and Jean-Luc Nancy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 13-44, and Jack Reynolds, *Merleau-Ponty and Derrida: Intertwining Embodiment and Alterity* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), 3-102. Although both works claim to provide a balanced view of the two philosophers' thinking, their understanding of deconstruction is arguably inadequate. For a nuanced and circumspect approach to the relation between Derrida and Merleau-Ponty, see Leonard Lawlor's "Verflechtung: The Triple Significance of Merleau-Ponty's Course Notes on Husserl's "The Origin of Geometry", in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology*, ed. L. Lawlor and B. Bergho (Evanston:

The final section of the chapter on “The Constitution of Psychic Reality through the Body” attests that Husserl avoided reducing the otherness of the alter ego while also safeguarding the immediacy of transcendental experience. He clearly distinguishes there, once again, the ego’s “solipsistic experience” and the immediate “givenness of our self” from the subsequent givenness of the self resulting from the constitution of the ego as “man”. The latter process alone is mediated by empathy and introjection. In other words, when one goes beyond one’s subjectivity and turns to the *animalia* encountered in the world, there occurs an “introjection” whereby *foreign* elements related to the state of “animality” are inserted into or annexed to the body as a material thing and then to the phenomenological experience of the body proper. In this way, the being called “man” is formed (see *Ideas II*, §42, 169).

Moreover, in the section Merleau-Ponty cites from the chapter on “The Constitution of Psychic Reality in Empathy”, Husserl emphasizes the terms “appresentation” and “empathy”, which bear witness to his intention to draw a demarcation line between pure solipsistic experience and introjective empathy (*Ideas II*, §45, 173-75). Empathy and introjection constitute processes less original than, if not secondary to, the constituting layer of the transcendental ego.³¹ Husserl’s statements regarding the immediate self-givenness of the subject and the primordial constitution of the body proper cannot just be dismissed. *Ideas II* but also other works, as I argued above, are replete with such assertions that one has to take seriously into account. His use of the term “introjection” presupposes and also consolidates the idea that the subject’s experience of its lived body enjoys a primary immediacy.

Merleau-Ponty’s endeavour, in “The Philosopher and His Shadow”, to introduce the alterity of the other’s body into the egological sphere has two consequences. First, he does justice neither to the letter nor to the spirit of Husserl’s text for he remains silent about his theses regarding the unbridgeable gap between the two zero points of self and other.³² Second, although Merleau-Ponty’s initial intention may have been to radicalize Husserl’s supposedly reactionary egology, his gesture has the opposite effect: in underestimating the salience of empathy and appresentation and, therefore, Husserl’s demand for an indirect access to the other and their experience, Merleau-Ponty might be taken to affirm the possibility of an access to the other’s body as immediate and primordial as the one I have to my own lived body. Thus, he detracts from Husserl’s thought its radicality, and may unwittingly be read as promoting an intuitionism of which Husserl was suspicious all along.

The alterity Merleau-Ponty associates with intersubjectivity *qua* empathy bears little relation to the alterity I discerned above on the basis of Derrida’s reading of

Northwestern University Press, 2002), ix-xxxvii, especially xxi-xxxii. The relation between the two thinkers is also explored in various texts in two earlier essay collections: M. C. Dillon, ed., *Écart and Différance: Merleau-Ponty and Derrida on Seeing and Writing* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1996); and Thomas W. Busch and Shaun Gallagher, eds., *Merleau-Ponty: Hermeneutics and Postmodernism* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992).

³¹ The originality or primordiality of the constitution of the body proper does not amount so much to a chronological anteriority as to a phenomenological priority necessitated by the demand for transcendental purity. Derrida recognizes this subtle difference, which is why he admits, while commenting on Merleau-Ponty’s view that the constitution of others does not come *after* that of my body (“The Philosopher and His Shadow,” 174), that Husserl could agree on that point (see OT, 193).

³² Derrida affirmatively notes: “Husserl’s cautious approach will always remain *before us* as a model of vigilance. It is necessary to watch over the other’s alterity: it will always remain inaccessible to an originally presentive intuition, an immediate and direct presentation of the *here*” (OT, 191).

Husserl's phenomenology of touch. For Derrida, the double apprehension entails an absolutely *necessary* alterity, a non-spatial spacing or an originary "inter" that, interposed between the touching and the touched, conditions but also limits the transcendental subject's immediate and self-identical purity. The alterity of this "inter", irreducible to spatial exteriority, is an essential structure to which the transcendental ego owes its possibility, but which simultaneously problematizes the phenomenological demand for a pure ego founded on the immediacy of its body proper. Such a structure leads to the aporetic construal of the lived body and the subject in terms of impossible possibilities, and is not equivalent to the ordinary intersubjective difference to which empirical exteriority gives rise.

In order to clarify that alterity further, whose logical necessity is curiously linked to the empirical and the possible too, I will now turn to visible exteriority and the hand's exemplary status. Derrida concentrates on §45 of *Ideas II*, which explores the transition from immediate solipsistic experience to empathy and the appresented interiority of other *animalia*. Focusing again on the constitutive role of tactile perception, Husserl scrutinizes three concrete examples, the first of which refers to the act of touching the area around the heart: "When I press the surface of the Body "around the heart", I discover, so to say, this "heart sensation", and it may become stronger and somewhat modified. It does not itself belong to the touched surface, but it is connected with it" (*Ideas II*, §45, 174). Husserl does not, of course, mention here the double apprehension. As Derrida explains, this is because the heart sensation, localized in the body's *invisible* and somewhat untouchable interior, is *mediated* by the localization of other, less mediate tactile sensations, namely, those of the touching fingers and the visible touched surface of the chest (OT, 177-78).

The second example is intended to attain a higher degree of immediacy: "[If I] press on it more strongly, press into the flesh, i.e., with my touching finger "feel through" to my bones or inner organs [...] then particular new sensations, which are attributed to the relevant felt-through Bodily parts, join to the general sensations of pressure and touch" (*Ideas II*, §45, 174). One is now closer to the haptic sensation *qua* double apprehension insofar as there are two surfaces and, therefore, the required experience of touching and being touched. It seems to make a difference, though, that some of the surfaces in question only possess a potential visibility or exteriority; these inner bodily parts are touchable but not actually visible. Husserl must go further if his examples are to ground safely the pre-eminence and immediacy of touch in the constitution of the lived body, a pre-eminence secured with the supplementation of a visual exteriority that paradoxically disrupts what it conditions.

The third instance clearly gestures toward the *necessary possibility* of visibility, a ubiquitous structure in the analyses of touch as a constitutive sense:

Solipsistically there belongs to every position of my eyes an "image"-aspect of the seen object and thus an image of the oriented environment. But also in the case of touching an object, there belongs to every position of my hand and finger a corresponding touch-aspect of the object, just as, on the other side, there is a touch-sensation in the finger, etc., and obviously there is visually a certain image of my touching hand and its touching movements. All this is given to me myself as belonging together in co-presence and is then transferred over in empathy: the other's touching hand, which I see, appresents to me his solipsistic view of this hand. (*Ideas II*, §45, 174)

This last example reveals the instrumentality of sight and its peculiar indissociability from touch. The example that grounds the primary immediacy of touch, in aporetic contrast with sight, is not just the hand or finger but the *actually* and *essentially visible* hand or finger which is touching an equally *visible* external object. “All this”, says Husserl, explicitly alluding now to the “obviously” *visible* experience of the touching-touched, “is given to me myself as belonging together in co-presence”. And the visibility this example reintroduces appears to be not simply equiprimordial with but, in a sense, more primordial than touch. The *necessary* visibility of the touching-touched hand or finger of the third example alone – not the merely potential visibility of other touchable members such as the bones, the lips, etc. – can give rise to the double apprehension, the act which forms the basis for the ego’s immediate, pure and transcendental experience of its body proper.

If the tactile double apprehension necessarily presupposes a visibility that is not simply spatial and empirical, the corollary exteriority introduces into the sphere of ownness something ineluctably foreign, which paradoxically mediates so that the lived body should become *both* phenomenologically possible *and* impossible in its immanent and apodictic purity. Derrida argues that such an introjection of alterity into the self-relation of the touching-touched amounts to a kind of *intra*-subjective empathy or appresentation (OT, 176-77). It is, *in fine*, Husserl’s text itself that legitimates the idea of a *double* and, therefore, non-singular and somewhat mediate constituting intuition, even if the philosopher does not expressly thematize this implication.

The hypothesis of such an originary introjection, inherent in Husserl’s discourse, leaves intact neither his views on intersubjectivity and the self-other dichotomy, nor his assertions about introjection in the ordinary sense. There appears to be a line or a limit that, even before the division of external space and the subsequent distinction between subjects, divides and differentiates the ego from its own self by introjecting into it an essential possibility of exteriority, an uncanny “inter”.³³ The latter, thanks to its entailed duality and the spacing between a “here” and a “there” (or the touching and the touched), makes it possible phenomenologically to transform the merely physical body into a subjective body proper. Similarly, according to Husserl’s earlier theory of temporality, a temporalizing, repetitious and allegedly auto-affective structure makes possible the living present and the ideal purity of the ego’s present experience.³⁴ Those experiences, nonetheless, cannot be purely immediate and self-evident precisely because of the interpolation of a certain spacing and repetition respectively.

Derrida stresses that the point is not to call into question Husserl’s convictions about the haptic constitution of the body proper (OT, 179). Rather, it is to reflect on the double apprehension and the prioritization of the hand and fingers, both of which surreptitiously allow for a reading of his writings that may have been unintended on his

³³ Another name for this “inter” as originary and irreducible alterity may be “archi-factuality” or “transcendental factuality”, a term that Derrida discusses on several occasions and that complicates the ordinary distinction between the transcendental and the empirical, the essential and the contingent. In “Violence and Metaphysics,” 131-33, for example, Derrida credits Husserl with being aware of that structure designated as “*Urtatsache*”. See also Ludwig Landgrebe, *The Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl: Six Essays*, ed. Donn Welton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).

³⁴ In *Speech and Phenomena*, 78-87, Derrida discusses auto-affectation primarily in terms of the operation of “hearing oneself speak” and Husserl’s theory of temporality. However, given that a similar logic underlies the spatializing movement involved in the double apprehension and the temporalizing movement associated with the phenomenological constitution of the living present, he affirms a peculiar co-implication of time and space (see *Speech and Phenomena*, 86).

part. Husserl's insistence on the exemplariness of the manual and digital double apprehension entails the insertion of alterity not as a mere potentiality that could easily be bracketed off, but as a necessary possibility that disrupts the principle of principles – the demand for a phenomenologically pure auto-affection of the body proper. As a result, Husserl's fundamental distinction between the auto-affective tactile apprehension and the hetero-affection of sight turns out to be inadequate and unfounded. According to Derrida, one had better differentiate between two types of auto-hetero-affection insofar as a pure, immediate, intuitive, living and psychical auto-affection can no longer serve as a stable point of reference (OT, 180). Far from saying that there are no traces or effects of auto-affection at all, this means that one has to learn how to recognize these effects as the precarious traces of an anterior hetero-affection that will always haunt their pure identity.

An originary hetero-affective "inter" lurks in Husserl's analyses of the lived body, and undermines the unity of an allegedly undivided subject. The experience of the body proper already presupposes a certain "inter" *qua* mediation of the other – not the alter ego but a structural alterity, a primordial non-presence that one might as well call "death". The latter torments the Husserlian concepts of the "lived body" and "transcendental ownness", into whose very heart it introduces exteriority, alterity, material nature, the non-living and the non-psychical as their quasi-transcendental conditions of im-possibility (see OT, 180).

If Derrida focuses on the exemplariness of the hand and fingers, it is in order to show that their metonymical use not only contravenes the rigorous and scientific literality to which phenomenology always and in principle appeals, but also entails an irreducible "inter" that both conditions and limits subjectivity:

More than any other part of the body proper, the hand has imposed a detour leading through visibility and exposition to a surface, precisely when it was meant better to illustrate the pure, psychic auto-affection of the touching-touched. Through this outlet, the hand has finally imposed the possibility of empathic appresentation, that is, ex-appropriation, the interminable appropriation of an irreducible nonproper, which conditions, constitutes, and limits every and any appropriation process at the same time. (OT, 181-82)

Reading Husserl's text in this way, that is, discerning a supplementary "inter" interposed, on the one hand, between the touching and the touched of the primordial double apprehension, and, on the other, between touch and sight, Derrida affirms the openness of Husserl's text and acknowledges its conceptual richness and philosophical finesse. At the same time, he succeeds in truly radicalizing phenomenology by opening up the possibility of a construal diagnosing that the text itself, rather than its author, complicates classical philosophical concepts such as "body", "subject", "immediacy" and "evidence".

For half a century Derrida strove to draw attention to the complexity and singularity of Husserl's philosophy by offering detailed commentaries and close readings of a range of phenomenological aporias: the relation between genesis and sense in "The Origin of Geometry",³⁵ the act of hearing oneself speak in *Logical Investigations*, temporalization and the living present in Husserl's writings on immanent

³⁵ Edmund Husserl, "The Origin of Geometry," Appendix VI, in Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 353-78.

temporality,³⁶ empathy and appresentation in *Cartesian Meditations*, the constitution of the body proper in *Ideas II*. He has insisted on the salience of a phenomenological aporia crystallized into the slogan “the constitution is revealed to be itself constituted”, and bearing witness to a limit that phenomenology both touches and somehow transgresses (OT, 226). Almost at the end of his long-standing involvement and uncanny encounter with Husserl, Derrida’s meticulous study of his phenomenology of the body led him to re-affirm his initial conviction that the radicality, depth and intellectual force of Husserl’s thought results from that double gesture of limitation and transgression.

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Fenomenologia simțului tactil la Derrida și Husserl: „inter” ca o condiție stranie a corpului trăit

Examinând îndeaproape lectura făcută de Derrida fenomenologiei simțului tactil a lui Husserl din *Ideas II*, eseul de față va desființa ideea unei presupuse critici pe care deconstrucția ar opera-o asupra fenomenologiei și va argumenta, urmându-l pe Derrida, că relația dintre cei doi filosofi e una complexă. Prima secțiune a lucrării se va axa pe experiența fenomenologică a corpului trăit [*Leib*], experiență bazată pe o întreagă rețea axiomatică de concepte (imediatețe, evidentă, etc). Primordialitatea și ireductibilitatea acestor valori fenomenologice este atestată de o serie de alte motive husserliene cum ar fi *epoché*, reducția și delimitarea unei sfere de proprietate transcendentă. A doua secțiune va explora instrumentalitatea simțului tactil și, mai precis, cea a actului imediat și auto-afectiv al simțului tactil manual în constituirea corpului trăit. Replica dată de Derrida în *On Touching–Jean-Luc Nancy la Ideas II* are în centru riguroasa distincție husserliană dintre simțul tactil și vedere. Glosând *On Touching* în secțiunea finală a lucrării, voi identifica o anumită caracteristică de tip „inter” *qua* spațializare originară la care tratamentul husserlian al simțului tactil face aluzie în mod oblic și pe care Derrida îl conceptualizează ca posibilitate esențială a unei exteriorități vizibile. Voi explica modul în care acest aporetic „inter” subminează pretinsa stare de imediat și pre-eminență a simțului tactil față de vedere și, de asemenea, motivul pentru care el constituie condiția deopotrivă a posibilității și a imposibilității corpului trăit.