

ceptualization of how the body incorporates social determinants and, thus, for a re-politicization of the body. I have also highlighted the similarities between the uses of concepts by the advocates of E-approaches, social epidemiology, feminist science and epigenetics. I am quite sure that this common conceptual background will require historians and epistemologists to retrace the epistemological and political history of E-approaches. This will likely contribute to a better understanding of how embodiment and affiliated concepts transform ontological boundaries and will also help to critically explore the general transformations of knowledge that we are currently witnessing.

References

- Conwill W. L. (1980) The inheritance of IQ and scholastic achievement: Further comments on the Jensen article. *The Journal of Negro Education* 49(1): 97–104.
- Dupré J. (1993) *The disorder of things: Metaphysical foundations of the disunity of science*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA.
- Epstein F. H. & Eckoff R. D. (1967) The epidemiology of high blood pressure-geographic distributions and etiological factors. In: Stamler J., Stamler R. & Pullman T. N. (eds.) *The epidemiology of hypertension*. Grune and Stratton, New York: 155–166.
- Fausto-Sterling A. (2004) Refashioning race: DNA and the politics of health care. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 15(3): 1–37.
- Fausto-Sterling A. (2008) The bare bones of race. *Social Studies of Science* 38(5): 657–694.
- Gallagher S. & Trigg D. (2016) Agency and anxiety: Delusions of control and loss of control in schizophrenia and agoraphobia. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 10: 459. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fnhum.2016.00459>.
- Haraway D. (1988) Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies* 14(3): 575–599.
- Haraway D. (1991) *Simians, cyborgs, and women: The reinvention of nature*. Routledge, New York.
- Jensen A. R. (1969) How much can we boost IQ and scholastic achievement? *Harvard Educational Review* 39: 1–123.
- Kellert S. H., Longino H. E. & Waters C. K. (2006) Introduction: The pluralist stance. In: Kellert S. H., Longino H. E. & Waters C. K. (eds.) *Scientific pluralism*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis: VII–XXIX.
- Krieger N. (2001) Theories for social epidemiology in the 21st century: An ecosocial perspective. *International Journal of Epidemiology* 30(4): 668–677.
- Krieger N. & Davey Smith G. (2004) “Bodies count,” and body counts: Social epidemiology and embodying inequality. *Epidemiologic Reviews* 26(1): 92–103.
- Krieger N. & Sidney S. (1996) Racial discrimination and blood pressure: The CARDIA study of young black and white adults. *American Journal of Public Health* 86(10): 1370–1378.
- Meloni M. (2015) Epigenetics for the social sciences: Justice, embodiment, and inheritance in the postgenomic age. *New Genetics and Society* 34(2): 125–151.
- Merleau-Ponty M. (1965) *Phenomenology of perception*. Routledge, London.
- Neser W. B., Tyroler H. A. & Cassel J. C. (1971) Social disorganization and stroke mortality in the black population of North Carolina. *American Journal of Epidemiology* 93(3): 166–175.
- Niewöhner J. (2011) Epigenetics: Embedded bodies and the molecularisation of biography and milieu. *BioSocieties* 6(3): 279–298.
- Varela F. J. (1979) Reflections on the Chilean civil war. *Lindisfarne Letter* 8: 13–19.
- Vidal F. (2009) Brainhood, anthropological figure of modernity. *History of the Human Sciences* 22(1): 5–36.
- Williams D. R. (2001) 14. Racial variations in adult health status: Patterns, paradoxes and prospects. In: Smelser N., Wilson W. J. & Mitchell F. (eds.) *America becoming: Racial trends and their consequences, Volume II*. National Academy of Sciences Press, Washington DC: 371–410.
- Mathieu Arminjon studied philosophy (Université Jean Moulin, Lyon 3) and psychology (Université Lumière, Lyon 2) and holds a PhD in life sciences from the University of Lausanne. He works at the School of Health Sciences (HESAV). His areas of interest cover the historical epistemology of biomedical sciences and care. He is currently working on the history of social epidemiology and the anthropology of pharmaceuticals.

RECEIVED: 17 JULY 2018

ACCEPTED: 10 OCTOBER 2018

Husserl's Unnoticed Contribution to Selfhood

Hubert Wykretowicz

University of Lausanne, Switzerland
hubert.wyk/at/gmail.com

> Abstract • Shaun Gallagher's philosophical inquiries are well known, among other things, for a phenomenological theory of an embodied selfhood. However, I show here that Gallagher has not considered all the means that phenomenology has to offer on this issue.

Gallagher's theory of self

« 1 » My main topic will be the self in phenomenology. I would like to modestly challenge, or at least emphasize, some technical questions about the phenomenology of selfhood as depicted in Table 1 in Shaun Gallagher's target article. My idea is that we find in Edmund Husserl's phenomenology a way to think of the self as a *unified phenomenon*, a “gestalt” that is hard to reduce to neuronal patterns (§35). Yet when Gallagher speaks of a “gestalt” with a “plurality of self-related factors” he barely puts a name on the phenomenon instead of trying to capture the unity of our subjective life.

« 2 » Let me first start with some remarks about a passage from the *Cartesian Meditations* by Husserl (1960). I will try to show that in this text Husserl himself, well known for his work on the transcendental ego, offers us a way to think about identity and selfhood as a unified phenomenon.

« 3 » As we know, Gallagher defended the idea that this unity is to be found in a core that is the *minimal self*, made up of ownership and agency. He also seems to recognize that around this core, there are, on a different level, a numerous quantity of elements that contribute to enrich this minimal self (see Table 1, which has to be read “bottom up”). That is mostly what we find in *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (Gallagher 2005) and *The Phenomenological Mind* (Gallagher & Zahavi 2008).

« 4 » However, my claim is that this minimal self is a sort of limit case of the self rather than the self itself. Put in another way, I want to show that the “core” is not where Gallagher thinks it is, i.e., the minimal self.

Instead of looking for a core, we must pay attention to the *hinge around which* the minimal self and the other components of my identity meet each other – a hinge that seems to be unclear in Table 1 because of the various layers that are spelled out. However, it is this kind of hinge that should be taken into account when one is looking for neural correlates of personal identity.

Husserl and the habitus

« 5 » The *Cartesian meditations* are well known as the summit of Husserl's idealism. However, we find in the 4th meditation, before the transcendental point of view definitely wins the game, an interesting analysis of the fact that *the ego is not only a formal condition that constitutes our first-person perspective, our subjective access to the world*. Indeed, Husserl is deeply conscious that the ego is an *embedded or embodied ego*, but he does not consider here this embodiment as we are used to seeing it in the work of Gallagher, Zahavi, Noë or Jean-Luc Petit in France. Let me quickly make that point clear.

« 6 » I mean that Husserl does not refer, in the *Cartesian Mediations*, to the embedding of our perception in movement, that is to say to the embodiment of every objectifying act (every synthesis of sensations) in the kinesthesia of the living body. This very kind of embodiment has been well analyzed by Gallagher (2005), Alva Noë (2006) or Jean-Luc Petit and Alain Berthoz (Berthoz & Petit 2006).

« 7 » Indeed, there are “sensorimotor contingencies” or “skills” that determine what we see when we see. We do not picture the world outside inside our brain, but we learn how to *achieve perception*, as Noë (2004) puts it frequently. For instance, we learned, when we were children, what happens when we move forward or backward in relation to an object, when we turn our head to the left or to the right. We got used to those kinds of perceptual patterns; we learned them. Let us also think about Jean Piaget's sensorimotor schemes. As Gallagher outlines in *How the Body Shapes the Mind*,

“the basic idea is that a full picture of human cognition can be drawn only by exposing the details of the various prenoetic processes that con-

stitute the body's contribution to the shaping of experience.” (Gallagher 2005: 133)

« 8 » However, as I said above, in the *Cartesian Meditations* (§32), we find a shift of focus. Husserl is not interested in this kind of embodiment of our perceptual achievements, but mostly in the embodiment of the ego itself. Therefore, Husserl draws on a path already mentioned in the second volume of his *Ideas* (Husserl 1996: §29, §56, §59f), which he calls *habitus* – a concept we are quite familiar with, at least in the francophone area, because of the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Let me briefly quote Husserl:

“[I]t is to be noted that *this centering Ego is not an empty pole of identity* [...]. [W]ith every act emanating from him and having a *new objective sense*, he acquires a *new abiding property*. [...] [I] find myself as the Ego who is convinced, who, as the persisting Ego, is determined by this abiding *habitus* or state.” (Husserl 1960: §32)

« 9 » Husserl considers here the habitus purely in its cognitive dimension, that is to say, when someone is, for instance, judging something about something, or having a belief about something. We may think here of John McDowell's (2013) “repertoire of conceptual capacities” as an example. However, we must think of the habitus not only as a pure cognitive process, but also as an emotional, practical and perceptual process. For instance, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone points out the habit as an “enlargement of one's kinetic repertoire” (Sheets-Johnstone 2014: 97) that has nothing to do with applying a set of cognitive instructions.

« 10 » Despite his cognitive primacy, Husserl leads us here to consider that *consciousness is not only an active performance or achievement of the ego*. For sure, I can judge, here and now, that this object is a pen, or imagine, here and now, what kind of beer I am going to drink after my talk. Or I can try to actively pay attention, here and now, to what kind of people are sitting in front of me.

« 11 » However, consciousness must also be seen from a *genetic* point of view. By “genetic” we must think of how an active consciousness, like attention, is possible in virtue of a world that is pregiven. To think

of time as a genetic constitution of the ego does not only imply a self-constitution of my sense of agency and ownership, that is to say, a pure formal subjective structure of consciousness (a *gestalt*). Indeed, in the 4th *Cartesian meditation*, it leads Husserl to the ego as a habitus. When I judge that this object is a pen, my judgment is, according to Husserl, settled in or laid down within a *set of dispositions, habits, tendencies, skills* that remain with me however unaware of them I am, or even when I am not thinking about them. Those dispositions constitute my habitus. I am counting on this *repertoire* of beliefs, preferences and skills in my everyday experience of the world. Indeed, they determine, or motivate (Husserl would say), shape (Gallagher) my upcoming conscious achievements. They support my following statements and undertakings.

« 12 » Let us briefly consider an example that belongs to a practical realm (that is to say a non-propositional attitude). I have been used to taking the Nr. 9 bus to go to work. The first time I had to do it, I was very aware of what I was doing: I was very aware of the number of the bus, trying not to miss it. Then, when inside the bus, I was very aware of needing not to miss the sight of the bus stop. But then it became a habit on which I count and that improves my everyday experience of the world, that makes it more familiar. I can now listen actively to music, read a book and *still I will feel when it is time for me to get off the bus without having to pay attention*.

What about the self then?

« 13 » Now, let us go back to our main topic, selfhood. What is this “I,” this “self” that is undergoing such an experience? What does it tell us about our most intimate self? Who am I? And what is it like to be a person? My basic idea is that, from this point of view, the core of my identity is not a minimal self. We are, however, far from experiencing ourselves in any such way. Besides, Husserl's analysis seems to apply for the self as a unitarian phenomenon.

« 14 » According to me, it is not enough to say that the first-person perspective is temporally shaped from the inside by a minimal self that explains its subjective quale (Gallagher 2005: Chapter 8). The self is not only a temporal formal structure of the

stream of consciousness that is, *by the way*, constituted by all the emotional, perceptual and cognitive contents that I may experience – as Table 1 seems to suggest. Instead, my self is *always already a structure that is “filled up” with the dispositions, skills and tendencies that develop out of my experience of the world*, and which constitute for me a set of *beliefs, preferences and capabilities* that are always already shaping my own experience *before I know it* (as Gallagher would say). This is what Husserl calls, in his *Idea for phenomenology*, “a person,” a “type” or a “style of living” (Husserl 1996a: §58, §60d).

« 15 » Thus, speaking of an embodied self is not speaking of a minimal self around which or in which different elements take place. Instead, it is speaking of that kind of *habitus* or what we may call a *dispositional self* – that encompasses the affective, behavioral and intersubjective aspects of selfhood, which Gallagher underlines here (§37). I have a subjective experience of the world not only because I am the owner and the agent of my experience, but because I see, feel and picture the world *from a certain standpoint which is made up of my dispositions, skills and preferences* – and that I already experience as deeply mine. For instance, when I see a rock and feel afraid of climbing, it is because I have already a sort of intimacy with myself, with what I am capable of doing and what I am not. I have a prenoetic understanding of my habitus, that is to say, of the capabilities that are mine. And what works here for my bodily attunement to the world works also for my cognitive attunement with ideas. For instance, when I encounter a poem or a math equation, I am already pre-reflectively aware of what I can and what I cannot do, of what I like and dislike. Generally speaking, I am already pre-reflectively aware of how the world shows up to me.

An embodied self is a habitus

« 16 » According to me, the *habitus*, or what we might call the “dispositional self,” is the *living strain* of my identity, the “root soil” to use an Husserlian expression. That is where the self resides that is to say, somewhere between the transcendental minimal and formal self and the contingent representation of myself through a narrative. As Husserl had seen, *the habitus is indeed a hinge where form and content, transcendental form*

and empirical matter, meet each other in such a way that it is simply not possible to distinguish clearly between them – contrary to what Table 1 seems to suggest.

« 17 » It is of course always possible to extract from my habitus such a core as the minimal self. That is somehow what Husserl did with the transcendental turn, speculating a transcendental ego that finally constitutes even its habitus or, at least, can get rid of it while operating the *epoché*. We can also focus on how the narratives contribute to rebuild my identity, but still, in that or this extraction, *we miss what it feels like to be someone*. To feel like a person must be understood, first and foremost, as the specific quale of my being a habitus, that is living within a set of beliefs, preferences and skills that are deeply rooted in my body. *That is the unified phenomenon that is the serious challenge for every neuroscientist who wishes to explain subjectivity. And that is a promising way of decentering the brain regarding the problem of self-identity, because it implies considering much more than simply brain correlates – my body as a whole, which has been shaped by biology, society and self-experience.*

Acknowledgements

This commentary comes from a talk that was given on the occasion of Gallagher's venue in Lausanne on 6 and 7 November 2017 at the Institut des Humanités en Médecine (University of Lausanne), organized by Nicolas Zaslowski and Mathieu Arminjon, to whom I am grateful.

References

- Berthoz A. & Petit J.-L. (2006) *Phénoménologie et physiologie de l'action*. Odile Jacob, Paris.
- Gallagher S. (2005) *How the body shapes the mind*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Gallagher S. & Zahavi D. (2008) *The phenomenological mind*. Routledge, London.
- Husserl E. (1960) *Cartesian meditations: An introduction to phenomenology*. Translated by Dorion Cairns. Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague. French original: Husserl E. (1931) *Méditations Cartésiennes: Introduction à la phénoménologie*. Armand Collin, Paris.
- Husserl E. (1996) *Idées directrices pour une phénoménologie*, Volume 2. Translated by Eliane Escoubas. PUF, Paris. German origi-

nal: Husserl E. (1952) *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch: Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution* (Husserliana IV). Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague. English translation: Husserl E. (1989) *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy – Second book: Studies in the phenomenology of constitution*. Translated by R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer. Kluwer, Dordrecht.

- McDowell J. (2013) *The myth of the mind as detached*. In: Scheer J. K. (ed.) *Mind, reason, and being-in-the-world: The McDowell–Dreyfus debate*. Routledge, London: 51–68.
- Noë A. (2004) *Action in perception*. MIT Press, Cambridge MA.
- Sheets-Johnstone M. (2014) *On the origin, nature, and genesis of habit*. *Phenomenology and Mind* 6: 96–116. http://dx.doi.org/10.13128/Phe_Mi-19553

Hubert Wykretowicz is a philosopher who works in the Psychiatric Department of the University Hospital of Lausanne, Switzerland. His main focus is the phenomenological resources for psychiatric thought on various topics like the body, perception, movement and affectivity. <https://unil.academia.edu/hubertwykretowicz>

RECEIVED: 1 OCTOBER 2018

ACCEPTED: 11 OCTOBER 2018