

TOUCHING HANDS*

Donn Welton**

SÍNTESE – Face às afirmações da fenomenologia de que todo ato de consciência é intencional na estrutura, há a dificuldade de caracterizar aquela que temos em nossa vida mental. Se nosso conhecimento é produzido somente numa segunda ordem de atos de reflexão que atingem o objeto, que parece ser exigido pela noção de intencionalidade, então somos presa de um infinito retorno de atos reflexos. Husserl, contudo, sustenta que nosso conhecimento é imediato e direto (Secção II). Ele discrimina isto a partir de uma subsequente e reflexiva análise mas equivocadamente deduzida de que a precepção como refletida é transparente e adequada (secção III e IV). Isto nos leva à questão da natureza do pré-reflexivo conhecimento de si mesmo. Husserl afirma que tal modalidade de contato é de tal maneira que este conhecimento depende de uma reflexiva (não reflectiva) conexão entre a mão, por exemplo, e o objeto tocado (Secção V). Quando o toque se torna referencial e a mão que toca é a mão tocada, o conhecimento está inevitavelmente arraigado na vida (*Leib*) e tem o efeito de deslocar os elementos da teoria fenomenológica de Kant e Descartes na análise fenomenológica (Secção VI).

PALAVRAS-CHAVE – Consciência. Husserl. Intencionalidade. Fenomenologia do corpo vivo.

ABSTRACT – In the face of phenomenology's claim that all consciousness is intentional in structure, there is a difficulty in characterizing the awareness we have of our own mental life. If self-awareness is produced only in a second order act of reflection that takes the mental as its object, as seems to be required by the notion of intentionality, then we are caught in an infinite regress of reflecting acts. Husserl, however, argued that our self-awareness is immediate and direct (Section II). He distinguished this from a subsequent reflective analysis but mistakenly inferred that consciousness as reflected upon is given transparently and adequately (Sections III & IV). This returns us to the question of the nature of pre-reflective self-awareness and to Husserl account of touch. It is argued that the modality of touch is such that self-awareness is dependent upon a reflexive (not reflective) connection between the hand, for example, and the object being touched (Section V). When touch becomes self-referential and the hand touching is the hand touched, self-awareness is inescapably rooted in the lived-body (*Leib*), which has the effect of displacing those elements of Kant's formal and Descartes' phenomenal theory of consciousness that linger in phenomenological analysis (Section VI).

KEY WORDS – Consciousness. Husserl. Intentionality. Phenomenology of the lived-body.

* A first shorter version of this paper will appear under the title "Hands" in a Festschrift for J. N. Mohanty. The original has been totally revised and expanded, to the point where only the broad outline of the original remains. A special word of thanks for Nythamar de Oliveira for his help in bringing this paper to publication.

** State University of New York.

"The first sense to ignite, touch is often the last to burn out; long after our eyes betray us, our hands remain faithful to the world."

Frederick Sachs¹

When one sees men and women in procession – be it on an aisle leading to a wedding altar or on cobblestone leading to a graveyard – our attention is fixed on faces. Faces lead the march with bodies, dressed in the white of a new day or in the black of a lost night, trailing behind. We, the spectators, search for the eyes of the bride or the widower, for we know that only in their gaze do these moments of radiant anticipation, veiled in hope, or of broken recollections, veiled in despair, dwell in their fullness. As our gaze inhabits theirs, we too are suffused with joy or sorrow.

In such ceremonies, which suspend the rhythms of everyday life, the hands are often gloved or hidden behind a bouquet of flowers. They are not at work. Hands contribute nothing to processions such as these, and so they recede from view. It is only at those moments when the ritual marks a future state and a return to the everyday that they are allowed to appear. The couple exchange rings, which both binds the hand and identifies it as belonging to the other. The widower slowly spades moist earth on the coffin and begins the long process of leaving behind what is eternally lost. Even here, however, the hands are hesitant for they await the return of the plowshare or the sword, or, for those blessed with leisure, the return of the pen or the paintbrush.

Once they are ungloved and allowed to go free, however, the hands are what carry our existence. They are connected to the body in a way that the hollow of the eyes is not. There is no dividing line between the hand and the arm, with the quality of one melding into that of the other. The broad, rounded hand of the longshoreman or the farmwoman is continuous with his or her large, muscular forearm. The movements and rhythms of a strong or even delicate arm with its hand are palpable modulations of his or her very existence. George Eliot, the English novelist, captures this as she describes the arm of a woman as the presence of her beauty:

"Who has not felt the beauty of a woman's arm? – the unspeakable suggestions of tenderness that lie in the dimpled elbow, and all the varied gently-lessening curves, down to the delicate wrist, with its tiniest, almost imperceptible nicks in the firm softness."²

The extension of the arm into a smooth, white hand, unsoiled and manicured, would only expand such beauty, making it all the more captivating – at least for Indian nobility or Brazilian gentry living in earlier days.

¹ Frederick Sachs, "The Intimate Sense of Touch", *The Sciences* (January/February 1988).

² George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, bk. 6, ch. 10 (1860).

But for those who labor, hands display skill and power. To take a tool in hand is to commit oneself to transforming the materials at hand. The style of the action exhibits the skill of the hands, the effectiveness of the action their power. Hands are hands-on. Hands also come as a pair and they work together. Both in terms of each other and in terms of the world, they bespeak involvement and participation. We not only have hands but we have a hand-in. What we construct with hands-on and hands-in is usually done for the sake of others. What is built is done so that it might be handed-over. Vision never gives; hands do.

Had philosophers begun with the hand as lived, we might not have been tempted to posit a chasm between external reality and us. Perhaps it is because we have thought of the ego as dwelling in the head and not in the hands that we came to believe that there is a gap in need of bridging between the subject and the world. Hands literally cease to exist as hands and become dangling appendages if there is nothing to take to hand, if a tool invites not their grip or unharvested wheat beckons not their labor. And through that transference of significance so characteristic of the body in action, what is touched or gripped can itself be described as a hand, as when we – feeling its fineness, texture, and durability – speak of the “hand” of a fabric or a carpet.

There is an objectivism that would reject this characterization of hands, that would argue that the hand is simply like any other empirical object, and that we must look to the natural sciences to discover its intrinsic properties. The hand, it is said, is the terminal part of the human arm located below the forearm consisting of the wrist, palm, four fingers, and an opposable thumb. Furthermore, the firing of certain neurons and the contractions of various muscles can explain the function of the hand. But notice that this type of description would apply equally well to corpses. In fact, it was only as the corpse became the site of revelation for the medical disciplines and the sciences of the body that it gained ascendancy. They assume that there is only one region of reality, the biophysical, and that to describe hands is to explain them with concepts that translate into operations of measurement. The reduction of reality that attends a scientific point of view, however, always fails to approach the meaning or significance of hands and always finds itself on the other side of the way hands fit into the circuit of our existence. Over against scientific objectivism, phenomenology is concerned with the *essence* of hands.

The way in which we experience our hands-in-action prethematically serves not as a foundation but certainly as a background to the various ways in which hands are elaborated metaphorically. To lend a hand is to lift another's burden or help pull a wagon across a ford. Hands speak of possession or ownership, as when the jewels are in my hands or the task has been given over to my hands. But they also bespeak authority, as when a person has been placed into our hands, or responsibility, as when the evening meal is in your hands. And they solidify our contact with others, when we in lighter moments greet each other with a shaking or slapping of hands. Follow the elaborate hand clasping routine of black kids in New York; they rarely look each other in the eyes as part of the greeting, as though the

look would spoil the touch. Even vows and promises are sealed with a grip of hands. By contrast there are hands that have been taken over by others. With the introduction of slave labor, sailing ships, and then factory work, there was a reduction of a person to "a hand" and a reduction of a hand to its sheer labor power. At the most extreme, there is the deeper shame associated with hands nailed to wooden planks.

A phenomenological approach thinks of these thematic elaborations and metaphorical extensions as dependent upon an experience of hands that is at work in our basic involvement with environments and situations. It does not begin with texts nor does it start with a truth functional analysis of the semantics of the term "hand". Rather the appeal is to what would give metaphors their background or field of intelligibility. In turning to experience before it becomes encumbered, the task is to account for hands at the level of their active engagement. But how is this to proceed? To answer this we must first step back from our account of hands in order say a few things in general about the nature of phenomenological analysis.

II

Phenomenology argues that an essential analysis of experience, be it of the body or perception, involves a moment of suspension. In order to reflect philosophically, we must not only set aside our inherited conceptions and theories of reality, we must also pull back from our everyday absorption in the world in an effort to discover the truth of things. Phenomenology is no chronicle of facts: it always involves eidetic analysis or what the later Husserl called eidetic variation. We pass from facts to recurring and invariant structures. Still, the turn from the everyday and the distinction between fact and essence are not peculiar to phenomenology. Most philosophy has at least this much.

If the analysis of essences is to be genuinely phenomenological, phenomena and then essences must be understood in terms of their *constitution*. The goal of phenomenology is to disclose the structure of manifestation itself. Because the appearance of something as something can be accounted for only in relation to the one to whom or *for* whom the appearance is given, reflection is always a form of self-reflection. The theory of intentionality is designed to account for this interconnection between the *as*-structure and the *for*-structure across any and all possible regions of analysis. For this reason consciousness, the field in which intentionality is deployed, is taken to be foundational and transcendental. At the level of eidetic analysis, this means that essences characterize the ontic conditions for the being of different types of phenomena in terms of the epistemic conditions of their appearance. The genius of Husserl's phenomenology was to think of essences in terms of meanings and meanings in terms of our cognitive involvement with things. Because of the way in which essences are tethered to schemes of constitution, "essences are destined to bring back all the living relationships of experience", as Merleau-Ponty puts it so well.³ To understand hands essentially is to conceptualize the meaning of hands, to

³ M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by Colin Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), xv.

see how they function in the experiential relationship between phenomena and the one to whom appearances are given, to grasp the manner in which they modulate our existence.

In arguing that the nature of phenomena requires a reflection upon consciousness, however, phenomenology risks falling into the position that the act of reflection itself produces the cognitive experience or at least produces the awareness that attends cognitive experiences. Only as the focal theme or object of a second reflective act would the primary act be conscious. Tugendhat, Frank, Henrich and others of "the Heidelberg School" have argued that Husserl's philosophy rejects the immediacy of self-awareness and, as a result, is infected with the difficulties that attend what they call the reflection theory.⁴ The reflection theory cannot account for the fact that we are directly aware of our own conscious states nor can it account for the self-identity of the one experiencing the primary act and the one performing the second reflective act. In addition, it leads to an infinite regress of subsequent acts of reflection being required to account for the awareness that attends previous acts.

This understanding of Husserl is completely false but time does not allow me to argue this here.⁵ In place of a lengthy discussion let me introduce one distinction and one quote. If we move beyond some of the terminology he used into the structural distinction he has in mind, Husserl clearly distinguishes between intentional act (*Akt*) and lived experience (*Erlebnis*), and then views *Erleben* as the sensed or experiential quality of such acts. *Erleben* is not itself an intentional act but characterizes the awareness that attends intentional acts or, more broadly, that characterizes being conscious itself. The confusion comes by assuming that Husserl did not make this distinction and that he held that we are aware of a mental event or *Erlebnis* only because it is *given*, and it is given only because there is a reflective intentional acts, in this case, an act of perception turned inward, that *grasps* it. But *Erlebnisse* as the lived quality of primary acts do not require second order reflective acts for their manifestation. They are immediately and directly present. We must say awareness attends intentional acts directly. To give it a name, we will call its self-awareness. To saddle Husserl with the theory that consciousness would be self-aware only if there were yet an intentional act that posits the *Erlebnis* is simply to destroy his hard fought distinction between *Erlebnis* and *Akt*. Reflection, the medium in which phenomenological analysis moves, is always reflection upon what exists *before* the reflection for Husserl. The reflection thematizes and does not produce either the act or its quality of being a lived experience. Husserl argues precisely this point in his study of time-consciousness, though he is still struggling with his terminology:

⁴ See Ernst Tugendhat, *Selbstbewußtsein und Selbstbestimmung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979); Manfred Frank, *Die Unhintergebarkeit von Individualität* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986); Dieter Henrich, "Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht", *Subjektivität und Metaphysik*, ed. by D. Henrich & H. Wagner (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1966), 188-232.

⁵ The best discussion of this issue is Dan Zahavi, *Self-Awareness and Alterity* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999). See also his "Husserl and the Question of Pre-reflective Self-awareness", *Husserl: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Donn Welton (forthcoming). The remainder of this section is much indebted to his discussion.

"Jeder Akt ist Bewußtsein von etwas, aber jeder Akt ist auch bewußt. Jedes Erlebnis ist 'empfunden', ist immanent 'wahrgenommen' (inneres Bewußtsein), wenn auch natürlich nicht gesetzt, gemeint (wahrnehmen heißt nicht meinend-zugewendet-sein und erfassen). . . . Freilich scheint das auf einen unendlichen Regreß zurückzuführen. Denn ist nun nicht wieder das innere Bewußtsein, das Wahrnehmen vom Akt (vom Urteilen, vom äußeren Wahrnehmen, vom Sich-freuen usw.) ein Akt und daher selbst wieder innerlich wahrgenommen usw.? Dagegen ist zu sagen: Jedes 'Erlebnis' im prägnanten Sinn ist innerlich wahrgenommen. Aber das innere Wahrnehmen ist nicht im selben Sinn ein 'Erlebnis'. Es ist nicht selbst wieder innerlich wahrgenommen."

"Every act is consciousness of something but each act is also conscious. Every experience is 'sensed', is immanently 'perceived' (internal consciousness), although naturally not posited, meant (to perceive here does not mean to grasp something and to be turned toward it in an act of meaning). . . . To be sure, this seems to lead back to an infinite regress. For is not the internal consciousness, the perceiving of the act (of judging, of perceiving something external, of rejoicing, and so forth) again an act and therefore itself something internally perceived, and so on? On the contrary, we must say: every 'experience' in the strict sense is internally perceived. But the internal perceiving is not an 'experience' in the same sense. It is not again internally perceived."⁶

Let me shortcut a possible misunderstanding. To say that I am directly acquainted with the cognitive experiences I am undergoing is not to say that the mental experience is *fully* given to me. To be aware of the act is not also to grasp its determinations. If by the given we mean the thematic object of an intentional act, we must say that before the act of reflection *Erleben* is not grasped or given at all. Rather, all that I am claiming is that, in the very course of an intentional act of perception, I also have a direct acquaintance with the conscious quality of that act, in addition to whatever object might be perceived. There is an irreducibility to the conscious *awareness* that attends all my intentional acts. Self-awareness must be distinguished from the subsequent *reflection* on the mental event that turns the mental event into a *theme* of investigation and attempts to articulate its features. To say that the mental event is self-aware *before* reflection is to say that reflection does not *create* the mental event, which would be the strong thesis of Dennett's intentional stance theory⁷. Nor does it *produce* the *self-awareness* attending the mental event, which would be the milder thesis of the reflection theory. Rather it *discovers* the mental event with which I was already acquainted. The point of reflection is to move acquaintance into intimate knowledge, which means that until I reflect I have yet to understand the mental event of which I am

⁶ Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins* (1893-1917), ed. by Rudolf Boehm, *Husserliana*, Vol. 10 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 126-127; *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (1893-1917), trans. by John Brough, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Pub., 1991), 130. Translation modified. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

⁷ See Daniel Dennett, *The Intentional Stance* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1987) and *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1991).

aware. When I reflect, however, I am reflecting on something already there, something with which I am already acquainted. The reflection does not project the mental event nor does it produce the awareness of the mental event.

III

Having shown that Husserl argues for a pre-reflective immediacy to self-awareness, however, allows us to go on and locate what is indeed a serious problem with his first accounts in the *Logical Investigations* (1900/01) and *Ideas I* (1913). The features of immediacy and directness attending our awareness of acts tempted Husserl to argue that in the subsequent phenomenological reflection upon consciousness, acts are given transparently and adequately. I will deal with this issue in this and the next section, and then return to the nature of pre-reflective self-awareness in the remainder of the paper.

In the period between the *Logical Investigations* and *Ideas I* Husserl developed the strong notion of evidence he thought capable of supporting his transcendental account of consciousness. As part of this program, Husserl contrasted the "inadequate" givenness that attends "outer perception," making its evidence subject to correction and improvement, to the "adequate" givenness and absolute evidence that accompanies our reflections upon consciousness.⁸ As was true of Leibniz and Fichte, two of his favorite philosophers, Husserl came to believe that a core of adequate intuitive evidence is required if we are to secure the existence and the structure of transcendental subjectivity.

The relentless effort in *Ideas I* to apply this strong notion of evidence to the apprehension of consciousness, however, led Husserl to restrict the scope of adequacy in important ways.⁹ A further clarification of the relationship between inadequate and adequate evidence will enable us to see this.

There are different kinds of evidence but generally the nature of the evidence attending our apprehension of essences depends upon the manner in which underlying phenomena are given. In the case of real objects the play of profiles (the sides directly given) and object (the whole co-given), as well as the causal nexus in which all material objects are located, mean that real objects are always given

⁸ See *Die Idee der Phänomenologie: Fünf Vorlesungen*, ed. by Walter Biemel. *Husserliana*, Vol. 2 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958) where this contrast is developed.

⁹ In this essay I will restrict my account to *Ideas I* (1913) and will not trace the development of this concept that occurs between the *Logical Investigations* (1900/01) and *Ideas I*. Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, 2nd rev. ed., 2 Bände (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1913 and 1921). All page references to the *Logische Untersuchungen* are to this edition. The English translation is *Logical Investigations*, trans. by J.N. Findlay, 2 vols. (New York: Humanities Press, 1970). Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, Vol. 1: *Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, in *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, Band 1 (Halle a.d.S.: Niemeyer, 1913), pp. 1-323. Since there are two different Husserliana editions of *Ideen I*, all page references to *Ideen I* are to this edition. The English translation is *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, Book 1: *General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, trans. by F. Kersten, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983). Husserl in the *Investigations* was convinced that one's own experiences are adequately perceived and he seems to mean by this the whole stream of these experiences. See *Logische Untersuchungen*, II/2, 240; Eng. trans., II, 866.

perspectively. And because there are profiles that are not immediately but only mediately present and because of the open, "presumptive" nature of all perceptual experience, real objects are given only inadequately. Not only are there manifold determinations that become manifest only in the course of further perceptual experience, it is also the case that with the next turn of the object something new and surprising can appear and the entire experience becomes transformed. When what we saw as a raccoon turns out to be the neighborhood cat, the phenomena itself is retrogressively reorganized. This entails that the evidence of external perception is always open and "impure". Husserl puts it this way:

"Prinzipiell kann ein Dingreales, ein Sein solchen Sinnes in einer abgeschlossenen Erscheinung nur 'inadäquat' erscheinen. Damit hängt wesensmäßig zusammen, daß keine auf solch einer inadäquat gebenden Erscheinung beruhende Vernunftsetzung 'endgültig', keine 'unüberwindlich' sein kann"

"In principle, something that is [physically] real, a being that has this sense, can appear in limited fashion and thus only 'inadequately'. Essentially tied up with this is the fact that no rational claim [*Vernunftsetzung*] based on such an inadequately given appearance can be 'final' and 'incapable of being overturned'. . . ."¹⁰

At best, adequate givenness in the case of real objects is recovered teleologically, only at the level of a projected ideal of what that type of object would be like if we did have an exhaustive experience of it. He envisions regional ontologies that articulate the "rules", which Husserl characterizes as an ideas in the Kantian sense, that prescribe the course of ongoing experience for different types of objects and, thereby, hypothetical ideals of their essential determinations.¹¹ However, what belongs to such rules, themselves adequately given as an eidos, is the stipulation that any actual, real object be given inadequately. What is real, then, is perspectively given and thus arrested in horizons. Any claim based on the real, as a consequence, is provisional and open to correction. In this realm only what is ideal and involves eidetic insight has evidence marked as adequate.

But what happens when in reflection the "object" being apprehended is consciousness itself? This is where we find a decisive tension in Husserl's theory. Initially he argued in *Ideen I* that lived experiences are adequately given in our reflections upon them. Unlike external objects of perception, lived experiences lack sides or profiles. They are given all at once and thus fully.

"Doch führen wir zunächst den Kontrast speziell zwischen Ding und Erlebnis noch nach der anderen Seite durch. Das Erlebnis stellt sich, sagten wir, nicht dar. Darin liegt, die Erlebniswahrnehmung ist schlichtes Erschauen von etwas, das in der Wahrnehmung als 'Absolutes' gegeben (bzw. zu geben) ist und nicht als Identisches von Erscheinungsweisen durch Abschattung. . . . Ein Gefühlserlebnis schattet sich nicht ab. Blicke ich darauf hin, so habe ich ein Absolutes, es hat keine Seiten, die sich bald so, bald so darstellen könnten."

¹⁰ *Ideen I*, 286-287; Eng. trans., 331. Italic removed and somewhat freely translated.

¹¹ See *Ideen I*, 297-298; Eng. trans., 342-343 on this point.

"Let us develop the specific contrast between thing and lived experience [*Erlebnis*] from the other side. The lived experience does not present itself, we said, [through adumbrations or profiles]. That means that the perception of a lived experience is a simple viewing of something *that is perceptually given as absolute* and not given as something identical through modes of appearance, each of which is an adumbration. . . . A lived experience of feeling is not adumbrated. If I look at it, I have something absolute; it does not have sides that present [the lived experience] sometimes in one mode, sometimes in another."¹²

Because it lacks different modes of appearance or profiles, the lived experience is given "absolutely". Adequate evidence is "in principle incapable of being 'strengthened' or 'diminished', thus without graduations of weight".¹³ With his strong view of evidence in play, Husserl summarizes his position in this way:

"Wir halten also fest: Während es zum Wesen der Gegebenheit durch Erscheinungen gehört, daß keine die Sache als 'Absolutes' gibt, statt in einseitiger Darstellung, gehört es zum Wesen der immanenten Gegebenheit, eben ein Absolutes zu geben, das sich gar nicht in Seiten darstellen und abschatten kann."

"We therefore hold fast to the following: whereas it is essential to givenness by appearances [i.e., profiles] that no one of them presents the matter as 'absolute' instead of in a one-sided presentation, it is essential to the givenness of something immanent to give precisely something absolute that cannot ever be presented in sides and be adumbrated."¹⁴

Eidetic insight, as a consequence, could claim to read not the structure that consciousness would have were it given completely but the structure that it actually does have because it is given without remainder. The a priori structure of consciousness is not a hypothetical construct and this is the main reason Husserl thinks he has escaped the Kantian and neo-Kantian "mythic" construction of the transcendental ego. The fact that it is "given" in transcendental reflection meant that we have secure, "actual," not presumptive, "hypothetical" evidence for it.

"Offenbar ist die Seinsnotwendigkeit des jeweiligen aktuellen Erlebnisses darum doch keine pure Wesensnotwendigkeit, d.i. keine rein eidetische Besonderung eines Wesensgesetzes, es ist die Notwendigkeit eines Faktums, die so heißt, weil ein Wesensgesetz am Faktum, und zwar hier an seinem Dasein als solchem, beteiligt ist."

"Obviously, the necessity attached to the being of the actual lived experience currently present is not a pure essential necessity, that is, not a purely eidetic particularization subsumed under an eidetic law. [Rather] it is the necessity of a fact [*Faktum*], so called because an eidetic law is involved in the fact and, indeed, in the existence of the fact as fact."¹⁵

¹² *Ideen I*, 81; Eng. trans., 95-96.

¹³ *Ideen I*, 288; Eng. trans., 333. Italics removed.

¹⁴ *Ideen I*, 82; modified Eng. trans., 96-97.

¹⁵ *Ideen I*, 86; modified Eng. trans., 103.

Because the evidence of consciousness is about an absolute "fact", intentionality as its eidós, as correlational a priori, can be read directly from it and secured as a foundational structure.

But in these paragraphs in *Ideas I* Husserl probes deeper and then hesitates. He realizes that

"Auch ein Erlebnis ist nicht, und niemals, vollständig wahrgenommen, in seiner vollen Einheit ist es adäquat nicht faßbar. . . . Nur in Form der Retention haben wir ein Bewußtsein des unmittelbar Abgeschlossenen, bzw. in Form der rückblickenden Wiedererinnerung. Und schließlich ist mein ganzer Erlebnisstrom eine Einheit des Erlebnisses, von der prinzipiell eine vollständig "mitschwimmende" Wahrnehmungserfassung unmöglich ist."

"It is also the case that a lived experience is never perceived completely, that it cannot be adequately seized upon in its full unity. . . . Only in the form of retention do we have a consciousness of the phase that has just flowed away, or else in the form of a retrospective recollection. And my whole stream of lived experiences is, finally, a unity of lived experiences which, of essential necessity, cannot be seized upon completely in a perceiving that 'swims along with it'.¹⁶

One of the passages cited above is also reworked in Husserl's personal copies. His insertions (underlined) further specify the difficulty he finds with his initial position:

"Das Erlebnis stellt sich, sagten wir, als wahrnehmungsmäßige Gegenwart nicht dar nach seinem ganzen Gegenwärtigen= Gehalt (und so in jedem Moment). Darin liegt, die Erlebniswahrnehmung ist schlichtes Erschauen von etwas, das in seiner Gegenwart, in jedem Punkt seines Jetzt in der Wahrnehmung als 'Absolutes' gegeben (bzw. zu geben) ist und nicht als Identisches von Erscheinungsweisen durch einseitige Abschattung. . . . Ein Gefühlserlebnis schattet sich einseitig nicht ab. Blicke ich darauf hin, so habe ich für jeden Punkt seiner kontinuierlichen Gegenwart ein Absolutes, es hat keine Seiten, die sich bald so, bald so darstellen könnten."

"The lived experience does not present itself as *perceptually present according to its whole present content (and thus in each moment)*. That means that the perception of a lived experience is a simple viewing of something that *in its present, at every point in its Now* is perceptually given as absolute and not given as something identical through modes of appearance, each of which is a *one-sided* adumbration. . . . A lived experience of feeling is not adumbrated *one side at a time*. If I look at it, I have *with respect to each point of its continuous present* something absolute; it does not have sides that present [the lived experience] sometimes in one mode, sometimes in another."¹⁷

At best, only the momentary Now, only the swell of the Now and not the entire lived experience or concatenation of experiences with their phases is immedi-

¹⁶ *Ideen I*, 82; modified Eng. trans., 97. Italics mine.

¹⁷ *Ideen I*, 81; Eng. trans., 95-96. Italics removed in order to make underlined passages clear. The insertions are published in Schuhmann's edition of *Ideen I*. See *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie.*, Vol. 2: *Ergänzende Texte (1912-1929)*, ed. by Karl Schuhmann, *Husserliana*, Vol. 3/b (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), 494. There are insertions as well, making this a passage that Husserl contests, but I include only the most relevant to our topic.

ately present. But this means that in the presentation of whole temporal mental events in and through retained and then recollected past phases, we have, if not profiles, then at least aspects or phases that are not adequately given. However self-given or immediately consciousness is present to itself, it is in only on the basis of a reflective grasp of consciousness as a whole, not on the basis of a momentary phase given in the Now, that we can make inferences about the structure of consciousness. This produced a modification in the evidence required to secure the "fact" of subjectivity. While the reflective apprehension of the whole of consciousness must include elements that are inadequately given (since the do not belong to the momentary Now), there is still a core passing through the Now that is adequately presented and thus "absolute". This is sufficient to render the evidence obtained in reflection apodictic or "originary," Husserl believed.

IV

From the tensions we just discovered, I want to argue that the modified theory of evidence Husserl used to secure his transcendental notion of consciousness is untenable, as is the way that theory, Cartesian in nature, affects or directs his characterization of consciousness. Husserl's Cartesian requirement that consciousness as phenomenon be "adequately given" entails both the idea that our reflective experience of the Now phase of a experience itself have the form of a direct and *complete apprehension* (in the sense of an act free from any dependence upon co-functioning, indirect acts), and the idea that what is so apprehended be itself *transparent*, given without hidden features or aspects. For it to be adequately given, as we have just seen, it would have to be present without profiles. This means, to use Husserl's terms, that it must not only be manifest in a sheer act of presentation (*Gegenwärtigung*), without the co-functioning of presentation or re-presentation (*Vergegenwärtigung*) but that it must also be given within presentation in a direct presentation (*Präsentation*) without the interplay of re- or appresentation (*Appräsentation*). And it must be given transparently, i.e., with all of its aspects fully manifest. The first is a noetic, the second a noematic requirement. But neither is the case.

At best, what is directly given as we reflect upon consciousness, according to Husserl's own admissions, is the impressional Now or, to draw from his later theory, the living Now. But even if we treat the impressional Now as *directly* given, this does not mean that it is *adequately* given. Husserl confused these two in *Ideas I*.¹⁸

There are indeed significant distinctions between (a) objects and profiles as they are given in normal perception, and (b) mental events given in phenomenological reflection. I am not claiming that mental events are given in profiles, as are perceptual objects. All objects of external perception are necessarily spatial. I can walk around them. This is not true of mental events. Try as I will, I cannot catch

¹⁸ It is an open question as to whether he later realized that they are different.

them from behind. But this does not mean that mental events lack "contours" that involve an interlacing of impressional and trace elements, of im-pressional (*in- + premere*) and re-pressional (*re- + premere*) materials. Husserl acknowledges this but initially preserves the thesis of adequacy by treating all re-pressional materials held in retention and eventually recollection as strictly derivative, coming from impressional materials as they fade from view. This implies, though, that the impressional phase could be given in an act or as a phase of an act that is independent of appresentation. But this is highly questionable. Studies in perception show that what is optimally Now is dependent upon a field. Impressions arising in presentation are not free of appresentational materials. If trace or re-pressional material is not merely a re-presentation of what was originally presented but also functions as the field or background within which all im-pressional materials have their determinacy and their significance, then all presentation is inescapably linked to and even dependent upon ap-presentation. Appresentation supplies not an "objective background" but a background belonging to the "conscious quality of the experiential moment"¹⁹ to borrow a phrase from Husserl's Göttingen lecture course from 1906-07. He even wagered to call such background material "prephenomenal".²⁰ If what is not directly given but retained is necessary to what is directly given in the mental event apprehended in reflection, and if appresentation is involved in the functioning of that background, then any mental event "directly" given in a Now will not be a mental event "adequately" given. The event will always be a phase of a whole and never phenomenally present in isolation. There is always this "surplus, over and above what is directly manifest, that is constitutive of what is present. Ironically, one could even claim that this is not only a consequence of but even the deeper insight of Husserl's own theory of the consciousness of inner time. One cannot escape the implication of this for the theory of evidence: any reflective apprehension of consciousness must be necessarily inadequate".²¹

There is a second difficulty. To isolate what is directly manifest in presentation always involves an abstractive procedure and thus the results count as phenomena only in an attenuated sense. But even if we could do this, even if we could isolate a mental event or phase from what is held in retention, we still would not have something adequately given. With rare exceptions, there are always other features not in focus that could be explored. Anger, for example, seems to involve a mixture of pain, shock, perception, and perhaps hate. The third note of a melody (taken only as an experienced unit) can have various intensities, pitches, and even be the result of several instruments that can be identified by those with a trained ear. In Husserl's terms, there is an "inner horizon" at work and this means determinations hidden in what is directly manifest.

¹⁹ Edmund Husserl, *Einleitung in die Logik und Erkenntnistheorie: Vorlesungen 1906/1907*, ed. by Ulrich Melle, *Husserliana*, Vol. 24 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984), 243.

²⁰ *Einleitung in die Logik*, 245

²¹ There are other dimensions to why we cannot adequately grasp mental events as singular that we cannot go into here. For one of the most interesting see *Einleitung in die Logik*, 220-224.

Since any mental act that would be directly manifest has itself elements that are concealed, the claim of transparency is thereby undercut. And since any conscious event directly manifest actually involves an intertwining of im-pressional and re-pressional materials and thus an interplay of presentation and appresentation, what is presented is necessarily inadequate. In view of his later thought, we can say that adequate givenness is a requirement that comes from Husserl's Cartesian view of evidence at work in *Ideas I*. It is not manifest in but superimposed upon mental phenomena. By contrast, direct yet inadequate givenness, interlaced with protentions and retentions, is closer to what his own phenomenology actually discovered in the reflection upon the mental acts with which we are directly acquainted.²² This is why his earlier emphasis upon adequacy gives way in his later thought to a notion of *originary* evidence for consciousness in which the feature of self-awareness and not transparent givenness becomes the decisive criterion.

This account of reflection now returns us to our initial concern with nature of pre-reflective experience. Thus far we have worked with a simple dyadic distinction between our direct, immediate acquaintance with the mental acts we are undergoing and a subsequent reflection upon those acts that describes their structures. But is the only quality of acts with which we are acquainted pre-reflectively, simply the fact that they possess self-awareness, that they are "lived" (*erlebt*)? Is the awareness we have of acts before we reflect wholly indeterminate? Is there nothing more than the sheer state of being conscious in play? Is self-awareness definable only as an *Ereignis*, as self-sustaining mental event, as Henrich argues.²³

V

Hands touch. What we take in hand is sensed as smooth, rough, warm, cold, etc. Touching, however, has the peculiar feature that in perceiving the tactile properties of the object, the hand is also offered to itself. In perceiving the rough wood I simultaneously sense the fingers as they cross the surface of the board. The fingers are themselves sensed *reflexively*, I want to say. Were there a gap between fingers and object, neither the fingers as sensing nor the roughness sensed would be manifest. Perhaps we can say that the action of reaching for the wood finds a double "fulfillment": in the process of giving what is touched to the hand, the hand as touching is also experienced.

Let me anticipate a possible misunderstanding. To speak of the experience of touching as *reflexive* is not to speak of it as the result of a *reflection*. Rather reflexivity is built into the kind of self-awareness that we find in the tactile realm. Only subsequently do we reflect upon it, as we are doing now.

²² It will not do to attempt to recover adequacy at the level of the essence. If Husserl claims that it is the idea of consciousness or consciousness as a "rule in the Kantian sense" that is foundational, then he is back in the lap of neo-Kantianism. Even worse, we also run afoul of Wittgenstein's deep insight that there is no rule for the application of rules. Whatever essence consciousness has, it cannot be put in the form of a hypothetical rule that prescribes what it *would* be if it were adequately given.

²³ Dieter Henrich, "Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht."

Notice, however, that the reflexivity of touching is such that I am not just self-aware. To be sure, touching is *co-present* with the touched. In touching there is a type of auto-manifestation of the experience itself in which touching itself is sensed. But touching also involves the element of "localization". The consciousness of touching is simultaneously manifest here as bodily. As Husserl puts it,

"Alle die bewirkten Empfindungen haben ihre *Lokalisation*, d.h. sie unterscheiden sich durch die Stellen der erscheinenden Leiblichkeit und gehören phänomenal zu ihr."

"All sensations thus produced have their *localization*, i.e., they are distinguished by means of their place on the appearing corporeality [*Leiblichkeit*] and they belong phenomenally to it."²⁴

Touch stands in striking contrast to sight. In the case of vision, that most rarified of our senses, the dyadic interplay of profile and object given in vision involves an awareness of the act of seeing itself only in a minimal sense.²⁵ What is seen does provoke a weak reflexive awareness of the noetic state of seeing or of the organs of sight, but this is because all vision arises in and through bodily movements of which we might be directly aware. The interplay of profiles and objects is spatially deployed and thus visual exploration always engages the capacities of the body, be it approaching nearer, standing back, or simply turning the head. Even the fixed eye is a mode of the "I can", Husserl reminds us.²⁶ But notice that seeing, which takes place only through the eyes, does not produce sensations that "localize" the eyes.²⁷ Here the body operates at best in the margins of the experience, so much so that an act of vision never senses its own unique organs of sight, never co-manifests the body doing the seeing.

What is distinct about touch as a whole is its ubiquity. Unlike the other senses, which are centered in a distinct organ, touch is everywhere. Perhaps we can say that its organ is the skin, which means that it extends over the entire body. It has unique functions and qualities but is not restricted to a single site, as is sight.²⁸ By contrast, touching brings the body to the fore. Here there is a strong reflexive awareness that keeps the touched tied to touching, and then touching to

²⁴ Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, Band 2: *Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*, ed. by Marly Biemel, *Husserliana*, Vol. 4 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), 145; *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, Book 2: *Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. by Richard Rojcewicz and Andre Schuwer, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Pub., 1989), 153.

²⁵ In the first version of this paper, written for a Festschrift for J.N. Mohanty, I argued that there was not reflexivity to vision. That thesis was too strong.

²⁶ Cf. *Ideen II*, 57-58, 152, 253-257; Eng. trans., 62-63, 159-160, 266-269; *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, ed. by Walter Biemel, *Husserliana*, Vol. 6 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954), 108-109; *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. by David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 106.

²⁷ I am leaving out of consideration such limiting experiences as a blinding light

²⁸ Diane Ackerman, *A Natural History of the Senses* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 77.

the body or the part of the body performing the touching. In addition to manifesting the act as one of touching, the self-awareness attached to a particular act of touching also involves circumscribing what will function as the organ of touch (the finger, the hand, the back, and so on). Touching that did not reflexively manifest the body would cease to be touching.

There is a marvelous passage on the pervasive nature of touch in a seventeenth century textbook of anatomy and physiology, Helkiah Crooke's *Microcosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man* (1615). He originally published in English and not in Latin, over the howls and protests of his fellow physicians, who feared what would happen if ordinary folk acquired such knowledge. Touching, he tells us, is "the ground of all the rest [of the senses]. . . . hence Aristotle, and with him all other Philosophers [name it such]. The Sense as if they should have said the only Sense of all Senses."²⁹

And he understood all too well the way in which touch spans and is yet more basic than the difference between inner and outer. Touch is the "innermost sense" yet its organ – the skin – is "nearer to the occurrence³⁰ or confluence of outward objects; because it is the limit and border as it were of all the parts".³¹

This account of touching has decisive implications for the relationship between consciousness and the body and, thereby, for any question about the transparency of consciousness. In touch there is both an awareness of the action of touching (and thereby the body) and a perception of the material object touched. Since reflexive self-awareness is built into the nature of tactile experience, and since subsequent reflection cannot alter but only represent the experience, it follows that the reflection upon tactile experience cannot transform these ties to the body into constituted appearances and free the presence of the mental experience from them. Unlike sight, the intentional bond is such that we cannot call into question either the existence of the body or the world without changing the nature of the experience. In touching we stand at the limit and border between them. Because it is first given at a reflexive level, any suspension of our belief in the existence of the world or the body would override the experience and cause it to collapse. Yet without this severance, consciousness itself cannot be set in opposition to the world and isolated as the distinct field of transcendental analysis, as Husserl's Cartesian way proposed. This entails that consciousness can never be grasped as the "self-contained complex of being, a complex of absolute being"³² required by Husserl's Cartesian analysis. The reduction, as a consequence, can never be completed.

²⁹ *Microcosmographia*, 648 as cited in Katherine Rowe, "'God's handy worke'," *The Body in Parts*, ed. by David Hillman & Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), 295.

³⁰ This is an old English term meaning "action from".

³¹ *Microcosmographia*, 84, as cited in Rowe, "'God's handy worke'," 295.

³² *Ideen I*, 93; after Eng. trans., 112.

The most interesting feature of touching, however, comes when the object touched is the body itself. This also occurs at a prereflective yet reflexive level and induces a richer awareness of the body. When the left hand grasps the right hand, a circuit of exchanges is established in which the left hand touching is not only aware of itself as the organ touching but also as the organ being touched by the right hand. In the dynamic interplay of touching-touched-touching, subject and object pass over into one another and thereby the body is manifest as *Leib*, lived-body.³³

This places a strain on the very terms organizing the theory of intentionality and any effort to subsume the notion of the lived-body under that of functioning subjectivity. As touched the hand is object. But since the object touched is also touching, it is subject. In this shift, self-awareness becomes articulated in and through a touching that incorporates the touched as touching. This has the consequence of decentering consciousness by deploying it in and through the lived-body. In place of synthesis, in place of unity, we have constant transposition and

³³ Here are Husserl's own words describing this in *Ideas II*:

"Wir können dabei gleich den besonderen Fall wählen, daß der räumlich erfahrene Körper, der mittels des Leibes wahrgenommen wird, der Leibkörper selbst ist. . . . Die linke Hand abtastend habe Tastererscheinungen, d.h. ich empfinde nicht nur, sondern ich nehme wahr und habe Erscheinungen von einer weichen, so und so geformten glatten Hand. Die anzeigenden Bewegungsempfindungen und die repräsentierenden Tastempfindungen, die an dem Ding 'linke Hand' zu Merkmalen objektiviert werden, gehören der rechten Hand zu. Aber die linke Hand betastend finde ich auch in ihr Serien von Tastempfindungen, sie werden in ihr 'lokalisiert', sind aber nicht Eigenschaften konstituierend (wie Rauigkeit und Glätte der Hand, dieses physischen Dinges). Spreche ich vom physischen Ding, 'linke Hand', so abstrahiere ich von diesen Empfindungen (eine Bleikugel hat nichts dergleichen und ebenso jedes 'bloß' physische Ding, jedes Ding, das nicht mein Leib ist). Nehme ich sie mit dazu, so bereichert sich nicht das physische Ding, sondern es wird Leib, es empfindet. Die 'Berührungs'-empfindungen gehören zu jeder erscheinenden objektiven Raumstelle der berührten Hand, wenn sie eben an dieser Stelle berührt wird. Ebenso hat die berührende Hand, die ihrerseits wieder als Ding erscheint, ihre Berührungsempfindungen an der raumkörperlichen Stelle, wo sie berührt (bzw. von der anderen berührt wird)."

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

Ideen II, 144-145; Eng. trans., 152-153. For a fuller analysis of Husserl's theory of the body see my "Soft, Smooth Hands: Husserl's Phenomenology of the Lived-Body", *The Body: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. by Donn Welton (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 38-56.

reversal. There is a lack of coincidence in the object perceived, for in the very course of being perceived it reverses itself into perceiving. "The two hands are never simultaneously in the relationship of touching and touched to each other."³⁴ From this doubling of touch there follows a doubling and then a distributing of consciousness in and through our actions. Consciousness is no longer exclusively constituting and thus self-possessed. And this means that it can never be understood as primitive (*unhintergebar*) and "completely irrelational" as the Heidelberg school wants.³⁵ In contrast to their thesis that consciousness is not only prereflective but also prereflexive,³⁶ touch presents us with an inescapable reflexivity that requires consciousness to be understood as relational and, thereby, essentially corporeal. The consciousness of which we are directly aware prereflectively has a built-in reflexivity that throws it beyond itself in its actions.

Notice that the body is not stationary in touching. As one hand caresses the other, it moves. In the movement of the body, new series of sensorial events arise that make touching possible at the same time that they enhance our self-awareness. Husserl calls them kinaestheses; today we speak of proprioception. They coalesce with certain motor habits into a thick sense of the body; consciousness is rooted in those corporeal capacities and capabilities (*Vermöglichkeiten*) that form the hidden condition of all perception.

There is one remarkable passage where Husserl suddenly realizes the implication of his analysis of touch for the way in which the body is experienced. In touch the efforts to perceive one's own body, and thereby constitute it as an object, meet with frustration because each time it is captured as an object it reverses itself into its opposite, into a subject. We cannot simply objectify the body and rid it of proprioceptive and reflexive sensings [*Empfindnisse*]³⁷ because they are essential to the way it is experienced. Including these sensings, however, means that

"Derselbe Leib, der mir als mittel aller Wahrnehmung dient, steht mir bei der Wahrnehmung seiner selbst im Wege und ist ein merkwürdig unvollkommen konstituiertes Ding."

"The same lived-body, which serves me as means for all my perception, obstructs me in the perception of it itself and is a remarkably imperfectly [or incompletely, *unvollkommen*] constituted thing."³⁸

In the body touching itself, consciousness as constituting "subject" is thrown beyond the immediacy of self-awareness into its opposite, into an "object" but one that is itself constituting and thus "subject." In touch the being (*esse*) and the

³⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 93. See pp. 92-94 for his comment on that part of Husserl's *Ideas II* we are discussing in this section.

³⁵ Frank, *Die Unhintergebarkeit von Individualität*, 60-64.

³⁶ Frank, *Die Unhintergebarkeit von Individualität*, 62

³⁷ *Ideen II*, 146; Eng. trans., 153. I am following Rojcewicz and Schuwer translation of *Empfindnisse* as "sensings". It might also be rendered "sensorial event".

³⁸ *Ideen II*, 159; slightly modified Eng. trans., 167.

being experienced (*percipi*) of consciousness diverge. To the extent that tactile experience is itself distributed across the body, to that extent we must say that consciousness itself is "imperfectly constituting". Because self-awareness involves body-awareness, our subsequent reflection upon consciousness will never grasp it as transparent. In fact what reflection discovers is the sense in which we are caught in the grip of nature. As our anatomist from the seventeenth century, Helkiah Crooke, put it, "this touching virtue or tactive quality [is] diffused through the whole body both within and without [and is] the foundation of the Animal Being, which may be called animality".³⁹

Introducing the body in this way transforms the field of analysis. In touch, the being of consciousness can never be severed from the being of the body. The body, for its part, is caught in the thicket of a life not entirely its own. "How are you?" a passing stranger asks in Kafka's novel *The Trial*, and the hero panics, paralyzed by the shock of being asked the one question he cannot possibly answer.⁴⁰ On the one hand, old affections, desires, and even instincts make demands of their own; on the other hand, pleasure and pain, gratification and frustration, and health and sickness augment or diminish our acts and our actions. The body is *flesh*. As flesh a depth is introduced to consciousness that is only glimpsed in self-awareness.

If it is the case, as Mohanty suggests, that "in the very structure of the transcendental subjectivity, as constituting both my body and nature [as noematic sense-structures], there is involved a stratum of corporeality",⁴¹ then that corporeality completely displaces those elements of Kant's purely formal and Descartes' purely phenomenal theory of consciousness that linger in phenomenological analysis. For in this case that very body being constituted is itself constituting.

VII

Whatever I take in hand takes me in hand. When the hand touching our hand is not ours but that of another, when our hand is grasped by a hand not my own, the circuit of reversibility encompasses others and corporeality (*Leiblichkeit*) becomes intercorporeal.⁴² Touch is not only the "first sense to ignite",⁴³ it is also the one that burns strongest. Babies born prematurely that are consistently massaged

³⁹ *Microcosmographia*, 730, as cited in Rowe, "'God's handy works,'" 296.

⁴⁰ Taken from Ackerman, *Senses*, 95.

⁴¹ J. N. Mohanty, "Transcendental Philosophy and the Hermeneutic Critique of Consciousness", *The Possibility of Transcendental Philosophy, Phaenomenologica*, Vol. 98 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985), 242. Also see his "Intentionality and the Mind/Body Problem", *Transcendental Philosophy*, 121-138 where he argues for "the *intrinsicity* of corporeality to the life of consciousness" (p. 128).

⁴² From the point of view of a structural reconstruction, using what Husserl called static method, we began with the isolated individual. But using what he called genetic method, the social dimensions of touch are primary for it is rooted in the relationship between caregiver and infant before there is an experiential difference between subject and object. From a genetic perspective, our beginning structural analysis can be understood as applicable to adult experience.

⁴³ Frederick Sachs, "The Intimate Sense of Touch".

gain weight as much as 50 percent faster than those that are not. Experiments show that baby monkeys that could see, hear and smell their mothers but not touch them because of a glass screen paced frantically and cried steadily.⁴⁴ For infants face-to-face encounters are first touch-to-touch exchanges before they consist of the vision of the face of the other.⁴⁵

Among adults we notice that when face-to-face encounters edge toward intimacy they expand touch over all the other senses. Think of the difference between a nod of the head and a handshake. As we grow in our friendships, we touch, even if it is just a hand on our shoulder or walking arm in arm. And then think of the difference between a handshake and a caress, between the sculpted hug of two friends and the frenetic embrace of two lovers. Kissing is mostly a matter of touching cheeks and confirming a bond when used in greetings. Lovers, however, are lost in their kisses, be they subtle, light exchanges that delay gratification as they heighten desire, or be they a riot of excess in which desire rains in sheets.

But those of us who live in North America have created a culture in which our advanced technologies constantly impose an electronic screen whose very clarity conceals others and keeps them at a safe distance. By reducing the object of our touch to a switch, a keyboard, or a remote control, we are insulated from the touch of others. The more we transform intimate subjects that could touch into airbrushed images or reels of celluloid that we slice and splice, the more touch becomes lost in self-reference. The computer monitor and the movie screen become the primary form of social encounter. We flee being touched and are left with nothing other than our own embrace. And we, too, begin to pace.

In touching another I am immediately at one with the person touched but only in his/her difference, only as "an imperfectly constituted" other, only as one that also escapes me. We already found an internal dissection or gap within the reflexive experience of touching myself. Touching never exhausts the touched because it encounters it as touching. In our encounters with others, that dissection is thrown outside one's own body and opens upon, at the limits, two possible forms. This dissection produces an economy of *violence* if the other person is either master or slave, to use Hegel's categories, and if touch is caught up in a circuit of control of one over the other. Masters touch slaves, often with whips, but slaves touch masters only on pain of death. But this dissection can also produce an economy of *care* in which the difference between touching and touched carries the affection and then the labor of one for the other, in the case of caregivers and friends, or the difference enhances the mutual desire and then the pleasure of each, in the case of lovers.

⁴⁴ Ackerman, *Senses*, 76.

⁴⁵ As Levinas might put it, the intentionality of enjoyment has priority over the intentionality of representation. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay On Exteriority*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 127.

Once we see the link between hands, the dynamics of touch, and the reversibility of intentional states, then we have a key to the internal connection between the structure of conscious life and the lived-body. At the level of sentience, consciousness is deployed in and through the lived-body. And once we have integrated this into our theory, we will no longer be tempted to treat consciousness as an irreducible and irrelational sphere of being.