

## Body and intersubjectivity in Husserl's phenomenology

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Far from representing an outmoded idealistic philosophy, as often either claimed or implied in philosophically-oriented cognitive linguistic writings, Edmond Husserl (e.g. Husserl 1989) was the first modern philosopher to emphasize the role of the body for consciousness (cf. Moran 2005) as well as the intimate relationship between embodiment and intersubjectivity for the constitution of the human lifeworld. More specifically, Husserl distinguished between at least *four different concepts of intersubjectivity* (cf. Zahavi 2003):

1. The dual nature of the body as *Körper* (the living, biological body) and *Leib* (the experiential body of feeling and selfhood), as a prerequisite for spontaneously recognizing the other as a subject of experience like myself.
2. The parity deriving from *recognizing that the other experiences me*, in acts of (mutual) gaze and bodily interaction.
3. The experience of a transcendent (i.e. going beyond myself, "objective") world presupposing the *independent and distinct perspective of another self*.
4. The "anonymous" community, with its *non-linguistic and linguistic norms*.

Concept (1) was later emphasized by Merleau-Ponty, and has been more recently taken up by "mirror-neuron" approaches to intersubjectivity (e.g. Iacoboni 2008). Concept (2) is important for social-interactionist approaches in the tradition of Mead, or more generally for those emphasizing pre-linguistic intersubjectivity (e.g. Reddy 2010). Concept (3) is reflected in recent treatments of intersubjectivity in terms of "joint attention" (e.g. Tomasello 2008). Concept (4), admittedly underdeveloped by Husserl until his final works, has some continuity with the arguments of those arguing for the centrality of linguistic normativity (e.g. Itkonen 2008).

My contention is thus that Husserl predates modern treatments of intersubjectivity, and that his conception was a more multi-faceted one than what is usually proposed by modern theorists. In the debate on the proper treatment of the concept, Husserl's phenomenology can serve as the basis for developing an integrative account, which captures the different aspects of intersubjectivity (1)-(4), as well as the intimate relation between intersubjectivity and the body. I will briefly sketch such an account.

### References

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